

Contemporary Art and Heritage

Interventions at the Brontë Parsonage Museum

Nicholas Cass

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

The University of Leeds

School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies

September 2015

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Nicholas Cass to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

© 2015 The University of Leeds and Nicholas Cass

Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
List of Illustrations	viii
Abstract	x
Introduction	1
The Research Context	2
Why an interest in heritage and contemporary art?	15
Methodology	18
Thesis Structure	38
Chapter 1	
Literature Review	41
Art in Heritage Sites	43
Artists and Museums	52
Heritage	58
Interpretation	66
Experience of Art	77
Brontës, Parsonage, Haworth	86
Conclusion	95
Chapter 2	
The Construction of a Shrine	98
The Brontës	102
From Home to Museum	105
Brontë pilgrims	113
A heritage site	122

Chapter 3	
The Contemporary Arts Programme: interventions in a shrine	146
Early development	153
Paula Rego, 'The Jane Eyre Prints'	161
Cornelia Parker, 'Brontëan Abstracts'	168
Subsequent Development	186
Chapter 4	
The Conjunction of Art and Heritage	196
Interpretation	198
Su Blackwell, 'Remnants'	209
Charlotte Cory, 'Capturing the Brontës'	222
Gesamtkunstwerk	238
Chapter 5	
Numen and New Heritage	248
Numen	251
Dissonance	264
A 'new' heritage process?	270
Contemporary Art and 'New Heritage'	286
Conclusion	294
The Legacy of the Brontës	297
Bibliography	303
Appendices	323
Appendix 1: Chronological List of Interviews	323
Appendix 2: Interview Summaries and Transcripts	325
Jenna Holmes, Arts Officer, Brontë Parsonage Museum	325
Catherine Bertola, Artist	328
Andrew McCarthy, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum	332

Rebecca Chesney, Artist	334
Charlotte Cory, Artist	336
Simon Warner, Artist	338
Ann Dinsdale, Collections Manager	340
Jordan Blackman, Intern	342
Brass Art, Artist Collective	344
Louisa Briggs, Arts Officer, (Maternity Cover),	347
Jane Sellars, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum	349
Visitor Interviews, 'Artists of Faith'	352
Lynne Howell and KM, Visitor Assistants,	353
Virginia Rushton, Brontë Society Council Member	354
Roy Voss, Artist	357
Su Blackwell, Artist	359
Visitor Interviews, 'The Silent Wild'	363
Diane Howse, Artist	365
Appendix 3: Contemporary Art Programme Exhibitions	366
Appendix 4: Contemporary Art Programme Funding	368
Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries	370
Paula Rego, 'The Jane Eyre Prints', 2004.	370
Cornelia Parker, 'Brontëan Abstracts', 2006.	373
Anneliese Strba, 'My Life Dreams', 2008	376
Sam Taylor-Wood, 'Ghosts', 2009	378
Su Blackwell, 'Remnants', 2010.	380
Catherine Bertola, 'Residual Hauntings', 2011	383
Charlotte Cory, 'Capturing the Brontës', 2013	384
General Comments Book, 2015.	388
Appendix 6: Intersecting Practices	392

For Eddie and Detlef; your inspiration imbues every word.

Acknowledgements

Nothing is achieved in isolation. To the following I extend heartfelt thanks for everything they have done: my supervisors Abigail Harrison-Moore and Chris Taylor for being fantastically supportive and provocatively challenging in perfect proportion; Helen Graham, for many thoughtful discussions; to the research community in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies, for creating such a rich and enjoyable atmosphere that has been a privilege to be part of; the staff of the Brontë Parsonage Museum including Ann Dinsdale, Sarah Laycock and especially Jenna Holmes for her unfailing support; the artists, all of whom were helpful with my research; and lastly, my family, especially Katie for encouraging me to do this in the first place and then putting up with me 'writing' for five years.

List of Illustrations

Figure 1:	Brontë Parsonage Museum.	3
Figure 2:	Haworth Main Street.	12
Figure 3:	Black Bull pub.	13
Figure 4:	Park Row Drawing.	17
Figure 5:	'Deposition' by Graham Sutherland in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.	25
Figure 6:	Untitled (Pentacost) by John Brokenshire in Charlotte's Room.	26
Figure 7:	Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book.	29
Figure 8:	Page from 'Jane Eyre Prints' Visitor Comments Book.	30
Figure 9:	Highlighted page from 'Remnants' Comments Book.	31
Figure 10:	Early ambrotype of the Parsonage.	103
Figure 11:	Plan.	109
Figure 12:	Dining Room in the early 1990s.	110
Figure 13:	Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.	111
Figure 14:	Charlotte's Room.	114
Figure 15:	Dining Room in the 1940s.	135
Figure 16:	Dining Room in 2013.	136
Figure 17:	Barrier in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.	137
Figure 18:	Brontë Country.	143
Figure 19:	Brontë timeline being installed, February 2014.	147
Figure 20:	Printmaking with Sarah Hutton in 1994.	155
Figure 21:	Germaine Greer with Paula Rego at her opening.	161
Figure 22:	Cornelia Parker examining Brontë artefacts.	171
Figure 23:	'Brontëan Abstracts', video installation.	174
Figure 24:	'Brontëan Abstracts', installation view, Entrance Hall.	175
Figure 25:	'Brontëan Abstracts', installation view, Kitchen.	181

Figure 26:	'Ghosts', installation view.	187
Figure 27:	Miss', Brontë Meadow installation view.	189
Figure 28:	'My Life Dreams', Dining Room installation view.	193
Figure 29:	'Ways to the Stonehouse', installation view.	194
Figure 30:	'Remnants': Book with Mechanical Pages.	210
Figure 31:	'Remnants': Installation view, Kitchen.	213
Figure 32:	'Capturing the Brontës', visitor leaflet.	224
Figure 33:	'Capturing the Brontës'. View of the Dining Room.	225
Figure 34:	'Capturing the Brontës', <i>Burnt Comb</i> .	226
Figure 35:	'Capturing the Brontës', view of Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.	228
Figure 36:	<i>Residual Hauntings</i> .	249
Figure 37:	<i>Residual Hauntings</i> , detail.	256
Figure 38:	'Remnants', installation view, Children's Study.	260
Figure 39:	'Remnants', installation view, Children's Study.	261

All photographs by Simon Warner, with the permission of The Brontë Society
except:

Figures 36 and 37 by Simon Warner, courtesy of Catherine Bertola, the
Workplace Gallery and Galerie M+R Fricke.

Figures 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 17, 18, 19, 27, photographs by the author.

Abstract

In this thesis I examine the Contemporary Arts Programme at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, with a particular focus on the commissioning and installation of artwork in the period interior of the museum. Reading the work of Paula Rego, Cornelia Parker, Su Blackwell, Charlotte Cory and Catherine Bertola through the literature of heritage and dialogical aesthetics, I seek to map the unexplored liminal territory between the Brontë Parsonage Museum as 'shrine' and the contemporary art installations as 'intervention'.

The purpose, through following a trajectory which has its origin in what Malinowski described as 'foreshadowed problems', has been to produce a rich account of the ways in which art and heritage practices intersect.¹ A reflexive ethnographic stance, in which the process has developed through and in, rather than prior to, the research process, acknowledges my own position as artist, museum educator and academic, engaged with a particular site where I have used visitor comment books and semi structured interviews with artists, staff and visitors to produce this account. This stance acknowledges that writing about art is itself a creative practice and should not be seen as existing as an independent, external addition; to be so, it would remain a 'shadow' of that which it describes.² Instead, it is my purpose to map the complexity of these installations as points of reference in the broader topology of heritage practice and contemporary art to demonstrate that they are not reducible to the paradigmatic arguments which are used to describe their existence within the museum space. Often characterised as 'social outreach, public relations, economic development and art tourism', I argue it is more productive to consider these

¹ Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2007), p.21.

² Nikos Papastergiadis describes that new forms of relationships are necessary between how we understand the network of functions of artist, writer and curator. Nikos Papastergiadis, *Spatial Aesthetics* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2006).

'interventions' as dialogic heritage, both in order to understand their 'affective' role in the process of interpreting the legacy of the Brontës, and to understand ways in which they address visitor experience.³

³ Hal Foster, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p.197; Stuart Hall, 'Whose Heritage: Un-Setting 'the Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) pp.219-228, p.221; Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.4.

Introduction

No exhibition should be held in this sanctuary of the Brontës!!⁴

Many visitors to heritage sites, country houses and museums are now familiar with encountering art which has been commissioned to enhance their experience of that site, house or collection.⁵ The relationship between artists and museums has a complex and symbiotic history. However, the early part of the twenty-first century has seen a dramatic rise in the number of heritage sites commissioning artists and curating artworks to be seen in conjunction with their buildings and collections. The rapid rise of this phenomenon has not been matched by any significant critical analysis.

This thesis takes as its case study one such site, the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth, West Yorkshire which, since at least 2006, has had a formal Contemporary Arts Programme (CAP).⁶ There is some debate as to when exactly the CAP became a formalised part of the museum's offer for visitors, however, the programme has included a wide range of exhibitions of contemporary artworks displayed in the period interiors of the heritage site. My thesis provides a detailed critical analysis of this programme in order to develop a more nuanced and complex understanding of this conjunction, which is intended not only to be productive for the Parsonage itself, but also to offer perspectives applicable in the context of other sites employing this strategy of intervention. My starting point, in order to explore the relationship between contemporary art and the heritage environment, has been to ask; what role does contemporary art play in the

⁴ 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book', (2004).

⁵ Visitors to both English Heritage and National Trust properties will be familiar with this strategy through the artist commissioning programmes both of these organisations have developed during the 2000s.

⁶ The museum is usually described as the Parsonage by those who are familiar with it. This thesis will henceforth refer to it by that name, unless there is a particular need to distinguish the different roles of the building as a home and a museum, where its full name will be given. For the sake of brevity, the programme will henceforth be referred to as the CAP.

interpretation of the Brontë Parsonage Museum? Heritage sites lie at the intersection of a multitude of knowledge practices. Law and Mol suggest that a method needs to be 'discovered' in order to make sense of this palimpsestic richness:

Multiplicity is [...] about coexistences at a single moment. To make sense of multiplicity, we need to think and write in topological ways, discovering methods for laying out a space, for laying out spaces, and for defining paths to walk through these.⁷

At the heart of this research project has been a symbiotic process of discovery and 'making sense'.

The Research Context

The Brontë Parsonage Museum lies at the top of the old village of Haworth, which is located in the Worth Valley, part of the Pennines ten miles north west of Bradford in West Yorkshire. Today, Haworth is a small town with a population of just over six thousand people.⁸ Situated within the boundary of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, it is formed from a small core of nineteenth-century housing, surrounded by the creeping growth of twentieth-century urbanism.

The historic village centre is formed of typical millstone grit architecture set on cobbled streets with a steepness and narrowness dictated by the way the village sits in the undulating moorland landscape. This historic nature is reflected in the fact that there are a large concentration of listed properties in the vicinity of the museum.⁹ The steeply inclined Main Street is flanked on one side by small

⁷ *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, ed. by John Law and Annemarie Mol, (London: Duke University Press, 2002), p.8.

⁸ Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 Key Statistics: Urban Areas in England and Wales Ks01 Usual Resident Population', <<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/index.html>> [accessed 10 September 2013].

⁹ English Heritage, 'The National Heritage List for England', (2013) <<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/mapsearch.aspx>> [accessed 7 July 2015].

houses which front directly onto the road. On the other side, there is a narrow pavement with slightly larger, and in some places newer, dwellings between which views across the valley open up. Following Main Street up this incline past the tourist outlets, turning left up the steps by the Black Bull pub, leads eventually to the Parsonage, set above the church, schoolroom and graveyard (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Brontë Parsonage Museum.

The Brontë family lived here between 1820 and 1861. In 1820, Patrick Brontë, originally from Ireland, was appointed Perpetual Curate of Haworth,

having been previously curate at the nearby village of Thornton.¹⁰ The Parsonage came with the position and he moved in with his wife and family that year. Unfortunately not long afterwards in 1821 Patrick's wife Maria died, leaving him to care for his six children. In 1825 two of his children, Maria and Elizabeth died. Charlotte, Anne, Emily and Branwell, the often-forgotten brother, would grow into adulthood, but they too would die before Patrick.¹¹ Branwell died in September 1848 having suffered a chronic addiction to alcohol and opium, although it is suggested he died of tuberculosis.¹² Emily died soon after in December 1848 and Anne died in May 1849, both from tuberculosis. Charlotte was very briefly able to experience married life before she succumbed to ill health in 1855. Patrick Brontë thus survived all of his family, remaining at the Parsonage until he died in 1861.

During their brief lives Emily, Charlotte and Anne wrote and published a range of novels and poetry which now rank among the most celebrated pieces of literature in the world.¹³ However, both in their own time and later, these were to be both lauded and vilified. Lucasta Miller suggested that Charlotte Brontë 'was so uninhibited in her portrayal of the female psyche that her heroines shocked many of her contemporaries and were accused of unwomanly assertion, morbid passion, and anti-Christian individualism'.¹⁴ The sisters' life story and literature are well known and the history of this family is inseparably tied up with both the history and contemporary identity of Haworth as a place.

¹⁰ See Ann Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës* (Stroud: Amberley, 2013) for a detailed examination of the Parsonage as a home not just of the Brontës, but of all the other people who have lived there. It is not well known that curators lived on site once it became a museum.

¹¹ For a detailed chronology, see Ann Dinsdale and Kathryn White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum* (London: Scala Arts & Heritage, 2013), p.43.

¹² Ann Dinsdale and Kathryn White, *Brontë Parsonage Museum* (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1998), p.45.

¹³ Currer Bell, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* Smith, Elder and Co., 1847); Ellis Bell, *Wuthering Heights* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847); Acton Bell, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1848).

¹⁴ Lucasta Miller, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Vintage, 2002), p.1.

In the nineteenth century the town was characterised by a well-developed agricultural industry. However the fundamental changes brought by the Industrial Revolution saw the rapid development of the textile industry, particularly influenced by the nearby towns of Keighley and Bradford.¹⁵ This period saw a growth in population and a sharp rise in domestic textile workers, a consequence of the number of textile mills which appeared in the area.¹⁶ Sadly, the infrastructure of the village did not progress at the same pace as this precipitate industrialisation. A lack of basic amenities, such as a clean water supply and effective sanitation, had devastating and tragic consequences for its residents. Overcrowding in the village compounded these conditions and resulted in an extremely high infant mortality rate, although, this high human cost of industrial development was not in itself unusual for the period.¹⁷

A report prepared by Benjamin Babbage in 1850, which Patrick Brontë 'had campaigned long and hard to get', drew attention to these dreadful conditions.¹⁸ Not only did Babbage quantify the death rate; 41.6 percent of children died before their sixth birthday; he also highlighted the very real health hazards created through the lack of sewers:

There are no sewers in Haworth; [...] generally the drainage runs

¹⁵ See Dinsdale and White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*, Barbara Lloyd Evans and Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Everyman's Companion to the Brontës* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1985).

¹⁶ Stephen Whitehead suggested that there were ten mills in close proximity to the village at the time the Brontës arrived in 1820 and Michael Bamber noted 'these mills marked the first stage of an upheaval which had changed Haworth out of all recognition by the time of Patrick Brontë's death'. See Stephen Whitehead, 'The Haworth the Brontës Knew', *Brontë Studies*, 32 (2007), 181-192, p.183 and Michael Bamber, 'Haworth in the Time of the Brontës', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.9-17, p.11. Given Juliet Barker's criticism that few writers have done sustained archival research, it is interesting to note the discrepancy between Whitehead's figure of ten mills, and Lucasta Miller who suggests there were thirteen mills in 1820. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.41. See also Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* rev. and updated edn (London: Phoenix Press, 2001), p.xix.

¹⁷ Dinsdale and White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*, p.9.

¹⁸ Barker, *The Brontës*, p.635; Benjamin Babbage, *Public Health Act (11 & 12 Vict., Cap. 63.) Report. On a Preliminary Inquiry Into the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of the Hamlet of Haworth* (London: H.M.S.O., 1850).

along in open channels and gutters. [...] into [the] middensteads are thrown the household refuse and the offal from the slaughter-houses, where, mixed with the night soil, and occasionally with the drainage from pigsties, the whole lies exposed for months together, decomposition goes on, and offensive smells and putrid gases are given out. These midden-steads are uncovered, and the majority of them were nearly full when I examined them. Bad as they are, their situation in close proximity to dwelling houses, makes them much more injurious.¹⁹

It is the tragic family history, in conjunction with the appalling conditions of the nineteenth-century industrial village, which provides a powerful counterpoint to the phenomenal success of the sisters' writing. Furthermore, the relationship between these historical facts as they are known, and the subsequent ways in which their lives have been sometimes inaccurately documented, has given rise to a complex web of Brontë mythology.²⁰

The way in which this web of mythology tends to emphasise some aspects of Brontë history but obscure others is important for this thesis, and the role of the Parsonage as a heritage site. That the Brontës were famous writers is, of course, common knowledge and seems too obvious to need emphasis. However, what seems to be less apparent, at least from my experience of visiting the Parsonage during this research project, is the broader social and political world in which they lived.

The starting point of the Brontë's lives as writers is, in Charlotte's own account, traced back to a gift of toy soldiers; in June 1826, Patrick had been away in Leeds and brought home a box of toy soldiers for Branwell.²¹ Already keen writers, the siblings all adopted the soldiers as the focus for what became a deeply complex set of interconnecting imaginary worlds that were manifest

¹⁹. Babbage, *Report*, p.13.

²⁰. Lucasta Miller provides a significant analysis of the way in which the mythology of the Brontës has developed. See Miller, *Brontë Myth*.

²¹. Barker, *The Brontës*, p.154.

through a range of written narratives.²² Known today as the Brontë Juvenilia, these early and extensive forays into writing precipitated an abiding interest in literature which led to the siblings' strong desire to be published writers.²³ Also clear, is the link between contemporaneous political events and their writing, as the Brontë children drew substantially on magazines to which they had access at home, particularly *Blackwoods Magazine*.²⁴ Simon Avery notes that 'from the outset, the children's commitment to writing was firmly rooted in politics, initiated by the wooden soldiers which Patrick brought home for Branwell in 1826 [...] which the siblings named after prominent political figures'.²⁵

In their early published work, the sisters went by the pseudonyms of Acton, Currer and Ellis Bell.²⁶ Charlotte Brontë eventually revealed their true identities to the public in her biographical notice to a second edition of *Wuthering Heights*, explaining that the choice to publish under assumed names was based both on a dislike of attention and also that anonymity would mean any criticism of their work would be more honest.²⁷ Their writing received mixed reviews but the nature of the writers' identities was soon in question as a result of having 'created a mystery where none was intended'.²⁸ The relationship between their work as writers, the subject matter they explored, and their social roles underpin

²² See for example *The Hand of the Arch-Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë*, ed. by Robert Collins, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and *Charlotte Brontë: Tales of Angria*, ed. by Heather Glen, (London: Penguin, 2006).

²³ It has been of huge benefit to this research project that Special Collections in the Brotherton Library at the University of Leeds has a substantial collection of Brontë material, including a rich collection of Branwell's Juvenilia. I included some of this material in an exhibition in the Stanley and Audrey Burton gallery 'Visions of Angria' in 2012.

²⁴ Barker, *The Brontës*, p.149.

²⁵ Simon Avery, 'Politics', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.261-268, p.262.

²⁶ Acton Bell, Currer Bell and Ellis Bell, *Poems* (London: Aylott and Jones, 1846). Robert Southey, to whom Charlotte wrote for advice about how to become an author, famously replied that women had no business being writers if they were properly occupied with their expected role. Kate Flint, 'Women Writers, Women's Issues', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.170-191, p.171.

²⁷ Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* rev. edn (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), p.xliv.

²⁸ Barker, *The Brontës*, p.497.

all of the Brontës' writing. Referring to a character from Charlotte's novel *Shirley*, Kate Flint suggested:

The figure of Rose encapsulates a theme which runs through the fiction of all three Brontës: the problems faced by an independent-minded woman, determined on expanding the emotional, intellectual, and on occasion the geographical boundaries of her immediate sphere, and yet forced to consider how far she is prepared to accommodate to societal norms.²⁹

Not only were the sisters proto-feminists, their experiences of 'fierce class conflict, political turmoil and call[s] for legislative and parliamentary reform [...] were to continually inflect the Brontës' writings throughout their careers'.³⁰

It was during Charlotte's lifetime that the sisters' notoriety began to be the stimulus for visitors to Haworth who sought to see the landscape depicted in the novels and visit the Parsonage, hoping to see the writers responsible for such dramatic works.³¹ Two years after Charlotte's death, the publication of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* marked a dramatic shift in the way in which the Brontës were perceived by the public. This biography is still seen as the single most important catalyst for the subsequent development of Haworth as a place of pilgrimage. According to Barker:

The book had placed Haworth firmly on the map. There had been a trickle of tourists ever since the publication of *Shirley* and the identification of 'Currer Bell'; in the wake of Mrs Gaskell's powerful and emotive descriptions of place, this now became a flood.³²

Lucasta Miller suggested that 'Charlotte Brontë was her own mythologiser', creating two myths; a tension between the 'positive myth of female self creation embodied by her autobiographic heroines, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snow, who forge

²⁹ Flint, 'Women Writers', p.171.

³⁰ Avery, 'Politics', p.262.

³¹ Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës*, p.37.

³² Barker, *The Brontës*, p.810.

their own sense of selfhood in conflict with their social environment' and the myth of:

a quiet and trembling creature, reared in total seclusion, a martyr to duty and a model of Victorian femininity[...] both had their elements of truth in aspects of Charlotte Brontë's private character, but both were imaginative constructs, consciously developed.³³

The nature of the site today bears testimony to the development of 'Brontë Country' as a tourist attraction, which is important for this thesis.³⁴ Given that the socially engaged nature of the Brontës' work has often been overlooked, 'emphasis[ing]' the Brontës as somehow *a-political*', pertinent questions can be raised regarding the relationship between history, heritage, representation, visitor engagement and contemporary art.³⁵

In 1904 Virginia Woolf visited Haworth and wrote:

At a certain point we entered the valley, up both sides of which the village climbs, and right on the hill-top, looking down over its parish, we saw the famous oblong tower of the church. This marked the shrine at which we were to do homage.³⁶

This suggests that the Parsonage becomes a shrine to the Brontës in the latter part of the nineteenth-century. Woolf also wrote of her experience of the museum which was not, at first, in the Parsonage. In 1893 'fiercely local admirers'³⁷ set up a society in order to 'secure and preserve' a wide range of Brontëana, setting up first a small museum in Haworth above a bank, and then taking advantage of the sale of the Parsonage in 1926 to acquire the building as the natural home of the Society and museum.³⁸ This move into the original home of the Brontës signalled

³³ Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.2.

³⁴ For an illustration of a 'Brontë Country' heritage sign, see Figure 18.

³⁵ Avery, 'Politics', p.261.

³⁶ Virginia Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 17 (1979), 272-275, p.273.

³⁷ Patsy Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', in *Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.214-241, p.218.

³⁸ W. L. Black, 'Early History of the Brontë Society', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1962), 38-40, p.38.

a shift in the status of the Society and from this time the collection grew substantially by bequest and purchase at auction.³⁹ The Parsonage now houses the largest collection of Brontë-related material in the world.

One of the Society's main objectives was to establish a museum to contain drawings, manuscripts, paintings, and other personal relics of the Brontë family [...] Over the years the Brontë Society has sought to restore the Parsonage to its appearance in the Brontës' time [...] The Society aims to engage a wide range of people with the Brontës' works, illustrating their influence in world literature through our award winning education programme and promoting the imaginative teaching of the novels and poetry. The Society also campaigns to preserve the landscape and buildings the Brontë sisters would have known.⁴⁰

It is this preservation of the moors, the village, the Parsonage and Brontë memorabilia which suggests that visitors to Haworth are anything but casual, and the concept of being on a pilgrimage to a shrine is central to Brontë discourse. Testimonies describing pilgrimage appear a number of times in *Brontë Society Transactions: The Journal of Brontë Studies*, the very early journal of the Brontë Society, and long held ambitions to visit Haworth can also be seen in the visitor books today:

I was very moved to be here. What an amazing experience for any lover of literature. Thank you.

Absolutely wonderful - very enjoyable, wanted to come for many years, Made it today well worth the Journey. Named my daughter - 'Emily - Jayne'. Loved every minute Keep up the good work.⁴¹

A pilgrimage from the other side of the world! Thank you!⁴²

Visitors had, and still have, complex reasons for visiting; they may already be emotionally invested in the Brontës having read the novels, or seen one of the recent film and television adaptations. Whatever their reasons, Haworth is

³⁹ Brontë Society, 'History', (2010) <http://www.Brontë.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=45> [accessed 8 July 2014] para 6.

⁴⁰ Dinsdale and White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*, p.64.

⁴¹ 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book', (2006).

⁴² 'General Visitor Comments Book', (2015).

clearly reliant upon the tourists who are brought by its deep and enduring relationship to the Brontës. This was a substantial underlying theme of comments in relation to a consultation with local traders carried out by the Parsonage in 2013.⁴³

Described as a 'honeypot village', Haworth and 'Brontë Country' form a particularly rich heritage attraction.⁴⁴ Bradford Metropolitan District Council runs a website, 'Visit Bradford' and four Tourist Information Centres, one of which is in Haworth. The Brontës have been marketed strongly by the Council since at least the 1980s.⁴⁵ In 2011, this included highlighting the way in which an experience of the contemporary landscape is overlaid with the fictional narrative of Emily Brontë's novel:

The world of *Wuthering Heights* is brought to life in the famous village of Haworth. This picturesque village was once home to the literary greats the Brontës and their home is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum.⁴⁶

In 2015, 'Haworth and Brontë Country' was one of the four main attractions highlighted on the 'Visit Bradford' website.⁴⁷ Developed from 2011, the rhetoric has broadened to focus on other areas of interest, highlighting for example that Haworth is a Fairtrade village;⁴⁸ however the Brontës, the Parsonage and the literary landscape still feature prominently:

If you are fans of the Brontë sisters and want to learn more then a visit to the Brontë Parsonage is a must. [...] After learning a bit about their life at the Parsonage you can then take a walk on to the

⁴³ Brontë Society, 'Notes From Our Public Visioning Meeting With Haworth', <<http://www.bronte.org.uk/bronte-society/notes-public-visioning-meeting>> [accessed 20 January 2015].

⁴⁴ C. A. Hope and M. S. Klemm, 'Tourism in Difficult Areas Revisited: The Case of Bradford', *Tourism Management*, 22 (2001), 629-635, p.631.

⁴⁵ Hope and Klemm, 'Tourism in Difficult Areas', p.630.

⁴⁶ Bradford Tourism Department, 'Visitbradford.com', (2011) <http://www.visitbradford.com/Brontë_Country/Haworth.asp> [accessed 29 March 2012].

⁴⁷ Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 'Discover Bradford District', <<http://www.visitbradford.com/discover/>> [accessed 6 July 2015].

⁴⁸ Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 'Discover Haworth and Brontë Country', <<http://www.visitbradford.com/discover/>> [accessed 6 July 2015] para 3.

unspoilt moorland and experience the inspirational spots where the sisters wrote. Discover the Brontë Bridge, the ruins of Top Withens (said to be the inspiration for *Wuthering Heights*), and the Brontë Falls. [...] Take time to explore the quiet network of country roads or the paths across the brooding moorland.

For the visitor approaching Haworth by car, the heritage status of the area is evident. Brown heritage road signs inform the visitor that this is 'Brontë Country'. Once in the village, there are many Brontë-themed cafes and shops along Main Street. Figure 2 shows one café named after Charlotte Brontë's fourth novel *Villette*; several buildings feature signs and notices which detail their relationship to the Brontës.⁴⁹



Figure 2: Haworth Main Street.

The Black Bull, for example, declares 'this inn was frequented by Patrick Branwell Brontë from 1817-1848' (Figure 3).⁵⁰ That it avoids mention of the fact

^{49.} A number of these buildings are listed for their architectural interest. English Heritage, 'The National Heritage List for England', (2013) [accessed 7 July 2015].

^{50.} The Kings Arms, on Church Street, has the slightly more tenuous claim that 'In 1841, Enoch Thomas, a friend of Branwell, was the innkeeper'. Both are Grade II listed buildings but only the Black Bull's English Heritage listing notes that it was 'Reputedly the haunt of Branwell Brontë'. English Heritage, 'The National Heritage List for England', (2013) [accessed 7 July 2015].

that Patrick Brontë had to 'watch his only son [kill] himself through drink' is an obvious example of the way in which heritage is implicated in contemporary perceptions;⁵¹ Haworth has been sanitised for the tourist trade.⁵² Furthermore, developments such as electricity pylons, which might impair this special atmosphere, are vigorously resisted.⁵³



Figure 3: Black Bull pub.

The heritage nature of Haworth provides a context for the Brontë Parsonage Museum as a period home with restored interiors within which the Contemporary Arts Programme operates. Since the museum first opened, there have been a number of significant changes worth noting here. The museum did not at first present the Parsonage as the Brontë's home. It was the addition of an extension in the 1950s which allowed the collections to be moved out of the

⁵¹ Barker, *The Brontës*, p.545.

⁵² Kevin Walsh points out the problems of omission in relation to heritage constructions. Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.139.

⁵³ See, for example, Brontë Society, 'Pylons on the Moors', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1966), 41-42 and Mark Branagan, 'Turbine Scheme Provokes Wuthering Gale of Protest', *The Independent*, 6 April 2012, p.16.

rooms, creating an opportunity for the Society to act upon their long-standing wish to develop the Parsonage as a period interior and show visitors the home of the Brontës. More recent developments include a stratigraphy of the museum, carried out in 2010, which led to a major new decorative scheme that opened to the public in 2013. This ongoing pursuit of 'accuracy' in the representation of the interior of the Parsonage provides a rich context in which to examine what is quite an established programme of contemporary art interventions.

The Contemporary Arts Programme as a regular feature of the museum's programming emerged from a series of activities which can be traced back to the 1990s. Having received substantial funding in 2006, it can now be seen as central to the activity of the museum. As a site which attracts such a specialist audience, but which is also relatively isolated geographically, there is a need for any strategy relating to audience development to be successful, particularly in the current economic environment of museums.⁵⁴ In this context, the use of contemporary art may be seen as a risky strategy.

Given the nature of the Brontë family, it makes sense that literature and creativity have formed a central nexus around which an interpretive programme has developed over many years. The Contemporary Arts Programme has a core of events which not only relate to contemporary interpretations of the Brontës' writing but also creative writing more generally. There is, for example, an annual Brontë Festival of Women's Writing. However, the museum's website alerts visitors to the fact that an experience at the Parsonage might involve more than visiting the Brontës' restored home in order to explore a representation of the past:

⁵⁴ Patrick Steel, 'DCMS Funding to Sponsored Bodies and Renaissance Cut By 15%', (2010) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/20102010-comprehensive-spending-review-museums>> [accessed 15 September 2015].

Through our contemporary arts programme we commission and showcase new responses to the Brontës and the Parsonage museum's collection from established writers and artists working today. We run a vibrant programme of exhibitions, screenings, talks, readings and lectures, as well as creative days for museum visitors to experience the Parsonage in imaginative ways and to explore their own creativity.⁵⁵

Thus, as is described here, visitors are able to engage with a 'vibrant programme' of artworks designed to provoke 'imaginative' experiences. Two notable examples include 'Brontëan Abstracts' by Cornelia Parker in 2006, where Parker used the technique of scanning electron microscopy to create extraordinary close up images of a variety of Brontë artefacts and the Brontës' own hair, and Su Blackwell's exhibition 'Remnants' in 2010, when she installed a wide range of cut paper works inspired by Brontë novels and their childhood writing. The suggestion that the CAP is able to provoke imaginative experience raises questions about the rationale and efficacy of the instrumentalisation of contemporary art in this way. Miwon Kwon, for example, has argued that 'vanguardist, socially conscious, and politically committed art practices always become domesticated by their assimilation into the dominant culture'.⁵⁶ It could be argued that the substantial growth of the practice of 'intervention by invitation' is a perfect example.

Why an interest in heritage and contemporary art?

This thesis has its origin in my own background as both an artist and an education officer working in museums. Like many artists, I developed a portfolio career as artist, teacher, lecturer and museum educator, working in museums in the North of England. Two of my roles are significant in the development of my

⁵⁵ Jenna Holmes, 'Contemporary Arts', (2013) <http://www.Bronte.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=154&Itemid=206> [accessed 5 July 2015].

⁵⁶ See Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), p.1.

thinking about the connection between artists and museums; between 1998 and 2001, I was the Education Officer at Temple Newsam House in Leeds. Run by the local authority and dating largely from the early seventeenth-century, Temple Newsam has substantial fine and decorative art collections. Working there, I began to notice the increasing number of ways in which artists were employed to engage with visitors. As an artist, I began to wonder how this related to my own practice and professional identity as a museum educator. At the same time, the rich, decorative atmosphere of Temple Newsam had influenced my work significantly. For example, through my engagement with the collections and staff, I was introduced to the work of the Renaissance polymath Hans Vredeman de Vries, to whose oeuvre I have responded in a variety of my own exhibitions as an artist. His work, and fine and decorative collections as experienced through museums and galleries, continue to be a reference point for me in much of my thinking as an artist.

From 2001 to 2004, I worked as Lifelong Learning Officer at the Royal Armouries in Leeds. The museum also had an interesting range of contemporary art and a Contemporary Art Curator and, again, I began to ponder the relationship between my own practice as an artist and as an education officer. The combination of technical metalwork and fine and decorative art at the Armouries, found for example on the Elizabethan armour, were a significant influence on my education work within the museum and also enriched the theme of decorative arts in my own work, following on from the influence of the collections at Temple Newsam House. *Park Row Drawing* for example (Figure 4), was commissioned by The Culture Company and Leeds Met Gallery as part of a public art project in Leeds in 2009. This artwork, installed on Park Row in Leeds, was based on the surface decoration of a wooden storage chest with which I was familiar in the collection.



Figure 4: *Park Row Drawing*.

While inhabiting these dual roles in a professional environment, my experiences led me to consider that there was a complexity to the way in which museums were utilising artists and artworks that was under explored.⁵⁷ As an education officer, I had particular institutional and museological responsibilities towards visitors, collections and sites where I worked. As an artist, I was interested in the collections but conscious that these interests were entirely unrelated to any thoughts about an audience for them. It seemed to me that a particular relationship was created when artworks were exhibited within a particular setting, in that the artwork was a work in and of itself, but also acted as a form of interpretation of the setting. This process of professional and personal reflection culminated in my desire to find a way in which I could explore the relationship that an artwork has with an environment defined as a museum or heritage space.

⁵⁷. My understanding of the real complexity of this relationship between artists working as museum professionals was significantly aided by a conference held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2012, 'Artists work in Museums'.

Methodology

In order to address the complexity of the overlaying of heritage and contemporary art practices, this thesis provides a critical analysis of the Brontë Parsonage Museum as a particular case study. In doing so, it draws on a number of methodological approaches in order to deal with 'a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit'.⁵⁸ The desire to study 'in' the Parsonage in order to think through the implications of the phenomenological experiences that heritage and art create, accords with Clifford Geertz's description of ethnography as 'thick description', and I align this work with his sense that the process in itself is interpretive and does not constitute the revealing of preexisting 'truths'.⁵⁹ Following Law and Mol's articulation of complexity, I aim 'to take all cases as phenomena in their own right, each differing slightly in some (unexpected) way from all the others',⁶⁰ and to write in relation to them in order that the resulting text both 'richly describe[s]'⁶¹ and also 'may sensitise the reader to events and situations elsewhere'.⁶²

I have navigated this territory by drawing on concepts suggested by the site itself including heritage, pilgrimage, space, site specificity and dialogical aesthetics; however, the methodological orientation is one of heritage. That is, this thesis represents an analysis of contemporary art in the context of heritage. The ways in which these concepts are both understood and applied are explored below in the literature review.

⁵⁸ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p.10.

⁵⁹ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, p.6.

⁶⁰ *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.15.

⁶¹ Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.22.

⁶² *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.15.

There were a number of possible case studies. At the beginning of the research, consideration was given to sites such as Harewood House in Yorkshire, the National Trust and the Trust New Art Programme, and Belsay Hall in Northumberland. All have shown a commitment to exhibiting contemporary art in their historic sites. However, it was the uniqueness of the Parsonage that Jenna Holmes, Arts Officer for the museum, had described in a seminar in 2010 that alerted me to the fact that many visitors to this site had an emotional involvement in their visit because of their abiding enthusiasm for the Brontë novels.⁶³

There are other places with a strong literary connection, such as the village of Grasmere in the Lake District where William Wordsworth spent a 'golden decade' at Dove Cottage.⁶⁴ The fact that Wordsworth wrote *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and many other famous works here means that Dove Cottage is now also a site of pilgrimage.⁶⁵ The nearby Wordsworth Museum houses an extensive collection of manuscripts, documents and artefacts. However, it was not a literary connection that I was looking for, rather a site in which the role of art was contentious. During this process, I have often needed to clarify in my own mind that my research project is not 'about' the Brontës.

This thesis is not an ethnography of the Parsonage, however, along with a conceptual underpinning in the discourse of heritage, ethnography and participant observation have formed a useful methodological orientation. Over five years, regular 'field' visits, interviews, observation of visitors, informal

⁶³ Inspired by Heritage Seminar, Mercer Art Gallery, Harrogate, 2010.

⁶⁴ This is how his time here was described by Kay, the tour guide during my visit in 2012. A great deal of research has been carried out which explores literary tourism. See, for example, Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), David T. Herbert, 'Heritage as a Literary Place', in *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, ed. by David T Herbert (London: Mansell, 1995) pp.32-48.

⁶⁵ Wordsworth is significantly associated with the development of Lake District tourism. See for example, Yoshikawa Saeko, *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

conversations and the study of visual artefacts and archival material constitutes substantial 'field work'. The writing process, however, while drawing substantially on my 'field' observations and interviews, also draws on a close engagement with the works from the Contemporary Arts Programme. Mieke Bal argues for new approaches:

Art-writing must sever the all-too-tight connections between disciplinary dogmas, such as those relating to influence, context, iconography, and historical lineage. [...] It is from the artworks of contemporary culture that methodological procedure and art-historical content must be derived.⁶⁶

Furthermore, writing about art does not necessitate reducing a complex experience which is not words, to a text; writing can be productive in its own terms:

writing *about* art is not a substitute *for* the art. Rather than standing in for the visual objects, texts about them ought, in the first place, to lead the reader (back) to those objects. [...] If all goes well, it unpacks some - and only points to others - of the many facets of that visual work of art.⁶⁷

Nikos Papastergiaidis has also provided a reference point for my engagement with art works at the Parsonage:

the politics of art exists [...] not only in the content of the work but also in the way it joins up with the experience and ideas of other people. The form of these relationships is diverse. In more general terms the form of art is always saturated with political meaning because it has implications that precede and go beyond the artists' individual intentions.[...]. It is part of my task to clarify the looping relations and mutual feedback that are at play in this system.⁶⁸

In this way, I align my engagement with these approaches, in that within the difficulties that writing about art entails, I aim both to 'unpack' and 'clarify' the complexity which exists in the conjunction of heritage site and contemporary art.

⁶⁶ Mieke Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.xi-xii.

⁶⁷ Bal, *Louise Bourgeois' Spider*, p.xii. Emphasis in original.

⁶⁸ Papastergiaidis, *Spatial Aesthetics*, p.4.

My initial engagement with the Parsonage took the form of visiting on a number of occasions in order to discuss the research project with staff, and establish ways in which I might go about the study. As such, the preliminary stages matched that of an ethnographic process. Ethnography has been described as a process by which everyday situations are studied and described, often using a range of sources from which data collection is relatively unstructured, particularly in the way in which the research process is flexible and develops during the process, rather than being defined in advance:

The analysis of data involves the interpretation of the meanings, functions and consequences of human actions and institutional practices and how these are implicated in local and perhaps wider contexts. What are produced, for the most part are verbal descriptions, explanations, and theories.⁶⁹

At these early stages of the research process it became clear that the Parsonage was 'the field' that I had already entered and that the research was developing in real time as I engaged with the site in order to establish how to proceed. This follows Hammersley and Atkinson's view that ethnography encompasses processes of iterative development, in that the project's parameters can emerge through the process.⁷⁰

This project has developed from my sense that the conjunction of heritage and contemporary art had not been adequately considered, and that there were few, if any, descriptions of these strategies available in the existing literature, 'itself represent[ing] a useful starting point for research'.⁷¹ This accords with Hammersley's suggestion that research can begin from 'foreshadowed problems' rather than a particularly well defined research question or theory and that the

^{69.} Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.3.

^{70.} Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.3.

^{71.} Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.22.

nature of the problem is actually defined through the process of the research.⁷²

The way in which I have defined my research questions also fits with Danny Jorgensen's description of various formulations of problem definition.⁷³ The idea that there was an issue to explore came from the conjunction of my education work in museums with my interest in museums as an artist. Jorgensen describes this formulation as 'from problem to setting'.⁷⁴ I had identified an issue, but had not yet defined a setting in which to carry out my research. At the proposal stage of my research I was aware of the CAP at the Parsonage but I had not identified this site as my central case study in advance of starting. The Parsonage was selected because of its peculiarities, which through the initial stages of research has resulted in the recognition and formulation of problems which are particular to the site; Jorgensen formulates this as 'from setting to problem'.⁷⁵ This process of narrowing the research focus was a critically important element of the early stages of this research project.

Having started my research by simply talking to staff at the Parsonage, what developed over time was a sustained and complex process that involved informal conversations, semi-structured interviews with staff, artists and visitors, as well as substantial observations of the site and its staff and visitors during my time there, all of which were collected in notebooks and transcribed.⁷⁶ Conceived of as 'participant observation' (PO), Jorgensen identifies a range of characteristics of PO which show that it is a particularly useful methodology when the focus is 'human meaning and interaction as viewed from the perspective of [...] members of particular situations and settings' and there is a demonstrable lack of

⁷² Hammersley is referring here to the work of Bronislaw Malinowski. Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.21.

⁷³ D. L. Jorgensen, *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* (London: Sage publications, 1989), p.26.

⁷⁴ Jorgensen, *Participant Observation*, p.29.

⁷⁵ Jorgensen, *Participant Observation*, p.31.

⁷⁶ See Appendix 1: Chronological List of Interviews, and Appendix 2: Interview Summaries and Transcripts.

information regarding the area of study.⁷⁷ With the Parsonage defined as a particular kind of setting, those involved with the site whether artist, visitor or staff, can be defined as 'insiders' through their shared love of, and commitment to, the Brontës.⁷⁸

In this way, PO provided a flexible methodology where the actual definition of the issue at the heart of the research was able to develop as new information came to light during the process. Interviewing, for example, allowed for the development of questioning over time.⁷⁹ The earlier stages of the process involved informal conversations which helped clarify my research aims. As my understanding of the complexity of the issues developed, I developed a schedule of semi-structured interviews with staff and artists. The choice of who to interview was based on either direct suggestion or my desire to engage with those artists who had been involved in the CAP. Later, further conversations and interviews allowed for more targeted questioning.⁸⁰ Jenna Holmes for example, as the Arts Officer, was important as she was directly responsible for the CAP. I interviewed her in 2010, and again in 2013. However, we also had many informal conversations which were extremely productive. Although a final interview was planned during 2015, this was not completed due to her maternity leave. Artists were supportive and willing to participate, although this was often on their terms. It was clear that Rebecca Chesney, for example, was less keen on a formal interview, but was happy to discuss the project at length as we took a walk from the Parsonage to Top Withens.

This slow incorporation into the field was very positive. I was welcomed

^{77.} Jorgensen, *Participant Observation*, p.13.

^{78.} Jorgensen, *Participant Observation*, p.13.

^{79.} For a full list of interviews see Appendix 1.

^{80.} This returning to the field to gather more data is also characteristic of the Grounded Theory Method, which appears a number of times in accounts of ethnography. See, for example, Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory* 2nd edn (London: Sage, 2014).

and accepted by staff. The fact of being in the building and 'chatting' contributed substantially to my understanding of the site's complex, lived relationships and also allowed me to share my thoughts and ideas. In reflecting on his research process, Papastergiadis suggests 'in ideal circumstances the partnership moves away from the position of a neutral witness and heads toward the more dynamic role of collaborator'.⁸¹ In her ethnographically informed analysis of the installation of an exhibition, Albená Yaneva suggests that there is a need to explore both sides of the exhibition equation, those outside the institution and those inside:

To look at the museum only from outside, is not sufficient if we want to explore the dynamics of art production. To look at the museum only by following the internal principles of arrangement for objects, is insufficient as a way of tackling the contemporary art installation. Thus, I suggest taking a position that straddles the border of the interior and the exterior of the museum.⁸²

PO allowed me to occupy a liminal position between inside and outside, particularly in providing access to staff, and the opportunity to observe and talk to visitors.

In 2014, an opportunity arose which allowed for both 'collaboration' and exploring the museum from 'inside'. I was invited to curate the 'Artists of Faith' exhibition as part of the Contemporary Arts Programme (Figures 5 and 6). This exhibition was a slight anomaly in the CAP programme, as it was not based on newly commissioned work, but was an exhibition of art works selected from The Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art.⁸³ There were many connections between the Brontës and Methodism to which this exhibition drew

⁸¹ Papastergiadis, *Spatial Aesthetics*, p.11.

⁸² Albená Yaneva, 'When a Bus Met a Museum: Following Artists, Curators and Workers in Art Installation', *Museum and Society*, 1 (2003) <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/msyaneva.pdf>> [accessed 23 April 2012], p.117.

⁸³ For an overview of the development of this collection see Roger Wollen, *The Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art: An Introduction* (Oxford: Trustees of the Methodist Church Collection, 2000).

attention. I had already curated two Brontë-related exhibitions in 2012 at other venues but, through this project, I was able to consider from an insider's perspective what choices were made about how to site works in the museum.⁸⁴ This also required extensive discussions with staff about what was felt appropriate, and also provided informal but significant responses from museum staff about visitor responses to the exhibition.



Figure 5: 'Deposition' by Graham Sutherland in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.

⁸⁴ In 2012, I curated 'Wildness Between Lines' at Leeds College of Art. The focus of the exhibition was art inspired by the Brontës, and featured some work previously exhibited at the Parsonage and some new commissions funded by both the Parsonage and Leeds College of Art. Concurrently, I also curated 'Visions of Angria' at the Stanley and Audrey Burton Gallery, University of Leeds. This exhibition included original Branwell Brontë Juvenilia from University of Leeds' Special Collections with illustrations created by second year students from Leeds College of Art.



Figure 6: Untitled (Pentacost) by John Brokenshire in Charlotte's Room.

Interviewing staff and artists was a relatively straightforward decision. Interviews developed from initial conversations, which led to recommendations regarding who I should talk to. However, the ways in which engaging with visitors might form part of my research was a question that emerged early in the process. They were of equal importance as a source of data, but I was also very clear that my research aims were not about trying to establish what meaning was generated for any particular individual or group of visitors. The processes that might be involved in such an analysis of visitors and their thinking are more located in the research paradigm of the social sciences. This type of research is important within the field of museum studies, but is not my focus here. Instead, my interest was focussed more on how visitor reaction, along with all other sources of data, might reveal more about the nature of contemporary art installations in heritage spaces. As Papastergiadis suggests:

Meaning can also be found in relating a work to its social context - in this way the political relevance and cultural references can be identified in order to see how it participates in the broader field of

power and knowledge.⁸⁵

Like Papastergiadis, my research focus has always been to think through the work, exploring its social context and broader field through a critical and reflective method, rather than through a sociological methodology. However, I was still clear that considering visitors' responses to these exhibitions was an important route for their voice to contribute to an understanding of this intersection of knowledge practices.

As the project developed, the answer to how I might do this came through the practice of the Parsonage itself. In the early stages of my research, I realised that visitors' written testimony is a fundamental part of Brontë history and the way in which the Parsonage operates today. Visitor accounts have been an important source of evidence from which the museum has been able to reconstruct the Parsonage as it was during the Brontës' occupancy. Replacing cabinets with shelves in the Dining Room is one example of a change which came about as the result of a nineteenth century published account.⁸⁶ Also, written visitor comments have formed a significant way in which Parsonage staff have monitored visitor reaction to the CAP. At the 'Inspired by Heritage' seminar in 2010 which had inspired me to select the Parsonage as a case study, Jenna Holmes used comments written by visitors to represent a range of reactions to the CAP.

There has also been a growing awareness that comments books can be a more useful research source than has previously been thought. Chaim Noy has suggested that visitor books can be conceptualised as 'stages for public expression', and rather than being 'unworthy of serious study' are in fact

⁸⁵ Papastergiadis, *Spatial Aesthetics*, p.2.

⁸⁶ Juliet Barker, 'Changes in the Museum', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1987), 172-174, p.172.

'discursively intriguing artefacts'.⁸⁷ Sharon Macdonald points out that visitor comments books have been overlooked, and that they can be extremely useful as indicators of directions for research,⁸⁸ and in describing herself as an 'inveterate reader of museum guestbooks', Susan Crane used visitor comments to reflect upon the ways in which history in a museum can be distorted.⁸⁹

This combination of factors suggested that a close reading of the visitor comments books was both appropriate and likely to be productive for my analysis. The Parsonage has two comment books, one in the Servants Room, which is identified as being for the current contemporary art exhibition (for example Figure 7), and one in the shop area, identified as a general comments book. My discussions with staff, and analysis of comments themselves, have shown that visitors are not clear about the purpose of each visitor book, and tend to write responses to both house and exhibition in either.

⁸⁷. Chaim Noy, 'Writing in Museums: Toward a Rhetoric of Participation', *Written Communication*, March (2015), 1-25, p.4.

⁸⁸. Sharon Macdonald, 'Accessing Audiences: Visiting Visitor Books', *Museum and Society*, 3 (2005) <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/macdonald.pdf>> [accessed 21 April 2012], p.131.

⁸⁹. Susan A. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum', *History and Theory*, 36 (1997), 44-63. Ken Yellis suggested it might have been worth taking more notice of the visitor comments to Fred Wilson's well known installation *Mining the Museum*. See Ken Yellis, 'Fred Wilson, PTSD, and Me: Reflections on the History Wars', *Curator: The Museum Journal*, 52 (2009), 333-348, p.338. Wilson's work is described in detail in the Literature Review on page 53.

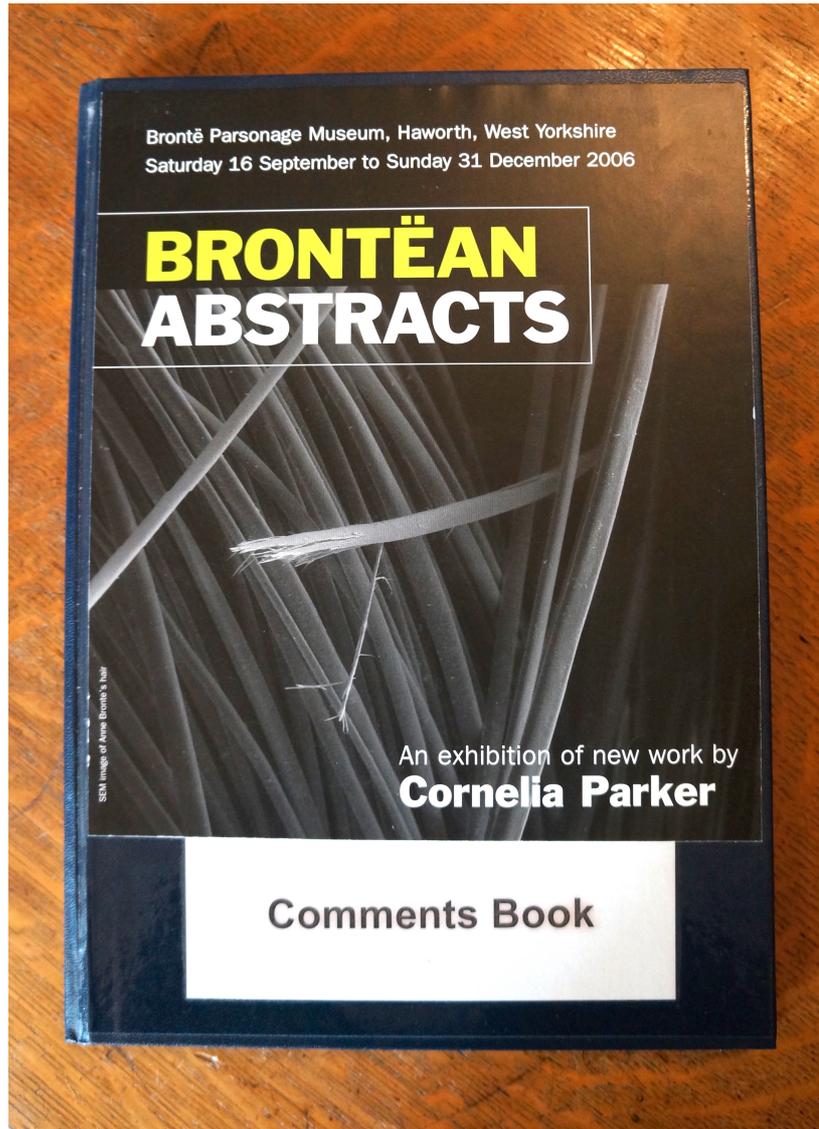
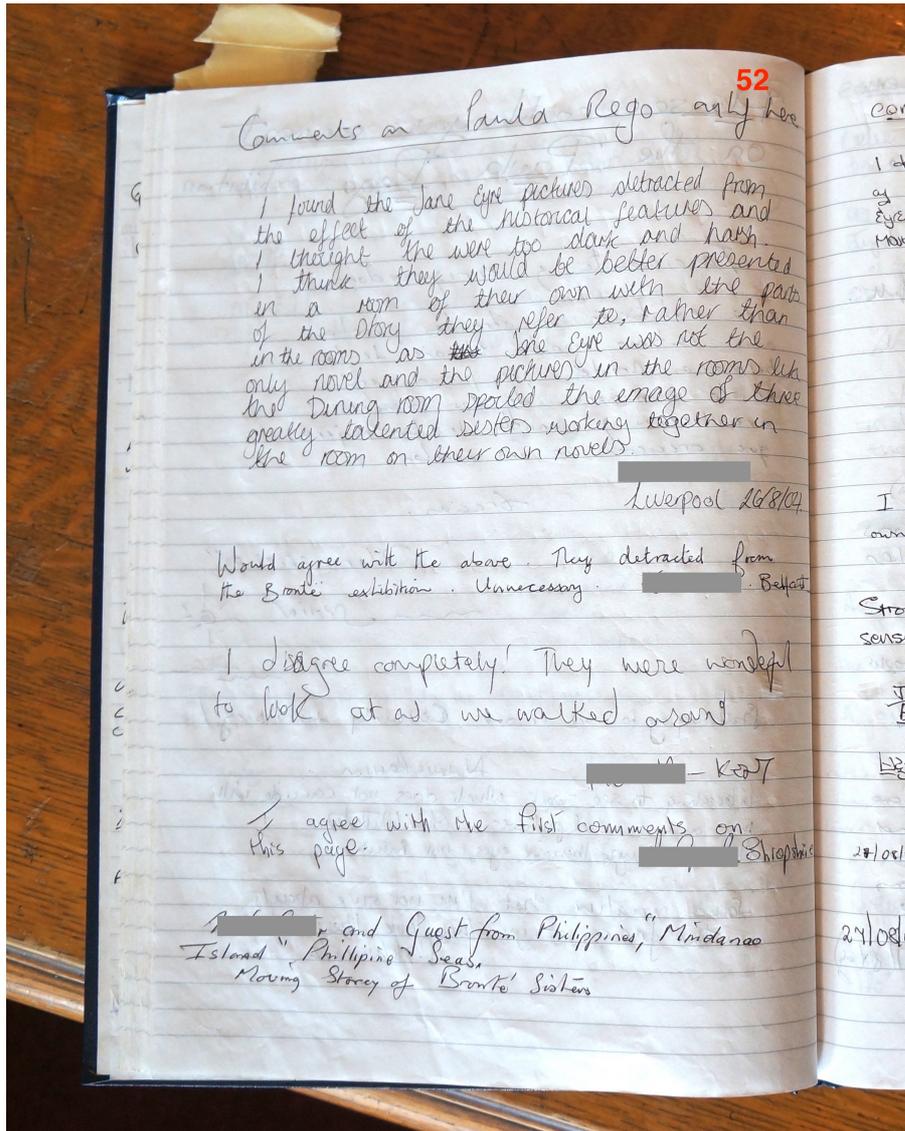


Figure 7: Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book.



52
 Comments on Paula Rego only here

I found the Jane Eyre pictures detracted from the effect of the historical features and I thought they were too dark and harsh. I think they would be better presented in a room of their own with the parts of the story they refer to, rather than in the rooms as ~~the~~ Jane Eyre was not the only novel and the pictures in the rooms like the Dining room spoiled the image of three greatly talented sisters working together in the room on their own novels.

Liverpool 26/8/04

Would agree with the above. They detracted from the Brontë exhibition. Unnecessary. [redacted] Belfast

I disagree completely! They were wonderful to look at as we walked around

[redacted] - KDT

I agree with the first comments on this page. [redacted] Shropshire

[redacted] and Guest from Philippines, "Mindanao Island", Philippine Seas, Moving Story of Brontë Sisters

Figure 8: Page from 'Jane Eyre Prints' Visitor Comments Book.

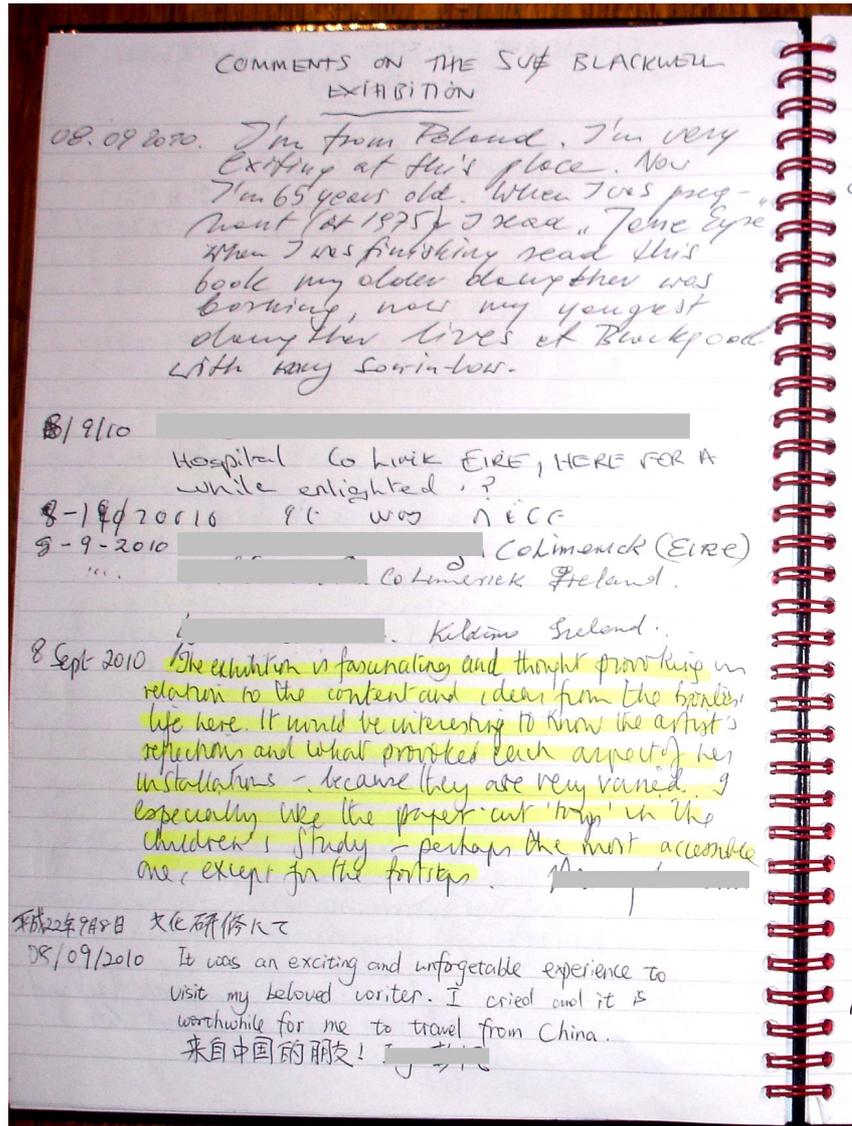


Figure 9: Highlighted page from 'Remnants' Comments Book.

For the purposes of this research, I transcribed the entire comments book from all of the contemporary art exhibitions to which I had access and, later, drew on the more general comments book to support my developing ideas. Many languages appear and, where possible, I had comments from French, Italian, Spanish and Japanese translated into English. In this way, I was able to examine the visitor voice in a way that reflected the reality of the Parsonage as an archive in which comment books were important. While differentiating between 'solicited' and 'unsolicited' data, Hammersley and Atkinson suggest 'all accounts must be examined as social phenomena occurring in, and shaped by, particular

contexts'.⁹⁰ The fact that creative writing is a strong part of the Contemporary Arts Programme is not to be ignored. It is very likely that many visitors consider writing as an important form of expression. The length and considered quality of many comments demonstrated clearly that visitors used this act of writing within the home of the Brontës to both celebrate and share their experience. Figure 8 shows a typical page from the the 'Jane Eyre Prints' Comments Book.⁹¹ Having gained access to a range of comment books and evaluation reports, it became clear that the comments books were monitored and were occasionally highlighted by staff, drawing attention to particularly interesting reactions (Figure 9), and that visitor comments had been included in at least one CAP evaluation report.⁹² My close reading of the comment books from each of the CAP exhibitions has drawn out 'rich description' and contributed substantially toward my research aim of 'unpacking' and 'clarifying'.

One key way that this was achieved was to use a coding process as a heuristic device, to explore concepts which either appeared regularly throughout the visitor comment books (either explicitly or implicitly), or which were emerging through the interviews. Hammersley and Atkinson suggest 'coding of data in terms of categories provides an important infrastructure [and] play[s] an active role in the process of discovery'.⁹³ These codes were either single word concepts such as 'authenticity', or short phrases such as 'comment on other comments' and 'should be elsewhere'.⁹⁴ This 'coding' was not to provide any statistical analysis, but to point towards concepts which would help explore ways in which visitors were making meaning. In many cases, visitors' use of language meant that the meaning of shorter comments was in fact difficult to clarify. This

⁹⁰ Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.120.

⁹¹ Names have been redacted in line with ethical review, and pages numbered digitally in red as part of the research collation process.

⁹² Jenna Holmes, 'The Land of Far Beyond: Su Blackwell Evaluation Report', (2011).

⁹³ Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.152.

⁹⁴ See Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

can be seen in comments like: 'Very good exhibition - well displayed, Don't like the Rego Prints!!'.⁹⁵ Here, the use of term 'exhibition' could be interpreted as a positive response to the inclusion of Rego's lithographs, had this particular visitor not appended their comment with a further, more specific response. Thus, where visitors were expressing an enjoyment of the 'exhibition', it is equally possible that they were referring to displays of Brontë related artifacts, rather than the contemporary art. Such ambiguous comments alerted me to the need to differentiate carefully comments which were explicitly related to the CAP. To provide context for the comments included in this research, an overview of the comment books, and numbers of comments which could be directly attributed to each exhibition can be seen in Appendix 5.

Despite the emphasis I have placed on using written comments as a primary source, this was not the only source used. Observation and participation are key characteristics of PO. Both of these led to informal discussions with visitors that I would write up and reflect on afterwards, Peter Howard has suggested 'much good work has been done by "chatting"[...]. Waving a clipboard does not work!'.⁹⁶ These have also been important in my consideration of visitor engagement with the site and the artworks I encountered. Throughout the process, however, I remained wary of the relative balance of sources and decided to carry out more specific on-site discussions with visitors, partly to ensure that they were fairly represented in my research, and also because at the later stages I felt it would be useful to test out some of the concepts I was exploring. To that end, I carried out informal interviews with small numbers of visitors during the exhibition 'Artists of Faith' which I curated in 2014, and also during the exhibition 'The Silent Wild' in 2015. The latter exhibition, while close

⁹⁵. 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

⁹⁶. Peter Howard, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum Books, 2003), p.122.

to the end of my writing period, did offer the opportunity to investigate and test a range of more specific ideas developed through earlier analysis.

Given that the researcher is not a neutral observer, but is fully implicated in the research, one of the central issues I considered early in the development of the project was whether I would pursue a practice-based, or research-based project. I was keen, however, to embark upon a research PhD, if only because I knew that, although I would always 'make' work as an artist, I would not necessarily always write. Of course, the period of my research project, 2010 to 2015, required me to acknowledge that making art could not be a priority. What I had not prepared for, though, was that I found myself engaged in an ongoing reflection on the relationship between my own practice and the Parsonage.⁹⁷ One issue on which I reflected was whether I would want to make work for the Contemporary Arts Programme. I knew early on that I was not keen to do this because I felt I was not the 'right' artist. This became relevant in discussions I had with Jenna Holmes about the selection process she used, and the nature of the relationship between the artists in the programme and the Brontës.

There are other aspects of the research process which were difficult. Drawing on theories of complexity and ethnography has been important, not only in shaping how the research developed, but also in recognising that difficulties are part and parcel of heritage research. To begin with, I found the Parsonage almost too rich a case study. Was I to start by reading the Brontë novels? Should I visit other Brontë-related sites? Should I join the Brontë Society? Ultimately, I struggled to navigate the difference between 'studying in' and

⁹⁷ In discussing the practice of anthropology, Tim Ingold suggested the need to be '[aware] of alternative ways of being, and of the ever-present possibility of "flipping" from one to another [...]. Wherever we are, and whatever we may be doing, we are always aware that things might be done differently'. Tim Ingold, 'Anthropology is Not Ethnography', in *Proceedings of the British Academy: Volume 154, 2007 Lectures*, ed. by Ron Johnston (London: British Academy, 2008), p.84.

'studying' the Parsonage, and thus to differentiate the extent to which I was studying the site, studying visitors or using these processes to think with. Whether during private reflection, or at conferences, or with colleagues, I regularly found myself needing to make clear that my interest was not the Brontës. Despite this, I did read a number of novels, watched a range of films, and, as a result, entered 'the field' of Brontë discourse much more completely than I had expected. I had not expected to develop an interest in the novels, but found myself wanting to know more of Brontë writing as this added to my understanding of the heritage site. This accords with Foucault's notion that 'ritual' is the fifth principle associated with heterotopic space, the richer meanings associated with the Parsonage only being accessible to me through this process of reading.⁹⁸

Catherine Palmer has argued that:

cultural contexts [...] are complex, disorganised and disjointed arenas into which a researcher tries, sometimes in vain, to bring about a form of ordered meaning no matter how contingent. [...] our interpretations of what we observe and record are necessarily incomplete, since exceptions can always be found.⁹⁹

Similarly, I found there was a gap between my 'ideal' research process and the reality. Trips to the Parsonage and my teaching and personal responsibilities all conspired to make the research process feel messy and incomplete. Opportunities to meet artists and attend openings were missed or cancelled.¹⁰⁰ Jenna Holmes, an important contact and 'gateway' to the field went on maternity leave which had a knock on effect regarding my access to the site. More significant than her simply

^{98.} See Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', in *Grasping the World, the Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) pp.22-35.

^{99.} See Catherine Palmer, 'Reflections on the Practice of Ethnography Within Heritage Tourism', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.123-139, p.135.

^{100.} Charlotte Cory cancelled my follow-up interview with her in London, despite it being arranged a long way in advance because she had been called to a meeting in Paris about an exhibition.

being absent was the fact that, while Holmes was on maternity leave, an office reorganisation led to her entire Contemporary Arts Programme archive being thrown away. Thus I had very little access to any material relating to the development of any of the early projects. Anne Sumner, who became director of the Brontë Society in February 2013, invited me to participate in various ways in the programme, but unfortunately left due to ill health, thus plans for exhibitions and events we had discussed were shelved. Rather than see these issues as problems which affected the validity of my research, as the project developed, I recognised that this was the research, this was the field, and ultimately, mess and inconsistency were endemic qualities of heritage research. They were part and parcel of the site of study, and not external qualities which needed to be somehow negated, ameliorated or avoided.

Other methods required an awareness of the issues inherent in their use. Interviews are not straightforward, and some consideration was given to the problems associated with them. Oral accounts are not 'simply constitutive of the phenomena they document', in that 'interviews are both formed and affected by the knowledge and insights that are pursued'.¹⁰¹ In setting out that there is a basic distinction between thinking of 'interview responses [...] as giving direct access to "experience" or as actively constructed "narratives" that themselves demand analysis', David Silverman suggests that both are valid but that the interviewer should 'justify and explain the position [they] take'.¹⁰² Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that as long as an understanding of how the researcher may be implicated in the process is considered, the use of interviews offers an important

¹⁰¹. Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, 'Between the Lines and in the Margins: Interviewing People About Attitudes to Heritage and Identity', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.164-176, p.64; Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.98.

¹⁰². David Silverman, 'Analyzing Talk and Text', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000) pp.821-834, p.825.

perspective not always accessible in other ways.¹⁰³ In this way, I do not treat interview responses as 'indicators of something measurable', but as pointing towards 'attitudes which are worth study in their own right'.¹⁰⁴

The transcription process is also not straightforward. There are a number of guides to transcription and a number of studies relating to its use in qualitative research.¹⁰⁵ The one consistency among them was that there are no hard and fast rules, apart from the necessity for consistency in the process. I incorporated guidance from several sources in my approach when moving from recorded interview to edited transcription. Together, full transcripts of these interviews approach 100,000 words and as such, are too large to be included in the appendices. However, their importance in this research process is demonstrated by the substantial material quoted from them. In order to give context to this quoted material, a summary of each interview has been provided in Appendix 2,

the purpose of summaries is to gather key basic information about the circumstances of the interview and give a concise guide to its contents. Summaries need to include names, places, events and topics appearing in each interview.¹⁰⁶

Social media are also being taken very seriously by museums so TripAdvisor and other similar sites become serious points of contact and feedback. While no direct comments have been included in this thesis, it is

¹⁰³. Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.102.

¹⁰⁴. John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, 'Heritage Studies: An Outline', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.11-28, p.24.

¹⁰⁵. Baylor University Institute for Oral History, *Style Guide: A Quick Reference for Editing Oral History Transcripts* (Waco: Baylor University, 2013); Minnesota Historical Society, *Transcribing, Editing and Processing Guidelines* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2001); University of Leicester, 'How to Interview: Summaries and Transcriptions', <<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/howtointerview/summaries.html>> [accessed 13 May 2014]; Christina Davidson, 'Transcription: Imperatives for Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8 (2009), 1-52; Daniel G. Oliver, Julianne M. Serovich and Tina L. Mason, 'Constraints and Opportunities With Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research', *Social Forces*, 84 (2005), 1273-1289.

¹⁰⁶. University of Leicester, 'How to Interview: Summaries and Transcriptions', [accessed 13 May 2014] para 2.

possible to conclude from the range of interest in visitor comments, that sites such as TripAdvisor, Facebook and Twitter should at some point be taken seriously as a form of visitor feedback. TripAdvisor has the advantage of enabling one to contact the people who have left comments. This is something I did in relation to comments about the Parsonage and found the process to offer a very straightforward way to verify the veracity of comments and also clarify issues that the comments raised.

Thesis Structure

This thesis asks a simple question; what role does contemporary art play when it is exhibited in a heritage space? It explores the complexity which arises with the insertion of contemporary art in the particular space of the Brontë Parsonage museum. Through engaging with the relatively unique case study of a site that for many is a shrine, it aims to clarify the role of contemporary art at the Brontë Parsonage Museum. A further aim is to demonstrate the ways in which artwork functions as a meaning-making device in this period interior, based on the belief that there is an inherent complexity lying at the conjunction of contemporary art and heritage practices. Extrapolation from the object of study to the more general is not necessary in many cases, especially where the object of study itself 'has intrinsic interest'.¹⁰⁷ One intended outcome of this research is to offer a nuanced analysis of the ways in which contemporary art interventions actually engage visitors, given that the Parsonage staff are clear that they lack this qualitative data. However, given the rapid development of interventions in major national organisations such as the National Trust, it is also intended that this thesis offers insight into how this complex territory can be productive for other heritage sites and visitors.

¹⁰⁷ Hammersley and Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, p.32.

In order to clarify terminology, and locate this research topic at the intersection of particular knowledge practices, I begin with a literature review which examines key concepts in relation to heritage, the experience of art, and the existing literature regarding art interventions and museums. Chapter 2 sets out how the Parsonage has developed over time, and looks at the way in which it has been conceived of as a shrine. The Brontës' identities as writers are inseparable from it and, as such, an introduction to the development of the Brontë mythology cannot begin without a consideration of the family. Their lives in the Parsonage are key to understanding both the development of the museum itself, and the ways in which visitors articulate their expectations of their visit. Chapter 3 examines the development of the CAP in detail, and then offers a close reading of two exhibitions to establish the ways in which these conjunctions can be seen as phenomenologically complex.

Chapter 4 represents a turning point in the analysis, in that the previous chapters focussed on the historical development of the museum and the Contemporary Arts Programme, whereas subsequent chapters deal with the more recent exhibitions that I was able to experience as part of the research process. These chapters explore further the ways in which visitors are able to use the contemporary art as a device for personal meaning making, and I use the concepts of numen, awe and wonder, to propose that artworks are substantially able to offer new ways of engaging with heritage, but that visitors' meaning-making processes are not always enabled by the artworks.

Chapter 5 explores the concept of dialogic heritage, and proposes that the contemporary art programme can be understood as creating dialogic space. Here Bakhtin's concept of 'heteroglossia' is useful in articulating a reading of the Parsonage as a space in which multiple and conflicting meanings can be held in

productive dialogue.¹⁰⁸ In particular, it seeks to argue that the nominally separate discourses of 'contemporary art' and 'heritage' share a concern for more dialogic, participatory approaches, and the role of the Contemporary Arts Programme can be articulated through these connected discourses of relational engagement, and thus should not be seen as separate or distinct from the interpretive framework of the Parsonage as a heritage site.

¹⁰⁸. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays By M. M. Bakhtin*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), p.263.

Chapter 1 Literature Review

This study of the Contemporary Arts Programme at the Brontë Parsonage Museum explores the premise that showing contemporary art in heritage sites is complex and under-theorised. When contemporary art is commissioned or selected to be exhibited as part of a heritage site, it is often described as bringing art objects 'into dialogue' with the buildings, objects and stories which surround it. This dialogue brings a multitude of new meanings. For example, In her analysis of 'Jeff Koons Versailles', in 2008, Ronit Milano suggests 'when the objects of the past and of the present are juxtaposed, these spatiotemporal conditions cease to seem hegemonic and call for new readings of the art, as well as of both history and art history'.¹⁰⁹ For the purposes of this analysis Claire Robins' definition of what constitutes an intervention is useful:

The proviso that most commonly constitutes an 'intervention' is that the art in question 'engages' with an existing context, for example, a museum's collection, its architecture, social histories, or with museological concerns, curatorial practices, interpretive strategies, publicity materials, corporate sponsorship and so on. Although some contemporary artworks placed in museums do respond to all of the above, not all of them can be seen to constitute an action undertaken in order to change what is happening or to prevent something 'undesirable' from continuing to take place. Whilst it is important not to fall into the error of making crude categories, it is also valuable to differentiate between contemporary artworks placed in collections with the intention of 'brightening things up' and other more significant motivations that include facilitating new readings of existing orders.¹¹⁰

Robins' definition encapsulates the issues that are raised by these interventions and that I explore in this chapter. Firstly, an intervention deals with an existing set of circumstances; thus an exploration of heritage as a context is necessary, not

¹⁰⁹. Ronit Milano, '(Re)staging Art History: Jeff Koons in Versailles', *Museum and Curatorial Studies Review*, 2 (2014) <http://www.macs-review.com/MACSR_Vol2_No1/03--Milano_MACSR--2.1.pdf> [accessed 25 January 2015], p.40.

¹¹⁰. Claire Robins, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), p.2.

least, to explore ways in which heritage might be affected by the 'new readings' Robins suggests. This definition also raises the issue of interpretation.

Interpretation may relate to a viewer formulating meaning from their experience, but it also relates to the whole range of materials that a heritage site might provide to engage its visitors in the experience.

In order to adequately address the complexity of the Parsonage as a specific case study of this dialogue, this literature review considers a number of key paradigms that are implicated by this intersecting hybrid display. Firstly, I examine the existing but limited literature relating to artists working in and with heritage sites in order to establish key issues that are addressed and raised by this practice. I also seek to contextualise this practice within the broader legacy of 'institutional critique'. This is in order to provide an account of the ways in which this current practice of heritage intervention can be seen to relate to earlier forms of dialogue between artists and museums.

I address concepts of heritage, interpretation and the experience of art as these three issues are implicated in the intersection of contemporary art and heritage. While there is a wide range of research into more globally-nuanced definitions of heritage, exploring for example alternative ontologies not recognised in the West, I limit my scope to research focussed on the United Kingdom, Europe and North America, as it is within these Western intellectual paradigms that this thesis is located. Finally, I address the literature relating to the Brontë Parsonage Museum and Haworth, in order to evaluate its potential as a case study and explore ways in which my analysis of it might be shaped. By considering these key paradigms, my aim is to articulate one framework, among many possible ones, through which the Contemporary Arts Programme can be examined in the chapters that follow.

Art in Heritage Sites

The limited range of material which directly addresses the insertion of contemporary art into heritage sites is the key rationale for this study.¹¹¹ The relatively rapid increase of the number of artists working within heritage contexts can be seen through a range of substantial projects since the millennium.¹¹² However, this growth in activity has yet to be matched by a significant response in critical discourse. For example, Ashleigh McDougall suggests that the lack of analysis regarding this growing phenomena requires deeper consideration of the curatorial strategies from which these types of projects emerge.¹¹³ A further lack of research in this area is demonstrated by Carol Parr's analysis of public art; while she suggests that 'the challenge of designing innovative, provocative and effective interpretation has led many practitioners of heritage, environmental and countryside management to look to the arts for inspiration', her focus is very much on art in public spaces of the city or countryside rather than within heritage sites themselves.¹¹⁴ Thus, in order to establish whether common aims of this practice exist, against which the CAP

¹¹¹. In order to avoid a complex discussion regarding the notion of 'contemporary', most artwork discussed in this thesis has been made by living artists for the specific purpose of being displayed in heritage sites. However, for the avoidance of confusion, I follow the definition of contemporary art as that which has been made since the 1960s. Ian Chilvers and John Glaves-Smith, 'Contemporary Art', (2009) </www.oxfordreference.com/10.1093/acref/9780199239665.001.0001/acref-9780199239665-e-581> [accessed 15 June 2015].

¹¹². The increase in the commissioning of artists has been noted in a number of places. Dipti Desai notes the global growth of this phenomena; See Dipti Desai, 'The Ethnographic Move in Contemporary Art: What Does it Mean for Art Education', *Studies in Art Education*, 43 (2002), 307-323, p.310. Grayson Perry suggests artists' interventions have become 'common practice'. Grayson Perry, *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* (London: British Museum Press, 2011), p.11.

¹¹³. Ashleigh McDougall, 'Place and Collaboration: Contemporary Art Curation Within Historic Sites', (2013) <http://desearch.co.uk/home/category-2013/20-place-and-collaboration-contemporary-art-curation-within-historic-sites-by-ashleigh-mcdougall> [accessed 23 February 2015].

¹¹⁴. Carol Parr, 'Public Art: Its Role as a Medium for Interpretation', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.123-140, p.123.

might be contextualised and evaluated, this section of the literature review explores a range of catalogue essays, press articles, project blogs and websites, as well as a limited number of evaluative reports and unpublished theses.

Harewood House, in Yorkshire, has had a significant programme of contemporary art interventions since the mid 1980s, with the Countess of Harewood, artist Diane Howse, conceptualising the white cube space of Terrace Gallery itself as a sculptural intervention in the house.¹¹⁵ Since 2000, there have been a number of substantial projects in this field in Britain.¹¹⁶ Contemporary art has been shown in National Trust (NT) properties as part of the 'Trust New Art' series of exhibitions, drawing on both new commissions and the permanent collection of Arts Council England. Tatton Park played host to the Tatton Biennial in 2008, 2010 and 2012. Belsay Hall in Northumberland hosted a series of themed exhibitions curated by Judith King. Museummaker was a substantial series of commissions which paired contemporary craft makers with a whole range of sites across England.¹¹⁷ 'Inspired By Heritage' was a project organised by Art Connections, pairing six North Yorkshire artists with a variety of museum and heritage sites, including a heritage landscape.¹¹⁸ New Expressions, based in the South West, has seen three phases of engagement with artists working in a wide range of museums and historic properties.¹¹⁹ The Freud Museum has had a wide

¹¹⁵ Diane Howse and I have met a number of times and discussed this history of her work at Harewood. See also the Interview Summary on page 365 of Appendix 2.

¹¹⁶ This work is not unique to Britain. In Europe, for example, Versailles has exhibited the work of Jeff Koons and Murakami Takashi.

¹¹⁷ Brigid Howarth and Susie O'Reilly, 'Sharing the Impact of Museummaker', (2011) <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/AJA_museummaker_SummaryDocument_web.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2015].

¹¹⁸ *Inspired By Heritage*, ed. by Art Connections, (Harrogate: Chrysalis Arts, 2010).

¹¹⁹ *New Expressions, Sharing the Impact of New Expressions 3: Unlocking the Creative Potential Collections and Spaces in South West England*, (Plymouth: New Expressions, 2012).

range of artists and curators responding to the site in Marefield Gardens.¹²⁰

A key focus of many of these projects is the desire to broaden audiences. Trust New Art exhibitions, which developed from an agreement between Arts Council England (ACE) and the National Trust (NT), have involved showing existing work from the Arts Council collection and commissioning new, site responsive, works. The first phase of Trust New Art took place between 2009 and 2013; a new agreement has secured the continuation of the programme from 2014 to 2018.¹²¹ The Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations suggests that the project is focussed particularly on the strengthening of connections that visitors have with NT properties and the broadening of audiences for contemporary art, and thus can be seen to meet the strategic objectives of both organisations.¹²² Alan Davey, Chief Executive of the Arts Council, has articulated the way in which their amalgamation with the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in 2010 has allowed them to '[extend] the reach of our influence into many more places'.¹²³

This underlying connection between projects extends to the ways in which they are funded. In 2006 Christopher Frayling commented that ACE's funding of

^{120.} See, for example, Sophie Calle, *Appointment* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005); William Cobbing, *The Gradiva Project* (London: Camden Arts Centre, 2008); Griselda Pollock, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration: Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, and Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freud Museum* (Leeds: Wild Pansy Press, 2013). The museum website hosts an extensive archive. See Freud Museum, 'Exhibition Archive', <<http://freud.org.uk/exhibitions/archive/>> [accessed 15 September 2015].

^{121.} Tom Freshwater confirmed this agreement during his presentation at *Intersecting Practices*, a series of seminars I organised at the University of Leeds in May 2014. See Appendix 6.

^{122.} Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding Between Arts Council England and the National Trust', <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/collaboration-and-partnerships/>> [accessed 20 December 2013]. The document itself is undated, but is likely to relate to the programme of exhibitions between 2009 and 2013. There is a new MOU which is dated from 2014 available from the same source. Inspired by Heritage, a project which took place in the north of England at six different kinds of site, had a particular aim of demonstrating the economic potential of a broader audience through developing tourism. See *Inspired By Heritage*, ed. by Art Connections.

^{123.} Arts Council England, *Great Art and Culture for Everyone: 10 Year Strategic Framework 2010 - 2020*, (London: Arts Council England, 2013), p.6.

Museummaker 'illustrates well the importance the Arts Council places on partnerships between the museum and heritage sector and today's makers'.¹²⁴ It is worth noting that the Arts Council has funded the post of Contemporary Arts Programme Manager for the National Trust since 2009,¹²⁵ and also funds the commissioning agencies Unravelled Arts and Meadow Arts. Both organisations have worked closely with the National Trust. This reveals that funding creates a connectedness between what might at first appear to be disparate organisations, all of whom are supporting the strategic audience development aims of the Arts Council, well known through their policy documents such as *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*.¹²⁶

Not all of those involved are comfortable with audience development as the rationale for contemporary art interventions. The curators of the Tatton Biennial, Danielle Arnaud and Jordan Kaplan, acknowledged that audience development was pertinent but were focussed very much on the production of art in a unique setting.¹²⁷ Judith King, curator of a number of exhibitions held at Belsay Hall since 1995, similarly commented about the need to maintain curatorial integrity in the face of an organisational desire to appeal to particular audiences.¹²⁸ The emphasis, then, is also on the production of high quality artworks. Tom Freshwater has suggested the challenge is to 'create meaningful

¹²⁴. Culture 24, 'Museummaker Commissions Major East Midlands Artworks', (2006) <<http://www.culture24.org.uk/art/craft/art35908>> [accessed 16 June 2014].

¹²⁵. Arts Council England, 'Trust New Art', <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/arts-council-initiatives/trust-new-art/>> [accessed 23 April 2012].

¹²⁶. See Arts Council England, *Great Art and Culture for Everyone*.

¹²⁷. *Tatton Park Biennial 2008*, ed. by Danielle Arnaud and Jordan Kaplan, (Knutsford: Tatton Park, 2008), p.4. 2012 was the last iteration. During their *Intersecting Practices* presentation, both curators cited funding as one of the key reasons the project did not continue. See Appendix 6.

¹²⁸. This was the theme of King's presentation at *Intersecting Practices*. King, Arnaud and Kaplan all expressed a strong concern about the tension between commissioning good art, and the desire of, in their cases English Heritage and National Trust respectively, to attract a 'family' audience. See Appendix 6.

contemporary art' rather than 'crowd pleasing blandness'.¹²⁹

Given that ACE and the NT want 'more opportunities for people to experience and engage with the contemporary arts', there is a desire to change the kinds of experiences people have during their visit. With her 3500 ceramic butterflies installed across the Regency interior of the Royal Pavilion in Brighton in 2010, Clare Twomey aimed to both 'seduce and disturb' the visitor.¹³⁰ She wished to unsettle visitors in a way that encouraged them to 'consider their own values and priorities'.¹³¹ Similarly, the MOU between the Arts Council and National Trust communicates a hope to '[enable] people to see the world in new ways'.¹³² Significantly, the MOU goes on to suggest that experiencing this 'juxtaposition of contemporary art and historic setting' may enable visitors to 'realise potential within themselves that might otherwise have lain dormant'; and further, 'that dialogue [...] stimulates artists and audiences and facilitates new perceptions and innovations'.¹³³ Wendy Read in her MA thesis based on the results of her visitor exit surveys at four Trust New Art exhibitions concluded that the vast majority of visitors felt that interventions were a good thing, but that the rationale for their being there needed to be clear. According to Read's research, visitors are willing to engage with these juxtapositions, but factors affecting how well this can take place include both staff and interpretive

¹²⁹ Nancy Groves, 'Arts Head: Tom Freshwater, National Trust Contemporary Art Programme', <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/mar/20/interview-tom-freshwater-national-trust>> [accessed 17 March 2013]. The need to 'please' the crowd arguably remains important given that this is part of a strategy to substantially increase membership of the Trust. See Michael Hampton, 'Human Nature', *Art Monthly*, December 2012, pp.10-13, p.11.

¹³⁰ David Beevers, 'A Dark Day in Paradise', <http://www.claretwomey.com/a_dark_day_in_paradise_info.html> [accessed 16 June 2014] para 9.

¹³¹ Beevers, 'A Dark Day in Paradise', [accessed 16 June 2014] para 6.

¹³² Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding', [accessed 20 December 2013], p.3.

¹³³ Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding', [accessed 20 December 2013], p.3.

materials.¹³⁴

The effect of interventions is often articulated as 'animating' a site, which implies that the site is otherwise static, frozen and uninteresting, or in fact, devoid of life. Sarah Roberts has described how:

artists become animateurs - they curate and re-frame, they present and perform, draw out new connections and references, allow new readings of old stories and refresh attitudes to familiar objects.¹³⁵

During a public talk in 2014 at the University of Leeds, the artist Harold Offeh also described his work in heritage sites as having the function of animating space.¹³⁶ A weakness, though, in this concept is suggested by Michel de Certeau. In de Certeau's terms, it is visitors, as 'poets of their own affairs', who animate the space; so the artwork only animates because the viewer engages with it, in as much as they might engage with any other object or combination of objects.¹³⁷

For the project Museummaker, their aim was 'to achieve long-term sustainable change in the way the historical is brought to life by the contemporary'.¹³⁸ The animating effect of artworks here is seen not just as a temporary provocation, but a longer term shift in visitors' engagement with the past. For historic houses, it is suggested that at the moment they are transferred to the National Trust, the connection between the site, its owners and the

¹³⁴. Wendy Read, 'What's the Story: Contemporary Art at Historic Houses and the Trust New Art Programme' (unpublished MA dissertation, Bournemouth University, 2011), pp.70-71.

¹³⁵. Sarah Roberts, 'Accreted Histories', in *Unravelling Uppark*, ed. by Caitlin Heffernan, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett (Hove: Unravelled, 2014) pp.12-20, p.15. A central aim for Ceramics in the Expanded Field was to 'explore how historic collections can be *animated* through a dialogue with contemporary practice'. My emphasis. See 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field', <<http://www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com>> [accessed 20 December 2013].

¹³⁶. 'Arts and Heritage', organised by the commissioning agency Pavilion, 22 January 2014.

¹³⁷. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press, 1984), p.34.

¹³⁸. Museummaker was focussed initially on the East Midlands between 2005 and 2007, but broadened out in its second, national, phase from 2009 to 2011 to involve several funding agencies, sixteen museums and the National Trust. Arts Council England, 'Museummaker', (2011) [accessed 20 December 2013] para 1.

creativity that went into creating it, risks being broken:

The relationship between the former owners of National Trust properties and artists and craftspeople resulted in acts of creation that have made the heritage of these properties an almost unique resource in the world. However, that creative bond often risks being broken when properties and sites are acquired by the National Trust or other institutional owners.¹³⁹

This echoes Tony Bennett's observation that the act of becoming a 'historic' property turns a site into a 'facsimile'.¹⁴⁰

In response, the aim of Trust New Art is to exhibit contemporary art in order to reinvigorate this creative connection. This is predicated on the idea that the houses were contemporary once, in that their design and furnishing were carried out by innovative contemporary artists and makers and that, by showing contemporary art, this connection can be remade.

This clearly raises a dialectical tension between a building conserved, restored and populated with collections in order to represent particular time periods, and new work 'inserted' into this context, suggesting new relationships are being made rather than old ones being reinvigorated. Matt Smith has noted that 'the (albeit temporary) insertion of "foreign" artworks into a house saved for posterity raises interesting, and occasionally challenging, questions for artists, staff and visitors alike'.¹⁴¹ While the presence of the art object is temporary and potentially provocative, Milano posited that both the art and the site are changed for the duration of these installations.¹⁴² These, then, represent a spectrum of alternative ideas about what happens; either old connections are reformulated or

¹³⁹. Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding', [accessed 20 December 2013], p.1.

¹⁴⁰. Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), p.129.

¹⁴¹. Matthew Smith, 'The Art of Unravelling the Past', *engage: the international journal of visual art and education*, 31 (2012), 72-78, p.75.

¹⁴². Milano, '(Re)staging Art History: Jeff Koons in Versailles'.

new ones are made.¹⁴³

Such new experiences in heritage sites may be of previously hidden or contested narratives. Several installations have related particularly to the relationship between the heritage sites and slavery. Visitors to Dyrham Park in 2012 were 'encouraged to reflect upon the hidden role of conquest and colonialism lying behind the beauty and opulence of the collections' through the inclusion of *Candle Bathing* by Johannes Phokela, the artists' re-interpretation of *Samson and Delilah* by Peter Paul Rubens.¹⁴⁴ Corrin has suggested that through artists' interventions 'those left out of the museum's historical narrative [are] literally given voice'.¹⁴⁵

Hidden histories relating to gender politics have also received a level of attention from artists who have questioned the choices made at heritage sites regarding which stories are told and which are hidden. Matt Smith is an artist who has worked to reveal previously hidden stories of same sex relationships. In *Unravelling Nymans*, one of Unravelling Arts' series of exhibitions engaging with National Trust Properties, Matt Smith drew attention to the homosexuality of Oliver Messell who had lived at Nymans. In doing so, Smith also ensured that the National Trust added this previously omitted narrative to the general visitor information.¹⁴⁶

Many of these projects have also highlighted the effect they had on the artist. Matt Smith has noted a destabilising effect; 'we became hybrids, neither

¹⁴³. Taking a dialogic approach based on Bakhtin in this thesis, I later suggest what is happening here is 'both, and', rather than 'either, or'.

¹⁴⁴. Colin Wiggins, 'Trust New Art With the Arts Council Collection', ed. by National Trust (London: Arts Council, 2012), p.26.

¹⁴⁵. Lisa Corrin, 'Mining the Museum: An Installation Confronting History', in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. by Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2004), p.252.

¹⁴⁶. *Unravelling Uppark*, ed. by Caitlin Heffernan, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett, (Hove: Unravelling, 2014), p.7.

visitors, occupants, nor members of staff'.¹⁴⁷ The evaluations of Museummaker suggest that, as a result of this project, makers are better able to make use of the opportunities to work with museum collections that may arise. Christine Keogh, director of Chrysalis Arts, suggested that one aim of 'Inspired by Heritage' was to 'contribute to the development of [artists'] professional practice'.¹⁴⁸ Thus, in addition to the idea of artists as outsiders who are brought in to animate sites and reveal histories, there is also a need to shape their professional practice in such a way as to make these partnerships productive. There is, perhaps, nothing wrong with this per se but the control these institutions exert over the relationship does suggest that the ideological frameworks of museums are less at risk than is sometimes portrayed and that the artist's role remains less than clear cut.

A number of tentative conclusions can be drawn from this survey of recent thinking about artists, museums and heritage sites. All projects seek to expand the audience for contemporary art by engaging with the audiences already on the sites in which they have taken place, and they also intend to develop new audiences through this intersection of practices. Commissions East, for example, concluded that their projects added greatly to the sites where they were involved through both the 'change' that took place in visitors' perceptions and the fact that the history of the sites was 'enriched'.¹⁴⁹

These issues all suggest that the CAP at the Brontë Parsonage is a case study worthy of analysis within these frameworks of organisational aims, artists' ideas and interests, and visitor experience. This review, however, also demonstrates some issues remain unclear. Why is it, for example, that Clare

^{147.} *Unravelling the Manor House*, ed. by Caitlin Heffernan, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett, (Hove: Unravelling, 2010), p.11.

^{148.} *Inspired By Heritage*, ed. by Art Connections, p.1.

^{149.} Commissions East, 'Contemporary Art in Historic Places: Discussion Summary', (2005) <<http://www.commissionseast.org.uk/html/casestudies/comtemporaryartinhistoricplaces/contemporaryartdiscussion.htm>> [accessed 7 December 2013], p.10.

Twomey's butterflies are deemed to be more capable of asking visitors to explore their own value systems than a visit to the opulent plaything of the aristocracy, the Royal Pavilion? If this was deemed a necessary amendment to the visitor experience, why is it that the curators and interpretation strategy of the museum do not do this?

Artists and Museums

The projects discussed above are one of the latest iterations of a long, symbiotic relationship between artists and museums. This relationship has been traced extremely well in a number of anthologies, exhibitions and monographs.¹⁵⁰ While museums are not the focus of this thesis, the literature available on artists' engagement with museums has been useful as a framework for crystallising key issues which are equally relevant in the heritage context of the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

Put simply, the relationship between artists and museums and galleries is complex and varied. A starting point is necessary, and the curators Kynaston McShine and James Putnam have written key works describing the range of connections artists have with museums.¹⁵¹ Both McShine and Putnam seek to '[recognise] the variety of motives and interests that artists have brought to the subject'.¹⁵² In doing so, each has grouped the artists' work into categories. Putnam suggests that, 'to present this phenomenon in a coherent form, it has been necessary to devise a classification system, a process which ironically alludes to

^{150.} See, in particular, James Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001); Kynaston McShine, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999); Robins, *Curious Lessons*. Also, Jane Rendell has explored the connections between art and architecture, and Colin Renfrew has explored connections between art and archaeology. See Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: I B Taurus, 2006) and Colin Renfrew, *Figuring it Out: The Parallel Visions of Artists and Archaeologists* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003).

^{151.} McShine, *The Museum as Muse*; Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*.

^{152.} McShine, *The Museum as Muse*, p.13.

the museum's own need for ordering systems'.¹⁵³ These categories include artists such as Daniel Buren and Fred Wilson, who have explored museums as places of political and cultural ideology that are ripe for disturbance, and Thomas Struth and Andrea Fraser, who have reflected on the practices of looking and visiting.

Exploring this relationship more recently, Claire Robins has suggested that the 1970s institutional critique of artists such as Marcel Broodthaers, Hans Haacke and Michael Asher, owes a debt to early twentieth-century Surrealism and Dada, but, more recently as Robins argues, artists have moved from provocative outsider to welcome guest.¹⁵⁴ Whether welcome or not, what is it exactly that the artist is able to bring into the institution?

Daniel Buren has suggested that 'work set [inside the museum] is sheltered from the weather and all sorts of dangers, and most of all protected from any kind of questioning'.¹⁵⁵ There are a number of well-known projects that demonstrate artists' ability to question the ideology of this sheltering process. Fred Wilson is one artist who has become a 'cause celebre'.¹⁵⁶ In 1991, he was invited by the curator Lisa Corrin to explore the collections of Maryland Historical Society and create an exhibition from his personal response to their archives.

The result, *Mining the Museum*, opened in April 1992, with Wilson

¹⁵³. Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*, p.7.

¹⁵⁴. Robins, *Curious Lessons*. For a review see Nick Cass, 'Claire Robins, Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013', *Museum and Society*, 12 (2014), 116-131. Glen Brown notes that the word intervention is a misnomer. See Glen R. Brown, 'Intervention, Interaction and the Will to Preserve', (2012) <<http://www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com/essays/alun-graves-gb>> [accessed 28 March 2013].

¹⁵⁵. Daniel Buren, 'Function of the Museum', in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists Writings*, ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2009) pp.102-106, p.105.

¹⁵⁶. Yellis, 'Fred Wilson, PTSD, and Me', p.334.

responsible for the entire design and installation.¹⁵⁷ Wilson's technique was deceptively simple. He selected a range of objects from the archives of the museum and displayed these using the relatively conventional museological practices of display cases and labels. It is in this subtlety that the greatest power of this exhibition may lie, and is best represented by the display case labelled 'Metalwork 1793 - 1880'.¹⁵⁸

In this vitrine, Wilson brought together a collection of silverware, including drinking vessels and pitchers, as examples of 'Baltimore repousse style, c. 1830-1880'. An untold number of museums have similar displays of fine and decorative arts. The central object in the case, however, was identified as 'Iron Slave Shackles, c. 1793-1872'. Wilson says:

I placed them together, because normally you have one museum for beautiful things and one museum for horrific things. Actually, they had a lot to do with one another; the production of the one was made possible by the subjugation enforced by the other.¹⁵⁹

Through this simple, yet radical, juxtaposition, Wilson reveals and condemns the very foundation of the museum. 'Violat[ing]' the representational structures upon which it relies,¹⁶⁰ showed how 'the museum classification system inadvertently

^{157.} The conceptual ambiguity regarding the status of these exhibitions is ironically encapsulated in the fact that under MHRA formatting guidelines exhibition titles are given in single quote marks; whereas works of art are given in italics. I have selected to follow Wilson's view that *Mining the Museum* was a work of art, and thus have formatted its title in italics. See Fred Wilson and Ivan Karp, 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums', in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996) pp.251-267, p.254.

^{158.} Fred Wilson and Howard Halle, 'Mining the Museum', *Grand Street*, 44 (1993), 151-172.

^{159.} Wilson and Karp, 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums', p.256.

^{160.} Yellis, 'Fred Wilson, PTSD, and Me', p.341.

represses the layered and complex history behind objects'.¹⁶¹ The intellectual fallout from this exhibition remains a central reference point for debate about artists and interventions today. Mieke Bal asks: 'who can continue to ignore the haunting presence of the history of slavery [...], after Fred Wilson's installation?'.¹⁶² Dipti Desai, however, notes the criticisms Wilson faced for acting as an ethnographic outsider who did not engage fully with the community he was purportedly representing.¹⁶³

Despite a long history of artists confronting museums, there remains disagreement about the potential of artists' interventions to significantly affect the deeper structure of the museum as a bastion of problematic ideology. In his reflection on the practices of Wilson and others, for example, Glenn Brown has argued that the word 'intervention' is no longer valid, as the artist is usually an invited and welcome guest, and that 'although this self-critique proved productive for revealing biases in practices of collecting and display, it stopped well short of placing the museum itself at stake'.¹⁶⁴ Brown seems to be suggesting that Wilson's intellectual project has been unsuccessful, but the evidence of the wider adoption of artists within museums as a corrective suggests otherwise. When asked whether artists were a 'virus' infecting museums, Mark Dion countered that they were more akin to an antibiotic; he argued that, while some

¹⁶¹. Corrin, 'Mining the Museum', p.252. For other commentary and reflections on Wilson's installation, see Susan Pearce, 'Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?', *Anthropologica*, 41 (1999), 25-33, Marion Endt, 'Beyond Institutional Critique: Mark Dion's Surrealist Wunderkammer at the Manchester Museum', *Museum and Society*, 5 (2007) <<https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumstudies/documents/volumes/endt.pdf>> [accessed 19 September 2015], Marjorie Schwarzer, Paula Marincola and Benjamin Filene, 'Mining the Museum Revisited: A Conversation With Fred Wilson, Paula Marincola, and Marjorie Schwarzer', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321; Yellis, 'Fred Wilson, PTSD, and Me'.

¹⁶². Mieke Bal, 'S-Words', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 11 (2012), 145-148, p.146.

¹⁶³. Desai, 'The Ethnographic Move in Contemporary Art: What Does it Mean for Art Education', p.311.

¹⁶⁴. Brown, 'Intervention, Interaction', (2012) [accessed 28 March 2013], p.2.

artists believe that museums are irreparable, there are:

artists whose engagement with museums is really to make them better; they believe in the mission of the museum, they believe that a museum is a place to gain knowledge through things and they will strive to make more responsible museums.¹⁶⁵

James Clifford has suggested that artists are able to substantially reframe the very nature of the site, 'I see [Susan Hiller's] presence in the Freud Museum as helping transform a shrine into a "contact zone"'.¹⁶⁶ In her analysis of the contemporary arts programme at the Science Museum in London since 2006, Bergit Arends suggests that the museum might be changing, because 'through the arts we hope to disrupt engrained perceptions *for the benefit of the Museum*, to change its course and to reveal new knowledge in this process'.¹⁶⁷ Writing about her more recent project 'Give and Take', Lisa Corrin echoes a similar concern with provocation, this time, for the visitor:

Our goal was to challenge our visitors, to provoke them to question rather than confirm assumptions, to invite them to see the collection as something that's constantly in intellectual, not just physical, rotation. We were also trying to communicate the idea that there should be room for subtlety, double take, and humor.¹⁶⁸

In this context of provoking visitors and attempting to change the very nature of the institution, Rachleff has asked the key question: 'who possesses historical authority?'.¹⁶⁹ She notes that these kinds of projects are never taken seriously as historiography, they are only ever conceived of within a contemporary art

^{165.} See Anna Dezeuze et al., 'Mark Dion in conversation with Anna Dezeuze, Julia Kelly and David Lomas', 4 (2006), <<http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal4/index.htm>> [accessed 12 January 2015].

^{166.} Alex Coles, 'An Ethnographer in the Field: James Clifford Interview', in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog, 2000) pp.52-71, p.70.

^{167.} My emphasis. Bergit Arends, 'Contemporary arts in the Natural History Museum London: symbiosis and disruption', 8(2) (2009), <<http://jcom.sissa.it/archive/08/02/>> [accessed 14 January 2015], p.2.

^{168.} Janet Kaplan et al., 'Give and Take Conversations', *Art Journal*, 61 (2002), 68-91, p.70.

^{169.} Melissa Rachleff, 'Peering Behind the Curtain: Artists and Questioning Historical Authority', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321, p.209.

framework.¹⁷⁰ Rachleff implicitly seems to raise another important question; is it possible for contemporary art to be conceived of 'as' heritage, rather than being 'inspired by' heritage?

This desire to challenge visitors reveals that the viewing experience of artworks alongside museum objects is complex and distinctly problematic. At a basic level, the site itself might provide so rich an experience that the artwork is not able to compete for the attention of the visitor.¹⁷¹ It may be that, as Andrew Brighton suggests, different kinds of attention need to be deployed.¹⁷² If the artwork is able to compete and draw attention to itself in a rich context, the resulting experience for the visitor might still be problematic. While Corrin and Arendt have argued that both visitors and institutions need to be challenged, Susan Crane has suggested that problems occur when this happens, 'where individual expectations and institutional, academic intentions interact, [...] the result is far from a one-way street'.¹⁷³ In fact:

whether expectations are thwarted deliberately (as may be the case when museums attempt to educate the public to see things "differently" than has been common practice) or not, visitors to museums, like members of any public or collective, will express their disappointment or disapproval as readily as if they were in fact responsible for the meanings produced by the exhibit. Personal feelings and memories, whether accurate or appropriate or not, indeed are always a factor in the contexts in which historical consciousness is made, because they shape how an experience is remembered.

Furthermore, Crane argues:

at stake, then, in the current politically charged arena of museums and memory is distortion: distortion of "the past," distortion of the

¹⁷⁰. Rachleff, 'Peering Behind the Curtain', p.208.

¹⁷¹. See, for example, Dale McFarland's review of the exhibition curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist at the Sir John Soane's Museum. McFarland, 'Retrace Your Steps: Remember Tomorrow', (2000) <<http://www.frieze.com/article/retrace-your-steps-remember-tomorrow>> [accessed 4 March 2014].

¹⁷². Andrew Brighton, 'Is Architecture or Art the Enemy?', in *Space Invaders: Issues of Presentation, Context and Meaning in Contemporary Art*, ed. by Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Easter (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 1997) pp.43-53.

¹⁷³. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion', p.46.

museum experience, memory distortions, and the negative charge associated with "distortion" in cultural discourse on memory and identity.¹⁷⁴

This has serious implications for this research, as it suggests the space which may be mapped out between visitor expectation, institutional strategies and the reality of a visit to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, is a particularly complex political arena in which artists' interventions may be seen as a challenge to ways in which the Parsonage presents the history of the Brontës. Rachleff's question regarding the possession of 'authority' in relation to the construction of historical narrative also raises a question about museums' responsibility as the MA Code of Ethics proposes that museums 'invite users to question assumptions'.¹⁷⁵

The work museums do to present history is put at stake by the use of artists' interventions, and these projects provide problematic experiences for visitors. However, the question as to whether contemporary art could 'be' heritage is intriguing. Notable in the literature though, is an absence of engagement with sites other than museums and galleries. Putnam's categories do not include a category of heritage intervention. The level of engagement artists have had with heritage sites in recent years, of which the CAP is one example, suggests that a shift of focus towards an analysis of these projects is both a natural and necessary step.

Heritage

The issue at the heart of this thesis is the conjunction of contemporary art with heritage, through what is commonly called an intervention. Having explored the nature of interventions, it is also important to clarify what is meant

¹⁷⁴. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion', p.57.

¹⁷⁵. Museums Association, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, (London: Museums Association, 2008), p.20.

by heritage, how it is conceptualised and how these conceptualisations relate to both the operational aspects of a heritage site and also to the kinds of experiences visitors might have. There is a range of literature which addresses the ideology of heritage, its relationship to tourism, and its connection to visuality and representational practices. Addressing the literature is significant in this study because at the heart of this investigation, explored through the case study programme of interventions at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, is a question about the ways in which contemporary art can be seen to form part of a heritage experience.

At its most simple, heritage can be seen as that which is passed down to us, but there are a number of definitions which reveal its complexity. Defined by the 1972 World Heritage Convention, in order for it to be recognised and thus adequately protected, 'cultural heritage' consists of monuments (including architectural works and paintings), groups of buildings and sites.¹⁷⁶ In contrast to this seemingly straightforward description of buildings and places, heritage has also been described as 'broad and slippery', including things that are 'solid', 'ethereal', 'large to small, grandiose to humble, "natural" to constructed'.¹⁷⁷ It involves an 'incremental expansion' of things that need to be protected.¹⁷⁸ Stuart Hall:

take[s] it to refer to the whole complex of organisations, institutions and practices devoted to the preservation and presentation of culture and the arts - art galleries, specialist collections, public and private, museums of all kinds (general survey or themed, historical or scientific, national or local) and

¹⁷⁶. UNESCO, 'Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage', (1972), <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>> [accessed 30 June 2014], p.2. For a comprehensive historical survey of the international policy development see Susie West and Jacqueline Ansell, 'A History of Heritage', in *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.7-46.

¹⁷⁷. Harrison, *Heritage*, p.5.

¹⁷⁸. Graham Fairclough, 'New Heritage: An Introductory Essay - People, Landscape and Change', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) pp.297-312, p.297.

sites of special historical interest.¹⁷⁹

Thus heritage thus can be thought of as 'everything that people want to save' and the implications are that 'it is all pervasive and includes everybody'.¹⁸⁰

In tandem with its growth, there has been a significant critique of what Robert Hewison has characterised as the 'heritage industry'.¹⁸¹ Most studies position heritage sites as useful in cultural and economic terms; Kevin Walsh, for example, suggested that 'heritagisation of space can help maintain an identity of place'.¹⁸² However, many studies engage with the deeper ideological complexity of the way in which heritage is formed through both authorising institutions and personal meaning making processes.¹⁸³ This echoes Leary and Sholes' distinction between 'authenticity' as it relates to visitor satisfaction, and as it relates to 'the degree of congruity between heritage presentations and current knowledge about the past; authenticity in this sense is contingent on expert judgements'.¹⁸⁴

Authenticity as it relates to heritage is a central challenge. Walsh argues that 'heritage would appear to be that which only seems to be "something", an image, an historical surface'.¹⁸⁵ This sense of a shallow surface is found also in

¹⁷⁹. Hall, 'Whose Heritage'.

¹⁸⁰. Howard, *Heritage*, p.1.

¹⁸¹. Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen Publishing Ltd., 1987); Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*; G. J. Ashworth and J. E. Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: John Wiley, 1995), Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country* (London: Verso, 1985); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

¹⁸². Rodney Harrison also notes that Raphael Samuel's book *Theatres of Memory* argued against Hewison, suggesting that heritage had a transformative potential. See Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139; Harrison, *Heritage*, p.100.

¹⁸³. Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006); Nick Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

¹⁸⁴. Thomas E. Leary and Elizabeth C. Sholes, 'Authenticity of Place and Voice: Examples of Industrial Heritage Preservation and Interpretation in the U.S. And Europe', *Public Historian*, 22 (2000), 49-66, pp.50-51. Peter Howard also explores authenticity as it relates to heritage values. He adapts Tunbridge and Ashworth's work to produce nine variations of authenticity which appear in the built heritage environment. See Howard, *Heritage*, p.227.

¹⁸⁵. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.80.

Bennett, who suggests that historic sites are a 'facsimile' of their previous existence.¹⁸⁶ This leads to 'the construction of unreal places',¹⁸⁷ where visitors may have trouble separating what is real from what is not.¹⁸⁸ Historical facts can be excluded from this facsimile if they might not be palatable to the contemporary visitor.¹⁸⁹ Heritage places are thus said to reinforce conservative social norms through the presentation of an idealised past which bears little, if any, resemblance to historical accuracy and visitors are in fact, looking at 'the comingling of fact with fiction'.¹⁹⁰

Perceived as illusory or not, heritage places are implicated in the formation of national and political identity.¹⁹¹ Through this process of inclusion or omission, certain histories are reinforced, others are forgotten, and less palatable histories are sanitised; Stuart Hall drew on Raymond Williams' concept of the 'selective tradition', to suggest this form of 'social memory [...] highlights and foregrounds [...]. Equally it foreshortens, silences, disavows, forgets and elides'.¹⁹² This has been called the 'dominant ideology thesis'.¹⁹³ Merriman traced the origin of the idea of 'dominant ideology' in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels'

¹⁸⁶ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.129. Further discussion of the problems of 'faking and pastiche' can be found in Emma Barker, 'Heritage and the Country House', in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, ed. by Emma Barker (London: Yale University Press, 1999) pp.200-228, p.223; issues around nostalgia and authenticity can be found in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia', in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, ed. by Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) pp.1-17.

¹⁸⁷ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.103.

¹⁸⁸ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.115.

¹⁸⁹ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139. More recent critique suggests that this exclusion has been of diverse cultural identity. See Jorge Otero-Pailos, Jason Gaiger and Susie West, 'Heritage Values', in *A History of Heritage*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.47-87, p.47.

¹⁹⁰ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.79. See also David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London: Viking, 1996), p.128.

¹⁹¹ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.11; J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', in *Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Laurajane Smith (London: Routledge, 1996) pp.206-248, p.231; Fiona McLean, 'Museums and the Construction of National Identity: A Review', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 3 (1998), 244-252.

¹⁹² Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.221.

¹⁹³ For examples of authors who discuss the dominant ideology thesis, see Tunbridge and Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', p.221; Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, pp.14-15.

The German Ideology, and its development through the Frankfurt School's work on ways in which cultural production maintains the 'status quo'.¹⁹⁴ Merriman suggests that this, along with Louis Althusser's concept of Ideological State Apparatuses, helps us to understand the ways in which museums and heritage sites can be seen as part of a system of cultural production 'which ensure the maintenance of the present social system'.¹⁹⁵ Tunbridge and Ashworth suggest that:

At its most extreme [...] heritage interpretations [are] endowed with messages which are deliberately framed by an existing or aspirant power elite to legitimise the existing dominant regime, or alternatively are developed by an opposition group with the objective of overthrowing a competitor.¹⁹⁶

This ideology thesis is disputed.¹⁹⁷ Nick Merriman argues that it is simply 'theoretically inadequate' to assume that all visitors engage with heritage sites for the same reasons and receive the same messages when there. Instead, people are thinking beings, engaging consciously with the world around them,¹⁹⁸ according to Danielle Rice, 'the notion of the visitor as "dupe" of the institutional "script" implied in much critical literature simply does not hold water'.¹⁹⁹ While Walsh argues that the constructed nature of heritage spaces simply prevents a proper understanding of place, Smith suggests this:

criticism cannot be sustained [...] rather, visitors critically and actively utilise these places as cultural and social tools in remembering and memory making.²⁰⁰

Furthermore, Smith suggests that heritage needs to be seen as a cultural

^{194.} Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.14. See also Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* 2nd edn (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974).

^{195.} Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, pp.14-15.

^{196.} Tunbridge and Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', p.221.

^{197.} Peter Howard summarises a range of arguments. See Chapter Three, Howard, *Heritage*, p.32.

^{198.} Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.18.

^{199.} Danielle Rice, 'Museums: Theory, Practice, and Illusion', in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. by Andrew McClellan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) pp.77-94, p.87.

^{200.} Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.137; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.196.

process in which remembering is a way of enabling people to navigate the present.²⁰¹ Thus, rather than backward looking, heritage is about the present and future.²⁰² David Lowenthal reminds us that heritage and history are just two different ways of looking; historians aim to understand what happened in the past, whereas managers of heritage are interested in how the past can be productively used in the present.²⁰³ In post-modernity, the past is seen as something which is over and finished, our inherent connection to the past was broken by the forces of modernity.²⁰⁴ Now, the past can be packaged neatly and represented in order to be consumed as a commodity which no longer has any bearing on the present other than as a visitor experience.²⁰⁵

Many writers who were deeply critical of the 'heritage industry', did however, suggest ways forward. Merriman has argued that 'the death of the past [...has] been overemphasised'.²⁰⁶ In 1992, Kevin Walsh suggested that what is actually needed is a 'development of intersubjective discourse between the providers and the consumers of such services'.²⁰⁷ Tony Bennett had suggested that this relationship ought to be embedded in policy, in order to take account of 'meanings which are transacted'.²⁰⁸

More recently, it has been argued that heritage should be seen as a discursive, dialogic process, which is less driven by experts and more about a relationship between those involved in the process.²⁰⁹ This has been characterised

^{201.} Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.66.

^{202.} Howard, *Heritage*, p.19; Harrison, *Heritage*, p.4. See also chapter six from Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade* for an analysis of how heritage differs from history.

^{203.} David Lowenthal, 'History as Heritage: The Past Made Present', (2012) <<http://criticalheritagestudies.org/content/publications/history-heritage-past-made-present>> [accessed 4 May 2015].

^{204.} Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.65.

^{205.} Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.68; Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.8.

^{206.} Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.18.

^{207.} Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.3.

^{208.} Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.133.

^{209.} Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.221; Harrison, *Heritage*, p.204.

as 'new heritage':

These new approaches [...] try to create greater democratic involvement in the heritage process, recognising this can lead experts to revise their views on what (and why) society values something.²¹⁰

In contrast to her concept of Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD) in which a 'set of values and meanings' is maintained through the hegemonic practice of 'experts',²¹¹ Laurajane Smith argued a more horizontal process also requires that the division between tangible and intangible heritage in UNESCO's policy is 'destabilised'. Smith argued that given heritage is a process rather than a thing, all heritage is intangible.²¹²

This new approach, also described as 'critical heritage', has been substantially defined by Rodney Harrison:

I argue that the goal of a critical field of interdisciplinary heritage studies is not to assume that such processes are 'natural' or inherently morally 'correct', but to interrogate the 'work' of heritage (cf Appadurai 1996, see Byrne 2008), which refers to its social, economic and political functions. To put it in Foucauldian terms, this requires an exploration of the nexus of interlinked knowledge-power effects, forms of authority, techniques and strategies by which individuals and groups are rendered governable which heritage makes possible at various scales, from the individual and the local to the national and global (see also Smith 2006). Importantly, official forms of heritage must be viewed as intricate and shifting assemblages (or agencements) composed of a range of people, ideas, institutions and apparatuses (dispositifs), all of which facilitate complex processes of social governance and a recursive making and remaking of our material and cultural worlds.²¹³

Despite the emergence of a new 'critical' heritage, and the general agreement that heritage is changing through the recognition of broader communities, research

²¹⁰. Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.297.

²¹¹. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.17.

²¹². Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, pp.53-56.

²¹³. Rodney Harrison, 'Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget: Late Modern Heritage Practices, Sustainability and the 'Crisis' of Accumulation of the Past', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19 (2013), 579-595, p.581.

into heritage sites and processes is still difficult.²¹⁴ Mary-Catherine Garden suggested heritage sites remain problematic because, while they are such an easily recognised and accepted part of our cultural landscape, this familiarity masks their significant complexity, and answers to basic questions are still elusive.²¹⁵ She suggested, 'not only do we lack the means to investigate, we also lack the words to discuss these spaces'.²¹⁶ Smith suggested that there has been a 'startling lack of attempts to understand why people visit country houses and heritage places more generally and what the visit actually means to them'.²¹⁷ Perhaps more germane to this study of contemporary art in the Brontë Parsonage Museum, however, is Watson and Waterton's contention that heritage scholars have 'focus[ed] on representations and representational practices rather than the dynamics that might be investigated in the spaces between representation and response' and that analysis of the 'visual culture upon which [heritage] seems largely to depend' is needed, to which their volume is offered as a substantial contribution.²¹⁸

The problem of heritage and research methodologies is echoed throughout the recent volume *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*.²¹⁹ Paola Filippucci, for example, reflecting on her own use of participant observation, argues that heritage research poses significant methodological problems because

²¹⁴. Carman and Sorensen, 'Heritage Studies: An Outline'.

²¹⁵. Mary-Catherine E. Garden, 'The Heritagescape: Looking at Heritage Sites', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.270-291.

²¹⁶. Garden, 'Heritagescape', p.271.

²¹⁷. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.116. Cameron and Gatewood also note this lack of evidence regarding the motivation of visitors. See Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past: What People Want From Visits to Historical Sites', *Public Historian*, 22 (2000), 107-127, p.125.

²¹⁸. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson, 'Introduction: A Visual Heritage', in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.1-16, pp.2-3.

²¹⁹. *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

of its interdisciplinary nature; she concludes mixed methods are best.²²⁰

In summary, it is thus argued that heritage sites, such as the Parsonage, are constructed through a set of practices which maintain what might be dominant cultural values, and 'common to these forms of heritage presentation [...] is the construction of unreal places' which 'do not represent universal truths'.²²¹ Visitors, it is suggested, have difficulty in separating what is real from what is not,²²² but, despite being exposed to a powerfully constructed ideological discourse, are able to 'produce' their own meanings in relation to hegemonic narratives.²²³ However, while remarkably familiar, heritage sites and the visual culture of their presentation, remain paradoxically under theorised.

Interpretation

Interpretation is a key aspect of this study as it relates to the processes by which a viewer engages with sites, objects and artworks and also to the physical materials a heritage site like the Parsonage might provide. Levinson, for example, suggests that 'interpreting [is] an activity which seeks the meaning, significance, purpose or role of that on which it is directed, and which issues in an interpretation stating or formulating some such meaning [or] significance'.²²⁴ Thus, with the aim of moving toward a greater understanding, this thesis is an interpretation, given that 'understanding *is* interpretation'.²²⁵ Referring to the belief that meaning inheres within social action and can studied by an

²²⁰. Paola Filipucci, 'Heritage and Methodology: A View From Social Anthropology', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.319-325.

²²¹. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.103; Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.18.

²²². Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.115.

²²³. Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.18.

²²⁴. Jerrold Levinson, *Contemplating Art: Essays in Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), p.275.

²²⁵. Thomas A. Schwandt, 'Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edn, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000) pp.189-213, p.194. Emphasis in original.

interpreter, 'interpretive philosophies' represent a tradition of debate regarding the connections and distinctions between the natural and the social sciences. Thomas Schwandt notes that 'at the heart of the dispute was the claim that the human sciences were fundamentally different in nature and purpose from the natural sciences'.²²⁶ These debates are hinged on different understandings of the relationship between that which is being interpreted, the role of the interpreter, and the location of meaning.²²⁷ Analogous ideas form a central debate in relation to concepts of art.²²⁸ Here I set out, necessarily briefly, ways in which aspects of 'interpretation' contextualise and underpin my approach and inform my analysis.

The 'problem of hermeneutics', as it has been described by Gadamer, is strongly connected to the past and thus relevant to a consideration of meaning making in museums.²²⁹ He argued that it is only through an understanding of past events that we come to understand the present.²³⁰ More critically, recalling the past is not enough, 'to expand our horizon, we must not only identify the way in which things from the past are different; we also have to ask how they can be combined with or otherwise affect our current understanding'.²³¹

This represents a significant shift in the philosophy of hermeneutics in the twentieth century. The philosophical position occupied by Wilhelm Dilthey, for example, required the viewer to break their connection to their present situation

^{226.} Schwandt, 'Three Epistemological Stances', p.191. Gadamer sets this out at the very beginning of *Truth and Method*, 'the phenomenon of understanding and of the correct interpretation of what has been understood is not a problem specific to the methodology of the human sciences alone'. Hans George Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, revised 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), p.xx.

^{227.} Schwandt, 'Three Epistemological Stances', p.194.

^{228.} See, for example, Robert Stecker, 'Interpretation', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd edn, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) pp.321-334.

^{229.} Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.xx.

^{230.} Catherine H. Zuckert, 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. by J. Robert Dostal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.201-224, p.205.

^{231.} Zuckert, 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', p.206.

in order to understand the past, based on, 'the general idea that it is possible for the interpreter to transcend or break out of her or his historical circumstances in order to reproduce the meaning or intention of the actor'.²³² Gadamer points out the problem with Dilthey's thinking:

it is clear that Dilthey did not regard the fact that finite, historical man is tied to a particular time and place as any fundamental impairment of the possibility of knowledge in the human sciences. Historical consciousness was supposed to rise above its own relativity in a way that made objectivity in the human sciences possible. We may ask how this claim can be justified without implying a concept of absolute, philosophical knowledge beyond all historical consciousness.²³³

In contrast, within Gadamer's hermeneutics 'the knower's present situation is always constitutively involved in *any* process of understanding'.²³⁴ Gadamer points out that it is hermeneutics which brings together the original purpose of an object and the purpose enacted by displaying it in a museum.²³⁵ Given that objects can never 'die' if they remain actively part of meaning making, this argument offers a significant antidote to the view expressed by Adorno that 'museum and mausoleum are connected by more than phonetic association'.²³⁶

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill has drawn on Gadamer and the hermeneutic circle to articulate the relationship between objects and visitors and the development of understanding. She describes the hermeneutic circle as a:

circular action [in which] understanding develops through the continuous dialogic movement between the whole and the parts of a work, where meaning is constantly modified as further relationships are encountered. The encounter between an individual subject and an object is influenced by prior experience

²³². Schwandt, 'Three Epistemological Stances', p.192; Beth Lord, 'From the Document to the Monument: Museums and the Philosophy of History', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.355-366, p.357.

²³³. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.236.

²³⁴. Lord, 'From the Document to the Monument: Museums and the Philosophy of History', p.357; emphasis in original. Here, Lord is drawing on Martin Heidegger.

²³⁵. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.xxviii.

²³⁶. Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), p.175

and knowledge. Meaning is to be found neither wholly in the object nor wholly in the viewer. Meaning is dialogic - a dialogue between viewer and object.²³⁷

Here, the 'movement' is also 'between the present and the past, simultaneously, with continual checking and rechecking, revision of ideas, the trying out of new ones and the rejection of those that don't work'.²³⁸ In this way, Hooper-Greenhill argues that, in the museum context, hermeneutics is seen as a key way in which visitors' engagement with museum objects can be explored.²³⁹

Similarly drawing on hermeneutics, Beth Lord argues that it is the fact that understanding is always from the viewer's present position that has been of central importance in the development of multi-modal ways of interpreting objects in museums.²⁴⁰ In encountering objects from the past, it is the engagement with current understanding that leads to new understanding and crucially, 'in the process, our understanding of ourselves and the world changes as we incrementally integrate current experiences with past memories'.²⁴¹ Lord argues that museums must use new approaches in order to move away from the didacticism of the past, where visitors are enabled to explore objects and their relationship to history, rather than simply attempt to place them within a remembered narrative. Thus, this research can be seen to ask, is the CAP at the Parsonage a new approach in this shifting territory of museological practice?

Individual objects 'have no essential truth'.²⁴² Instead, meaning is created in

²³⁷. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.117.

²³⁸. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.117.

²³⁹. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.116.

²⁴⁰. Lord, 'From the Document to the Monument: Museums and the Philosophy of History', p.357.

²⁴¹. Zuckert, 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', p.206.

²⁴². Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.162. See also Elaine Heumann Gurian, 'What is the Object of This Exercise: A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums', in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. by Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2004) pp.269-283, p.270.

museums in a number of ways which are 'fluid, changeable, relational and contextual'.²⁴³ A number of writers reflect two aspects of this process, suggesting that museums create meaning, and visitors create their own meanings in relation to the museum displays they experience:

wherever one turns in discussing the display of artefacts in a museum there is a problem of epistemology, of how artefacts are perceived and represented by the museum curator, and of how they are perceived and understood by the museum visitor.²⁴⁴

Susan Pearce, for example, has focussed on the way in which curators make meaning through processes such as classification, research and display.²⁴⁵ Individual objects can be powerful carriers of meaning arising from the epistemological frameworks within which they are placed.²⁴⁶ Putting objects together affects their status, creating a vastly more complex set of possible meanings.²⁴⁷ Howard has suggested a problem occurs because ordinary objects can be aestheticised and thus 'elevated; however, by displaying and aestheticising religious objects, these are in effect 'demoted'.²⁴⁸ Semiotics, as a substantial analytic approach to this process of signification, can be seen to suggest a tenuousness between the meanings that museums generate through

²⁴³. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.162.

²⁴⁴. Charles Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989) pp.7-21, p.19. See also Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.124.

²⁴⁵. *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), pp.118-119.

²⁴⁶. Pearce also suggests that objects themselves are active, rather than passive, within the meaning making process. See Susan Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University, 1992), p.211.

²⁴⁷. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.3.

²⁴⁸. Howard, *Heritage*, p.83. See also Michael Baxandall, 'Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.33-41; Peter Vergo, 'The Reticent Object', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989) pp.41-59, p.46.

their curatorial processes and the meanings visitors 'receive'.²⁴⁹ Further:

Exhibitions are produced to communicate meaningful visual and textual statements, but there is no guarantee that the intended meanings will be achieved. Visitors to museum exhibitions respond in diverse ways. They may or may not perceive the intended meanings, and, perceiving them, they may or may not agree with them, find them interesting, or pay attention to them.²⁵⁰

Drawing on the semiotics of George Mounin, Hooper-Greenhill suggests unintended meanings arise based on the prior interests of visitors as a result of issues that might be 'pertinent' to their personal interests, but of no relevance to the exhibition.²⁵¹ In fact, it has been argued it is difficult to identify what it is that people learn from exhibitions.²⁵²

Thus objects, as 'sites at which discursive formation intersects with material properties', can be seen to possess the ability to carry multiple meanings across multiple sets of knowledges.²⁵³ Pascal Gielen suggests that not enough attention is paid to how something is presented, and the way the past is 'staged' needs to be analysed in conjunction with visitor perceptions.²⁵⁴ Falk and Dierking agree that much more knowledge of the intersections between display practices and visitor engagement is needed. Their suggestion is to start 'with the fundamentals of how people learn'.²⁵⁵

Interpretation, along with 'management' and 'conservation', is one of three

^{249.} Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 'A New Communication Model for Museums', in *Museum Languages, Objects and Texts*, ed. by Gaynor Kavanagh (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991) pp.49-61; Susan Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning: Or Narrating the Past', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) pp.19-29.

^{250.} Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.4.

^{251.} Hooper-Greenhill, 'A New Communication Model for Museums', p.58.

^{252.} John Falk and Lynn Dierking, *Learning From Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (Plymouth: Altamira press, 2000), p.13.

^{253.} Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.103.

^{254.} Pascal Gielen, 'Museumchronotopics: On the Representation of the Past in Museums', *Museum and Society*, 2 (2004) <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumstudies/documents/volumes/gielen.pdf>> [accessed 23 April 2012].

^{255.} Falk and Dierking, *Learning From Museums*, p.13.

central heritage practices.²⁵⁶ ICOMOS, in their Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites define it as:

The full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site. These can include print and electronic publications, public lectures, on-site and directly related off-site installations, educational programmes, community activities, and ongoing research, training, and evaluation of the interpretation process itself.²⁵⁷

The breadth of activity between the visitor and the heritage is reflected in other definitions. The Association of Heritage Interpretation for example suggest Freeman Tilden's definition is still central:

'An educational activity which aims to reveal meaning and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information'. After 50 years, this is still one of the clearest insights.²⁵⁸

These definitions demonstrate Smith's AHD, heritage as an ideologically driven hegemonic discourse, in that they are internationally agreed and provide an authorising framework within which a range of appropriate activity can take place.²⁵⁹ In contrast, Russell Staiff has argued that it is a 'false dichotomy' to define heritage interpretation as distinct from other forms of meaning making.²⁶⁰ Staiff has written a substantial critique of Tilden's position, arguing that he is representative of an untenable realist position, in that his well known 'six principles' are based on his belief that meaning exists beyond the viewer, and is

²⁵⁶. Howard, *Heritage*, p.244.

²⁵⁷. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', <http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/interpretation_e.pdf> [accessed 10 June 2013].

²⁵⁸. Association for Heritage Interpretation, 'What is Interpretation?', <http://www.ahi.org.uk/www/about/what_is_interpretation/> [accessed 30 June 2014]. Italics in original. They are quoting from Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage* 4th edn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

²⁵⁹. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.17.

²⁶⁰. Russell Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), p.34.

waiting to be revealed through the processes of interpretation.²⁶¹ Instead, Staiff argues that 'sensorial and aesthetic responses, subjectivity and the possibility of visitors empowered by their own meaning-making are compelling and worthy of greater exploration'.²⁶²

Interpretation refers to both the explicative materials provided and the process by which visitors engage with heritage sites. Tim Copeland draws attention to the two different paradigmatic approaches that are both still very much in existence. First, he points out that 'a positivist approach [...] provides only one view of complex issues and presumes that there is a fixed place that the visitor must come to know'.²⁶³ Second, in contrast to this didactic approach, he argues that a constructivist approach is much more productive:

A constructivist approach simply suggests that we construct our own understandings of the world in which we live. Since the past does not exist any more we have to construct what it might have been like from present evidence. We construct our understandings through reflection upon our interactions with objects and ideas [...] and the ideas of others who have already constructed their own understandings and are in a position to share them.²⁶⁴

Rather than the visitor acting passively, in this conceptualisation they are enabled to construct their own meanings in relation to the site, objects and interpretive materials they encounter. It is not presumed that they are absorbing a previously-constructed message, but that the meaning of their experience is generated through and within the encounter. However, Copeland's argument remains within a framework that assumes the heritage experience is cognitive; the

^{261.} Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.35. For his six principles of interpretation see Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*.

^{262.} Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.42.

^{263.} Tim Copeland, 'Constructing Pasts: Interpreting the Historic Environment', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.83-95, p.84.

^{264.} Copeland, 'Constructing Pasts', p.84.

educational implication of this for some visitors may, in fact, be a disincentive to visit.²⁶⁵

Some studies suggest there has been too much focus on cognitive approaches.²⁶⁶ A counter approach can be drawn from writers who have argued that more attention ought to be paid to the affective and the precognitive, particularly because 'affect is increasingly recognised as an important means to achieve audience participation in the process of meaning-making'.²⁶⁷ In his definition of affect, Nigel Thrift notes that it is often 'associated with words like emotion and feeling [...] terms like hatred, shame, envy, fear, disgust, anger, embarrassment, sorrow, grief, anguish, love, happiness, joy, hope, wonder...'.²⁶⁸ However, he does 'not think these words work well as a simple translations of the term'.²⁶⁹ The key point Thrift makes which is applicable to heritage is that 'affect is [...] a form of thinking[...]. Affect is a different kind of intelligence about the world but it is intelligence nonetheless'.²⁷⁰

Interpretation which focusses on the affective has been described as 'hot'.²⁷¹ David Uzzell and Roy Ballantine suggest that 'the concept arose as a response to the failure of many interpretive designers and providers to acknowledge that visitors to heritage sites do not experience heritage simply as a cognitive experience'.²⁷² Drawing on Thrift's *Non Representational Theory*, David

^{265.} Richard Prentice, 'Perceptual Deterrents to Visiting Museums and Other Heritage Attractions', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 13 (1994), 264-279, p.276.

^{266.} Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*.

^{267.} Kate Gregory and Andrea Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.263-275, p.263.

^{268.} Nigel Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p.175.

^{269.} Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, p.175.

^{270.} Thrift, *Non-Representational Theory*, p.175.

^{271.} David Uzzell and Roy Ballantyne, 'Heritage That Hurts: Interpretation in a Postmodern World', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008).

^{272.} Uzzell and Ballantyne, 'Heritage That Hurts', p.502.

Crouch suggests that this focus has moved heritage beyond the visual, 'instead of working off representations of things, their debate emerges in the liveliness of things'.²⁷³ This 'liveliness' is articulated by Olga Belova as a shift from seeing as an ocular centric event based around the experience of individual objects, to seeing as an embodied event which unfolds temporally.²⁷⁴

Key to this shift towards the affective is a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of the visitor or, at least, a clearer recognition that visitors are not to be understood as a single amorphous group; 'publics' has been suggested as a better place to start to think of the diversity of visitors.²⁷⁵ Visitors want different things, and bring different things with them;²⁷⁶ this includes different conceptual approaches depending on the kind of institution visitors are attending.²⁷⁷ Yaniv Poria et al. argue that interpretation needs to be personalised, and is not monolithic, as is suggested by the dominant ideology thesis.²⁷⁸ David Carr points out that we do not 'have' an experience, but take a much more active role in making our own.²⁷⁹ However, there is still a notable lack of analysis of 'the underlying nature of the transactions that occur between site, interpreter and

²⁷³. David Crouch, 'The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage', in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.57-71, p.62. The volume of which this chapter is a part focusses substantially on the way in which heritage is encountered largely through visual representation.

²⁷⁴. Olga Belova, 'The Event of Seeing', in *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*, ed. by Sandra Dudley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.117-133. See also Joyce Brodsky, 'How to 'See' With the Whole Body', *Visual Studies*, 17 (2002), 99-112.

²⁷⁵. Mieke Bal, 'Exposing the Public', in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (London: Blackwell, 2007) pp.525-542, p.525.

²⁷⁶. Susie West and Elizabeth McKellar, 'Interpretation of Heritage', in *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.166-204, p.177.

²⁷⁷. Gielen, 'Museumchronotopics', p.150. Drawing on Fyfe and Ross, Gielen suggests that visitors to art museums employ very different conceptual frameworks from those they employ when visiting local history museums.

²⁷⁸. Yaniv Poria, Avital Biran and Arie Reichel, 'Visitors' Preferences for Interpretation at Heritage Sites', *Journal of Travel Research*, 48 (2009), 92-105.

²⁷⁹. David Carr, 'A Museum is an Open Work', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7 (2001), 173-183.

visitor'.²⁸⁰

This deficit of understanding is reflected in other problems with heritage that implicate interpretation processes. Tunbridge and Ashworth argue that heritage effectively 'disinherits' many people 'completely, or partially, actively or potentially'.²⁸¹ Furthermore, 'all heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's'.²⁸² Since then, there has been a greater recognition that heritage presentations were too focussed on a limited number of narratives, and many heritage sites now include more information regarding the lives of servants and estate workers for example. However, this has not yet widened enough to be seen as properly inclusive. Stuart Hall, in his argument that British heritage presentations are 'intended for those who "belong"', argues for more socially inclusive representations.²⁸³ The fact that many of the contemporary art interventions discussed above deal with hidden histories reflects that the ground is indeed shifting, and heritage interpretation is becoming more critically engaged. Although, in the same way that Crane argued museum visitors do not like it when they are challenged or 'thwarted',²⁸⁴ in the context of heritage interpretation, Tony Bennett suggests 'disruption' occurs if the illusion of historical authenticity is accidentally broken.²⁸⁵

Based on this initial exploration of interpretation, already a number of relevant questions can be formulated in relation to the Parsonage as a key example of contemporary artworks in heritage sites. It becomes clear that, given artworks are

²⁸⁰. Copeland, 'Constructing Pasts', p.83. Peter Vergo suggested that developing criteria which allowed a much clearer understanding of the relationship between exhibitions and audiences 'is one of the more urgent tasks of the new museology'. See Vergo, 'The Reticent Object', p.59.

²⁸¹. Ashworth and Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage*, p.21.

²⁸². Ashworth and Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage*, p.21.

²⁸³. Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.221.

²⁸⁴. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion', p.46.

²⁸⁵. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.120.

being incorporated to affect a viewer's understanding of a particular place, interpretation, both as a theorised process of engagement with experience and a process of practical museology, is centrally implicated because it is through this process that visitors make sense of themselves in relation to both past events and current concerns. This is not only because the artwork has been seen to be a form of interpretation, but also engagement with the artwork itself as an object is an act of meaning making. Claire Robins and Miranda Baxter point out this duality, in that 'artists' interventions are both interpretive devices and works of art'.²⁸⁶ A further complexity is that no fixed agreement exists about how something might be interpreted as 'art' or not.²⁸⁷ There is, therefore, a need to be clearer about the relationship between cognitive and affective experiences because this has implications for the way in which sites operate. There is thus, also, a need to research both visitor experience and the way in which representations of the past are constructed because both form inseparable parts of the ways in which meaning emerges in relation to experience.

Experience of Art

Heritage, now conceptualised as a dialogic process, is substantively complex. To display contemporary art in a heritage context, such as the Brontë Parsonage Museum, tied to a demonstrably didactic or instrumental agenda, requires that questions are asked about how this conjunction works. It is notable that the growing use of artists as a technique of visitor engagement in heritage sites has paralleled the 'golden age', a period of the early twentieth century when funding was available to develop audiences, especially amongst regional

²⁸⁶ Claire Robins and Miranda Baxter, 'Meaningful Encounters With Disrupted Narratives: Artists' Interventions as Interpretive Strategies', in *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions*, ed. by Suzanne Macleod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.247-256, p.248.

²⁸⁷ Christopher Whitehead, *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), p.3.

museums through programmes such as Renaissance in the Regions.²⁸⁸ This suggests there must be something about the experience of art which is deemed to be of merit in that it adds to the experience of a particular place in a unique way. Two issues arise here. Firstly, the issue of art experience itself needs to be addressed. Secondly, the relationship between art and the context in which it is seen needs to be questioned. A third element, while not dealt with in this thesis, needs to be identified here for clarity. Within the field of aesthetics, the discussion regarding the nature of aesthetic experience is inseparably tied to a philosophical engagement regarding the nature of artworks as a category; this includes questions regarding the identification of the properties aesthetic objects can be seen to have in common with each other. This in itself can be seen as a form of interpretation. What one person might interpret as art, might not be the same for someone else.²⁸⁹ While this leads to questions such as 'what makes good art good', which is of interest in relation to contemporary art in heritage space, it is necessary here to limit my focus specifically with the kind of experience art generates in this context.²⁹⁰

Interpretation in relation to artworks is complex. Christopher Whitehead suggests that it is difficult to find a starting point when thinking about interpretation because it:

is not just the label on the wall, but everything which precedes, surrounds and follows its production and consumption: it can be every intellectual and political act governing the ingress of an object into an art museum, into the category of art and into regimes of value and significance; it can extend into the experience of the viewer, not just for the time it takes to read the label, but as a

²⁸⁸ Sarah Selwood, *Making a Difference: The Cultural Impact of Museums*, (London: National Museums Directors Council, 2010), p.4. There has been substantial criticism of this period too. See, for example, Sharon Heal, 'The End of an Era: What Have Tony Blair and New Labour Done for Museums?', *Museums Journal*, 107 (2013), 13.

²⁸⁹ Christopher Whitehead points out that any belief in what might be defined as art 'does not readily stand up to scrutiny other than as expressions of personal identity'. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.3.

²⁹⁰ George Dickie, 'Evaluating Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 25 (1985), 3-16, p.3.

long event for the rest of her life.²⁹¹

The first aspect which is useful to draw out from Whitehead's description is the museum's explicative role in relation to the artworks it has on display. This is a discursive construction. Any individual work is at the mercy of 'the museum's spatial nature, and the discursive media which can be adopted within it'.²⁹² This furthermore 'structure[s] specific kinds of articulations between objects and between knowledges'.²⁹³ The discursive formation of the museum has been widely shown to be deeply ideological in nature, creating rather than reflecting culture.²⁹⁴ Nicholas Serota, for example, has explored different approaches to the interpretation of art, contrasting a 'principle of interpretation, of combining works by different artists to give selective readings, both of art and of the history of art', with an 'absolute concentration of focus on the work of single artists oblig[ing] us to develop our own readings of the work rather than relying on a curatorial interpretation of history'.²⁹⁵

The second interesting aspect from Whitehead's description is interpretation as it relates to experiences of a work which are made meaningful through the cognitive processes of the viewer. In relation to the viewer's cognitive processes, Robert Stecker highlights key difficulties.²⁹⁶ One question relates to the way in which any meaning that is generated relates to the meaning the artist had in mind while creating the work. Stecker describes this as 'actual intentionalism' but rejects it, arguing that there is too much of a gap between what we might hold out as our intentions, and the reality of what actually

²⁹¹. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.xii.

²⁹². Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.23.

²⁹³. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.23.

²⁹⁴. See especially Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* and Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.13.

²⁹⁵. Nicholas Serota, *Experience or Interpretation* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), pp.8-10. See also Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995).

²⁹⁶. Stecker, 'Interpretation'.

happens. He argues that, even if the artist had a clear intention in their mind, 'we sometimes fail to say what we want to say' and thus the actual intention of the artist is unreliable as an indicator of meaning, and seeking explanation in the biography of the artist is also rejected on similar grounds.²⁹⁷ Following this, Stecker points out that there may in fact be many actual or possible meanings. Asking whether this concept of 'work meaning' is helpful, Stecker simply says 'while we cannot deny that works can bear *meanings*, it does not follow that there is such a thing as *the meaning* of a work'.²⁹⁸ More recently, it has been argued that artists' 'not knowing', is a productive mode of creative being which does not need to move towards greater understanding.²⁹⁹

As well as theoretical problems relating to meaning-making processes, it has been shown that many visitors struggle to engage with artworks. Drawing substantially on the work of Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Louis Lankford argues that visitors often do not know how to behave in front of artworks and that museums need to assist visitors in developing the facility to have aesthetic experiences.³⁰⁰ Butler, for example, suggests that this consists of 'learn[ing] to pay attention in a certain way'.³⁰¹ This learning can be seen to relate to Michael Parsons' five stage process through which the viewer, at any stage in their lifetime, might proceed, from only being able to deal with basic conceptual ideas about representation, through to having a sophisticated understanding of the contingency of interpretation, where 'the individual must judge the concepts and

^{297.} Stecker, 'Interpretation', p.325.

^{298.} Stecker, 'Interpretation', p.328. Italics in original.

^{299.} *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, ed. by Elizabeth Fisher and Rebecca Fortnum, (London: Black Dog, 2013).

^{300.} Louis E. Lankford, 'Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 36 (2002), 140-153, p.151.

^{301.} Christopher Butler, *Pleasure and the Arts: Enjoying Literature, Painting and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.170. Andrew Brighton has similarly argued that artworks cannot be experienced inattentively. See Brighton, 'Space Invaders', p.46. Duncan has argued museum spaces created a habituated attention that is ritualised. See Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, p.12.

values with which the tradition constructs the meanings of works of art'.³⁰² At this stage of the process of dealing with the work of art, 'each of us, curators and visitors alike, will have to [be] more willing to chart our own path'.³⁰³ Being willing to engage does not mean that the meaning-making process is simple or accessible. The research of Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri suggests that 'where no special provision is made for visitors unfamiliar with art galleries and their cultural repertoires, there will be little to attract or engage new audiences, and even existing visitors may feel at a loss to produce meaningful interpretations'.³⁰⁴ From this, a clear connection can be seen with one of the most fundamental questions that can be asked of art; what kind of experience does it generate?

This literature review is not the place to explore the full implications of this question, however, it does remain central to the issue. Art is being mobilised in heritage sites, such as the Parsonage, as a methodology to achieve a particular response from visitors. It thus remains apposite to explore the ways in which this can be mapped onto a number of theoretical concerns associated with the philosophy of art, not least the issue of the kind of experience that art generates.

Of relevance to my enquiry into artworks at the Parsonage, is the question of whether the experience of art refers to broader issues, or is a complete experience in and of itself. A fundamental aspect of Emmanuel Kant's argument regarding aesthetic experience was that disinterestedness from everyday concerns was a key feature.³⁰⁵ Furthermore, aesthetic experience was necessarily different from cognitive experience.³⁰⁶ John Dewey's pragmatist philosophy

³⁰² Michael J. Parsons, *How We Understand Art: A Cognitive Developmental Account of Aesthetic Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p.25.

³⁰³ Serota, *Experience or Interpretation*, p.55.

³⁰⁴ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill and Theano Moussouri, *Making Meaning in Art Museums 1: Visitors' Interpretive Strategies at Wolverhampton Art Gallery*, (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2001).

³⁰⁵ Kirk Pillow, 'Beauty: Subjective Purposiveness', in *Immanuel Kant: Key Concepts*, ed. by Will Dudley and Kristina Engelhard (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) pp.155-169, p.157.

³⁰⁶ Donald W. Crawford, 'Kant', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.55-69, p.57.

stands in direct opposition. Dewey argued that aesthetic experience was part and parcel of a full and rich life, and should not be separated from everyday concerns by the analytical philosophy represented by Kant's position;³⁰⁷ however, Dewey does differentiate between 'an' experience and general ongoing experience.³⁰⁸ He suggests that within ongoing experience there is 'distraction and dispersion'; however an intellectual unity can be ascribed to 'an' experience afterwards, 'when the material experienced runs its course to fulfilment'.³⁰⁹ Characteristics can be applied to this unity, but the experience is not reducible to those characteristics.³¹⁰ Thus, rather than an experience of a work of art being separate from more quotidian experience, Dewey's position suggests an imminent connection between the artwork and life as it is being lived by the viewer. George Dickie explores a further dimension of this argument by contrasting the positions of Monroe Beardsley and Nelson Goodman.³¹¹ For Goodman, artworks are cognitively experienced as referring to things outside themselves. For Beardsley, artworks are 'detached' and self referential. Pragmatically, Dickie suggests they are both right but, to more properly understand what is central to these arguments,

'the best thing to do is give up using the term "aesthetic experience" as the generic term for the experience of art. It is best, I think, simply to use the term "the experience of art" for the experience of art [...].With this neutral way of speaking, we are free to describe our experiences of art as they actually occur'.³¹²

Others also argue that the experience of art is embodied rather than simply scopic. John Shotter, for example, suggests that experience is dialogically

^{307.} Richard Shusterman, 'Pragmatism: Dewey', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.121-131, p.122.

^{308.} John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: Penguin Books, 2005), p.36.

^{309.} Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p.36.

^{310.} Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p.38.

^{311.} Dickie, 'Evaluating Art'.

^{312.} Dickie, 'Evaluating Art', p.14.

structured and shared; Shotter calls this 'relationally responsive' understanding.³¹³ In his consideration of looking at a work of art, Shotter suggests 'rather than looking *at* it, I look *beyond* it, or *through* it, to see other things in my world in its light; it is [...] a guiding or directing agency in my looking; it gives me a way of *looking*'.³¹⁴ Joyce Brodsky similarly 'insist[s] that bodily experience is implicated even in art forms considered to be traditional and essentially visual'.³¹⁵ Experience of art according to these analyses is more than visual and more than a singular, unique experience. Instead, it is a lived experience in which the artwork is part of a rich unfolding temporality. Where this unfolding experience is seen as a highly focussed engagement, it has been described as 'flow', in which extraneous distractions fade and attention is enhanced.³¹⁶ Flow experiences are commensurate with aesthetic experiences and Charles Gunther suggests that providing a 'flow' experience is the ultimate aim of a museum.³¹⁷ Lankford, however, points out that this is not straightforward because, to have a 'flow' experience of a work of art, you need to be skilled in the 'reading' of the work.³¹⁸

In many ways this highlights a difficulty with these theoretical considerations of aesthetic experience. When considered in the context of visitor studies, there is an inadequate conceptualisation of visitors. While a Kantian analysis is based on the establishment of common characteristics of disinterestedness that could be shared, the reality is that there is not one kind of viewer; each will bring their own experiences and characteristics to bear. In this

³¹³ John Shotter, 'Real Presences: The Creative Power of Dialogically Structured, Living Expression', (2002) <<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/KCCOutline.htm>> [accessed 27 February 2015] para 15.

³¹⁴ Shotter, 'Real Presences', (2002) [accessed 27 February 2015] para 19.

³¹⁵ Brodsky, 'How to 'See' With the Whole Body', p.102.

³¹⁶ Mihaly Csikszentmihayli and Rick E. Robinson, *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter* (Los Angeles: Getty Education Institute for the Arts, 1990), p.7.

³¹⁷ Charles F. Gunther, 'Museumgoers: Lifestyles and Learning Characteristics', in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1994) pp.286-297.

³¹⁸ Lankford, 'Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums', p.148.

respect, Laurie Hanquinet et al. suggest that, while there is much research into the social status of the visitor which has built on the the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Nick Merriman,³¹⁹ visitor preferences have changed.³²⁰ More visitors are interested in making connections between the art that they experience and a broader social context. According to Hanquinet et al., this is in contrast to Bourdieu's 'highbrow-lowbrow hierarchy'.³²¹

Recently, concerns regarding the place of art within a constrained economy have meant that an interest has grown in finding ways to articulate the value of cultural experiences. A recent report by Arts Council England posits that historically research has been either 'instrumental', in that it focussed on wider benefits, or 'intrinsic' and focussed on the benefits to the person.³²² One of the particularly relevant pieces of research cited here is by Paul Silvia, who argues that research into aesthetic experiences has focussed on a limited range of emotions, and asks 'where are confusion, anger and embarrassment to be reported?'.³²³ Given this expanded conceptualisation of the art experience, a further aspect to consider is the way in which the artwork relates to the context in which it is situated. This is important because artworks are being placed in the Parsonage not only so that the artwork is experienced, but so that the site is experienced differently as a result.

The space in which an artwork is seen plays a fundamental part in the

³¹⁹ See, for example, Pierre Bourdieu and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) and Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*.

³²⁰ L. Hanquinet, H. Roose and M. Savage, 'The Eyes of the Beholder: Aesthetic Preferences and the Remaking of Cultural Capital', *Sociology*, (2013), 1-22, p.16.

³²¹ Hanquinet, Roose and Savage, 'The Eyes of the Beholder: Aesthetic Preferences and the Remaking of Cultural Capital', p.16.

³²² Arts Council England, *Understanding the Value and Impacts of Cultural Experiences*, (Manchester: Arts Council England, 2014), p.2.

³²³ Arts Council England, *Understanding the Value and Impacts of Cultural Experiences*, p.61.

meaning that is generated.³²⁴ Victoria Newhouse suggests that:

Placement - also referred to as presentation, arrangement, display, hanging (for pictures) and more recently installation - comes into play whenever and wherever a moveable art object is seen.³²⁵

Furthermore, Newhouse argues that, by changing the way in which an object is sited, both the object and the perception of it are changed significantly.³²⁶ Didier Maleuvre traced a historical aspect of this argument by considering the opposing opinions of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy.³²⁷ Quatremère believed that, when one removed an artwork from its original context to a museum, it lost such a fundamental part of itself that it was no longer art. In contrast, Hegel argued that the 'context' was actually the experience of the work, so only in the active process of being viewed does something come to operate as art.³²⁸

These arguments emphasise the connection between the artwork, the way in which it is displayed, and the meaning which is generated by the viewer's engagement. This, it has been suggested, was the fundamental shift introduced by site-specific practice in the 1960s.³²⁹ In this work, more specific attention was paid to the relationship between the artwork and the site in which it was displayed. In contrast to a modernist conceptualisation where art is 'instantaneously perceived in a visual epiphany by a disembodied eye', Miwon Kwon argues that 'site-specific work in its earliest formation [...] focussed on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site, and demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the work's

^{324.} Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube* expanded edn (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999).

^{325.} Victoria Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2005), p.8.

^{326.} Newhouse, *Art and the Power of Placement*, p.39.

^{327.} Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories, History, Technology, Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p.21.

^{328.} Maleuvre, *Museum Memories, History, Technology, Art*.

^{329.} Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), p.154.

completion'.³³⁰ In examining more recent 'installation' art, Claire Bishop similarly suggests that the viewer's bodily presence completes the work.³³¹ In addition to this tracing of the ways in which artists seek new contexts and relationships, Ashleigh MacDougal has drawn attention to the curatorial desire to find other sites in which to develop exhibitionary practices as a result of the belief that the 'white cube' was too removed from the full richness and complexity of everyday life.³³²

This necessarily brief consideration of the nature of art experience, context and site specificity begins to demonstrate the complex constellation of artwork, context, curator, artist and visitor. The implications for this study are that both the didactic aims of the curator and the practices of engagement employed by viewers are significant and need to be considered throughout the analysis of the Parsonage as the central case study.³³³ Further, given the nature of interpretation as inherently polyvalent and relational, a study which focussed on visitors alone would not adequately address the issues which are raised at this particular intersection of art and heritage.

Brontës, Parsonage, Haworth

In exploring the Brontë Parsonage Museum as a potential case study, a careful exploration of the literature relating to the Brontës was necessary. Given the global impact of the Brontës, it is no surprise that this field is vast. I was cautious in my selection to avoid the risk of being overwhelmed by this range of Brontë-related study. I was also conscious that my interest was not the Brontës per se, but the way in which the historical reality and mythologised stories of

³³⁰ Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p.12. O'Doherty also discusses the concept of the 'eye' rather than a whole 'spectator'. O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube*, p.35.

³³¹ Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005), p.6.

³³² McDougall, 'Place and Collaboration: Contemporary Art Curation Within Historic Sites', (2013) [accessed 23 February 2015] para 6.

³³³ Serota, *Experience or Interpretation*, p.42.

their lives had metamorphosed into a Society and museum in which contemporary art is now being used as an interpretive device.

Despite my research focus on the way contemporary art is being mobilised at the Parsonage, the way that the literature of the Brontës is consumed and recognised on a global stage frames the wider context in which visitors make their way to the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Howarth. This wider context includes the complex intertwining of the known historical facts of the sisters, the myths which have grown up around their lives and the narratives and characters of the novels themselves. Each of these elements coalesce around the visitor and their experience in the Parsonage building and are thus in themselves fundamental to a deeper understanding of contemporary art in this context.

The development of Haworth as the nexus of Brontë mythology had its origin even during the Brontës' lifetime, as enthusiasts would travel to Haworth once it became known that this was their home. Charlotte herself noted 'various folks are beginning to come boring to Haworth on the errand of seeing the scenery described in *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*'.³³⁴ Patrick Brontë is known to have cut up Charlotte's letters and given pieces away to visitors who wanted a memento of their visit.³³⁵ This highlights the early desire of Brontë readers to find out more about the Brontës and the location in which the novels were written, and their desire to seek a greater connection to the author through relics. Later visitors would even take pieces of the Parsonage to satisfy their treasure hunting instincts.³³⁶ Gaskell's *Life* can be seen as the starting point from which Haworth developed into a significant tourist site:

For a right understanding of the life of my dear friend, Charlotte

³³⁴. Charlotte Brontë letter, quoted in *Early Visitors to Haworth: From Ellen Nussey to Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Charles Lemon, (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1996), p.xiii.

³³⁵. Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës*, pp.37-38.

³³⁶. Charles Hale, 'An American Visitor at Haworth, 1861', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1967), 126-138, p.135.

Brontë, it appears to me more necessary in her case than in most others, that the reader should be made acquainted with the peculiar forms of population and society amidst which her earliest years were passed, and from which both her own and her sisters' first impressions of human life must have been received.³³⁷

However, in her desire to maximise the dramatic context of Haworth for Charlotte's work, Gaskell misdescribed it:

what she failed to do, quite deliberately, was to paint an accurate picture of Haworth in the time of the Brontës. It was unrecognisable not only to its inhabitants, but even to the tourists who flocked to see it in the wake of her book.³³⁸

Emphasising the isolation of Haworth, cut off from any sense of civilisation, Gaskell aimed to provide an explanation for the radical nature of Charlotte's writing. In seeking to do this, she also substantially misrepresented the reality of the family life at the Parsonage:

Mrs Gaskell's portrayal of Patrick as a half-mad recluse who wanted nothing to do with his children was intended to explain away those characteristics of his daughter's writings which the Victorians found unacceptable. Most of the stories were completely untrue... Mrs Gaskell was compelled, albeit reluctantly, to remove the accounts from her third edition.³³⁹

Thus the intertwined interest in the nature of the lives of the Brontës, and interest in seeing the landscape that is inextricably linked to the novels, underpinned both contemporary tourism, and the development of a museum.

Most accounts of the Brontës begin by setting out the complexity of the narratives which surround their lives. According to Juliet Barker, 'the Brontë story has always been riddled with myths'.³⁴⁰ The entry in *British Writers*, for example, points out that 'where Brontë biography is concerned it is very difficult

³³⁷. Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Penguin Books, 1997a), p.17.

³³⁸. Juliet Barker, 'The Haworth Context', in *Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.13-33, pp.14-15.

³³⁹. Barker, *The Brontës*, pp.107-108.

³⁴⁰. Barker, *The Brontës*, p.xviii.

to tell fact from legend'.³⁴¹ In her introduction to a recent examination of the critical context of Brontë discourse, Marianne Thormählen suggests that 'the lives of those authors have exerted a peculiar fascination for a century and a half' and goes on to say, 'outwardly uneventful, these lives are the stuff of legend'.³⁴² The Parsonage literally 'enshrine[s] [...] the myth of three famous writing sisters'.³⁴³

The complexity of this legend and its origin is dealt with particularly well by Lucasta Miller in *The Brontë Myth*. In her preface Miller maps the reasons why the Brontës have had an enduring fascination for her. Firstly, Miller notes her own experience growing up as a reader, 'their novels - which I had first read in my early teens - provided emotional nourishment, but the legendary tale of their lonely moorland lives [...] had gripped my imagination even before I was old enough to read *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*'.³⁴⁴ As an adult, she found a need to 'think more questioningly about the role the Brontës played not only in 'her' own imagination but in culture at large'.³⁴⁵ This role, according to Miller, comes partly from the fact that 'both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* have burst their generic boundaries and found their way into mass culture through Hollywood, stage versions, television and even pop music'.³⁴⁶ It is perhaps this biographical complexity that led Miller to suggest that her book 'is not so much a biography of the Brontës but a book about biography [...] when focussing on the sentimental excesses of the Brontë cult, it may even read more like an antibiography'.³⁴⁷

Miller's questioning includes a detailed examination of the disinformation

^{341.} *British Writers*, ed. by Ian Scott-Kilvert and Jay Parini, (New York: Scribners, 1979), p.49.

^{342.} Marianne Thormählen, 'Introduction', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p.1.

^{343.} Christine Alexander, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.93-110, p.93.

^{344.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.ix.

^{345.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.ix.

^{346.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.ix.

^{347.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.x.

created by Elizabeth Gaskell. Miller suggests Gaskell's biography, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, is 'arguably, the most famous English biography of the nineteenth century' and that 'it catapult[ed] the Brontës into the realm of myth'.³⁴⁸ It did so by including narrative elements into the biography that were pure fiction:

Of all the inaccuracies and half-truths which Gaskell had so far picked up about the Brontë family, none were to become more legendary than her apocryphal stories about Patrick.³⁴⁹

Not only did Gaskell mythologise the Brontës, she also painted a very particular picture of Haworth in order to support her view that the Brontës were a product of wild and secluded isolation. Juliet Barker suggests that Gaskell 'set Haworth at the forefront of the Brontë story, deliberately linking place and subject in an exceptionally emphatic way'.³⁵⁰ Barker continues:

Gaskell's magnificent opening sequence, with its evocation of the journey from Keighley to Haworth, was [...] invested with massive symbolism: it was a passing from the comparative civilisation of a thriving commercial town, which Gaskell's readers would recognise as typical of the industrial West Riding of Yorkshire, to a strange moorland village, cut off from the ordinary world by the 'monotonous and illimitable barrier' of the surrounding hills. Every page of her description is peppered with carefully chosen adjectives such as 'wild', 'bleak', 'oppressive', 'lonely' and 'isolated', which reinforce the idea that Haworth was physically remote; a place not only difficult to get to, but also, more significantly, difficult to leave.³⁵¹

This sense that Haworth was 'cut off from the ordinary world' is indicative of the way in which the wider landscape has been drawn into the Brontë story, thus embedding within the landscape itself the narrative of both real and fictional lives. David Herbert has identified that visitors will not normally see any difference between the real and the fictional Haworth landscape; 'the writer

^{348.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.57.

^{349.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.36.

^{350.} Barker, 'The Haworth Context', p.13.

^{351.} Barker, 'The Haworth Context', p.14.

infuses the novel with a sense of place but the novel in turn adds meaning to place'.³⁵²

Subsequent scholars have sought to correct such biographical inaccuracies. Juliet Barker has been critical of the way that most biographers have relied on secondary sources and, as a result, have simply perpetuated the same stereotypical characters.³⁵³ Stephen Whitehead has explored *The Haworth the Brontës Knew*, and concluded that it was less isolated than had traditionally been thought because it had a sizeable textile industry, but his suggestion that it may have been culturally isolated is countered by Barker who suggested that her research using local newspapers 'should [...] scotch the myth that Haworth was a remote and obscure village where nothing ever happened. It was a township, [...]where politics and religion were hotly disputed and culture thrived'.³⁵⁴ Patsy Stoneman has also explored the overlapping of fact and fiction and wonders whether visitors actually want some of the myths stripped away.³⁵⁵

A great deal of work has been done to explore ways in which Brontë novels have been adapted by other cultural forms. Stoneman argues that a Derridian approach is useful in order to explore the dispersal of cultural meaning through a careful tracing of 'adaptations, prequels, sequels [and] translations'.³⁵⁶ Stoneman's research deals largely with reworkings of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* because she suggests that only these novels have 'achieved [such] iconic status'.³⁵⁷ This work is important as it clarifies the ways in which these rereadings allow new meanings to be generated and old ones to be challenged. Other writers

³⁵². Herbert, 'Heritage as a Literary Place', p.33.

³⁵³. Barker, *The Brontës*, p.xix.

³⁵⁴. Whitehead, 'The Haworth the Brontës Knew', p.189; Barker, *The Brontës*, p.xix.

³⁵⁵. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218.

³⁵⁶. See Patsy Stoneman, *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* (London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996) and Patsy Stoneman, 'Adaptations, Prequels, Sequels, Translations', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) .

³⁵⁷. Stoneman, 'Adaptations', p.213.

have compared different iterations of characters from the novels; televised costume drama versions of *Jane Eyre* have been considered and the international reworkings have also received critical attention.³⁵⁸ Peter Conrad concluded that new versions of the novels are always necessary as our relationship to the work changes as we grow older.³⁵⁹

It is notable, however, that while Stoneman suggests *Wuthering Heights* has a particular appeal to 'poets, musicians and dancers', she includes little analysis of the visual arts.³⁶⁰ She makes a brief response to Andrea Arnold's 2011 film version of *Wuthering Heights*, in which 'wind and rain replace dialogue',³⁶¹ but makes no mention of the Yorkshire landscape photography of Sam Taylor-Wood which also explores the way in which the narrative of the novel affects a perception of the Yorkshire landscape. It is reasonable to assume that Stoneman, as a member of the Brontë Society, would be familiar with Taylor-Wood's work when it was exhibited at the Brontë Parsonage in 2006.

The last theme to draw out of the literature on the Brontës deals with the relationship between visitors, Haworth and the Brontë Parsonage Museum. Two key interrelated ideas can be identified. Firstly, visitors to Haworth are thought

³⁵⁸ Paisley Mann, 'The Madwoman in Contemporary Adaptations: Depictions of Rochester and Bertha in Recent Jane Eyre Film and Television Adaptations', *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 152-162; Rebecca White, 'Fresh Eyre? How Original is Sandy Welch's Televised Jane Eyre?', *Brontë Studies*, 33 (2008), 136-147; Saviour Catania, 'Landscape Living: Yoshida's Arashi-Ga-oka and the Frost/ fire Heart of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 247-254; Edward Hotspur Johnson, 'Wuthering Heights: Bombay Style', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1989), 325-327; Maki Okumura, 'Intrusion of the Stranger: Yoshishige Yoshida's Version of *Wuthering Heights*', *Brontë Studies*, 29 (2004), 125-134.

³⁵⁹ Peter Conrad, 'Jane Eyre and *Wuthering Heights*: Do We Need New Film Versions?', *The Observer*, 21 August 2011, p.14.

³⁶⁰ In *The Brontë Influence*, Stoneman and Knight do consider a series of illustrations from different versions of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, and, in very brief notes, explore how they have a broader influence on other writers. See *The Brontë Influence*, ed. by Charmian Knight and Patsy Stoneman, (Haworth: The Brontë Society, 2004).

³⁶¹ Stoneman, 'Adaptations', p.211.

of as pilgrims.³⁶² Secondly, and clearly predicated on the concept of pilgrimage, the house is perceived as a shrine in which the belongings of the Brontës are relics.³⁶³ These concepts have formed a substantial part of developing my approach to the museum as a site.

The historical narrative of Brontë pilgrims can be traced in the Brontë Society's own publication *The Brontë Society Transactions; the Journal of Brontë Studies*.³⁶⁴ A criticism of this approach might be that this would simply reproduce a narrative from the secondary literature that may in fact not be entirely accurate. However, it is precisely the existence of these complexities that drew my attention to the Parsonage as a site of study. If the Brontë Society has had a hand in 'creating' the notion of pilgrimage, one can see certain marketing advantages in having done so, this simply adds to the richness of the site as a case study in which to address the problematics of contemporary art interventions as an interpretive technology.

Most accounts to be found within the pages of *Transactions*, are from material which has been published elsewhere. A further distillation is found in Charles Lemon's edited volume, *Early Visitors to Haworth*, which provides a useful overview of the arrival of visitors while Charlotte was still alive and then charts the growth of visitors after Patrick Brontë died in 1861.³⁶⁵ In one instance, Lemon can be seen to retrospectively apply the word pilgrimage when the original account itself did not use it. The account, which Lemon titled 'A pilgrimage to Haworth: The Bradford Observer, 30 April, 1857', details a walk

³⁶² Ivy Holgate, 'A Pilgrim at Haworth 1879', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1961), 29-37; W. R. Mitchell, *Hotfoot to Haworth: Pilgrims to the Brontë Shrine* (Giggleswick: Castleberg, 1992); Jessica Baldwin, 'Pilgrims Damaging Brontë Parsonage', *Sunday Telegraph*, 16 December 1990, p.4.

³⁶³ Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218; Anon, 'The Brontë Museum at Haworth', *Manchester Guardian*, 1895, p.8; Brontë Society, 'Museum Attendances: Some Comparisons', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 11 (1950), 336, p.336.

³⁶⁴ Later, the journal was renamed *Brontë Studies*.

³⁶⁵ *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon.

made by two people from Manningham in Bradford to Haworth.³⁶⁶ The narrators describe arriving at the Parsonage; 'with a melancholy pleasure we lingered about the spot and thought over the lifelong struggles of the poor devoted creatures who had there spent the best days, neglected and unknown'.³⁶⁷ While the account does not include the word pilgrimage, it is easy to understand that visitors making such an effort to reflect on their relationship to the writers does very much suggest that 'pilgrimage' is an appropriate description.

Many other early accounts set up this dialectic of 'pilgrim' and 'shrine'. Sir Thomas Wemyss Reid makes a connection to Gaskell's biography as a likely cause:

one great change resulted immediately from the publication of Mrs Gaskell's work: Haworth and its parsonage became the shrine to which hundreds of literary pilgrims from all parts of the world began to find their way to see the house in which the three sisters had spent their lives and done their work.³⁶⁸

Perhaps the best-known account drawing on Gaskell is that written by Virginia Woolf in 1904.³⁶⁹ Woolf was unsure 'whether pilgrimages to the shrines of famous men ought not to be condemned as sentimental journeys' but, she continued:

the curiosity is only legitimate when the house of a great writer or the country in which it is set adds something to our understanding of his books. This justification you have for a pilgrimage to the home and country of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters.³⁷⁰

Woolf also reflects on the 'relics' contained in the Brontë Parsonage Museum, wondering whether it is useful to preserve the belongings of the deceased.³⁷¹

Concluding that these objects are in fact able to provide a strong connection to

^{366.} *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon, p.28. It is notable that this is a month after Gaskell's *Life* has been published.

^{367.} *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon, p.32.

^{368.} *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon, p.xiii.

^{369.} Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904'. This account first appeared in *The Guardian* on 21 December 1904.

^{370.} Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p.272.

^{371.} Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', pp.273-274.

Charlotte Brontë, Woolf provided the locus for a consideration of heritage, a further discourse appropriate to this thesis.³⁷²

Drawing on this initial engagement with the literature on the Brontës, one can see that a complex mythology has built up around the Parsonage across a substantial period of time and that visitors have often been seen as pilgrims. This indicates that the Parsonage is an interesting and perhaps unique case study in which to explore contemporary art interventions, particularly as Harald Hendrix has suggested that the way the house exists today may actually preclude visitors from being 'open-minded'.³⁷³ The Brontës' influence on popular culture also adds a contextual richness for this thesis and offers the opportunity for it to contribute to an expanded analysis of the Brontës in other art forms. Finally, the way in which the site is constructed has a role to play in the experiences of visitors, thus 'heritage' as a concept is an important grounding point.

Conclusion

It is clear from the limited extant writing about the conjunction of contemporary art and heritage sites, that further research is necessary. While artists have a history of challenging the institution, more recent iterations of artistic engagement within both heritage sites and museums has been born out of the growth in museum education as a manifestation of the post-1970s 'new museology'. Audience development is seen as an important rationale, but many sites also want to demonstrate a commitment to offering new ways for existing visitors to engage. As artists have been invited in most of these interventions, artworks risk being inconsequential rather than genuinely offering a critical means to dismantle problematic ideologies embedded in institutional practices.

³⁷². Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p.274.

³⁷³. Harald Hendrix, 'Writers' Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance: From Self-Fashioning to Cultural Memory', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.1-11, p.8.

Despite the fact that there are many instances where problematic or overlooked histories can be dealt with, or at least brought to light, recent research regarding how art is experienced suggests that establishing that these artworks are effective is anything but straightforward. A broad implication of this is that, while this practice is becoming increasingly common, any evidence of its efficacy is based on a limited range of evaluative reports rather than any empirically robust data. Of course, what constitutes 'robust data' in heritage environments is itself an issue to be explored,³⁷⁴ however, there are certain assumptions and questions that can be drawn from this review which are centrally relevant to the Brontë Parsonage Museum and its Contemporary Arts Programme.

There is an assumption that the heritage environment is stable, and the art object is a temporary interloper and unnecessary to the integrity of the site; that is, without it, the site continues to function as a whole. Also, there is the assumption that artworks, as 'contemporary', are neither heritage interpretation nor heritage experiences because they are almost invariably promoted as offering something different from that which is normally on offer. This 'offer' is often thought of as 'provocation' in order to 'reanimate', which may or may not be what visitors desire from their experience. Additionally, visitors make meanings in ways which are not simply a replication of the narratives laid out for them by site staff. Given that it has been shown that museums need to provide a carefully structured experience of artworks to allow viewers to benefit from their engagement, will placing artworks in heritage sites do anything other than increase exponentially the possibility for fragmentary and problematic interpretations of both the site and the artwork?³⁷⁵ All these issues, raised through

³⁷⁴. Carman and Sorensen, 'Heritage Studies: An Outline', p.24.

³⁷⁵. Jane Deeth, 'Engaging Strangeness in the Art Museum: An Audience Development Strategy', *Museum and Society*, 10 (2012) <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/albano.pdf>> [accessed 10 April 2012].

this review of recent literature, suggest the Brontë Parsonage Museum is a particularly apposite case study in which to explore the role of contemporary art.

What are the implications for heritage processes? Stuart Hall's analysis of heritage reminds us that interpretation is a part of the process by which heritage is constituted, not a separate way of engaging with something that is pre-existing and fully formed.³⁷⁶ In this sense, a final question remains: what is it that artists are able to do in heritage sites that curators can not?

³⁷⁶ Hall, 'Whose Heritage'.

Chapter 2

The Construction of a Shrine

To start with, I think there are a lot of people who regard this as a sort of shrine. There are so many myths around the three sisters you know, myths, really, misinformation; there is a very romantic public perception about how these three sisters lived and worked.³⁷⁷

In this chapter, I investigate the nature of the Brontë Parsonage Museum as a heritage site. The central question of this thesis relates to the way in which contemporary art intersects with the period interiors. Thus an understanding of how the site has developed through time, and the way it is presented today, are key to this investigation because the primary rationale for showing art in the museum interior has been articulated as 'changing' the way this site is experienced. Andrew McCarthy, who began the programme when he was Education Officer, described the aim as wanting:

people to come here and not just celebrate the Brontës and their work but also [...] engage with their own imagination and their own creativity in various ways.³⁷⁸

The Contemporary Arts Programme leaflet echoes this:

Through our contemporary arts programme we aim to commission and showcase new responses to the Brontës and [...] creating opportunities for general visitors to experience the Parsonage in imaginative ways which will allow them to explore their own creativity.³⁷⁹

While the focus of this investigation relates substantially to the period in which the CAP has been formally in operation, 2006 to date, the nature and operation of the site as it is today is the result of its development over time. Thus this chapter explores the historical development of the Parsonage. It is not the

³⁷⁷. Interview with Virginia Rushton, Leeds, 16 July 2014. Virginia Rushton was a member of the Brontë Society, and served as a trustee of the museum until her death in 2015.

³⁷⁸. Interview with Andrew McCarthy at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 6 July 2012.

³⁷⁹. Brontë Parsonage Museum, 'Contemporary Arts Programme: April to September 2013', [Leaflet] (2013).

purpose of this chapter, or indeed this thesis, to provide a detailed analysis of Brontë history; however, given that the Brontë works are 'unimaginably famous' it is pertinent and apposite to deal with the way in which their home became a museum, as the status of the site as a tourist destination is inextricably linked to the fame of the authors and the ways in which visitor experiences are formulated today.³⁸⁰ There are a number of key aspects of Brontë history which are important for this thesis. Firstly, documentary evidence of early travellers making their way to Haworth feature in numerous accounts of Brontë history.³⁸¹ These early accounts of visitors as pilgrims thus demarcate Haworth and the Parsonage as a shrine. This status of the site as a shrine bears a significant relationship to both the way in which contemporary artists are commissioned to make work in relationship to it and visitors' openness to experiencing contemporary art during their visit. Thus, to provide a historical context to 'visitors as pilgrims' will serve to underline the relationship between the site and its visitors, providing the impetus for a detailed analysis of the Contemporary Arts Programme in later chapters.

I have articulated that the broader context for this investigation lies in the rapid growth of the practice of artists' commissions within a heritage context. The development of heritage from the late 1980s, and its related critique, has a significant bearing on the way in which museums have developed their programmes in the early part of the twenty-first century and consequently the expectations visitors have from their visits to heritage sites.³⁸² In terms of the Parsonage, the origin of the Brontë Society in a group of 'fiercely local admirers' is inextricably linked to the development of the Parsonage as a heritage site and

³⁸⁰. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.236.

³⁸¹. See The Brontë Society journal *Brontë Society Transactions*. Accounts also appear in *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon, and Mitchell, *Hotfoot to Haworth*.

³⁸². This critique is dealt with more substantially later in this chapter. For an overview, see Robert Lumley, 'The Debate on Heritage Reviewed', in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, ed. by Gerard Corsane (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) pp.15-27.

tourist attraction.³⁸³ More critically, this influences the way in which the museum operates today.³⁸⁴

The Brontë Society is a charitable organisation which owns and maintains the museum for the purposes of 'celebrating the lives of the Brontës [...] facilitat[ing] learning activities and promot[ing] events, residencies and exhibitions.'³⁸⁵ The Society has a Council, which has similarities to a board of trustees. However, all council members, often also referred to as trustees, are drawn from the Society itself, rather than a wider constituency. Trustee Virginia Rushton described the structure at length:

The council is elected by the members, it's a membership organisation, with delegated powers for taking forward the objectives of the charity which is to run the museum, to acquire, to make acquisitions, to buy things for the museum, manuscripts, rare editions of the works, artworks, artifacts, furniture, whatever we need to keep that collection growing. And of course we are responsible for the financial stability of the organisation, so there's a lot of work around budgeting, budgets, financial planning, strategies, managing the investments which we farm out to stockbrokers and trying to make sure that there's enough income both to pay our way in terms of staff salaries, and the running costs, but also to make sure that there's money there to develop the museum and its programmes; and that's quite a challenge in these times.³⁸⁶

During the latter stages of this research, it was clear that there were tensions in the management of the museum. Disagreements amongst staff and council members have been reported quite widely:

Members of the Brontë Society have expressed serious concerns about the organisation's governance and are seeking to call an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) in order to elect a new

³⁸³. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218.

³⁸⁴. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218.

³⁸⁵. Charity Commission, '529952 The Brontë Society: charity overview', (2015), <<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=529952&SubsidiaryNumber=0>> [accessed 14 January 2015].

³⁸⁶. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

council of trustees.³⁸⁷

In her role as Arts Officer, Louisa Briggs has noted that the current Council members, drawn from members of the Society, have a significant and unusually 'hands on' role in the running of the museum.³⁸⁸ Jane Sellars, Director of the Parsonage between 1989 and 1997, highlighted the lack of experience of museums within the council, 'I think they've never [...] had anyone on the board who had a professional knowledge of museums'.³⁸⁹ This view was echoed more recently in a *Guardian* newspaper article in which new Council members are quoted as saying that the Society needs to 'become more professional'.³⁹⁰

Therefore, the role of the Brontë Society, while not central, is important for this thesis, as the historical development and management of the museum is key to understanding the rationale for the development of the Contemporary Arts Programme, and the tensions which exist within the various responses to the artworks installed in the museum. Many museums cite the need to develop audiences and find new ways of working. This itself can be seen as a response to some of the problems raised by heritage critique. Thus, it is centrally relevant to this investigation to set out the way in which the Parsonage can be seen as a heritage site.

This chapter, then, first traces the history of the museum and considers the

³⁸⁷. Geraldine Kendall, 'Brontë Society in Turmoil as Members Call for Egm', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/27082014-Brontë-society-in-turmoil>> [accessed 10 November 2014]. See also Geraldine Kendall, 'Brontë Society EGM Fails to Resolve Dispute With Members', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/07112014-Brontë-society-egm-fails-to-resolve-dispute>> [accessed 10 November 2014]; Rebecca Atkinson, 'Chair of Brontë Society Steps Down After One Month in Role', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/15102014-chair-of-Brontë-society-steps-down>> [accessed 10 November 2014].

³⁸⁸. Interview with Louisa Briggs at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 15 November 2013.

³⁸⁹. Interview with Jane Sellars at the Mercer Art Gallery on 8 January 2014. .

³⁹⁰. Alison Flood, 'Bonnie Greer Resigns From Floundering Brontë Society After Months of Infighting', *Guardian*, Books, 9 June 2015, <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/09/bonnie-greer-resigns-bronte-society-yorkshire>> [accessed 14 July 2015].

implication of understanding visitors as pilgrims. Following this, it contextualises the Parsonage within the discourse of heritage in order to demonstrate the significant complexity of the site as a visitor attraction.³⁹¹

The Brontës

For a home is not simply a house. It is an image of how we dwell, how we inhabit the world, how we view ourselves in the world. In this sense the nineteenth century interior captures the philosophical image of what it is like to dwell in the nineteenth century and, furthermore, what it is like to be in the nineteenth century.³⁹²

In raising the ontological question of 'being' in the nineteenth century, Maleuvre draws our attention to one of the central obsessions of Brontë discourse. This centres around the nature of the lives of Anne, Emily and Charlotte Brontë; the way in which the particularity of their lives in that place at that time resulted in the production of some of the most extraordinary literary works, not only of the nineteenth century, but in the history of literature. Given that a major component of the CAP is to provide alternative interpretations of the Brontës, their history and relationship to the present, this first section of chapter one sets out a brief history of the Brontës.

The Parsonage was built in 1779 (Figure 10), and came with Patrick Brontë's new position as Perpetual Curate of Haworth.³⁹³ In 1820, when they moved in, the Brontë family consisted of Maria Branwell, Patrick's wife, and their six children. Two daughters had been born while the family lived at Hartshead; Maria in 1814, and Elizabeth in 1815. The four famous Brontë children were born in Thornton, near Bradford; Charlotte in 1816, Patrick Branwell in 1817,³⁹⁴ Emily

³⁹¹. Rodney Harrison for example, suggests that his concept of 'connectivity' is a useful 'method for analysing and understanding heritage'. See Harrison, *Heritage*, p.229.

³⁹². Maleuvre, *Museum Memories, History, Technology, Art*, pp.119-120.

³⁹³. See Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës* for a detailed examination of the Parsonage as a home not just of the Brontës, but all the other people who have lived there.

³⁹⁴. Known more commonly as Branwell.

in 1818 and Anne in 1820. Unfortunately, soon afterwards, Patrick's wife Maria died in 1821, leaving him in sole charge of his family. Tragedy struck again only four years later when Maria and Elizabeth died in 1825.



Figure 10: Early ambrotype of the Parsonage.

Patrick was seen as a caring father, despite the rumours to the contrary that were perpetrated by Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë*.³⁹⁵ He was also very much involved with the cultural life of Haworth.³⁹⁶ A key moment in the development of the children as writers is Patrick's gift of toy soldiers for Branwell, brought back from Leeds in 1826. Branwell, Charlotte, Emily and Anne reacted to this gift by creating imaginary characters for whom they went on to create extensive imaginary worlds and develop complex narratives that reflected the real world events of which they were aware. These stories were to occupy the young writers into early adulthood, and influence much of their subsequent

³⁹⁵. Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857b)

³⁹⁶. Barker, 'The Haworth Context', p.19.

creative output.³⁹⁷

After the deaths of his wife and eldest daughters, the family did not remain untroubled. Haworth itself suffered a high death rate, compounded by particularly poor sanitation and sadly Patrick Brontë was to outlive all of his children.³⁹⁸ Branwell Brontë, after a varied and troubled adult life in which he was addicted to alcohol and opium, died of tuberculosis in September 1848.³⁹⁹ Emily died of tuberculosis in December 1848 and Anne died of the same in May 1849. Charlotte, very shortly after marrying Arthur Bell Nicholls, died of complications in relation to her pregnancy in 1855. Patrick Brontë remained at the Parsonage until he died in 1861.

The Brontës were interested in all art forms. Charlotte considered becoming an artist and had two drawings included in an exhibition in Leeds in 1834.⁴⁰⁰ It was as writers, however, that in the 1840s the sisters first came to public notice. Their first foray into publishing occurred in 1846 with the publication of *Poems*.⁴⁰¹ They chose to publish *Poems* under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell; according to Charlotte, this was born from a wish to avoid publicity.⁴⁰² Still under pseudonyms, Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne's *Agnes Grey* were published in 1847. Even with the publication of these first books, critics wondered about the identity of the authors.⁴⁰³ Due to their uncompromising portrayal of women's lives, these novels shocked contemporary readers. Attention was more and more drawn to the authors and

³⁹⁷. These stories have since been transcribed, and form a very important element of the literary scholarship of the Brontës. See, for example, *The Hand of the Arch-Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë*, ed. by Collins and *Charlotte Brontë: Tales of Angria*, ed. by Glen.

³⁹⁸. There are many sources available with detailed chronologies. See Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith, *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) for a particularly comprehensive chronology.

³⁹⁹. Dinsdale and White, *Brontë Parsonage Museum*, p.45.

⁴⁰⁰. Ann Dinsdale, *The Brontës at Haworth* (London: Francis Lincoln, 2006), p.62.

⁴⁰¹. Bell, Bell and Bell, *Poems*.

⁴⁰². Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p.xliv.

⁴⁰³. Charlotte herself notes this in her 'Biographical Notice'.

their public personas became the subject of intense scrutiny. Critics were 'immediately intrigued' as to the authors of *Poems*;⁴⁰⁴ later, 'the authors, not the books became the focus of interest'.⁴⁰⁵

By the early 1850s, it is apparent that people began to make their way to Haworth in a 'steady stream'.⁴⁰⁶ Visitors were interested both in the landscape and the writers, hoping 'to catch a glimpse' of Charlotte herself.⁴⁰⁷ However, it was after the death of the sisters and the publication of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857 that Haworth grew as a significant tourist destination, as it was Gaskell's book that 'catapult[ed] the Brontës into the realm of myth'.⁴⁰⁸ At this point Charlotte 'became a legend'.⁴⁰⁹ Later in this chapter I will examine a range of visitor accounts, tracing a path from some of the early visitors who show that the notion of Haworth as a shrine was embedded very early in the visitor consciousness, to more recent accounts which still demonstrate this sense of pilgrimage. However, at this point, it is to the development of this museum that I now focus my attention by exploring the process by which the home of the Brontës became first a museum and then a 'home' again.

From Home to Museum

While visitors were making their way to Haworth in the latter part of the nineteenth century, local interest in the Brontës was also growing.⁴¹⁰ After Patrick

^{404.} Lucasta Miller suggests critics were 'immediately intrigued' as to the identity of the authors of *Poems*. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.11

^{405.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.15.

^{406.} Anon, 'In Haworth a Century Ago', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 16 (1973), 219-221, p.219.

^{407.} Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218.

^{408.} Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*; Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.57.

^{409.} Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.1. Both Ann Dinsdale and Jane Sellars suggest that Gaskell's biography was central to the development of the Brontë story. Interview with Ann Dinsdale at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 4 October 2013; Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

^{410.} In characterising the development of the Parsonage as 'from home to museum' followed by 'from museum to home', I draw on Charles Lemon who titled one of his chapters 'From a Museum into a Home'. See Charles Lemon, *A Centenary History of the Brontë Society, 1893-1993* (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1993).

Brontë died, the contents of the Parsonage were sold at auction, creating a ready market for memorabilia, much of which was sold to wealthy American collectors as well as local residents.⁴¹¹ By 1893, however, dissatisfaction with this loss of local heritage had stimulated public calls from a variety of people, including a librarian, a journalist, an MP and an antiquarian, for Brontëana to be preserved.⁴¹² One of this group, the journalist W.W. Yates, wrote:

has not the time arrived when an effort should be made to secure, and to preserve for the use of the public for ever, the literary and other relics of Charlotte and her sisters?⁴¹³

It is from these early meetings and subsequent public correspondence in local newspapers that both the Brontë Society and the Brontë Museum were born.⁴¹⁴ The Society was formed in 1893, with the express purpose of collecting and displaying Brontëana. The first meeting described a 'new spirit' having arrived, representing a strong desire 'that the Brontë name should be perpetuated in as suitable a manner as possible'.⁴¹⁵ A museum was opened in a rented room above the Yorkshire Penny Bank on Haworth Main Street in 18 May 1895;⁴¹⁶ John Brigg from Keighley was the first signature in the first visitor book.⁴¹⁷

The Brontë Parsonage Museum is the only museum which is run by a literary society,⁴¹⁸ and the development of the Society and the museum in the

⁴¹¹. Brontë Society, 'History', (2010) [accessed 8 July 2014].

⁴¹². Lemon cites those present as 'Mr Butler Wood, the Chief Librarian of Bradford Public Libraries [...] Mr J. Horsfall Turner, of Idle, an antiquarian, Mr William Walsh Yates, a Dewsbury journalist, and Mr (afterwards Sir) John Brigg MP, of Kildwick'. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.2.

⁴¹³. Black, 'Early History of the Brontë Society'.

⁴¹⁴. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, pp.2-3.

⁴¹⁵. Brontë Society, 'First Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 1 (1895), 5-8, p.7.

⁴¹⁶. Anon, 'The Brontë Museum at Haworth', *Manchester Guardian*, 1895, p.8. This building is now the local Tourist Information Office.

⁴¹⁷. It was in examining these first visitor books, and noting that visitors only left a signature and address, that I became more aware of the fact that leaving comments has not always been common practice.

⁴¹⁸. Ann Sumner noted this during a lecture she gave at University of Leeds in November 2013.

early days were one and the same thing.⁴¹⁹ The Society had the aim of moving their museum to the Parsonage, records show one member had suggested the Parsonage as the ideal venue as early as 1898.⁴²⁰ When it came up for sale in 1928, local businessman James Roberts was able to offer the Society the £3000 that was needed to purchase the newly-vacant building.⁴²¹ The Brontë Parsonage, home of the Brontë family between 1820 and 1861, was opened as a museum on 4 August 1928. At this point, the Society gained the capacity to expand the collection. Space had been a problem in their original site above the bank; with the additional space that their new home brought, the collection was able to expand rapidly through acquisition and bequest. The Brontë Society quickly secured the Museum's status as the largest collection of Brontë-related material in the world.

With its new site and growing collection, huge visitor numbers followed. In the first year, the Parsonage welcomed ten thousand visitors. In the first decades this figure was not matched again until 1934, but from this point there was a steady increase, with numbers peaking in 1974 at 221,000 visitors.⁴²²

Within the *Brontë Society Transactions*' narrative of the museum's twentieth-century history, a significant change can be seen in the 1950s in the way that the museum developed. Put simply, it was in this decade that the Society enacted their long-held ambition to restore the Parsonage to a 'historically accurate' interior; 'it has always been the dream of the Brontë Society to restore the

⁴¹⁹ The history of the Brontë Society is well documented throughout the *Brontë Society Transactions*, however, a detailed history was written by Charles Lemon in 1993 to mark the centenary of the society. It is from Lemon's history that this summary is largely drawn.

⁴²⁰ Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.10.

⁴²¹ Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës*, p.61. It is interesting to note that this connection between the Parsonage and Sir James Roberts was explored in *The Silent Wild*, a film commissioned by Diane Howse as part of her collaborative exhibition project shown at the museum in 2015.

⁴²² For detailed Society membership and museum visitor statistics, see appendix C in Lemon, *A Centenary History*, pp.139-141.

Parsonage as far as possible to what it looked like when the Brontës lived there'.⁴²³ This notion is critical for an understanding of the site as it is today.

There were a number of practical reasons why a change was necessary. Firstly, change was driven by the large number of visitors who were creating problems, not least congestion in the main doorway. The staircase created further congestion as it was by this means that visitors had to both ascend and descend.⁴²⁴ Through the work which took place to replace out-of-date wiring in 1952, additional problems had come to light such as dry rot and woodworm,⁴²⁵ and by 1955 the Society had formally noted their desire for an extension as it would relieve many of these problems.⁴²⁶ When work actually started in 1957, the Society's intentions were again reiterated, 'far from in any way changing the character of the building, the proposed scheme will make it more closely resemble the Parsonage of the Brontës' day'.⁴²⁷

During an appearance on Woman's Hour in 1959, Dr Phyllis Bentley from the Society described the way that the refurbishment transformed the museum into an 'expert affair':

The Parsonage windows have been reglazed with small panes, so that we now look through the same kind of windows the Brontës looked through. The dining room [...] has now the chairs the Brontës sat on and the table they used, the couch on which Emily died [...] their pictures and books, and in the wallpaper and furnishing 'crimson predominating' as Mrs Gaskell said when she visited Charlotte in 1853.⁴²⁸

It is important to note the way in which the objects had a fetishised quality; Caterina Albano has described objects such as these as 'biographical relics' and

⁴²³. Brontë Society, 'From a Museum Into a Home', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 13 (1959), 339-341, p.340.

⁴²⁴. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.48.

⁴²⁵. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.51.

⁴²⁶. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.53.

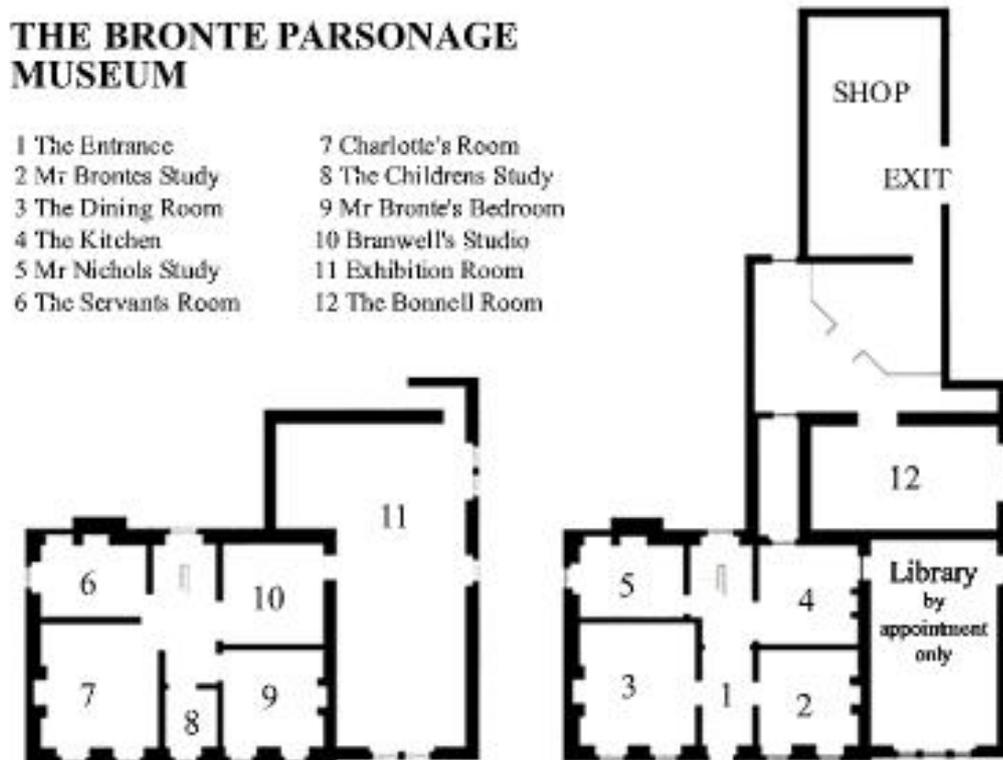
⁴²⁷. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.57.

⁴²⁸. Brontë Society, 'From a Museum Into a Home', pp.340-341 See also the quote from Charles Hale on page 117 regarding his enthusiasm for looking through Brontë windows.

that 'the turning of personal possessions into modern relics has broader social and cultural significance'.⁴²⁹

The extension that was built as part of this refurbishment was the structural catalyst that allowed the recreation of the Brontës' home. Figure 11 shows a plan in which the extent of the additional space can be seen, from Room 12, The Bonnell Room, to the shop and exit at the rear. Moving some of the collections into display areas created by this extension enabled the Parsonage rooms to be developed as period interiors. Christopher Whitehead suggests that this type of display has a particular duality, in that it is a collection of objects, and has an identity as an object itself.⁴³⁰ This is important to note as it is this unity of the interior as an object which is at issue with the 'intervention' of art.

Figure 11: Plan.



⁴²⁹. Caterina Albano, 'Displaying Lives: The Narrative of Objects in Biographical Exhibitions', *Museum and Society*, 5 (2007), 15-28, p.15 and later quote p 18.

⁴³⁰. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.26.

Information for these reconstructions came from a variety of sources, including the sale catalogue of 1861 and Elizabeth Gaskell's observations.⁴³¹



Figure 12: Dining Room in the early 1990s.

The ongoing nature of this process is evident today in the work that the Society continues to do to retain and further develop the presentation of the Parsonage as the Brontë home. Ann Dinsdale explained that 'wherever possible we set the rooms out using the Brontës' own furniture in accordance with contemporary accounts and every scrap of information is [...] referenced in the way that the house is displayed'.⁴³² The issue of authenticity has been a source of difficulty from the beginning. Charles Lemon noted that it was the sale in 1861 of 'Brontëana, leading in turn to the production of all kinds of spurious artefacts - a disquieting development which was one of the reasons for the establishment of the society'.⁴³³

⁴³¹. Dinsdale, *The Brontës at Haworth*, p.133.

⁴³². Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

⁴³³. Lemon, *A Centenary History*, p.2.

After their usual closed period in January 1987 for example, then curator Juliet Barker wrote in *Transactions* that further improvements had been made in the verisimilitude of the house.⁴³⁴ For the Dining Room, additional sources from 1858 had come to light which showed that the alcoves either side of the fireplace had originally had shelves. This new source prompted the staff to remove the display cabinets which had been there and replace them with shelves (Figure 12). Barker also described that:

in Mr Brontë's Study, Ellen Nussey's chairs (which were of a quality far superior to anything owned by the Brontës) have been removed from display. The non-Brontë tablecloth which covered the two side tables in the centre of the room has been removed and the two tables have been put into the alcoves, one each side of the fireplace. Mr Brontë's delightful little desk with the brass handles has been brought into greater prominence in front of the fire.⁴³⁵



Figure 13: Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.

More recently, 'in 1989 all furniture not belonging to the Brontës was removed to leave only authentic items, with the exception of the reproduction

⁴³⁴. Barker, 'Changes in the Museum'.

⁴³⁵. Barker, 'Changes in the Museum', p.173.

bed in Patrick Brontë's bedroom, which is based on a drawing by Branwell' (Figure 13).⁴³⁶ An entirely new decorative scheme was developed from 2011. Allyson McDermott was appointed to provide a detailed survey and stratigraphy in order to 'inform decision making about the restoration'.⁴³⁷ This stratigraphy revealed that in certain places in the dining room there were eighteen identifiable layers of decoration. Based on these results, in combination with broader based research into what a parsonage might have looked like in the 1840s, a dramatically new restoration was carried out during January 2013.⁴³⁸ Every single room open to the public 'has been historically and scientifically refurbished'.⁴³⁹ Virginia Rushton described:

what they are seeing at the moment is pretty much the house that Charlotte died in. It's her house. It's been recreated to reflect what happened when Charlotte started to earn some money. Just before she got married there were alterations made. It became a mid-Victorian house, rather than a late Georgian early Victorian house.⁴⁴⁰

This accords with Rinsicoff de Gorgas who argued that 'the chief purpose of the historic house museum is to ensure that the building is in all aspects at one with the more or less original collections', and that 'the symbolic value of this unity makes it a realistic benchmark of past time'.⁴⁴¹

This development 'from museum to home' was created partly in response to the sheer numbers of visitors who were making their way to Haworth, but it had always been the aim of the Society to move towards this as a strategy of engagement. Moving from the first museum to the actual Parsonage ultimately

⁴³⁶. Dinsdale and White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*, p.6.

⁴³⁷. Allyson McDermott and Crick Smith, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum Haworth: An Analysis of Decorative Finishes With Focus on the Brontë Period of Occupation*, (Lincoln: University of Lincoln, 2011), p.9.

⁴³⁸. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

⁴³⁹. Brontë Society, 'A guide to the Brontë Parsonage decorative scheme', [Leaflet] (2013).

⁴⁴⁰. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

⁴⁴¹. Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas, 'Reality as Illusion, the Historic Houses That Become Museums', *Museum International*, 53 (2001), 10-15, p.11.

enabled the creation of a visitor experience which give visitors an impression of the Brontës' home. McCarthy suggests 'there's this kind of illusion that the Brontës have just stepped out of the room'.⁴⁴² Heritage as a concept provides the context for both the processes of period reconstruction and the growth of tourism, and a context in which to explore the ways in which contemporary art intersects with the Parsonage as a heritage site. In the context of the Parsonage, this relation is closely bound up with expectations of visitors to the site and the notion of Brontë pilgrims.

Brontë pilgrims

The *Companion to the Brontës* suggests that, like 'so many cultural shrines', Haworth depends on Brontë tourism.⁴⁴³ Deborah Phillips has highlighted that:

the literary pilgrimage [...] can take in a range of sites: the houses where great writers (or often their characters) lived, worked or died, the settings of their fictional worlds, and the houses and gardens that have been used in film and television adaptations; all are potential destinations for the literary pilgrim.⁴⁴⁴

The Parsonage as a literary museum is thus described as a shrine and visitors are pilgrims. It is worth dwelling for a moment on what these labels might suggest, and then exploring a range of historic and contemporary visitor testimony to see if these tropes are appropriate ones to use as terms of reference in this analysis of the Parsonage.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes a shrine not only as a 'repository in which the relics of a saint are preserved' but also as 'a place where worship is offered or devotions are paid to a saint or deity'.⁴⁴⁵ I do not wish to begin a

⁴⁴² Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁴⁴³ Lloyd Evans and Lloyd Evans, *Companion to the Brontës*, p.389.

⁴⁴⁴ Deborah Phillips, 'Mapping Literary Britain: Tourist Guides to Literary Landscapes 1951-2007', *Tourist Studies*, 11 (2011), 21-35, p.21.

⁴⁴⁵ *Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. by John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

discussion of the saintly status of the Brontës, however, the Brontë Society preserves a wide range of objects belonging to the family including clothing, underwear, hair and other quite private belongings (Figure 14). Maines and Glynn have described these sort of objects as 'numinous', or things

we collect and preserve not for what they may reveal to us as material documents, or for any visible aesthetic quality, but for their association, real or imagined, with some person, place or event endowed with special sociocultural magic.⁴⁴⁶

This definition suggests that it is important to consider the role of those who are involved in the preservation, as well as those who are 'offering worship'.



Figure 14: Charlotte's Room.

Returning to the dictionary, a pilgrimage is described as 'a journey made by a pilgrim; a journey (usually of some considerable duration) made to some sacred place, as an act of religious devotion' or 'a journey undertaken [...] to visit a place held in honour from some association with some person or event'.⁴⁴⁷ This

⁴⁴⁶. Rachel P. Maines and James J. Glynn, 'Numinous Objects', *Public Historian*, 1 (1993), p.10.

⁴⁴⁷. *OED*, ed. by Simpson and Weiner.

suggests that visitors to the Parsonage may potentially have travelled long distances because the site is deemed important simply through association.⁴⁴⁸ The extent of the distances travelled is borne out by visitor books. The very first visitor book from 1895 has entries in May which show visitors came from Dublin and Switzerland.⁴⁴⁹ The June entries include visitors from Australia, South Africa and six different states in America. This book was for visitors to the museum above the bank, rather than the Parsonage, but it demonstrates the range of distances travelled very early in the life of the Society and museum. Also found in this first book is what might have been the first school visit, with the teacher Jonas Bradley signing the book for his class of twenty pupils from Stanbury school, who visited in 1904. Contemporary comments also demonstrate that distance travelled is important enough for visitors to record. Today, the popularity of Haworth can also be seen by the range of languages in which the museum provides guidebooks, and the fact that the walk across country to Top Withens, the farm site whose 'mythic status' stems from its reputation as the inspiration for Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, is signposted in Japanese as well as English.⁴⁵⁰

It has been argued that there are three stages to a pilgrimage.⁴⁵¹ Firstly, through the physical act of leaving home, there is separation from the normal environment. This separation is followed by a liminal stage, far away in both mental and physical space, during which time the pilgrim experiences something sacred. The final stage is one of return to what might be described as normal life.

⁴⁴⁸. Contagion is a concept through which objects gain value simply by association. For an analysis of how contagion relates to authenticity of artworks, see G. E. Newman and Paul Bloom, 'Art and Authenticity: The Importance of Originals in Judgments of Value', *Journal of Experimental Psychology General*, 141 (2012), 558-569.

⁴⁴⁹. Original Visitor Books, Brontë Parsonage collection.

⁴⁵⁰. Room guides are available in English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Russian, Polish, Chinese, Japanese and Korean. *Ways to the Stone House: Simon Warner*, ed. by Brontë Society, (Haworth: The Brontë Society, 2012), p.5.

⁴⁵¹. John Urry and Jonas Larson, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* 3rd edn (London: Sage Publications, 2011), p.12.

On return, though, the pilgrim's identity is seen as changed through the process:

At the far place both the pilgrim and the tourist 'worship' shrines which are sacred, albeit in different ways, and as a result gain some kind of uplifting experience.⁴⁵²

The status of the Parsonage as a shrine, which is set apart, also accords with Michel Foucault's concept of a heterotopia, a place which is both real and set apart from everyday life and time, and suggests that a form of 'ritual' is necessary to enter.⁴⁵³ Reading the novels could certainly be described as the ritual necessary to truly 'enter' the spirit of the Parsonage as a place. In what ways then, are these ideas evidenced through visitor testimony?

There are many accounts of visitors to Haworth. Charlotte herself had noted their appearance in one of her letters of March 1850, finding it strange, since Haworth was not the setting for these novels.⁴⁵⁴ Numerous accounts can be found in *Brontë Society Transactions* that accord with this notion of pilgrimage.⁴⁵⁵ Throughout the journal, a variety of testimonies suggest that Haworth was becoming a place subject to the tourist gaze as early as the 1850s and that visitors were an expected part of village life by 1858,⁴⁵⁶ when Patrick Brontë's sermons were 'sometimes swollen with sightseers'.⁴⁵⁷

Notable examples of visitor testimony from *Transactions* include Charles Hale who, in 1861, wrote to his mother from Elizabeth Gaskell's house where he was staying as a visitor.⁴⁵⁸ Hale described in detail a trip he made to Haworth, noting elements of his visit that were suggested by Gaskell who would have been

⁴⁵². Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.12.

⁴⁵³. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.378.

⁴⁵⁴. Dinsdale, *At Home With the Brontës*, p.37. An extract from the letter is quoted on page 87.

⁴⁵⁵. The number of visitor accounts in the journal merited a special publication of the Brontë Society. See *Early Visitors to Haworth*, ed. by Lemon

⁴⁵⁶. Anon, 'In Haworth a Century Ago', p.220.

⁴⁵⁷. Brontë Society, 'History', (2010) [accessed 8 July 2014] para2.

⁴⁵⁸. Hale, 'An American Visitor'.

extremely familiar with both Haworth and the Parsonage. In a remarkable passage Hale described how, as the result of repairs being carried out to the Parsonage, he was able to purchase parts of sash windows and some panelling from Charlotte Brontë's bedroom:

so I can frame photographs with wood and glaze them with glass from the place - we shall look at them through the same medium through which Charlotte Brontë saw the dreary landscape before her window and they will be surrounded with wood that was about her as she sat there.⁴⁵⁹

Clearly Hale had been able to secure for himself a relic, something that would connect him with the writer and her experience of being and looking in the Parsonage. Hale's visit is also noted by Tracey Messenger who suggested that Brontë artworks have been collected as relics, rather than for their qualities as artworks.⁴⁶⁰

During Emily Dawson's visit in 1866, she explored the village and key Brontë landmarks including the Parsonage, the church and the Black Bull pub.⁴⁶¹ Her testimony demonstrates the value that knowledge of the Brontës brings to the experience:

Take away the association and what had we seen? A straggling, dreary village, a lone, gray, square house with a few stunted trees in a small front garden, a remarkably ugly church and a dirty village inn - and yet, compared with them and the peculiar sensations they aroused, the most splendid palace among the most gorgeous scenery would have sunk to nothing.⁴⁶²

Here a village with apparently little architectural or horticultural appeal is lifted above 'the most splendid palace', purely through its association with the Brontës.

⁴⁵⁹. Hale, 'An American Visitor', p.135.

⁴⁶⁰. Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.434.

⁴⁶¹. Emily Sarah Dowson, 'A Visit to Haworth in 1866', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1968), 255-257. *The Manchester Guardian* noted that these sights are 'worth more to the true pilgrim than the personal relics in the museum'. Anon, 'The Brontë Museum at Haworth', *Manchester Guardian*, 1895, p.8.

⁴⁶². Dowson, 'A Visit to Haworth in 1866', p.257.

In a 1973 issue of *Transactions*, Emilie Langois recounted the journey made by François Odysse-Barot from France in 1873.⁴⁶³ Langois noted that in Odysse-Barot's 1874 book on English literature, he included a section on Charlotte Brontë, where he described Haworth, the influence of Elizabeth Gaskell, and the number of visitors who travelled to Haworth to pay their respects to the writers.⁴⁶⁴ While Odysse-Barot did not use the word 'pilgrimage', it is clear he was surprised by the number and global diversity of visitors to this 'lugubrious' place.⁴⁶⁵

Virginia Woolf's first ever published writing was an account of her visit to Haworth in 1904. It was reprinted in *Transactions* in 1979, having resurfaced in an edited volume of Woolf's writings published in 1978.⁴⁶⁶ Woolf's text is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, she considers the nature of pilgrimages to 'shrines of famous men';⁴⁶⁷ she also notes another enduring myth 'that the sun very seldom shone on the Brontës', and she constructs her text around ideas suggested by Gaskell's biography.⁴⁶⁸ As well as exploring the interior of the Parsonage, Woolf visited the Brontë Museum, which was at that point in the village,⁴⁶⁹ describing it as:

a pallid and inanimate collection of objects. An effort ought to be made to keep things out of these mausoleums, but the choice often lies between them and destruction, so that we must be grateful for the care which has preserved much that is, under any circumstances of deep interest.⁴⁷⁰

It is clear from these early descriptions of visits made to Haworth that the

⁴⁶³. Emile Langois, '100 Years Ago: A Frenchman's Visit to Haworth', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 16 (1973), 222-223.

⁴⁶⁴. François Odysse-Barot, *Histoire De La Littérature Contemporaine En Angleterre, 1830-1874* (Paris: Charpentier et Cie, 1874).

⁴⁶⁵. Langois, '100 Years Ago: A Frenchman's Visit to Haworth', p.222.

⁴⁶⁶. *Books and Portraits*, ed. by Mary Lyon, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978).

⁴⁶⁷. Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p.272.

⁴⁶⁸. Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p.273. This myth inspired the artist Rebecca Chesney to analyse both the real meteorological history of Haworth, and the fictional weather as it appears in the novels of the Brontës. Her residency ran from 2011 and the resulting exhibition was shown at the Parsonage in the summer of 2012.

⁴⁶⁹. Despite my efforts, I could not find her signature in the corresponding visitor book in the Brontë Parsonage archive.

⁴⁷⁰. Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904'.

sense of pilgrimage was already embedded in visitors' thinking before the turn of the century. Charles Hale's testimony showed the importance of objects and their associations. The value of relics varied, however. An article reporting the 'Sale of the Brontë Relics' complained that 'the first half dozen lots [...] failed to elicit a single bid, and even afterwards, when bidding did begin, things went for the most part at ridiculously low prices'.⁴⁷¹

From the accounts considered here, the subject matter of the novels and the mystery surrounding the authors' identities have contributed to the development of Haworth as a site of pilgrimage. Emily Dawson's testimony showed the importance of place. Dawson demonstrated a keen sense of wanting to find the origin of the books in order to understand how such a place gave inspiration to the authors. François Odysse-Barot demonstrated the distance from which visitors would travel; a fact which is also clear from the original visitor books. Virginia Woolf's account of her visit in 1904 demonstrated a tension between the idea of the museum as a mausoleum and objects which were valuable aids to thinking about the Brontës' work. This sense of pilgrimage is also clear when more recent testimony is considered.

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze.⁴⁷²

Two issues from Urry's definition of tourism are of particular pertinence to the notion of a pilgrimage to Haworth. Firstly, Urry suggests that the tourist who is visiting Haworth has spent some time considering the kind of experience they are likely to have during their visit. Key here, however, is that literature is a

⁴⁷¹. Anon, 'Sale of the Brontë Relics', *Observer*, 3 July 1898, p.7.

⁴⁷². Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.4.

technology of anticipation. Pocock's research from 1987 concluded that 'anticipation of the experience of Haworth among the visitors was derived overwhelmingly from the writings of the Brontës themselves'.⁴⁷³ Many comments demonstrate that it is visitors' connection with the Brontë novels that forms the nexus of their 'anticipation', perhaps supported through film and televisual adaptations, or knowledge of the lives of the Brontës themselves:

A wonderful visit on my birthday. I studied *Jane Eyre* many years ago as a GCSE and loved the novel.

I love it here and I was inspired by reading *Jane Eyre* & *Wuthering heights* at school.

A fascinating way to spend our 14th Wedding Anniversary. *Jane Eyre* was an inspiration to me as a teenager, I never get tired of reading any Brontë novel.

I read *Jane Eyre* when I was 11 & it is still my favourite book. An experience of a life time for me. Thank you. [Cape Town, South Africa]⁴⁷⁴

The second point Urry makes is that:

The tourist gaze is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary.⁴⁷⁵

The fact that visitors to the Parsonage perceive their experience as something which is significantly different from their normal lives is important. MacCannell proposed that 'the tourist is a kind of contemporary pilgrim, seeking authenticity in other "times" and other "places" away from that person's everyday life'.⁴⁷⁶

Kylie Message has described a 'disjuncture' at the point at which

⁴⁷³. D. C. D. Pocock, 'Haworth: The Experience of a Literary Place', in *Geography and Literature*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1987) pp.135-142, p.136. Unfortunately, Pocock's research is limited in its questioning of the concept of 'pilgrimage' and 'shrine'.

⁴⁷⁴. In order, these comments are from 'Remnants: visitor comments book', (2010); 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book', (2013); 'Ways to the Stonehouse: Visitor Comments Book', (2012); General Comments Book, (2015).

⁴⁷⁵. Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.4.

⁴⁷⁶. Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.10.

museums as bastions of 'high culture' are separated from the 'everyday' life that surrounds them.⁴⁷⁷ Conversely, however, it has been suggested that tourism is not as separate from everyday life as has been previously thought. Recent work in Tourism Studies, notably by David Crouch, has borrowed from Actor Network Theory to suggest that tourist experiences are more layered and complex, and cannot easily be defined as separate.⁴⁷⁸ MacCannell has also critiqued Urry's tourist gaze, suggesting that it polarises the tourist's life into a dialectic of 'boring ordinary' and 'extraordinary tourism'.⁴⁷⁹ The interesting element of this criticism, is that MacCannell goes on to say that the logical conclusion to this is a problem for museums. If the tourist gaze correctly identifies the desire for extraordinary experiences, then the museum must meet that demand for spectacle and wonder in relation to that which for the visitor (in their normal lives), is ordinary. Clearly, for the diversity of museum visitors, this yardstick of 'extraordinary' becomes difficult to quantify, and has implications when considering the way in which contemporary art changes one type of experience for another;

Combined with expectation, it is this liminality which can be seen to frame a visitor's experience of the Parsonage. The strength of feeling which is consistently expressed by visitors and the fact that a substantial number of comments refer to a long held ambition to visit, is useful in relation to the subsequent analysis of contemporary art within its walls.⁴⁸⁰ Given that Urry suggests reminiscence is a major part of what people do at heritage sites, reminiscence may not be so easily reconciled with the central idea of the CAP

⁴⁷⁷ Kylie Message, *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p.5.

⁴⁷⁸ David Crouch and Luke Desforges, 'The Sensuous in the Tourist Encounter: Introduction, the Power of the Body in Tourist Studies', *Tourist Studies*, 3 (2003), 5-22, p.12.

⁴⁷⁹ Dean MacCannell, *The Ethics of Sightseeing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p.198.

⁴⁸⁰ See Appendix 5, Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

which is a desire to encourage new ways of looking. This demonstrates the need to consider how these artworks intersect with these notions of pilgrimage.⁴⁸¹

A heritage site

According to the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) a:

Cultural Heritage Site refers to a place, locality, natural landscape, settlement area, architectural complex, archaeological site, or standing structure that is recognized and often legally protected as a place of historical and cultural significance.⁴⁸²

This definition frames the Brontë Parsonage Museum, the surrounding countryside and locality as a place which has a particular cultural value based on its historical significance. According to DEMHIST, the International Committee for Historic House Museums, the Parsonage can be identified more specifically as a 'personality house' because it is associated with significant writers.⁴⁸³ As the ICOMOS Charter suggests, its value is also recognised in law. The Parsonage is legally protected by its status as a Grade One listed building. Thus, along with the development of the Parsonage as a site of pilgrimage, it can also be set within the context of a framework of heritage policies and legal protection at a national and international level.

In addition to the growth of this international framework of governing documents relating to the protection of culturally valuable places, the last decades of the twentieth century also saw a significant level of critique aimed at

⁴⁸¹. See John Urry, 'How Societies Remember the Past', in *Theorising Museums*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) pp.45-65, p.54.

⁴⁸². ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.2. According to the 1972 World Heritage Convention, 'cultural heritage' consists of monuments (including architectural works and paintings), groups of buildings, and sites. UNESCO, 'Convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage'.

⁴⁸³. Julius Bryant and Hetty Behrens, 'The DEMHIST Categorisation Project for Historic House Museums: Progress Report', *International Committee for Historic House Museums*, (2007) <http://demhist.icom.museum/shop/data/container/AASLH_Kykuit_Findings.pdf> [accessed 18 June 2012].

this expanding protection of historic sites. Kevin Walsh has argued that this 'expansion of such representations should be considered as another part of the intensification of the (post-)modern experience.'⁴⁸⁴ In his key piece of heritage critique from 1987, Robert Hewison described the obsession with turning historic sites into visitor attractions as the 'heritage industry'.⁴⁸⁵ Arguing that it was a result of industrial decline, Hewison found Britain too full of places which were backward looking, a symptom 'of a country obsessed with its past, and unable to face its future'.⁴⁸⁶ Further:

we have begun to construct a past that, far from being a defence against the future, is a set of imprisoning walls upon which we project a superficial image of a false past, simultaneously turning our backs on the reality of history, and incapable of moving forward because of the absorbing fantasy before us. This is the meaning of the heritage industry.⁴⁸⁷

Reading the Parsonage within both these frameworks, policy and critique, sets up a provocative dialectic. In the terms of ICOMOS, the Parsonage is a place of cultural significance. Perhaps both symptom and cause of this significance, the Brontë Society has, over many years, carefully developed the building as an increasingly accurate period interior representation of the Brontës' home. In Hewison's terms, this is no more than an 'absorbing fantasy'. This is not an attempt to reduce the Parsonage to one or the other. Instead, this dialectic suggests a rich complexity within the nature of the Parsonage as a heritage site which is important to explore as the context within which the Contemporary Arts Programme operates. This will be analysed in detail in the next chapter.

In examining the attitudes of contemporary visitors, several sources have been addressed. This includes interviews with staff and visitors, informal observations

⁴⁸⁴. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.94.

⁴⁸⁵. Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*.

⁴⁸⁶. Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, p.9.

⁴⁸⁷. Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, p.139.

and conversations on site and drawing substantially on visitor comment books. One substantial source is the extensive visitor survey carried out by Wafer Hadley in 2014.⁴⁸⁸ I also interviewed the intern who carried out the initial visitor survey which formed the basis for this report.⁴⁸⁹ Popular travel writing can also be found on a variety of social media, blogs and websites. As contemporary versions of the earlier forms of travel writing, these merit consideration as they indicate the general attitudes of visitors. Using TripAdvisor or Facebook as a source, for example, raises a number of problems relating to the veracity of comments or the identity and affiliation of the author, although, these also relate to the concerns which surround the validity of visitor books. Despite these problems, social media platforms are now a significant route for museums to engage with their visitors and as such should not be overlooked.⁴⁹⁰

TripAdvisor, for example, is a website which provides the opportunity for people to submit comments relating to their holidays and travel.⁴⁹¹ As an independent resource, it aims to allow travellers to advise each other in order to improve their travelling experience.⁴⁹² It is a comprehensive resource and there are a number of pages with comments relating to a wide variety of Brontë and Haworth-related attractions. One of the advantages of TripAdvisor and Facebook over traditional comment books is that authors can be contacted directly. In this way, I followed up a TripAdvisor comment which expressed an objection to my exhibition 'Artists of Faith'. The author replied and clarified their objection which

⁴⁸⁸ Wafer Hadley, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum: Visitor Survey Analysis and Recommendations*, (Leeds: Wafer Hadley, 2014).

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with Jordan Blackman at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 22 November 2013.

⁴⁹⁰ A substantial section of *Museum Practice* is dedicated to social media. See for example Rebecca Atkinson, 'Developing a Social Media Strategy', *Museum Practice*, (2011) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/social-media-basics/15032011-strategy>> [accessed 3 September 2015].

⁴⁹¹ See <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk>.

⁴⁹² TripAdvisor, 'About Us', (2013) <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-c6-About_Us.html> [accessed 5 May 2014].

deepened my understanding of the context. Indeed, Parsonage staff have also contacted people in this way to address issues raised. During my visit to the Parsonage on Friday, 10 July 2015, I had a discussion with one member of staff regarding a Facebook comment in which a visitor had complained about the installation of an iPad on the dining room table as part of 'The Silent Wild' exhibition. The comment read 'The iPad showing a modern dance piece is completely inappropriate and ruins the atmosphere of the dining room. Can it not be moved to a more appropriate place outside the Brontë home?'. The Parsonage had replied on Facebook, asking for the author to contact them directly. I have used comments on social media, however, only to triangulate my ideas about visitor responses, rather than as direct sources in their own terms.

The broad picture of visitors these sources create is one of the Brontë enthusiast who may have travelled a long distance to visit the place where the famous novels were written. Jenna Holmes, for example, in describing the Parsonage visitor said:

Well, we do have quite a variety really because we have people who've travelled from all over the world, we'll have for example a lot of Japanese tourists who come; I've heard stories of people fainting on the threshold, you know, that they've wanted to come all their life; you know you do have this sense of the pilgrimage about it. But then we have a lot of American visitors and overseas visitors, and then people who come from all over the country.⁴⁹³

Ann Dinsdale, Collections Manager, who herself has 'been coming here from being a young child during the 60s', described the site and the visitor in much the same way:

⁴⁹³. Interview with Jenna Holmes at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 5 November 2010.

Well it is, it is a shrine. I mean we get people who come here from all over the world; you know it's been like an ambition from childhood to come here and see where the novels were written.⁴⁹⁴

Virginia Rushton, a trustee until 2014, noted again a similar visitor, but also began to articulate the complexity of connection between individuals and an active engagement with the Brontë literature:

Well to be quite flippant to start with, I think there are a lot of people who regard this as a sort of shrine. [...] I think that there is a group of people who do know the literature, and they really want to come and see where it all started and that's a bit of a shrine but it is also informing the way they re-read the literature, the way they think about the contribution; what *Jane Eyre* means, what is the impact of *Wuthering Heights*, why do people go on reading *Wuthering Heights*, I hope that the visit stimulates a broadening of ones own personal intellectual, emotional horizons. So there's that. Lots of school kids come. The education programme supports the national curriculum. It's a nice place for pupils to come and visit in groups and I think the programme works quite well. So the pilgrim, the real Brontë enthusiast, the Brontë scholar, and the new Brontë reader if you like.⁴⁹⁵

Visitor books at the Parsonage are particularly compelling. Visitors are writing their comment actually in the house which has been the object of their pilgrimage.⁴⁹⁶ Jane Sellars suggested that the visitor books in Haworth are 'very important' because visitors are 'moved to write something' and 'you ignore at your peril if a message is coming over to you'.⁴⁹⁷

While the Parsonage maintains one 'general' comments book, and one for the Contemporary Arts Programme, similar comments appear in each. From a close reading, several themes emerge. A substantial number of comments from all comment books could be coded as 'ambition' to visit.⁴⁹⁸ Visitors describe their

⁴⁹⁴. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

⁴⁹⁵. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

⁴⁹⁶. It is worth noting here that visitors did not always leave comments. At least until to the 1970s, visitor books comprise only a signature and a date.

⁴⁹⁷. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014. Andrew McCarthy also described the visitor books as 'very important'. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁴⁹⁸. See, for example, the comment book summaries for Paula Rego, Cornelia Parker and Su Blackwell in Appendix 5.

wish to visit, often since childhood:

After 50 years - here at last.⁴⁹⁹

Have wanted to come here since I was a child and finally made it for my 53rd Birthday! Wonderful!⁵⁰⁰

This desire can be connected to Urry and Larson's sense of anticipation; these visitors clearly know how long the Brontë Parsonage Museum has been a place that they wanted to visit. Often, visitors remark on how many times they have been, or how far they have travelled:

2nd Pilgrimage to the Parsonage. Wonderfull [sic] feelings here.⁵⁰¹

3rd or 4th time we have been, but still a very moving experience. Just love it here!!⁵⁰²

A pilgrimage from the other side of the world! Thank you!⁵⁰³

These comments also highlight that visitors describe emotions aroused as a result of being in the house. David Crouch has argued that this "'there-ness" (being *there* at a heritage place) is a dynamic interplay between sensory feelings, imagination, sensuality and desire, expressiveness and meaning making'.⁵⁰⁴ The dynamic nature of visitors is often one of movement through the house: 'wonderful experience to walk and see and feel the environment which created such talented

⁴⁹⁹. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁵⁰⁰. General Comments Book. July 2015.

⁵⁰¹. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁵⁰². 'General Visitor Comments Book' (2015).

⁵⁰³. General Comments Book. July 2015. The use of the word 'pilgrimage' can also be found on the TripAdvisor page for the Parsonage. For example, the TripAdvisor user 'Jandhml' posted: 'having been a fan of the Brontës books for years I had always intended to make the pilgrimage to their home in Haworth'. Jandhml, 'Well Presented and Informative', (2013) <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186409-d211789-r175895980-Bronte_Parsonage_Museum-Haworth_Keighley_West_Yorkshire_England.html> [accessed 5 June 2015].

⁵⁰⁴. David Crouch in Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.49. See also Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.77. Peter Howard has noted that tourists sometimes have unexpected experiences which can be described as spiritual. Howard, *Heritage*, pp.127-128.

artists'.⁵⁰⁵ Crouch has furthermore pointed out that Urry's concept of the 'Tourist Gaze' is inadequate for conceptualising the complexity of the physical and emotional engagement of a tourist.⁵⁰⁶

These, and earlier comments, point to the spiritual nature of many visitors' journey to the Parsonage as a sacred site. People visit because they already have a long established relationship to the Brontës, they are likely to have read the novels when they were younger, and are now interested in the Brontës and the stories of their lives in Haworth:

I come from Spain, quite a long way; but I would take it a second and a third time just to see such a wonderful museum about such an extraordinary family. *Wuthering Heights* was an unputdownable novel for me.⁵⁰⁷

A further notable example from 2013 can be seen in the visit by Patti Smith, a musician well known for her involvement in the punk scene in the 1970s.⁵⁰⁸ Echoing those early American visitors, Smith has had a long fascination with English literary history, and she played a small concert in Haworth to raise money for the Brontë Society.

Two research projects show consistency across time in relation to visitors' interest in the Brontës. In 1998, Sarah Tetley found over 80% of visitors were motivated to visit by their interest in the Brontës.⁵⁰⁹ These testimonies are supported by the findings of the Wafer Hadley report from 2014. This report is

⁵⁰⁵. General Comment Book. July 2015. Richard Voase has concluded that the 'richness' people encounter in visiting cathedrals is within their emotional reaction that is connected to, but not within, the cathedral architecture. See Richard Voase, 'Visiting a Cathedral: The Consumer Psychology of a Rich Experience', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 13 (2007), 41-55.

⁵⁰⁶. Crouch and Desforges, 'The Sensuous in the Tourist Encounter: Introduction, the Power of the Body in Tourist Studies', p.7.

⁵⁰⁷. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006). See also Appendix 5, Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

⁵⁰⁸. 'Patti Smith Makes Literary Pilgrimage to Play Benefit Gig for Brontë Parsonage Museum', (2013) <<http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/literature-and-music/art417732>> [accessed 29 December 2013].

⁵⁰⁹. Sarah Tetley, 'Visitor Attitudes to Authenticity at a Literary Tourist Destination' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, 1998), p.138

based on over eleven hundred visitor surveys completed in 2013. The key findings show that most visits are from first time visitors (65%) and:

Many visitors are making a kind of 'pilgrimage' to the Parsonage. 'Seeing artefacts related to the Brontës' is the main motivation for visiting, with 'seeing the period rooms' a close second. For this audience, preserving the authenticity of the house is paramount.⁵¹⁰

According to this survey 80% of visitors cited their motivation to visit as 'to see artefacts relating to the Brontë sisters'; 75% were interested in the period rooms.⁵¹¹

Glynn and Maines suggest that visitors to heritage sites are looking for numinous experiences where the meaning is more psychological than material, calling forth 'awe and reverence'.⁵¹² In giving separate definitions for 'resonance' and 'wonder', Stephen Greenblatt suggests resonance is:

The power of the object displayed to reach out beyond its formal boundaries to a larger world to evoke in the viewer the complex, dynamic cultural forces from which it has emerged and for which - as metaphor or, more simply, as metonymy - it may be taken by a viewer to stand.⁵¹³

The objects visitors encounter at the Parsonage are points of focus through which some of the more intangible facets of a visitor's relationship with the Brontës are embodied and made tangible. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill notes that 'objects may materialise notions of the sacred. They act as powerful metaphors, material representations of complex beliefs and thoughts'.⁵¹⁴ Caterina Albano suggests that biographical objects straddle past and present 'because of the feelings and images with which they are invested or that they are able to evoke'.⁵¹⁵

^{510.} Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.3.

^{511.} Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.13.

^{512.} Maines and Glynn, 'Numinous Objects', p.9. On p.10, Glynn and Maines also point out that objects concretise memories that are hard to put into words. Other visitor comments demonstrating numen include 'I really felt a connection in the dining room' and 'I am so happy! I breath the same atmosphere as Charlotte!'. From 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

^{513.} Stephen Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 43 (1990), 11-34, pp.19-20.

^{514.} Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.109.

^{515.} Albano, 'Displaying Lives', p.17.

From my own time spent in the museum observing visitors, the dining room provides a numinous experience. It is described by the Parsonage as the place in which the novels were written, and the place where Emily Brontë died:

Charlotte, Emily and Anne did much of their writing here. Their world famous novels, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* were written in this room. At night time the sisters would walk around the table discussing their writing until following the deaths of Emily and Anne, only Charlotte was left to walk in solitude. By the fireplace stands the rocking chair where Anne would sit with her feet on the fender and it is believed that Emily died on the sofa in this room.⁵¹⁶

I have listened to visitors discussing the fact that Emily died here. Also important for the visitor experience of this room is the idea of the sisters walking around the dining table and that, after the loss of her sisters, Charlotte is known to have continued to do this alone:

charlottes[sic] habit[sic] of walking around the table alone is quite sad.⁵¹⁷

In relation to the veracity of some of these ideas, Patsy Stoneman draws our attention to their constructed nature, 'it is unlikely that any amount of historical reasoning will remove the cherished image of Emily dying on the sofa, refusing to take to her bed'.⁵¹⁸ Stoneman also countered the idea that the Parsonage is a shrine. From two days spent talking to visitors, she concluded instead that visitors are 'no longer worshippers' but are there for more general heritage-related reasons, and in fact only one in four visitors is a real Brontë fan.⁵¹⁹ The growth of heritage tourism as a more generalised leisure activity is well documented and this growth would broadly support Stoneman's point.⁵²⁰ However, both staff testimony and Wafer Hadley's report refute this, suggesting

⁵¹⁶. Text panel from the Dining Room.

⁵¹⁷. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁵¹⁸. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.218.

⁵¹⁹. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.219.

⁵²⁰. Heritage and its relationship to the Parsonage is considered later in this chapter.

instead that a significant number of visitors are Brontë enthusiasts who are on a pilgrimage, despite Stoneman's claim. Furthermore, it can be seen through recent work in Tourist Studies that tourism is itself a kind of pilgrimage.⁵²¹

While the Parsonage was a site of pilgrimage before any effort was made to preserve it, the way in which it has come to have value can be described within what Laurajane Smith has called Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD).⁵²² A key aspect of Smith's argument is that things are preserved not because they have inherent value, but that value is created through the process by which they are preserved. According to Smith, AHD, as a 'set of values and meanings', prioritises a number of concepts including 'nation building'.⁵²³ In the same way that Eileen Hooper-Greenhill argued that the National Portrait Gallery was established to project an image of nation through the careful selection of important role models (and therefore the exclusion of others), the Parsonage could be seen to exist as one element in a network of sites which maintain the importance of a particular range of celebrated writers as part of Britain's intellectual landscape.⁵²⁴ Deborah Phillips has argued that guide books play a key role; 'it is illustrated guides that classify the authors and places deemed worthy of the 'tourist gaze' and point the literary tourist towards them'.⁵²⁵

According to Smith, a further key feature of AHD as a hegemony is that it empowers only the experts, those who discern what is and is not valuable.⁵²⁶ The Brontë Society states that its central responsibility is:

to ensure the preservation of Haworth Parsonage, its collections

⁵²¹ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p.43; Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.10.

⁵²² Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

⁵²³ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.11.

⁵²⁴ Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, pp.23-48.

⁵²⁵ Phillips, 'Mapping Literary Britain: Tourist Guides to Literary Landscapes 1951-2007', p.22.

⁵²⁶ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.29.

and exhibits, and to maintain its fabric, atmosphere and setting in a manner which is sympathetic to, and which supports, the Brontë heritage.⁵²⁷

Many visitors recognise this. At first I paid little attention to the number of comments which ended with 'Thank You'. However I slowly realised that this represented genuine gratitude, which is occasionally more specifically articulated:

I came here from Poland. I love Emily's writing, her books and her style. I also love the film based on the book. Now I'm rich in new experiences. Thanks to all of you who take care of the parsonage.⁵²⁸

Third visit. Thank you for preserving these memories that help bring us closer to the books!

We return again and again to this fascinating, atmospheric place which is preserved with great care by the Trust. Thank you for preserving this history for us.⁵²⁹

Thank you so much. Coming here has meant a great deal to me + it's heartening to see the Brontës treated with such respect.⁵³⁰

The Society plays an important role in identifying the authenticity of Brontë artefacts and manuscripts,⁵³¹ which accords with Smith's idea that the value of heritage is difficult to identify without the assistance of experts. Peter Howard, however, suggested that there is a difference between heritage which is 'bottom up', that which develops from more local and individual interests, and heritage which is 'top down', that which is seen as imposed from above.⁵³² In either analysis, the Brontë Society has its origin in a grass roots organisation, formed by local enthusiasts who were concerned that their heritage was being sold off to enthusiastic and wealthy overseas collectors, but now plays an important custodial role that is strongly recognised and appreciated.

⁵²⁷. Brontë Society, 'Heritage and conservation policy', (2014).

⁵²⁸. 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book', (2011).

⁵²⁹. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁵³⁰. 'General Visitor Comments Book' (2015).

⁵³¹. Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.219.

⁵³². See Chapter 3 of Howard, *Heritage*.

The ICOMOS Charter provides further starting points to tease out the complexity of this custodianship. Among others, one principle of the Charter is to:

respect the authenticity of cultural heritage sites, by communicating the significance of their historic fabric and cultural values and protecting them from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure, visitor pressure, inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.⁵³³

Here, the Charter sets out that heritage sites such as the Parsonage have a responsibility to communicate their historical importance in ways which are appropriate in presentation and interpretation. In addition, it suggests that there are methods of interpretation which are not appropriate. Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas points out, 'above all, [historic] houses are perceived as "true reality" and therefore free of any kind of manipulation'.⁵³⁴ It is not in the scope of this thesis to engage with a full analysis of the emergence of a desire for authenticity as, arguably, the product of post-modern alienation;⁵³⁵ however, Walsh and others suggest that heritage preservation must be seen within a neo-conservative discourse of selective preservation and that 'common to these forms of heritage [...] is the construction of unreal places'.⁵³⁶ Given the primacy of authenticity as a central concept in heritage discourse, and the fact that the Parsonage period interiors are largely reconstructions, how is the 'authenticity' of the Parsonage to be measured?⁵³⁷ The Brontë Society clearly sets out its responsibility towards the outside environs:

the Society has a legal obligation to maintain the Parsonage in accordance with its status as a Grade I Listed Building. Any new

⁵³³. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.3.

⁵³⁴. Risnicoff de Gorgas, 'Reality as Illusion', p.10.

⁵³⁵. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p.91.

⁵³⁶. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.103.

⁵³⁷. For discussion regarding the issues of authenticity, see, for example, Garden, 'Heritagescape', p.273; Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.125; Herbert, 'Heritage as a Literary Place', p.34.

development of the museum and its associated structures, including building work, must seek to preserve the original Parsonage fabric both externally and internally and must be in sympathy with the period character of Church Street.⁵³⁸

Further, the inside must remain accurate in its presentation:

The internal appearance of the original Parsonage should be maintained to resemble as closely as possible any chosen period during the Brontë family's residence. Temporary museum cases and/or displays, should be kept to an absolute minimum and all that does not reflect the appearance of a home should, as far as possible, be removed.⁵³⁹

This accords with the *Nara Document on Authenticity* which states that:

Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful.⁵⁴⁰

Based on her extensive visitor surveys in Haworth, Sarah Tetley has argued that interest in authenticity is important. This interest was categorised as a 'historically accurate [...] understanding of the history of the village of Haworth, of the Brontë family, and of the Brontë novels'; further, it was reasonably consistent amongst those visitors who were specifically interested in the Brontës and also those who were identified as more general visitors.⁵⁴¹ The centrality of authenticity for visitors is also clear from the analysis which follows in subsequent chapters, as it is in visitors' reaction against the Contemporary Arts Programme that 'authenticity' is invoked.⁵⁴²

The heritage critique which reached its apogee in the 1980s and 1990s also

⁵³⁸. Brontë Society, 'Heritage and conservation policy' (2014).

⁵³⁹. Brontë Society, 'Heritage and conservation policy' (2014).

⁵⁴⁰. ICOMOS, 'The Nara Document on Authenticity', (1994) <<http://www.icomos.org/en/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994>> [accessed 3 September 2015], pp.46-47.

⁵⁴¹. Tetley, 'Visitor Attitudes', p.156.

⁵⁴². See visitor comments relating to 'authenticity' in relation to Charlotte Cory's exhibition 'Capturing the Brontës' on page 370 in Appendix 5, Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

focussed on the accuracy of heritage sites, arguing that the 'heritage industry' created commodified consumer experiences, which had little relationship to historical accuracy.⁵⁴³ Hewison has argued that: 'a heritage would appear to be that which only seems to be 'something', an image, an historical surface'.⁵⁴⁴ Important for this investigation is the way in which the 'image' or 'historical surface' of the Parsonage has been constructed through a variety of processes including architectural preservation, interior decoration, collections management and interpretation.



Figure 15: Dining Room in the 1940s.

Figure 15 shows the Dining Room in the 1940s. Comparison to more contemporary images (Figures 12 and 16), is useful to show just how much the room as it is now is a reconstruction. In this photograph it is clear that the focus of the room is a range of objects in cases. This is the collection of Henry Bonnell, a

⁵⁴³. See Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.79 and Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, p.168.

⁵⁴⁴. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.80.

wealthy American collector who bequeathed his Brontë collection to the museum in 1929.⁵⁴⁵ His importance is shown by the location of his photograph above the fireplace.



Figure 16: Dining Room in 2013.

The Dining Room as it is today is fundamentally different. One iteration of its development from the 1990s can be seen in Figure 12; Figure 16 shows it in 2013.⁵⁴⁶ Objects have been repatriated and both wallpaper and portraits which were known to hang here reproduced. Virginia Ruston, reflecting on the current iteration of the Dining Room, made clear the illusory nature of the reconstruction:

The table in the dining room is not the table that they walked around. That's Charlotte's table, that she bought when she was rich and famous. The decorative scheme, whatever anybody says about it, that dining room, that parlour, is not how it was when those girls were growing up and writing their first stories. And so, to that extent, the notion of the shrine has already been

⁵⁴⁵. Dinsdale, *The Brontës at Haworth*, p.151.

⁵⁴⁶. These can be compared to a recent image of the Dining Room during 'Capturing the Brontës' by Charlotte Cory, see Figure 33 on page 225.

compromised.⁵⁴⁷

Thus a visitor to the Brontë Parsonage Museum, through what has been characterised as 'sleight of hand', encounters a professionally constructed representation of the place in which the Brontë sisters lived and worked and died.⁵⁴⁸



Figure 17: Barrier in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.

⁵⁴⁷ Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014. Since this interview, the table that the sisters did walk around has been repatriated.

⁵⁴⁸ Alison Hems, 'Thinking About Interpretation: Changing Perspectives at English Heritage', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.189-199, p.194; Gielen, 'Museumchronotopics', p.147 suggests it is not possible to study visitors and this representation of history separately.

The liminal nature of this Baudrillardian 'play of illusions and phantasms' can be seen by the way in which most rooms are staged viewings.⁵⁴⁹ Figure 17 shows the rope barrier and floor in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom. The illusion of the bedroom is only fully sustained beyond the rope; where the visitor walks, the floorboards are protected by functional rather than historically accurate floor covering. Council member Virginia Rushton compared this strategy to the proscenium arch, and wondered whether it was possible to overcome this divide.⁵⁵⁰ Tony Bennett suggests that 'dedicated to a new use as, precisely, a historic site, [the museum] becomes a facsimile of what it once was'.⁵⁵¹

The kitchen which the Brontë sisters would have recognised, for example, was transformed by Reverend Wade who moved into the Parsonage after Patrick Brontë died in 1861. Wade built the large extension to the left of the Parsonage, and as part of these changes, the Brontës' kitchen became a passageway. As part of the attempt to give visitors a sense of the Brontës' kitchen, a range of the appropriate period has been reinstated and the room is furnished with objects which did belong to the family.⁵⁵² So, instead of preserving a 'living memory',⁵⁵³ the Parsonage is part of the continual process of recreating the past in the present through its curatorial activity, and visitors are in fact looking at 'the commingling of fact with fiction'.⁵⁵⁴ The emotional power of the illusion, however, can be found in visitor comments:

I can feel the years pass away looking at there artefacts, bring me

^{549.} *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, ed. by Mark Poster, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p.171.

^{550.} Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

^{551.} Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, p.129. Further discussion of the problems of 'faking and pastiche' can be found in Barker, 'Heritage and the Country House', p.223; issues around nostalgia and authenticity can be found in Shaw and Chase, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia'.

^{552.} Dinsdale and White, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum*, p.20.

^{553.} Visitor Comments Book, 2004.

^{554.} Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, p.128 See also Urry, 'How Societies Remember the Past', p.49.

one step closer to those that held them. Wonderful!

So lovely to be where they lived & worked – has really brought them to life for me.

Wonderful & interesting I feel I know the family as I walk through the rooms.⁵⁵⁵

The issue here is that the dates to which the house is furnished and restored correspond to what has been called the 'mythological map of the mind' in that the place is a conglomeration of different things from different times and places.⁵⁵⁶ Michel Foucault has characterised places with these qualities as 'heterotopias', or places of 'indefinitely accumulating time'.⁵⁵⁷ Spaces such as these collapse both time and space in that they are capable of 'juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces [...] that are in themselves incompatible', and further that they 'constitute a place of all times that is itself out of time'.⁵⁵⁸ Jenna Holmes has suggested that it is impossible to restore the house to a single point in time.⁵⁵⁹

Holmes and Rushton have both raised the problem that most visitors are imagining the house with all three sisters living there; whereas the nearest date of restoration is actually later than this when Charlotte was the only surviving sister, and most of the collections date from this time.⁵⁶⁰ The dining table, which is so central to the narrative trope of the sisters walking around it, was not (until 2015) the one that they walked around. The table that the visitors saw until January 2015 was the one which Charlotte had purchased later, when she lived in the house on her own.⁵⁶¹ So there are a number of ways in which Walsh's suggestion that the public actually have some difficulty in separating what is real

⁵⁵⁵. First comment from 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book' (2011); subsequent comments from 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁵⁵⁶. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.104.

⁵⁵⁷. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.377.

⁵⁵⁸. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', pp.376-377.

⁵⁵⁹. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁵⁶⁰. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014, Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁵⁶¹. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

from what is not, is borne out by the gap which exists between their expectations and the reality of the restoration. Patsy Stoneman makes this point albeit slightly differently. She noted the blurring of fact and fiction with the example of a visitor who asked 'which sister was it that married Heathcliff?'.⁵⁶²

Issues of authenticity and illusion are not limited to the museum. According to ICOMOS, 'the surrounding landscape, natural environment, and geographical setting are integral parts of a site's historical and cultural significance and, as such, should be considered in its interpretation.'⁵⁶³

The world of *Wuthering Heights* is brought to life in the famous village of Haworth. This picturesque village was once home to the literary greats the Brontës and their home is now the Brontë Parsonage Museum.⁵⁶⁴

This description of Haworth village and the Parsonage by Bradford Tourism Department from 2011 is interesting in that it suggests the present is contingent on both a real and a fictional past.⁵⁶⁵ Firstly, it seems that visitors can experience 'the world' of Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*, and that in some way, this fictional narrative is a tangible part of the landscape. The second suggestion is that visitors can explore the factual reality of the village and house which was once the Brontës' home. Kevin Walsh has characterised the transformation of places into historical pastiche, as 'heritagisation', which he suggests has the potential to be a positive force, by helping to retain the unique character of particular locations. The problem is that 'only safe and selected images will be preserved'.⁵⁶⁶ This intertwined nature of heritage and place is also

⁵⁶². Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.219.

⁵⁶³. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.5.

⁵⁶⁴. Bradford Tourism Department, 'Visitbradford.com', (2011) [accessed 29 March 2012].

⁵⁶⁵. In asking what has shaped the tourist village that Haworth is today, the cause is laid very squarely on the shoulders of Elizabeth Gaskell. See Whitehead, 'The Haworth the Brontës Knew', p.181.

⁵⁶⁶. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139.

noted by Herbert:

Literary places are the fusion of the real worlds in which the writers lived with the worlds portrayed in the novels. Any distinction is unlikely to be made in the minds of visitors. Haworth, for example, is the landscape in which the Brontës lived, but is also that occupied by the characters in their novels. The writer infuses the novel with a sense of place but the novel in turn adds meaning to place.⁵⁶⁷

On the surface the contemporary visitor to Haworth still encounters a view not dissimilar from the one Elizabeth Gaskell described as she approached from Keighley in 1857:

on this road rises Haworth village; he can see it for two miles before he arrives, for it is situated on the side of a pretty steep hill, with a background of dun and purple moors, rising and sweeping away yet higher than the church, which is built at the very summit of the long narrow street.⁵⁶⁸

Gaskell arguably started the 'heritagisation' process. According to Miller 'the Legend [Gaskell] laid down - three lonely sisters playing out their tragic destiny on top of a windswept moor with a mad misanthrope father and doomed brother [...] would feed imperceptibly into the collective mind'.⁵⁶⁹ What are significantly different today are the effects of tourism and a heritage process on Haworth. Gaskell would not recognise a museum which has been adapted; Reverend Wade's extension from the 1870s; a further extension in the 1950s and the car parks and wide range of tourist facilities one now expects at a significant heritage attraction. In addition to the physical changes, Miller noted changes in the understanding of the sisters:

in the twentieth century, Emily toppled her elder sister from her pre-eminent position and became enshrined as the free spirit of the moors. It was through the cult of Emily that the myth of the Brontës as forces of nature rising ineluctably out of the wuthering landscape gained currency. Images of storm-tossed passion associated with her [...] are now part and parcel of the Brontë

⁵⁶⁷. Herbert, 'Heritage as a Literary Place', p.33.

⁵⁶⁸. Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p.12.

⁵⁶⁹. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.57.

brand.⁵⁷⁰

It can be argued that the Brontë Society, through a range of heritage processes, works hard to maintain these myths and has a 'deep investment in [its] own truth'.⁵⁷¹

The heritagisation of Haworth can be seen in Figure 18 which shows one of the brown tourist signs which declare it to be 'Brontë Country'. Jane Sellars recalled that this began to appear in the 1990s: 'it suddenly gathered pace in the nineties, this idea of Brontë Country, whatever the hell that was, and that people had to go there! It always struck me as bizarre and funny'.⁵⁷² Urry described Brontë Country as a themed space, noting both the sense of commodification, and Debordian 'spectacle' of places like these.⁵⁷³ Brontë Country is perhaps comparable to the example of 'Catherine Cookson Country' which Walsh suggests markets the experience of Tyneside through fictional characters.⁵⁷⁴ Urry suggests that one aspect of these kinds of places is the presence of international brands. In Haworth the Edinburgh Woollen Mill, although operating five hundred shops under that name, chooses to operate under the trading name of the 'Brontë Weaving Shed: A True Yorkshire Shopping Experience', saying in its leaflet, 'Situated in Haworth, once the home of the Brontë sisters, the Brontë Weaving Shed offers a great shopping experience for all the family'. That the entire experience of the area around Haworth is perceived through a Brontë lens is clear, but how does this themed place diverge from history?⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷⁰. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.107.

⁵⁷¹. Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.221.

⁵⁷². Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁵⁷³. Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.125.

⁵⁷⁴. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139. Cornwall is similarly connected to the author Rosamunde Pilcher. See 'The Rosamund Pilcher Trail: Why German Tourists Flock to Cornwall', *The Guardian*, 4 October 2013.

⁵⁷⁵. David Lowenthal examines the difference between heritage and history. See chapter six, Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*.

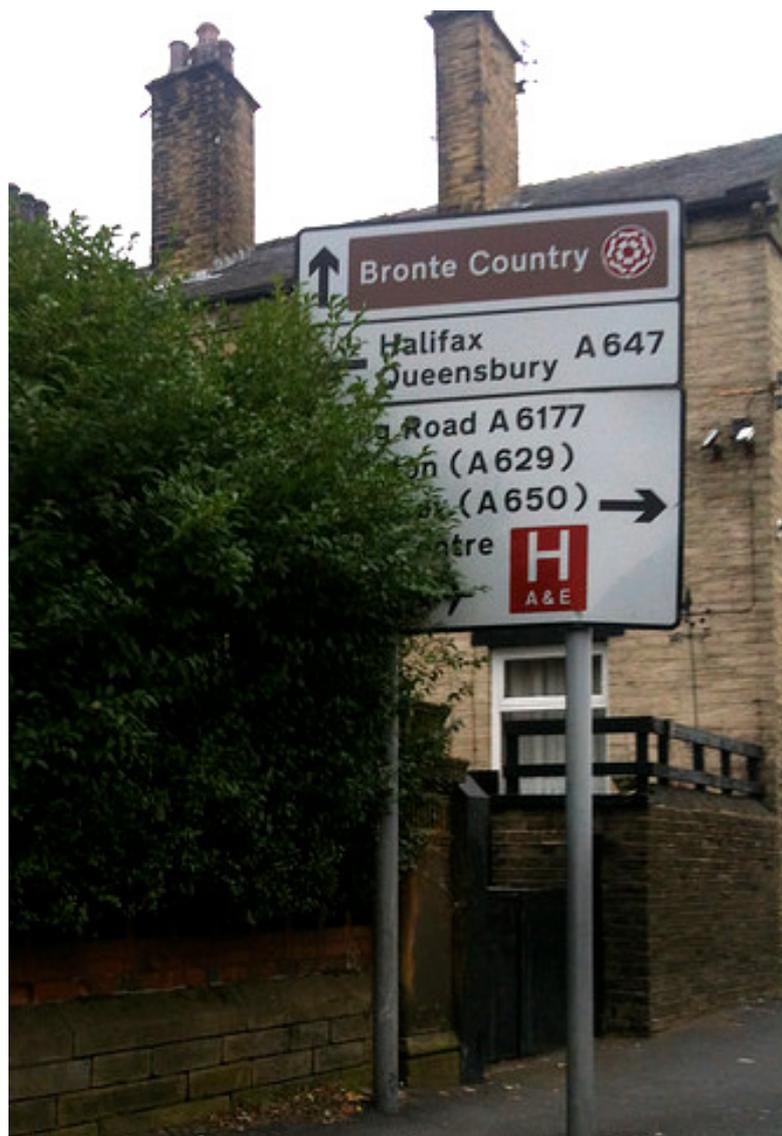


Figure 18: Brontë Country.

Both Kevin Walsh and David Lowenthal suggest that in creating suitable visitor experiences, heritage places 'exclude' certain historical facts if they are not palatable to the contemporary visitor.⁵⁷⁶ Certainly the squalor and cramped conditions of life in Haworth in the nineteenth century are conspicuously absent from the village today; there is no open sewer running down the main street and in the Parsonage itself the early nineteenth century conditions are ameliorated by

⁵⁷⁶. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139. More recent critique suggests that this exclusion has been of diverse cultural identity. See Otero-Pailos, Gaiger and West, 'Heritage Values', p.47.

the contemporary floor coverings and heating system. These 'exclusions' are arguably practical and sensible and Jenna Holmes suggests visitors would be 'shocked' if the house was truly returned to the state it was in when the Brontës lived there.⁵⁷⁷

A heritage context, then, is one of a set of practices which maintain certain cultural values through fictionalisation, illusion and which selectively omits, moderates and sanitises. Haworth can thus be thought of as 'unreal', this unreality having an additional complexity due to the protagonists in this narrative being both real, the Brontës, and fictional, the characters in their novels. Kevin Walsh seems to find this a problem when he points out that the public actually have some difficulty in separating what is real from what is not;⁵⁷⁸ however David Herbert notes that this 'fusion' is enriching:

Literary places are the fusion of the real worlds in which the writers lived with the worlds portrayed in the novels. Any distinction is unlikely to be made in the minds of visitors. Haworth, for example, is the landscape in which the Brontës lived, but is also that occupied by the characters in their novels. The writer infuses the novel with a sense of place but the novel in turn adds meaning to place.⁵⁷⁹

The Brontës and their lives in Haworth are significant in the history of English literature. Their family background and their life experiences in relation to the social conditions of the time have led to a range of enduring novels which remain relevant today, and a Society that works through a range of processes to maintain and promote the literature and its contemporary relevance. Despite the academic critique which can be applied to the Parsonage and the processes by which the Society maintains an illusion of the Brontës' home, the meaning and significance of the site for its visitors, staff and Society membership cannot be

⁵⁷⁷. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁵⁷⁸. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.99.

⁵⁷⁹. Herbert, 'Heritage as a Literary Place', p.33.

underestimated. For a substantial number of visitors it is a shrine and they consider themselves as pilgrims. The collections have global value and significance as objects of awe and wonder. The building itself holds a powerful attraction for visitors who are often deeply emotionally invested in the site long before they have ever visited. This is not completely unique, but it is relatively rare.

This examination of the Brontë Parsonage Museum as shrine demonstrates not only that it is a significantly complex site but it is also a unique case study in which to examine closely the role of contemporary art interventions. Thus, in the consideration of the Contemporary Arts Programme which follows, I aim to explore the nature of the artworks in this programme and their relationship to the complexity of experience which is found at this shrine in Haworth.

Chapter 3

The Contemporary Arts Programme: interventions in a shrine

The Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth has developed significantly in the years since its inception. It was the home of the Brontës between 1820 and 1861, and became a museum in 1928. Since that date, it has developed in various ways; most notably in the 1950s when the Brontë Society shifted away from a strategy of display which relied on museum cases containing Brontë-related artefacts and manuscripts and instead recreated the period interior of the Brontës' home as it is thought to have been during the 1850s. As with many houses of famous people which have become museums, such as the Freud Museum and the Charles Dickens Museum in London, the Brontë Society has endeavoured to create as accurate a picture of the Brontës' home as possible and now uses a variety of interpretive strategies to communicate the importance of the site to its visitors. This includes an introductory timeline panel in the entrance where visitors buy their tickets (Figure 19), leaflets to guide visitors around the house, text panels, object labels and two separate exhibition spaces which further place the Brontës and their writing in context. The exhibition room on the first floor of the 1950s extension houses a permanent exhibition of Brontë artefacts. The Bonnell Room on the ground floor hosts changing exhibitions, for example, 'Sex, Drugs and Literature: the Infernal World of Branwell Brontë' in 2011 and 'The Brontës and Animals' in 2014.



Figure 19: Brontë timeline being installed, February 2014.

Unsurprisingly, for what Jane Sellars described as a literary museum, it has a long history of public events focussed on promoting both contemporary interpretations of the Brontës' writing and creative writing more generally.⁵⁸⁰ The leaflet which promoted the 2012 Brontë Festival of Women's Writing declared:

Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë were pioneering women writers and continue to inspire contemporary literature in limitless ways. The Brontë Parsonage Museum hosts its third festival weekend dedicated to showcasing and celebrating women's writing, featuring workshops, talks and readings by emerging and prominent women writers.

This extract highlights that events are promoted based on the fact the Brontës were powerful advocates for reform, as their work questioned religious and

⁵⁸⁰. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014. The 2014 Arts Council funding award has encouraged the Parsonage to further develop its literary programme. Discussion with Jenna Holmes at the Parsonage, 14 October 2014.

social norms, and thus have been hugely influential both in their own time and for writers today.⁵⁸¹

In addition to providing visitors with information about these bookable events, the museum's website bears testimony to the fact that their experience at the Parsonage might be more than simply visiting the Brontës' restored home in order to explore a representation of the past.⁵⁸² They might instead engage with a 'vibrant programme' of interpretation designed to provoke imaginative experience:

The Brontës are famous as writers, but were interested in many art forms, and have inspired successive generations of writers and artists. Our ambition is for the Brontë Parsonage Museum to truly reflect the Brontës' own remarkably diverse creative talents and the rich heritage of artistic response to their lives and works. Through our contemporary arts programme we commission and showcase new responses to the Brontës and the Parsonage museum's collection from established writers and artists working today. We run a vibrant programme of exhibitions, screenings, talks, readings and lectures, as well as creative days for Museum visitors to experience the Parsonage in imaginative ways and to explore their own creativity.⁵⁸³

Thus, visitors today may encounter a variety of commissioned 'interventions' in the period interior of the house as part of the museum's Contemporary Arts

^{581.} *Shirley*, for example, explores the social conditions of workers in the context of the Industrial Revolution and also meditates on poverty, the church and the role of marriage. Currer Bell, *Shirley* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1849). Their questioning of social norms was such that 'charges of impropriety continued to dog the Brontës once their identities as women were discovered'. Elizabeth Langland, 'Careers for Middle-Class Women', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.303-310, p.308. In reflecting on the shift from an underlying acceptance of imperialism within their childhood writings, to an underlying challenge to it in their adult life, Stephen Prickett suggests that 'the Brontës may be best seen not so much as embedded within a particular intellectual and social context as among those who helped change it'. Stephen Prickett, 'The Philosophical-Intellectual Context', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.224-231, p.230.

^{582.} The hierarchy of the information on the website itself is however, somewhat problematic given that the Contemporary Arts Programme is relatively hidden, and many complaints which the Parsonage receive are based on the fact that the artworks were unexpected.

^{583.} Holmes, 'Contemporary Arts', (2013) [accessed 5 July 2015].

Programme.⁵⁸⁴ The programme has also consistently featured regular contemporary exhibitions shown in the entrance lobby. While these fall outside of the scope of my analysis, their role within the broader interpretive programme of the Parsonage should not be discounted.

Claire Robins has explored the history and current role of 'interventions' in museums and describes that:

The proviso that most commonly constitutes an 'intervention' is that the art in question 'engages' with an existing context, for example, a museum's collection, its architecture, social histories, or with museological concerns, curatorial practices, interpretive strategies, publicity materials, corporate sponsorship and so on. Although some contemporary artworks placed in museums do respond to all of the above, not all of them can be seen to constitute an action undertaken in order to change what is happening or to prevent something 'undesirable' from continuing to take place. Whilst it is important not to fall into the error of making crude categories, it is also valuable to differentiate between contemporary artworks placed in collections with the intention of 'brightening things up' and other more significant motivations that include facilitating new readings of existing orders.⁵⁸⁵

Robins has suggested that an intervention may 'do' one of two things. It might 'brighten things up' or it might 'facilitate a new reading'. The central question of this thesis rests on this conjunction of display and interpretive methodology within a heritage site that has pursued an interpretive strategy focussed on an increasingly 'accurate' period interior representation of the Brontës' home and is

⁵⁸⁴. It is notable that in 2013, as part of the adaptations made to the visitor route, a new Contemporary Art Space was created in the entrance area; and during the planning stages of my own exhibition 'Artists of Faith', it was clear that several Council members felt that this is the only space where contemporary art should be shown.

⁵⁸⁵. Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.2.

held to be a shrine by many of its visitors. What kinds of 'new readings' of the site can be provided by the interventions of the CAP?⁵⁸⁶

This chapter provides a critical analysis of the development of the CAP, focussing on the contemporary art interventions in the period interiors; in particular, two significant exhibitions; Paula Rego's 'Jane Eyre Prints' exhibition from 2004, and Cornelia Parker's 'Brontëan Abstracts' exhibition from 2006. These are important exhibitions in the development of the programme, and it is pertinent to examine the context in which these exhibitions took place and the responses to them. The purpose of examining these exhibitions within the context of the Parsonage's rationale for this change in interpretive strategy, is to provide ways to approach the analysis of later exhibitions which might be productive. This structure of analysis reflects the way in which the research project developed. My initial consideration of the programme developed through interviewing staff and researching past exhibitions. This process alerted me to issues which I felt were appropriate to follow up through a considered analysis of exhibitions I was able to experience first hand.

My underlying questions relate to the nature of the intersection of contemporary art and heritage. The Literature Review demonstrated that art is a complex phenomenon in its own right, and that while heritage sites have been incorporating contemporary art in their displays in order to engage visitors, sustained analysis has not yet taken place regarding the ways in which this

⁵⁸⁶ Research in this area is developing. Recent theses have included analyses of the broader development of Contemporary art in heritage spaces, an analysis of the National Trust's Trust New Art Programme, and an analysis of the Freud Museum. See Charlotte Inch, 'Contemporary Art in English Country Houses: An Exploration of Current Practice' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Leicester, 2010); Wendy Read, 'What's the Story' (unpublished MA dissertation, Bournemouth University, 2011); Danny Birchall, 'Institution and Intervention: Artists' Projects in Object-Based Museums' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of London, 2012). Joanne Morra is writing about the Freud Museum, see Joanne Morra, *Art, Curating and Site Responsibility* (London: I B Taurus, forthcoming). See also Robins, *Curious Lessons* for a recent analysis of the relationship between interventions and museums as inherently pedagogic institutions.

practice forms part of heritage interpretation. In this chapter I draw on interviews with key members of staff and trace significant developments in interpretive strategy through the *Brontë Society Transactions*. I also draw substantially on the Visitor Comment Books for both exhibitions examined here.

Complexity theory provides an important reference point in this topography of intersecting discourses. Law and Mol write:

when investigators start to discover a variety of orders - modes of ordering, logics, frames, styles, repertoires, discourses, then the dichotomy between simple and complex start to dissolve. This is because various "orderings" of similar objects, topics, fields, do not always reinforce the same simplicities or impose the same silences. Instead they may work - and relate - in different ways⁵⁸⁷

The argument I develop below rests on my belief that there are a 'variety of orders' which can be seen to intersect at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, and that what ought to be 'dissolved' is the notion that the Parsonage is a fixed entity into which the artwork is inserted as a temporary instability.⁵⁸⁸ I acknowledge that this is to follow only one pathway through this territory, not to reduce the CAP to a historical schematic representing slow incremental development, but to use the material I have found as vantage points from which the various discourses can be demonstrated to relate in a particular way.⁵⁸⁹ Complexity theory would suggest that in trying to simplify the complex, inevitably, more complexity is revealed.⁵⁹⁰ It is perhaps in the gaps between existing epistemological frameworks of heritage and contemporary art that both the tension and richness of the CAP may be found. Given that Law and Mol suggest 'to pin [things] down is to lose [them]', I reiterate my desire not to 'pin down' but to 'richly describe' in order that these different ways of 'ordering' might be

^{587.} *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.7.

^{588.} See especially Yaneva, 'When a Bus Met a Museum'.

^{589.} This can be seen to relate to the Deleuzian concept of 'relay' as used by Rendell. See Rendell, *Art and Architecture*.

^{590.} *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol.

enabled to speak through their 'imposed silences'.⁵⁹¹

Robins has contextualised her analysis of artists' interventions in the broader shifts in museum practice, signified by the concept of new museology embodied by Peter Vergo's book *The New Museology* from 1989. More specifically, Robins' analysis relates to the increased emphasis on museums as sites for learning and thus the relationship between interventions and museum strategies for pedagogical engagement. While I purposely align this research within a conception of heritage experiences as being inherently pedagogical, I do not want to replicate this approach, despite the fact that a constructivist teaching and learning principle has driven much of my own work within museums. This would risk finding what has already been demonstrated elsewhere, that interventionist work like the CAP is a form of pedagogic practice.

The intention in this and subsequent chapters, by considering selected exhibitions held at the Parsonage between 2004 and 2014, is to establish some understanding of each artists' project and to think through ways in which the exhibitions interact with the site and meaning-making processes employed by visitors. While learning about the Brontës is likely to be part of the rationale for visiting, the notion of pilgrimages to this shrine suggests a richer kind of exchange is taking place. Drawing on Robins' dialectic, the next chapters explore ways in which installations might be 'anodyne' and reassuring, or more subversive and challenging.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹¹. *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.21.

⁵⁹². Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.5.

Early development

The picture that can be pieced together from annual reports in the latter decades of the twentieth century and from interviews carried out for this research shows that at the Parsonage, like many museums, traditional ways of operating began to give way to new ideas about how museums could be engaging with their visitors. Efforts to develop the Parsonage as a centre for creativity can be traced back over fifty years. Jane Sellars, Director of the Parsonage from 1989 until 1997, described early attempts to change the way it was perceived:

The first person to try and break the mould was probably Joanna Hutton in the 1960s who really, fought against the traditional old view of this is a place where you come and be very quiet and everything.⁵⁹³

Space is very limited within the building, and like many museums any kind of educational activity really needs space. During the 1960s, in an effort to create greater capacity for educational activity, the cellar was cleared to provide somewhere for groups to begin their visit. In order to provide a contextualising introduction to the Brontës, a slide lecture and talk was given to visiting groups before they explored the house.⁵⁹⁴

When Sellars was appointed, she noted 'the development of an education service [was] high on my list of priorities'.⁵⁹⁵ Further describing that things were 'very set' when she arrived, in the 1980s 'what was offered as events or engagement or anything other than looking round and being awed, was very limited'.⁵⁹⁶ The strategy of giving a slide talk to welcome groups of visitors, for

⁵⁹³. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁵⁹⁴. Joanna Hutton, 'Curator's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1964), 64-65, p.64.

⁵⁹⁵. Jane Sellars, 'Director's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 20 (1990), 105-106, p.106.

⁵⁹⁶. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

example, barely changed between the 1960s and 1990s. The numbers of people given slide talks were reported every year from the 1960s. It was noted in 1983 that the slides were updated, and in 1989 that the slides were replaced by video; however, the overall strategy remained consistent for over thirty years.⁵⁹⁷ Sellars described that embedded in the trustees were strong ideas about what interpretive engagement was appropriate, which she was keen to change, but remembered that 'it was a very slow process to gradually introduce new things'.⁵⁹⁸

Fixed ideas about what infrastructural development was and was not appropriate can be inferred through the Annual General Meeting reports given in *Brontë Transactions* each year. The extension work in the 1960s provoked substantial disagreement about whether it disturbed the Parsonage's 'bare and austere' character.⁵⁹⁹ In the 1990s there was also substantial disagreement regarding appropriate development. In 1991 Sellars noted that space was a real problem and referred to what was known as the 'extension controversy'.⁶⁰⁰ This was still an issue in 1993 when Sellars appealed for calm, noting that 'it is impossible to produce a Forward Plan for an institution which cannot agree about where it is going and I would appeal to everyone to work towards a final solution to our problems'.⁶⁰¹

A significant interpretive development in 1995 was to appoint Judith Warner, a playwright, as Education Officer, given that all the education work had been delivered by Sellars up to that point:

^{597.} See Marjery Raistrick, 'Custodian's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 18 (1983), 251-252 and Marjery Raistrick, 'Custodian's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1989), 382-383.

^{598.} Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

^{599.} W. Linton Andrews, 'The Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1963), 37-38, p.37

^{600.} Jane Sellars, 'Director's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 20 (1991), 234-237, p.237.

^{601.} Jane Sellars, 'Director's Report to the 1993 Brontë Society Annual General Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 21 (1993), 44-47, p.45.

The appointment of the Society's first Education Officer, Judith Warner, was a major change; it allowed proper time to be given to this important aspect of the Museum's work which had hitherto been undertaken by the Director among all her other responsibilities.⁶⁰²

At the same meeting, Sellars' Director's Report noted that:

Council had adopted a formal Education Policy which it was felt would increase interest in the Brontës, inspire creative output and promote the Parsonage as a centre of public learning.⁶⁰³

Warner set about creating a wider range of activity than just working with schools. It was Warner who developed a link with the Ilkley Literature Festival and instigated residencies with poets and writers.



Figure 20: Printmaking with Sarah Hutton in 1994.

Educational activities can be seen to represent the beginnings of broadening approaches to interpretation for a wider range of audiences. In this

⁶⁰². Brontë Society, 'Brontë Society Annual General Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 21 (1996), 382-394, p.384. It is worth noting here, for clarity, that the Journal volumes at this time span three years so Volume 21 includes issues from January 1993 and January 1996. From volume 22 onwards, each volume represents a single year.

⁶⁰³. Brontë Society, 'Brontë Society Annual General Meeting', p.387.

context, the value of the Parsonage as a context in which to experience artwork had been recognised at least since the 1980s. In November 1984, four paintings were loaned by the National Portrait Gallery to form part of a larger exhibition of Brontë portraits. These works were displayed in the exhibition room rather than the period interiors, but it was remarked that it was a good opportunity to see these works in their 'old home'.⁶⁰⁴

A further example from 1994, seen in Figure 20, was a short workshop by the artist Sarah Hutton, who made prints on site and demonstrated the process to visitors. While this shows the importance of the dialectical relationship between artwork and site as contributing to meaningful experiences and demonstrates a willingness to think of the museum as a flexible space, this is different from the stated purpose of the current CAP which aims to 'showcase new responses [by] artists working today' by including artworks in the period interior.⁶⁰⁵

Andrew McCarthy is cited as the key person who instigated the current Contemporary Arts Programme.⁶⁰⁶ He joined the museum as an Education Officer in 1999, became Audience Development Manager in 2003 and Director in 2008; leaving the museum in 2012. While McCarthy's employment trajectory through the museum might not initially be seen as relevant, the status and support of the CAP within the organisation is of key relevance, especially in relation to its perceived validity as a form of interpretation. This is of particular interest in relation to the later analysis of the Charlotte Cory exhibition of 2013 and its impact on the perception of museum staff about the long term viability of the programme. Here it is worth noting that the significant period of development and success of the CAP, aligns strongly with McCarthy's trajectory

^{604.} Jocelyn Kellett, 'The Brontë Portrait Exhibition', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 18 (1985), 408-410, p.409.

^{605.} Holmes, 'Contemporary Arts', (2013) [accessed 5 July 2015].

^{606.} Both Virginia Rushton and Jane Sellars cite McCarthy as being responsible for the programme.

through the institution.

McCarthy, as Jane Sellars had previously, arrived in 1999 with a strong agenda for change:

clearly the Brontës were a creative family and for me developing education services and developing contact teaching sessions, holiday workshops, whatever it might be, with a range of age groups from very young children through to adults it was really important [and] that programme not only informed people about the Brontës' own great artistic achievements but actually encouraged people to engage with their own imaginations and their own creativity.⁶⁰⁷

The last point that McCarthy makes here is perhaps the most critical, and can be seen in subsequent iterations of the purpose of the CAP, that visitors should be more active in their engagement with the site, and that this active engagement was to be imaginative and creative. Thus, McCarthy described that:

right from the start really in relation to the development of that education programme I started to introduce, in a variety of ways, arts based activity, whether that be drama or creative writing or visual arts related projects.⁶⁰⁸

McCarthy noted a 'feeling that traditionally the Parsonage has been seen as a mausoleum really' and that while it is important for people to be able to come and look at the Parsonage in order to pay their respects to the dead:

there is this amazing rich heritage of creative responses to the Brontës which runs right from Mrs Gaskell two years after Charlotte's death through to everything that's happening now in the arts. So we want to reflect that and [...] develop things as part of the arts programme that allows people to come here and not just celebrate the Brontës and their work but also [...] engage with their own imagination and their own creativity in various ways.⁶⁰⁹

The comparison to a mausoleum is not unique to 'personality homes'. Theodore Adorno's view that museum and mausoleum are connected by more

⁶⁰⁷. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁰⁸. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁰⁹. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

than a similarity in lexical structure, is countered by Elizabeth Conran, the Director of the Bowes Museum.⁶¹⁰ In response to 'A Private View', an exhibition of contemporary art at the Bowes Museum, Conran wrote:

Museums are not mausoleums. They are living organisms, evolving to speak to each succeeding generation. This exhibition opens up some possibilities both for collecting and for new displays at the Bowes Museum in the 21st century. If it irritates the visitor it is doing a good job. We hope it stimulates constructive debate and that visitors will take the opportunities provided to make their views known.⁶¹¹

The key issue for McCarthy was that the enormous legacy of the Brontës' impact was not visible in the Parsonage. The house as it was displayed showed something of their domestic life, but little of the novels or poetry, 'there isn't really anything which tells them very much about how hugely influential the Brontës have been'.⁶¹² The visitor could perhaps wonder whether Emily died on the sofa in the Dining Room and gaze at Charlotte's darned stocking in Charlotte's Bedroom, but they were not truly able to develop an understanding of the impact the Brontës had had on the world of the arts; 'how they have influenced novelists and visual artists and inspired all kinds of creative responses in writing [...] and in film and in theatre and dance and a whole range of media'.⁶¹³ This clearly connects to the broader idea, which can be found in the heritage critique of Kevin Walsh and others, that heritage has not helped people engage with the unique characteristics of individual places.⁶¹⁴ In the Exhibition Room the visitor is able to explore some of the manuscript material but, even here, extracts from the novels in large text on the walls do not easily demonstrate

⁶¹⁰. Adorno, *Prisms*, p.175.

⁶¹¹. *Private View: Contemporary Art in the Bowes Museum*, ed. by Penelope Curtis, (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1996), p.20

⁶¹². Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012. While I had been aware of it previously, I was struck by this absence of the Brontës' own writing in the Parsonage itself, only after visiting the Dickens museum in 2014. This had recently been refurbished, and features many Dickens novels bound in covers which invite the visitor to 'read me'.

⁶¹³. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶¹⁴. See for example Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*.

the importance of the novels within English literature. The artworks in the CAP can thus be seen to have two underlying aims matching Robins' definition of intervention, to prevent something 'undesirable' (the Parsonage being treated as a mausoleum) and to 'facilitate new readings' that will enable visitors to develop a fuller understanding of the contemporary relevance of the Brontë legacy.⁶¹⁵

It is pertinent to locate this within the earlier consideration of the ideological dimensions of heritage. At issue for McCarthy appears to be a tension between the Parsonage as a fixed construction in which visitors are passive recipients of a preordained experience, and his vision that visitors should be enabled to respond in a way in which meaning can emerge from the experience, rather than be passively consumed. This concern bears a strong resemblance to the 'dominant ideology thesis' against which Nick Merriman has argued, suggesting it is impossible to understand all the ways in which a visitor might engage with a heritage site. People make their own meanings in their own ways despite, rather than because of, heritage narrative constructions.⁶¹⁶ This is a significant issue, particularly if the rationale for the CAP is that visitors are passive, but Merriman's argument is that visitors 'use' heritage sites in their own ways which are anything but passive. As Graham Black points out, experiences of enjoyment can appear to be passive where 'people do not do much', but 'can be intensely engaging'.⁶¹⁷

A further context to these changes was the political climate at the end of the 1990s. The New Labour government who came to power in 1997 had a significant impact on funding and support for museums, particularly education.⁶¹⁸ It is interesting to note the need for museums to promote

⁶¹⁵. Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.2.

⁶¹⁶. Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.18.

⁶¹⁷. Graham Black, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty First Century* (London: Routledge, 2012), p.6.

⁶¹⁸. Selwood, *Making a Difference: The Cultural Impact of Museums*.

'imagination and creativity' appeared in David Anderson's *A Common Wealth*:

Museums are engaged in what William Morris called 'the education of desire' –the stimulation of a wish to enhance the quality of our lives. They allow us to learn through our senses, especially sight, hearing and touch, in ways that give us pleasure. They develop our feelings as well as our powers of perception, analysis, ethical awareness, *imagination and creativity*.⁶¹⁹

In 1999 when I was working as Education Officer for Leeds Museums and Galleries, Anderson's report had an enormous impact on my colleagues at that time. The second edition was published just as McCarthy became Education Officer for the Parsonage; it is reasonable to assume that he was aware of, and thus influenced by, the Anderson report.

⁶¹⁹. David Anderson, *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999), pp.8-9. My emphasis.

Paula Rego, 'The Jane Eyre Prints'

The origin of the CAP can be traced to an exhibition of Paula Rego lithographs in 2004. These prints were ostensibly a response to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and were born out of Rego's 'undeniably creative' response to the novel.⁶²⁰ Laurent Bury suggests some disagreement exists in accounts of this work as to whether Rego had read *Jane Eyre* as a child or not, and whether it was Rego's interest in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys's prequel rather than *Jane Eyre* which formed the original impetus for the work. This disagreement characterises Brontë scholarship's obsessive pursuit of factual accuracy. Rego's lithographs were shown at the Parsonage in an exhibition called 'The Jane Eyre Prints' from August to September 2004.



Figure 21: Germaine Greer with Paula Rego at her opening.

McCarthy described how the exhibition came about by accident.⁶²¹ The

⁶²⁰. Laurent Bury, 'Creative (Mis)reading: Paula Rego's *Jane Eyre*', *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, 7 (2009) [accessed 18 March 2013] para 1.

⁶²¹. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

lithographs were going to be shown, along with a selection of Rego's *Nursery Rhyme* prints, at the nearby Artsmill in Hebden Bridge as part of the Hebden Bridge Arts Festival 2004. McCarthy knew the curator of Artsmill who suggested that showing them in the Parsonage would make a lot of sense. When McCarthy proposed this to Alan Bentley, the Director of the Parsonage at that time, Bentley simply said 'go ahead'.⁶²² This resulted in a joint exhibition between the Artsmill and the Parsonage.⁶²³

McCarthy went on to tell me:

at this point in time my job really wasn't mounting exhibitions, it was much more specifically involved with the education programme. Right from the start [...] we knew we didn't have some sort of contemporary annex to the museum where these works could go but regardless of that we thought that what we need to do here is [...] juxtapose these contemporary images with the historic part of the house.⁶²⁴

Two points are worth highlighting. Firstly, the CAP has its origin within the paradigm of education rather than curatorship. This underlines the importance of Sellars' view that it was Judith Warner's appointment as Education Officer in the mid 1990s that was a significant step towards the realisation of the museum as a centre for creativity. Secondly, McCarthy clearly felt that the context of the Parsonage would offer something to the lithographs, and the lithographs would offer something to the period interior and that key to this exchange was 'juxtaposition'.

In recalling the reaction to this first exhibition, McCarthy noted that in:

the visitors book that we've still got from this project there were [...] polarised views on it. On the one hand you had people who absolutely loved the idea of placing contemporary art within the

⁶²² Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶²³ This 'split site' model has been used again recently in the 2012 Rebecca Chesney exhibition where smaller works were shown in the exhibition space at the Parsonage; larger works were shown at South Square Gallery in Thornton, Bradford. The availability of exhibition space inside the Parsonage is a significantly limiting factor.

⁶²⁴ Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

rooms; a kind of twenty-first-century woman artist, her response to the Brontës and their work in the house, but then there were others who [...] just couldn't understand it and were appalled really that we were doing this.⁶²⁵

Further:

the good thing about that was the visitors book, in a sense, became a kind of dialogue or debate [...] somebody would come along and write, I hate these, and somebody else would come along and say, Don't you understand, this is what it is about. So it made a really interesting change from what can tend to be fairly kind of pedestrian comments that you normally get in the visitors book.⁶²⁶

The polarisation McCarthy pointed out is clear:

Paula Rego's prints - haunting, powerful, moving - with echoes both contemporary and historical. Work of the highest quality - both technical and expressive. A brilliant way of displaying them: the images comment on the permanent exhibition, and the Brontë artefacts seem on the point of invading the pictures! A superb experience.

I have wanted to visit this exhibition for years. After reading some books on the Brontës recently I decided to come & see the Parsonage - finally! It was a unique atmosphere despite all the tourists passing through on a daily basis. I have really enjoyed my visit - thank you to all who make it possible! I didn't like the exhibition (Paula Rego) at all - what is the point of sticking these ugly pictures in front of the things we are trying to look at? Horrendous!⁶²⁷

That McCarthy's juxtaposition worked for some visitors but not for others is not necessarily useful in any analytical way; this range of reaction is neither unexpected nor necessarily undesirable. More pertinent is to note the ways in which visitors' language points to underlying issues that are important. The first comment draws attention to the dialogue created between the historical and the contemporary, and that this works both ways. It is early indication that 'juxtaposition' was productive for some. However, comments, such as the second one above, which suggest the exhibition 'should be elsewhere' were numerous.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁵. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶²⁶. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶²⁷. 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

⁶²⁸. See page 371 of Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

'Atmosphere' is clearly something that visitors valued, but the Rego prints detracted from their experience of it:

The pictures detracted from the atmosphere of rooms, also obscured some of the exhibits. Not in keeping, should be elsewhere.

Enjoyed the museum and the building, very interesting. Unfortunately I think the pictures detracted from it. Sorry.⁶²⁹

Atmosphere has been characterised as that which, in historic houses, often relates to the most 'present' feature, that of absence; 'absence is in fact integral to [the] ability to invoke the presence, of the past'.⁶³⁰ Rather than referring to something inconsequential, the issue of 'atmosphere' may be central.⁶³¹

The strength of feeling that was expressed demonstrated that the exhibition evoked strong emotions:

No exhibition should be held in this sanctuary of the Brontës!! Our second visit in twenty years.⁶³²

For this returning visitor from Belgium, the Parsonage exists as a powerful and emotive place; no less than a 'sanctuary', which accords it a very particular kind of status, very close to a shrine. A range of strong emotions that were expressed related to this idea:

⁶²⁹. 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

⁶³⁰. Gregory and Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', p.265.

⁶³¹. See page 372 of Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

⁶³². 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004). This particular comment had been highlighted. In examining visitor books at the end of exhibitions, staff have highlighted comments which are of particular interest, highlighting a wide range of opinions.

We came to see authentic pieces connected with the Brontës and how they lived not a warped interpretation of their books.

They should not be displayed in the authentic rooms as we cannot experience what it once was like.⁶³³

These visitors wanted the connection between the historic and contemporary to be their own dialogue with 'authentic' objects in an 'authentic' site, rather than through a vicarious interpretation of *Jane Eyre*. Whether rejecting the prints as worthy of attention or not, it was a significant theme of visitor response that they simply should not be there, however good they might be as artworks. Given that agreement about what constitutes art is part of the interpretation of it, visitors also struggled with their acceptance of it as art, describing Rego's work as 'grotesque caricatures', 'ugly' and 'offensive'. Furthermore, McCarthy noted that visitors engaged with a dialogue with each other through the comment books. A number of visitors appended views such as 'I agree with the last comment!'.⁶³⁴ Thus, while visitors engaged in dialogue with each other, and the museum, about what it was that these prints brought to their experience, it is relatively difficult to discern that McCarthy's juxtaposition was well received.

These comments represent seemingly blanket refusals of the possibility that any exhibition in the Parsonage might offer what McCarthy had set out to achieve; creative and imaginative experiences for visitors. Despite the academic critique of writers such as Walsh and Lowenthal through which the Parsonage itself can be seen as an inauthentic 'surface', this very first experiment with 'intervention' saw visitors reject the works as an interruption to experience, rather than an enabler of creative experience. They perceived the 'Jane Eyre Prints' as an inauthentic and vicarious intrusion.⁶³⁵

⁶³³. 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

⁶³⁴. 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004). See page 370 of Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

⁶³⁵. Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.80.

In writing about these lithographs Marina Warner suggests that a powerful element of their success lies in Rego's ability to link the visible world and the imagination. According to Warner:

Brontë and Paula Rego share an imaginative ardour that abolishes the veil between what takes place in fact and in fantasy. As storytellers, they really are kith and kin: Rego reproduces the psychological drama in the book through distortions of scale, cruel expressiveness of gesture, and disturbingly stark contrasts of light and welling shadows.⁶³⁶

The experience of viewing the interior of the Parsonage also relies very much on the ability to see more than the objects in front of you. Through their 'Marie Celeste' effect, the period interiors provoke an imaginative response, particularly in relation to how the sisters might have utilised each room.⁶³⁷ In this context, Jane Sellars is supportive of McCarthy's experimental palimpsestic approach, but suggests that:

creative opportunities to enhance both art and setting were missed; sometimes very narrowly, as with the odd positioning of the powerful 'Come To Me' [...] on the stairway wall, a perfect location for the work, but not hung in precisely the right place.⁶³⁸

Sellars emphasised the importance of precise location, suggesting that the exhibition lacked 'the art curator's eye'.⁶³⁹ Drawing on visitors' comments, Sellars also pointed out that, while many thought the works an unwelcome 'intrusion', in her view 'it was both wonderful and inspiring to see Rego's Jane Eyre prints in

⁶³⁶. Marina Warner, 'An Artist's Dream World', *Tate Arts and Culture*, 8 (2003) <<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/an-artists-dream-world-paula-rego>> [accessed 29 July 2015].

⁶³⁷. In relation to his creation of the fictional Jervis family of Huguenot silk weavers at his house, now a museum in Folgate Street, London, Denis Severs called this strategy 'life interrupted'. Denis Severs, *18 Folgate Street: The Tale of a House in Spitalfields* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001), p.39.

⁶³⁸. Jane Sellars, 'Paula Rego's Jane Eyre Prints: Exhibition at the Brontë Parsonage Museum 7 August –19 September 2004', *Brontë Studies*, 30 (2005), 83-86, p.84.

⁶³⁹. Sellars, 'Paula Rego's Jane Eyre Prints', p.84.

the house that nurtured the creative genius of Charlotte Brontë and her extraordinary siblings'.⁶⁴⁰

In November 2004, two months after Rego's exhibition closed, McCarthy wrote about the success of the education programme for *Brontë Studies* citing significantly increased visitor numbers:

Since 1998 there has been an increase of over two hundred per cent, with figures for the first six months of 2004 showing an increase of seventy percent on the previous year. The service has been developed by Andrew McCarthy, the museum's Education Officer for the past five years, who has recently taken on the new role of Audience Development Manager.⁶⁴¹

It is clear from this that McCarthy's activity had a significant effect, perhaps even resulting in his appointment to the new role of Audience Development Manager with its new remit. What is important in the showing of contemporary art, however, is a point McCarthy makes later in the same article:

The service we offer is not just about introducing both children and adults to the Brontës but also about encouraging them to access their own creativity and I think it is this which is at the heart of the education programme's success.⁶⁴²

It thus seems reasonable to suggest that McCarthy felt that it was the juxtaposition of artistic response and period interior that allowed people to engage with 'their own creativity' rather than simply engage with a presentation which was 'historically focussed on what happened here in the past'.⁶⁴³ Despite the strong response from some visitors against the exhibition of Rego's lithographs, it is clear that McCarthy felt the strategy was worth pursuing, given the subsequent development of the programme.

⁶⁴⁰. Sellars, 'Paula Rego's Jane Eyre Prints', pp.83-85.

⁶⁴¹. Andrew McCarthy, 'Brontës Inspire Education at Haworth Parsonage', *Brontë Studies*, 29 (2004), 266-267, p.267.

⁶⁴². McCarthy, 'Brontës Inspire Education', p.267.

⁶⁴³. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

Cornelia Parker, 'Brontëan Abstracts'

Following on from the exhibition of Rego's lithographs, McCarthy 'initially started doing ad hoc events and then decided to try and formalise it into a contemporary art programme with a regular kind of brochure'.⁶⁴⁴ In 2005 he secured Esmée Fairbairn funding for an exhibition by Simon Warner called 'Leaving Home'; about which he said:

We are very excited about this project and very grateful to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation for their support. The exhibition will continue the work we are doing not only to increase people's awareness and understanding of the Brontës but to establish the museum as a centre for contemporary creativity. We want to add to the traditional methods of displaying the museum and try to reflect the remarkable creative energies that were generated here during the Brontës' time.⁶⁴⁵

This exhibition represented one strand of the CAP which is to support more regional artists. McCarthy has explained that 'there's kind of a philosophy there I guess in the sense that we want to work with some major artists but we want to give opportunities to local artists'.⁶⁴⁶ The following year, an application was submitted, again to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to fund a residency in the museum for the artist Cornelia Parker. This showed McCarthy's commitment to attracting 'quite significant people' as a result of 'the Brontë name ha[ving] huge kudos'.⁶⁴⁷

In the application to the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to fund Parker's residency, the expectations of the museum are clearly articulated. First, the application cited a need for change:

The Parsonage museum has been seeking to explore new forms of

⁶⁴⁴. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁴⁵. 'Brontë Parsonage Museum: Leaving Home Exhibition', (2005) <<http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/news/large.asp?id=49>> [accessed 12 December 2014].

⁶⁴⁶. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁴⁷. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

display and interpretation in a bid to occasionally challenge the period room presentation that has defined the museum since it opened in 1928. It is felt that this form of presentation has caricatured the museum as a literary 'shrine' and perhaps re-enforced some of the myths and clichés which have surrounded the Brontës for over a hundred and fifty years.⁶⁴⁸

Here, the Parsonage is described as embodying a form of presentation little changed in almost one hundred years. The use of the word 'cliche' suggests the role of the museum as a site of pilgrimage 'betrays a lack of original thought', a position which is almost the antithesis of the reason why the Brontës are celebrated in the first place.⁶⁴⁹ Also clear from the application is that it was felt necessary to move towards this type of interpretation because the museum was in danger of becoming caricatured as a shrine. To caricature means that 'certain striking characteristics are exaggerated in order to create a comic or grotesque effect'.⁶⁵⁰ It thus appears there was dissatisfaction within the museum both about its status, and interpretive processes. Visitors have always treated a visit to Haworth as a pilgrimage, however, perhaps here there is a realisation that the methodology of the period room interior has served to fuel an adulatory engagement with the site, rather than a more critical engagement with the Brontës and their relevance today.

After setting the context for change, the application went on to describe why a residency by Parker would be productive:

As a place of literary pilgrimage and a major international tourist attraction, the Parsonage museum certainly corresponds with her notion of the 'popular' or 'clichéd' spot. In the same way, her desire to expose the unconscious of such places is absolutely in tune with our aim to enable visitors to experience the Parsonage's period rooms (which have remained largely unchanged for

⁶⁴⁸. At the beginning of my research, Jenna Holmes, Arts Officer, provided me with a range of primary source material in a document she called 'Mission Statements'. This quote is from 'Esmee Fairbairn - Initial Application for Cornelia Parker's Brontëan Abstracts 2006'.

⁶⁴⁹. *OED*, ed. by Simpson and Weiner.

⁶⁵⁰. *OED*, ed. by Simpson and Weiner.

decades) in a new and thought-provoking way.

Parker, therefore, was seen as an external catalyst; one who would be able to change visitors' experiences. In short, Parker was invited to provoke.

Esmée Fairbairn was a victim of an air raid during World War II. Seeking to honour her memory, her husband and sons established a charitable foundation in her name which is now 'one of the largest independent organisations of its type in the UK, supporting programmes in the arts and heritage, education, the environment and social change'.⁶⁵¹ In an interesting coincidence of purpose, a trust set up to create contemporary social change as a memorial to personal loss through conflict, was able to support a memorial to writers who sought social change, which was itself seeking to reinvent its role as a heritage site. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation awarded the Brontë Society £14,935.⁶⁵²

Cornelia Parker has been a significant part of the international art world for much of her career. Iwona Blazwick suggests that 'her genius lies in the elasticity she brings to [the] semantic, historical and material properties' of 'sculptures and installations derive[d] from the found object'.⁶⁵³ Her work has included a wide range of objects, materials and locations. Her engagement with the relics of famous people has been a consistent strand of investigation and Parker has described her interest in 'reactivating' museum objects.⁶⁵⁴ This accords with the trope that artist's interventions in museums 'reanimate'. Her Einstein's Abstracts, for example, were made during her residency at the Science Museum from September 1998 to March 1999. These are photographs taken through a

⁶⁵¹. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 'Annual Report and Accounts 2006', <<http://esmefairbairn.org.uk/who-we-are/governance/annual-reports/>> [accessed 31 March 2015], p.56.

⁶⁵². The exhibition also received funding from Illuminate, and the Henry Moore Foundation. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation has provided a substantial amount of funding. See Appendix 4.

⁶⁵³. Iwona Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), p.32.

⁶⁵⁴. Deborah Mulhearn, 'Inspired Choices', *Museums Journal*, 106 (2006), 30-33, p.31.

microscope of the equations which remain on the blackboard Einstein last used for a lecture at Oxford in 1931 which can now be found in the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford. During this residency, Parker also created Marks Made by Freud, Subconsciously, a close-up photograph of Sigmund Freud's chair which is on display at the Freud Museum in London.

In a manner which echoes Clifford's view that Susan Hiller's 'presence in the Freud Museum [helped] transform a shrine into a "contact zone"', it is clear the Parsonage staff wanted Parker to engage with their 'cliche-ridden' relics, and thus change visitors' experience of them.⁶⁵⁵ In arguing the case for funding, the application cited Parker's work *The Maybe* from 1995, noting that elements of this work included objects associated with a range of famous people. The fact that *The Maybe* included a darned stocking and a quill pen was certainly a portent of the objects Parker would find interesting in the Parsonage.



Figure 22: Cornelia Parker examining Brontë artefacts.

Several artists involved in the CAP have highlighted how the site offers

⁶⁵⁵ Coles, 'An Ethnographer in the Field', p.70.

particular challenges. Rebecca Chesney and I discussed that we both felt relatively naive when it came to our knowledge of the Brontës at the beginning of our respective projects and Serena Partridge whom I met in 2015 during preparation for her exhibition due in 2016, was 'daunted' by the weight of the legacy of the Brontës and the previous artists who have worked on site. Parker was clearly concerned about what she might be able to do in such a charged location:

The Brontës are such iconic figures and are so overexplored and written about. How could I possibly make any work about them, because every little particle had already been written about.⁶⁵⁶

Over the extended residency, Parker spent a long time examining and engaging with the collection in the Parsonage (Figure 22) and related material in the British Library. She described how her approach was a scientific one:

By capturing images of the Brontë's[sic] relics through an electron microscope, I was using the tools of science to try and understand the power of the myth. Whether a split end in Anne's hair, pinholes punctured by Charlotte, or the tip of a quill pen worn away by Emily, these are abstractions made by them, unconsciously. I wanted to give a visual dimension to the tiny frictions in their everyday lives.⁶⁵⁷

The resulting exhibition 'Brontëan Abstracts' was shown at the museum from September to December 2006. The fact that this was perceived as a substantial interpretive development was noted in the press release which pointed out the:

ambitious project to establish the Brontë Parsonage Museum in Haworth as a vibrant centre for the creative arts will be officially launched with a stunning new exhibition by one of Britain's most famous artists, and Turner Prize nominee, Cornelia Parker [and] will, most unusually, be displayed within period rooms of the

⁶⁵⁶. Ina Cole, 'Suspending Frictions: A Conversation With Cornelia Parker', *Sculpture Magazine*, (June 2009), , cited in Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker*, p.141.

⁶⁵⁷. Cornelia Parker in Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker*, p.201.

Parsonage.⁶⁵⁸

The exhibition was comprised of a series of framed photographic images of Brontë-related objects taken with varying levels of enlargement, a sound work replaying a recording of two psychics trying to establish a connection with any spirits present in the house and a video interview with Phyllis Cheney who claims to be a direct descendent of Branwell Brontë (Figure 23).

Thus Parker took two approaches to the Brontë myths which were the focus of this exhibition. By using scanning electron microscopy to create close up images of Brontë artefacts and hair, Parker adopted a scientific approach, whereas the sound and video works represent alternative, less empirical approaches. Rather than examine the works in themselves, which has been done significantly well elsewhere, here I examine them as an integral aspect of the Parsonage, and draw substantially on the visitor comments book from the exhibition to explore what this 'juxtaposition' provoked.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁸. Diane Benn, 'Press Release: Cornelia Parker Exhibition', <<http://bronteparsonage.blogspot.co.uk/2006/07/cornelia-parker-exhibition.html>> [accessed 2 April 2015].

⁶⁵⁹. See, for example, *Brontëan Abstracts*, Cornelia Parker, ed. by Brontë Society, (Haworth: Brontë Society, 2006) and Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker*.



Figure 23: 'Brontëan Abstracts', video installation.

Figure 24 shows 'Brontëan Abstracts' installed in the Hallway, the first space of the visitor circuit. Until a refurbishment in January 2014, this was the main museum reception area where visitors purchased tickets. There was a great deal of information to be communicated at this point; the visitor needed to absorb information about ticket prices, gift aid, membership of the Brontë Society, general orientation and the current exhibition. Before the ticket desk was moved to its current location, there were often queues here, making it a difficult point of contact. However, Jenna Holmes has suggested that this is also a critical

moment for Brontë enthusiasts, 'I've heard stories of people fainting on the threshold, you know, that they've wanted to come all their life'.⁶⁶⁰ Otto Bollnow has discussed the importance of threshold in relation to the interior of the home being sacred.⁶⁶¹ This accords with the comments explored in Chapter 2 which reflected that simply being in the house, or 'there-ness', is a substantial affective part of the experience of the museum.⁶⁶² The doorway and Entrance Hall was thus a complex transition from outside to inside.

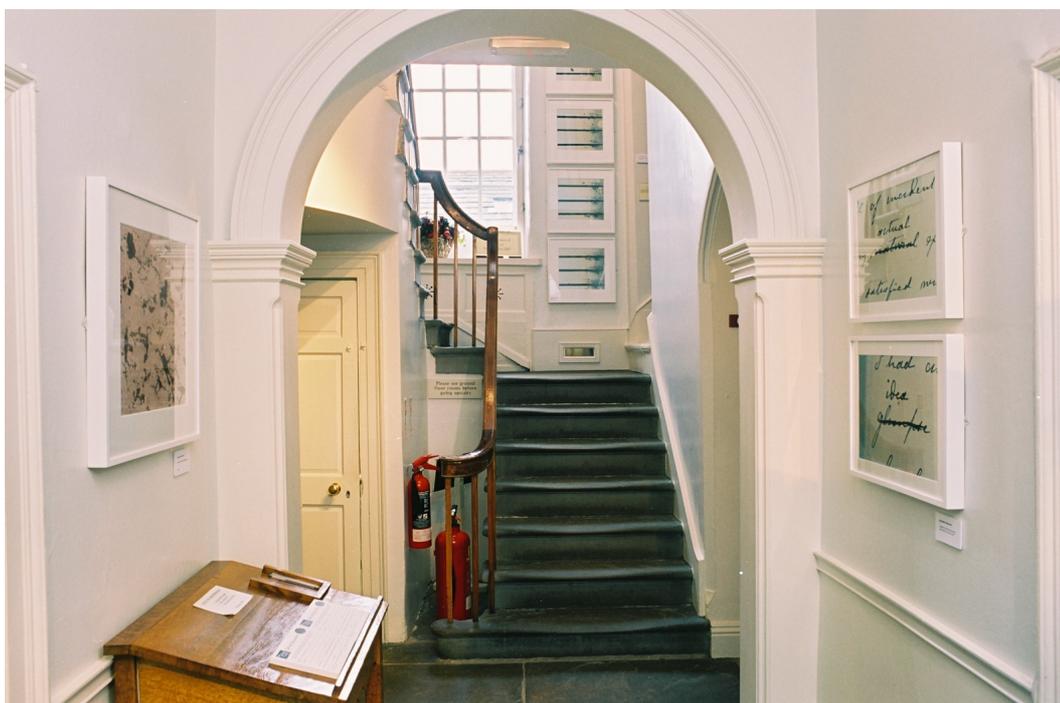


Figure 24: 'Brontëan Abstracts', installation view, Entrance Hall.

Three of Parker's works were installed in the Entrance Hall. Figure 24 shows on the left, *Brontëan Abstract (Emily Brontë's blotting paper)*; on the right, *Brontëan Abstract (Deletions from the original manuscript of Jane Eyre)*; straight ahead, *Brontëan Abstract (Marks made in the margins of Emily Brontë's lined paper)*. As well as suggesting these works added to a complex moment of visitor orientation, it could immediately be argued that these works were out of place

⁶⁶⁰. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁶⁶¹. Otto Friedrich Bollnow, *Human Space* (London: Hyphen Press, 1963), p.134

⁶⁶². David Crouch in Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.49.

with the Parsonage's own strategy of developing an increasingly accurate interior. This strategy was later enshrined in their Heritage and Conservation Policy which states 'the internal appearance of the original Parsonage should be maintained to resemble as closely as possible any chosen period during the Brontë family's residence'.⁶⁶³ The responsibility to maintain the semblance of a Brontë home can also be seen in the guidance laid down by ICOMOS which suggests the need to 'respect the authenticity' of the site, especially by [...] protecting [it] from the adverse impact of intrusive interpretive infrastructure [...] inaccurate or inappropriate interpretation.'⁶⁶⁴ These works of art provoke the visitor to think about what 'intrusive interpretation' might be, and also about the nature of authenticity in period interiors such as the Parsonage. In the first weeks of this exhibition, however, it was not the *Brontëan Abstracts* that visitors found intrusive or inauthentic. It is clear from the comments book that visitors' were almost entirely distracted by Parker's sound installation.

Comments regarding the conversation between psychics suggest a number of reactions.⁶⁶⁵ During the first two weeks, of the forty two comments attributable to the exhibition, twenty seven visitors found this audio substantially problematic:

Conversations between mediums is [...] banal and intrusive. I'm astonished that the Brontë Society lends itself to such unacademic posturing.

I endorse the comments of the person before me. I found the chattering very obtrusive and contrary to the atmosphere of the

⁶⁶³. Brontë Society, 'Heritage and conservation policy' (2014) section 1. While the Parsonage had a policy, it was rewritten in 2014, possibly as a reaction of the Trustees to the controversial Charlotte Cory exhibition.

⁶⁶⁴. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013]

⁶⁶⁵. It is interesting to note a number of other artists have used sound within their responses to the Parsonage, even when sound was not their priority medium. Su Blackwell, for example, had not used sound previously in her work. In contrast, Simon Warner who installed small video pieces in his 2012 exhibition 'Ways to the Stonehouse', was clear that his films needed to be silent. Interview with Simon Warner, Whitestone Farm, 4 October 2013.

parsonage which caused the children to create their fantasy world.

An illuminating exhibition for Brontë afficienades[sic] BUT - Get rid of the ongoing background commentary. Very distracting. One needs to contemplate the exhibit without background noise. Thank you!

WONDERFUL MUSEUM, BUT I HAVE TO AGREE ABOUT BACKGROUND "MEDIUM VOICES" - AWFULL!![sic] WE WOULD PREFER SILENCE TO SOAK UP ATMOSPHERE⁶⁶⁶

'Intrusive', 'obtrusive', 'contrary' and 'distracting' all suggest the sound in some way prevented these visitors from engaging in the way that they had hoped. Notable, as we have seen in the comment book from the exhibition of Paula Rego's prints, is a consistent desire to engage with the atmosphere of the house, a more intangible aspect of the site.⁶⁶⁷ The first comment also draws out an issue of responsibility, with an implicit questioning of the Brontë Society and a perception of their duty to be serious. The second comment multiplies its own critical power by endorsing the first. This engagement with previous visitor comments is a particularly interesting and sustained element of visitor books at the Brontë Parsonage and can be seen again in the second pair of comments above.

Andrew McCarthy recalled this episode as one of some 'awful mistakes'; 'initially we had all the psychic installation as ambient recordings and it was a disaster'.⁶⁶⁸ In response to the complaints received during the first two weeks, headphones were added which allowed visitors to choose whether they wanted to listen to the voices or not.⁶⁶⁹ What is notable from the narrative of the visitor comments book, is the immediate effect that this had as the tone of the comments

⁶⁶⁶. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁶⁷. See further comments relating to 'atmosphere' on page 374 of Appendix 5: Visitor Comment Book Summaries.

⁶⁶⁸. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁶⁹. In 2011 the sound installation *To Be Forever Known* by Catherine Bertola operated on a timer, playing only once every twenty-five minutes. This establishes the work as an event to be anticipated, rather than a continual background sound.

changed significantly. After this change, few comments related to the sound work; most that referred to the exhibition engaged with the *Brontëan Abstracts*, suggesting visitors were then able to concentrate on these works in a way which had not been possible within the first iteration of the psychics recorded conversation.

An alternative to the argument posited earlier about the works being out of place, would be that these images fit into a broad range of interpretive material to 'enhance understanding of [the] cultural heritage site'.⁶⁷⁰ The abstracts provided close up views of Brontë artefacts in a way which could enhance an understanding of the objects. Offering visitors detailed views of artefacts is a very normal part of interpretive strategy seen in museums. Instead of worrying whether these modernist insertions were contiguous with their immediate surroundings beyond the frame, perhaps it is better to conceive of them as contiguous with the experiential space of the Parsonage as the content colour or medium of the images themselves were not inappropriate to the context. The works fit well within the overall colour scheme of the space; the more obvious anachronisms are the fire extinguishers at the bottom of the stairs and the room titles set above each door on a painted wooden baton. Although the room titles are minor, they do stand out and as such could equally be seen as intrusive interpretive infrastructure.

In the catalogue, Parker suggested that she wanted to bring attention to overlooked objects.⁶⁷¹ For Fred Wilson in *Mining the Museum* this involved a simple strategy of redisplay; Wilson argued that this turned the entire Maryland Historical Association into a work of art.⁶⁷² Rather than exhibit the original object,

⁶⁷⁰. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.2.

⁶⁷¹. Deborah Levy, 'Slip of the Pen', in *Brontëan Abstracts*, Cornelia Parker, ed. by Brontë Society (Haworth: Brontë Society, 2006) pp.5-10, p.9.

⁶⁷². Wilson and Karp, 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums', p.254.

however, Parker produced scanned images and exhibited these as artworks. As many of these were scans of manuscripts and writing implements, Parker drew attention to the writing process and encouraged contemplation about what the objects may mean, rather than what they are. Crucially, this removed the object's status as a relic. Abstracting Emily's blotting paper into an artwork, for example, allowed a different kind of knowledge to be generated. This new knowledge was described by visitors as 'another dimension', 'a needed feature to balance all the antiques' and 'a useful and interesting addition to the exhibits'.⁶⁷³ One visitor remarked that it:

Made me feel the weirdness of Brontë obsession. Gave a new take on the cult of celebrity. Will people hoard JK Rowling ephemera? How strange if they do.⁶⁷⁴

Parker herself has suggested that 'looking is a different kind of knowledge'.⁶⁷⁵ This can be paralleled with the sisters' visuality; Jane Kromm has argued that Charlotte Brontë was acutely aware of the ways in which visuality in the nineteenth-century was dominated by the male gaze, and that the narrative descriptions of making and looking at art which occur within *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* are 'part of a carefully crafted feminist critique of spectatorship and representation'.⁶⁷⁶

In shifting visitors' gaze, objects became images that could be read poetically, rather than elements within a specific social historical narrative.⁶⁷⁷ Levy noted this, suggesting that, in examining an object so closely, paradoxically

⁶⁷³. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁷⁴. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁷⁵. From an interview with Bruce Ferguson in October, 1999; cited in Blazwick, *Cornelia Parker*, p.138.

⁶⁷⁶. Jane Kromm, 'Visual Culture and Scopic Custom in 'Jane Eyre' and 'Villette'', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 26 (1998), 369-394, p.369.

⁶⁷⁷. Britta Rudolff argued that poiesis is the bridge between art and heritage. Innovate Heritage Conference, Berlin 2014. For details and video, see Innovate Heritage, 'Innovate Heritage Conference 2014: Artists and Speakers', (2014) <<http://innovateheritage.com/conference-2014/artists-and-speakers>> [accessed 8 September 2015].

Parker 'moves further away from it, so that it is no longer entirely recognisable in its original form and is freed from its previous use'.⁶⁷⁸ The artist collective Brass Art, whom I interviewed in relation to their project with the Parsonage, suggested that they are able to treat objects substantially differently from curators, because they can traverse the taxonomic systems museums rely on, and also focus on features of the objects that are not important within museums' narrative structures.⁶⁷⁹

Some visitors were clearly made very aware of the act of looking, both in understanding the desire to see more, but also the inevitable limitations of this as a process:

'The electron micrographs framed next to a revealed detail of the wall set me thinking that these physical realities did not help me understand the bronte [sic] literary spark.

...I also particularly like the scans + SEM images. They give a sense of looking at something really closely but not finding "useful" information. Leads me to question how far is it really possible to reconstruct these lives?

The Cornelia Parker images are beautiful and add an extra dimension to the objects on show.⁶⁸⁰

As well as enjoying the aesthetic quality of the images, this last comment touches on an important aspect of the exhibition, the way in which meaning is generated between the artworks and the objects themselves.

While the images in the entrance and hallway dealt with the Brontës as writers, one work on the ground floor related to Emily herself rather than the writing.

⁶⁷⁸. Levy, 'Slip of the Pen', p.7.

⁶⁷⁹. Interview with Brass Art at Huddersfield Art Gallery on Wednesday, 4 December 2013. Their exhibition 'The Imagining of Things' was shown at Huddersfield Art Gallery in 2013 and was based on the artists' engagement with the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

⁶⁸⁰. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).



Figure 25: 'Brontëan Abstracts', installation view, Kitchen.

Figure 25 shows Parker's close up scan of Emily Brontë's comb installed in the kitchen. In 2015, the comb is on display in the Exhibition Room, the museum label tells us:

This comb was donated to the museum in 1928. It is believed to be the comb which Emily was using shortly before her death. She dropped it into the fire and a large burnt section is clearly visible.

There is a subtle shift from conjecture to fact in this statement. As the value of the comb is based on the 'belief' that it belonged to Emily, this accords with the concept of 'contagion' where 'objects are valued because of where they came from and the people they came into contact with and not because of their tangible properties or presumed special utility'.⁶⁸¹ The label then describes how Emily actually lost her grip in a way that resulted in it being burned in the fire. Parker's title reinforced the suggestion that this is undoubtedly Emily's comb; however, at

⁶⁸¹. Newman and Bloom, 'Art and Authenticity: The Importance of Originals in Judgments of Value', p.559.

the same time her forensic examination seemed, to be questioning the authenticity of the object.

A further conflict can be seen arising from the location of this work. The Kitchen made little sense as the room in which to show this image because of the biographical narrative this comb is seen to represent. Juliet Barker described the events leading up to the comb being burned:

On the morning of Tuesday, 19 December 1848, [Emily] insisted on rising at seven as was her habit. Combing her hair before the fire, the comb slipped from her fingers and fell into the hearth: she was too weak to pick it up, and before Martha Brown arrived and retrieved it for her, a large part of it had been burnt away by the flames. Neither Martha nor Charlotte dared to offer assistance as Emily slowly dressed herself and made her way downstairs.⁶⁸²

According to Barker's account, the comb was burned in the fireplace in the bedroom which is now known as Charlotte's Room.⁶⁸³ Assuming that this is the real comb, despite the fact that the burn shape echoes that created by a comb held against a candle, rather than one dropped in a fire, what did this work do here? It was not a form of interpretation of the kitchen as it had no narrative link. Thus to avoid the critique Jane Sellars brought to bear on the Paula Rego exhibition (that location is of critical importance), a broader view of the visitor experience of this work needs to be considered.

The practical answer in this case lies with elements of pragmatic curation. In his interview with me, McCarthy discussed the need to consider how the exhibition worked in the house as a whole. In his view, all work created for the CAP is in some way a response to the site and he argued that this legitimises the installation of work in locations within the house to which it might not have a

⁶⁸² Barker, *The Brontës*, p.576.

⁶⁸³ In her exhibition at the Parsonage, 'Capturing the Brontës' in 2013, Charlotte Cory herself added further confusion to this by suggesting in her 'alternative' tour, that the dining room is the room in which 'Emily Brontë died on the sofa, refusing to acknowledge that she was ill and letting a comb slip from her hair into the fire'. Charlotte Cory, *Charlotte Cory: Capturing the Brontës* (London: Colville, 2013), p.183.

direct connection.⁶⁸⁴ According to McCarthy, Parker produced a lot of work and some practical decisions needed to be made about whether a room needed an artwork or not. Siting *Brontëan Abstract (Emily's Burnt Comb)* in the kitchen appears to be one of these decisions. The historical moment of Emily's death to which this object is inextricably connected had no direct connection with the kitchen and did not add to the narrative of a room that had been described as 'the warm heart of the Brontë household where the children would gather on winter evenings and listen to their servant Tabby's tales of bygone days'.⁶⁸⁵ This work was not contiguous with its surroundings, but in dialogue with the broader story of the Brontës and the experience of being in the house.

This installation is indicative of the complexity of these conjunctions and countered the broader curatorial strategy of the Parsonage as a heritage site. Each room display is the result of careful research to establish the presence and location of particular objects.⁶⁸⁶ Emily's death as a moment in time and space is inextricably linked to the sofa in the Dining Room. By not being tied to a specific point in time and space in the same way, this artwork had what might be perceived as a more poetic relationship. Visitor comments discussed so far have consistently articulated that these forms of intervention created confusion. Thus it is reasonable to question what meaning was created by the juxtaposition of Parker's scan of Emily's comb and the location in which it was positioned.

The sound work was clearly a deeply problematic interruption to this meaning-making process. Visitors wrote of not being able to concentrate, of not being able to engage with the act of 'being in' the Parsonage.⁶⁸⁷ The importance of 'atmosphere' in the comments underlines the importance of this sense of

⁶⁸⁴. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁶⁸⁵. Brontë Society, 'Brontë Parsonage museum', [Leaflet] (n.d.).

⁶⁸⁶. See page 110 for my discussion regarding the curatorial strategy and the pursuit of verisimilitude.

⁶⁸⁷. See page 373 of Appendix 5 for comment book extracts.

inhabiting the Parsonage bodily; sharing the same space as the Brontës, despite the temporal distance. In many cases, the comments reflect a strong sense of temporal shift in that they were written addressing the Brontës as if they were still there. Given this, what can be drawn from the comments visitors left about the *Brontëan Abstracts*?

Comments demonstrated varying levels of engagement with the work, which accords with Michael Parsons' account of cognitive developmental understanding of art.⁶⁸⁸ Visitors found the abstracts 'beautiful' or 'lovely', or 'enjoyed' them.⁶⁸⁹ Other comments begin to suggest a more complex negotiation of the ways in which the *Brontëan Abstracts* were a valuable addition:

Some beautiful SEM images and a sensitivity to the profound impact this family had on the literary / emotional life of England.

The Cornelia Parker images are beautiful and add an extra dimension to the objects on show.

The Cornelia Parker exhibition complemented the parsonage very well. It was interesting to have the juxtaposition of old & new and gave a new take on the Brontë heritage. Very good indeed.

Eerily fetishistic in parts, but also quite touching.⁶⁹⁰

Parsons' theory suggests that the most developed understanding of art - 'autonomy' - is a point at which the viewer is able to recognise the complex social networks of meaning which frame the work and the reason for it coming in to being.⁶⁹¹ This is clear in the following two comments:

Read about it. but quite interesting & attractive upon viewing - adds a needed feature to balance all the antiques. I think the whole project is a success.

Fascinating and an interesting view on the traditional way of portraying things. Well put together & wonderful to spend time here once again after visiting here as a student some years ago!

⁶⁸⁸. Parsons, *How We Understand Art*.

⁶⁸⁹. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁹⁰. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁹¹. Parsons, *How We Understand Art*, p.25.

Museum as a whole experience is “time out” well spent.⁶⁹²

The first shows an understanding of the different traditions in which the artworks and the parsonage exist; the second clearly engaged with the nature of the Parsonage as a 'traditional' place and that the artworks were actually an engagement with this.

In the way that they engage with the artworks and the site, other comments suggest that it would be useful to carry out a substantial analysis of the ways in which the objects promoted hermeneutic engagement:

The exhibition made me think about ways of searching for the past and how it is possible to look hard at something and maybe not see what is important. Perhaps the museum does this already and what the exhibition has done for me is to focus on this. The electron micrographs framed next to a revealed detail of the wall set me thinking that these physical realities did not help me understand the Bronte literary spark; the psychics voices (which I initially disliked as bogus) and the account from [?] also set me thinking we can look back and not really see anything.

I also particularly like the scans + SEM images. They give a sense of looking at something really closely but not finding 'useful' information. Leads me to question how far is it really possible to reconstruct these lives? Conversely, the manuscripts with altered words makes me think of the Brontës[sic] books as process - things they did - rather than the reified objects that now exist. I didn't immediately like the psychics as much. Yet considering them in relation to the scans made me think that they are intentionally vacuous rather than trying to discover 'true' history.⁶⁹³

Pierre Bourdieu described the 'legibility' of art as 'a function of the distance between the more or less complex and sophisticated code demanded by the work, and the individual's competence'.⁶⁹⁴ Both of these comments demonstrate a conceptual engagement with the works and the experience of them and as such perhaps indicate the kind of competence to which Bourdieu was referring. They indicate a recognition that the museum was attempting to engage with relatively

⁶⁹². 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁹³. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁶⁹⁴. Bourdieu and Darbel, *The Love of Art*, pp.42-43.

sophisticated debate, and a willingness to participate in this discussion by leaving such engaged and thoughtful responses. They also show a familiarity with contemporary art language, articulating the complex engagement between Parker's exhibition and the Parsonage as a heritage site, which, as a physical site, is limited in its ability to communicate the Brontës' 'literary spark'. It is important to note that selecting these particular comments does not suggest that shorter, more prosaic comments are somehow indicative of visitors who had a lesser experience, only that comments as a whole can be seen to represent varying thought processes which are worthy of consideration in themselves.⁶⁹⁵

Subsequent Development

'Brontëan Abstracts' was a significant commitment to contemporary art. According to Simon Warner, McCarthy had been:

⁶⁹⁵ Macdonald, 'Accessing Audiences'.

very very good because he really was interested in art and [...] he'd managed to create space for himself to develop this programme within what was then his education remit, and eventually of course they managed to get funding for an arts officer post separately which is the rest of the story really'.⁶⁹⁶

Jenna Holmes was appointed to this role in 2006 and 'she really got the whole thing massively moving'.⁶⁹⁷ Since this date, the programme has included exhibitions from artists such as Sam Taylor-Wood (Figure 26), Catherine Bertola, Rebecca Chesney, Su Blackwell, Simon Warner, Charlotte Cory and Roy Voss.⁶⁹⁸



Figure 26: 'Ghosts', installation view.

The substantive role of the CAP then, has been to ask artists to respond to the site. Although, the process by which each exhibition has come about does not follow a regular pattern. This could be seen to be a result of the programme being reliant on external rather than core funding. Cornelia Parker's 'Brontëan Abstracts' for example, was the result of a targeted grant application. Discussing

⁶⁹⁶. Interview with Simon Warner, 4 October 2013.

⁶⁹⁷. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁶⁹⁸. See Appendix 3: Contemporary Art Programme Exhibitions. It is notable that the gender balance is very much toward women and it occurs to me that this itself might be a problem which the Brontës would not have liked.

Simon Warner's 2014 exhibition 'Ways to the Stonehouse', Holmes thought that:

because it was funded externally by Pennine Prospects, it was fantastic that we actually had a good budget and good resources to draw on so in that way, it was a really well supported project which was fantastic, with a lot of invested partners in making it happen so that was quite a good way to work.

In comparison, Sam Taylor-Wood's 'Ghosts' was the result of Holmes discovering that Taylor-Wood was already producing a set of work based on *Wuthering Heights*, and approaching her to suggest an exhibition.⁶⁹⁹ The relatively small size of the Parsonage as an institution perhaps means that unexpected opportunities can be seized, as McCarthy had done with Paula Rego's lithographs. Holmes suggested that her curatorial approach has been one of balancing audience expectation with the desire to take risks.⁷⁰⁰ Holmes further described the selection process as one of both 'free rein' and 'pre-selection':

I very much try to invite an artist I feel is appropriate for the museum and for the space, and invite them to respond to the museum and I very much want to give them free rein as much as I can and that's the whole point that that selection's been done so I've got confidence in that artist to come and do something here.⁷⁰¹

'Appropriate' has not necessarily required an interest in the Brontës, though it is clear that Rego, Parker, Taylor-Wood, Blackwell, Cory and Warner all had prior, significant, interest. Rebecca Chesney and Roy Voss, however, had no particular interest, and neither had read any Brontë novels.⁷⁰² Despite this, while Voss was initially reticent in accepting an invitation to exhibit at South Square Gallery in 2015, it was the opportunity to also show work at the Parsonage that persuaded him to accept the project.⁷⁰³ 'Miss' by Voss (Figure 27), came about because a

⁶⁹⁹. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷⁰⁰. Interview with Jenna Holmes at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 29 April 2013.

⁷⁰¹. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁷⁰². Interview with Roy Voss, via Skype, 26 March 2015; Interview with Rebecca Chesney, Brontë Parsonage Museum, 17 February 2012.

⁷⁰³. Interview with Roy Voss 26 March 2015.

project with the artist Kate Whiteford, to be installed in the Brontë Meadow next to the museum, could not go ahead.⁷⁰⁴



Figure 27: Miss', Brontë Meadow installation view.

The significance, though, of this process of 'selection' is that it is difficult for any artist to be truly provocative. Based on what they have produced elsewhere, Holmes has been aware of the kind of work that artists might produce, thus, there is a level of expectation surrounding what might be produced before they start. The ongoing development of the programme has allowed for more pronounced interventions to take place, perhaps as curatorial confidence in the programme grew. Holmes clearly preferred these as they involved a more substantial collaborative approach:

working through ideas with artists [...] I just think that's quite an interesting way of working, it's definitely something I'd like to do more of; that sort of installation idea so, I think that will make the projects more involved and more complex but I think its worth it

⁷⁰⁴ 'Miss: Exhibition Proposal', (2014).

for the final results to the house.⁷⁰⁵

Later exhibitions have included more dominant artworks in and amongst the collections, draped, hung or otherwise attached to collection objects. Su Blackwell's installation *Remnants* in 2010, and Charlotte Cory's exhibition 'Capturing the Brontës' in 2013 adopted this kind of approach. These have been seen as the most 'invasive' exhibitions in the programme, and form the focus of my analysis in Chapter 4.⁷⁰⁶ They offer different perspectives on the issue of provocation, given that the visitor response to each could not be more different. Su Blackwell's exhibition was almost universally loved and can be contrasted with Charlotte Cory's being almost equally disliked by visitors and staff alike. To move towards a more substantive understanding of this relationship between art and site, and the complexity of the negotiated relationship, it is important to examine more carefully how these exhibitions have engaged with the Parsonage.

In 2010, when the first three years of funding for the Contemporary Arts Officer had ended, the Brontë Society's initial scepticism seemed to have been replaced by acceptance of the CAP as a core museum activity. McCarthy noted 'as time has gone by I think it has become more and more established as a core function' and likened the Society's reticence in accepting the CAP to an earlier episode where education work was not well understood,

there was a point in time in the Society's history where education was seen as something of a kind of slightly new and unusual kind of thing that we perhaps should, or maybe we shouldn't, be doing, so there was a big debate about whether we should have an education officer. This is quite a lot of years ago now, it's well established now as a core function of what we do and the same thing has happened with the arts programme.⁷⁰⁷

Holmes expressed a similar view:

⁷⁰⁵. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010

⁷⁰⁶. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷⁰⁷. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

the Brontë Society are prepared to commit, now they've seen the results and what it brings to the profile and all that sort of thing so I am trying to secure some more Arts Council funding just for additional programming really which would be really helpful because it costs so much money to do what we do.⁷⁰⁸

At this point in 2010, Holmes discussed with me how they were reflecting on the whole programme. Not only had they concluded that the exhibitions brought in additional visitors, they also felt that it was important to continue with artworks in the house because the Brontës had been radicals and creative artists in their own right.⁷⁰⁹ With the benefit of hindsight, this support is something that could be seen as tenuous, especially given that the problems caused by the Charlotte Cory exhibition in 2013 saw some Council members rapidly withdraw support for the programme and argue for it to cease altogether. Jane Sellars notes that the exhibition was 'controversial'.⁷¹⁰ The exhibition I curated, 'Artists of Faith', was the next exhibition in the programme after Charlotte Cory. From my conversations with staff, it was not clear that the Council members were going to approve it to be shown in the period interiors. The Council was seeking to have all contemporary art exhibitions shown in the small exhibition space in the entrance area. When it had been agreed that 'Artists of Faith' should be shown inside the Parsonage, I felt under pressure in that I knew the exhibition needed to be well received by visitors. The exhibition proposal for 'Miss' also clearly related to problems caused by Cory's exhibition as it stated that, 'following on from the Charlotte Cory exhibition, we would make sure this work is properly interpreted and accessible to visitors'.⁷¹¹ In 2010 however, it seemed that the programme was going from strength to strength.

⁷⁰⁸. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷⁰⁹. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷¹⁰. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁷¹¹. 'Miss: Exhibition Proposal' (2014).

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a detailed insight into the rationale for the development of the Contemporary Arts Programme at the Brontë Parsonage Museum and to use this to frame a further analysis of the more recent programme of exhibitions. A number of initial challenges can be discerned from this initial overview of the programme and review of two exhibitions.

As a heritage site and listed building, the building itself is a limiting factor. In a site already densely packed with objects and artworks, Jenna Holmes has described that one challenge is space:

the actually physical limits are the tricky parts [...] really, making what [artists] want to happen in the Parsonage work in terms of care for the building, not drilling holes, but also in the practical running of the museum as in, if we put something there, and every morning and every evening it has to be taken down for the shutters to be closed and opened, you know that sort of thing, it tends to be that that is the limiting factor, and that's what I see as my role in trying to overcome those so that we can [...] navigate that.⁷¹²

These restrictions have resulted in the most common strategy of placing both painting and sculptural objects in and amongst the room settings themselves. Paula Rego's *Jane Eyre* lithographs were displayed on easels thus avoiding the need for wall space, however, visitors clearly felt the work to be too prominent as 'the easels and paintings got in the way of viewing the rooms'.⁷¹³ In many ways, Rego's lithographs were simply too big. In later exhibitions, smaller works have been located on furniture surfaces and inside display cases. In 2008 for 'My Life Dreams', Anneliese Strba's small photographic works were displayed amongst other table top items (Figure 28). Several of Simon Warner's films for his 2012 exhibition 'Ways to the Stonehouse' were shown on small iPods that could be inserted into existing tableau and display cases (Figure 29). The nature of

⁷¹² Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁷¹³ 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

these restrictions led Holmes to suggest the house itself exerts a kind of agency, 'I think that with technology definitely. [The Parsonage] doesn't like it'.⁷¹⁴



Figure 28: 'My Life Dreams', Dining Room installation view.

The analysis of 'Brontëan Abstracts' in this chapter suggests wherever artworks are sited, the relationship between them, their location and hermeneutic processes needs further clarification, particularly given that 'juxtaposition' was a significant interpretive aim for McCarthy, and that problems with 'location' meant that Sellars felt Rego's exhibition had shortcomings. The siting of artworks can create a complexity which does not appear easy to resolve, particularly in the context of existing debate around visitors as either passive consumers or independently-thinking beings.

⁷¹⁴. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013. This idea emerged from our discussion of Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).



Figure 29: 'Ways to the Stonehouse', installation view.

While understanding that the impact of the CAP is problematic, the way in which the programme has been funded suggests that this 'risk taking' is innovative. The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which has provided substantial funding for the programme's development, is interested in work that 'addresses a significant gap in provision' and which 'tests out new ideas or practices'.⁷¹⁵ These are 'risks' taken with the existing concepts of heritage production explored in Chapter 2, concepts which underpin the identity of the Parsonage as a period representation of the Brontës' home. It may be that the CAP could be conceived of as 'problematic boundary work', work that challenges the way in which 'heritage' and contemporary art' are categories [which] form disciplinary regimes of apprehension (including sensory apprehension), interpretation and understanding for the objects used to embody them'.⁷¹⁶

Following MacDonald's view that visitor comments are useful in pointing

⁷¹⁵ Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 'Applying to the Main Fund: Guidance Notes', <<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/main-fund.html>> [accessed 31 March 2015].

⁷¹⁶ Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.25.

towards areas for research, it is clear from the responses to both Rego's and Parker's work shown in the house that less tangible aspects of the experience are important and that visitors describe 'atmosphere' as being key.⁷¹⁷ Visitors' responses to these exhibitions demonstrated a dialectical tension, in that art either added to, or detracted from, their perceived idea of what they expected and the intangible aspects of their experience. From his perspective as the artist behind the museum which is 18 Folgate Street, in London, Denis Severs suggested differences in visitors' reaction is a result of differing abilities to imagine creatively that which is not seen, but alluded to within what is in front of them.⁷¹⁸ Perhaps new conceptual tools are needed to explore the role and impact of this work in being able to 'open up a space in which the intangible past can be *sensed*', particularly art's role in effecting the temporal collapse which provokes feeling, that 'might commonly be described as a house having "atmosphere"'.⁷¹⁹

⁷¹⁷. Macdonald, 'Accessing Audiences'.

⁷¹⁸. Severs, *18 Folgate Street*, p.106. For an analysis of Severs' creative approach to history, see Mary Teeling, 'A London Travelogue: Visiting Dennis Severs' House', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321.

⁷¹⁹. Gregory and Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', p.265. Emphasis in original.

Chapter 4

The Conjunction of Art and Heritage

Wherever one turns in discussing the display of artefacts in a museum there is a problem of epistemology, of how artefacts are perceived and represented by the museum curator, and of how they are perceived and understood by the museum visitor. It becomes clear that this is a highly fluid and complex activity, which is not susceptible to straightforward definition [...] artefacts do not exist in a space of their own, transmitting meaning to the spectator, but, on the contrary, are susceptible to a multiform construction of meaning which is dependent on the design, the context of other objects, the visual and historical representation, the whole environment; that artefacts can change their meaning not just over the years as different historiographical and institutional currents pick them out and transform their significance, but from day to day as different people view them and subject them to their own interpretation.⁷²⁰

Charles Samaurez Smith encapsulates several issues which are central to this case study. Siting artworks in the reconstructed domestic interiors at the Brontë Parsonage Museum can be seen as a 'multiform construction' which creates a hybrid space in which the building, collection, objects, artworks, visitors, curators and artists are all implicated in the 'visual and historical representation'. Michael Baxandall reinforces this point, suggesting it is not possible to 'exhibit objects without putting a construction upon them'; Danielle Rice further argues that approaching museums from the perspective of any one discipline is 'often inadequately narrow'.⁷²¹

Chapter 3 demonstrated that the Contemporary Arts Programme (CAP) at the Parsonage is a strategy born from the desire to provide new experiences for visitors. This is one case study from a wider 'historiographical and institutional current' amongst heritage institutions, comprising what might be seen as the instrumentalisation of artists within curatorial and educational programmes.⁷²²

⁷²⁰. Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', p.19.

⁷²¹. Baxandall, 'Exhibiting Intention', p.34; Rice, 'Museums', p.79.

⁷²². Kwon discusses the way in which artists' practice has become a kind of cultural service. Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p.4.

Samaurez Smith also highlights a potential gap between the ways in which artefacts, and by 'artefacts' I mean both historical objects and works of contemporary art, are 'perceived and represented' by curators and the way in which they are 'perceived and understood' by visitors.⁷²³ In relation to this 'problem of epistemology', it was possible to conclude from the Literature Review that the kinds of meanings generated by heritage processes are 'not susceptible to straightforward definition', much as Samaurez Smith suggests in the quote above. Neither are the experiences of contemporary art easy or straightforward to understand, either in what we 'get out of' them or why we seek them in the first place.⁷²⁴ Furthermore, meaning in relation to objects is inseparable from the context in which they are seen and from the person who is doing the seeing; post-structural approaches to interpretation remind us that 'the interpretation of the meaning and significance of material culture is a contemporary activity. The meaning of the past does not reside in the past, but belongs in the present'.⁷²⁵

Thus Samaurez Smith helps frame the necessity for an analysis of the complex conjunction which interventions at the Brontë Parsonage represent. The 'interpretation' of a heritage site is a complex process in itself. The juxtaposition of objects which traditionally exist within very different kinds of epistemological frameworks suggests the CAP constructs a particular type of heritage experience which is 'multiform' and not easy to articulate.

The analysis in this chapter is not an attempt to 'reduce a complex reality to whatever it is that fits into a simple scheme', as this would risk both 'forgetting' and possibly 'repressing' the complex.⁷²⁶ Given the orientation of this chapter

⁷²³. Saumarez Smith, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', p.19.

⁷²⁴. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.14.

⁷²⁵. Christopher Tilley, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) pp.67-75, p.73.

⁷²⁶. *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.3.

around interpretation, the discussion about two exhibitions from the CAP that follows can be seen as a dialogue which works towards a 'making sense':

only in a dialogical encounter with what is not understood [...] can we open ourselves to risking and testing our preconceptions and prejudices [...]. Understanding is participative, conversational and dialogic. [...] Moreover, understanding is something that is *produced* in that dialogue, not something *reproduced* by an interpreter through an analysis of that which he or she seeks to understand. The meaning one seeks in "making sense" of a social action or text is temporal and processive and always coming into being in the specific occasion of understanding.⁷²⁷

This chapter first examines the concept of 'interpretation', in order to set out ways in which the conjunction of art in this rich and complex heritage site might be problematic from the perspective of its use as a form of interpretation. Two exhibitions from the Contemporary Arts Programme are then studied, Su Blackwell's exhibition 'Remnants' from 2010 and Charlotte Cory's exhibition 'Capturing the Brontës' from 2013.

Interpretation

Parsonage staff have characterised the new experiences they are interested in creating as ones which require the visitor to use their imagination and creativity, and also that the visitor should from time to time experience artwork which is a challenge to their understanding of the period interiors of the museum. The funding for Cornelia Parker's exhibition in 2006 was predicated on the desire:

⁷²⁷ Schwandt, 'Three Epistemological Stances', p.195.

to explore new forms of display and interpretation in a bid to occasionally challenge the period room presentation that has defined the museum since it opened in 1928. It is felt that this form of presentation has caricatured the museum as a literary 'shrine' and perhaps re-enforced[sic] some of the myths and clichés which have surrounded the Brontës for over a hundred and fifty years.⁷²⁸

McCarthy described this broader move towards provoking creative experiences:

So we want to [...] develop things as part of the arts programme that allows people to come here and not just celebrate the Brontës and their work but also [...] engage with their own imagination and their own creativity in various ways.⁷²⁹

The publicity for the Su Blackwell exhibition 'Remnants' in 2010 discussed below, described that the CAP exists 'to encourage new ways of looking at the museum collection and at contemporary art, and celebrate the connections between creativity past and present'.⁷³⁰ A notable difference in this later statement is a shift away from the idea that the artwork might 'challenge' the period interior.

However, all three of these statements regarding the purpose of the CAP locate the exhibitions within a model of interpretation defined by ICOMOS as 'the full range of potential activities intended to heighten public awareness and enhance understanding of cultural heritage site[sic]'.⁷³¹ Alison Hems suggests 'effective interpretation, [...] sensitively developed for both its audience and the site for which it is designed, is also about encouraging access in the widest sense'.⁷³² How then, does the CAP 'enhance understanding' of the Parsonage, and encourage visitors to 'not just celebrate' the Brontës?

The Parsonage as a building is important, as are the stories of the Brontës

⁷²⁸. Initial Application for Cornelia Parker's 'Brontëan Abstracts' 2006.

⁷²⁹. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁷³⁰. Brontë Parsonage Museum, 'Remnants: Su Blackwell', [Leaflet] (2010). De Bolla suggests 'we may only be able to see through a particular lens no matter how hard we try to see differently'. Peter De Bolla, *Art Matters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), p.16.

⁷³¹. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.2.

⁷³². Hems, 'Thinking About Interpretation', p.190

that are told within it. Thus it can be seen to meet Gurian's notion of a 'place' of memory and meaning:

If the essence of a museum is not to be found in its objects, then where? I propose that the answer is in being *a place* that stores memories and presents and organizes meaning in some sensory form. It is both the physicality of a place and the memories and stories told therein that are important.⁷³³

Interpretation, then, can be seen to relate to ways in which stories are told. In the sensory form of a heritage site, the Parsonage has created meaning in a number of ways.

Since the moment in the nineteenth century when a group of enthusiasts agreed that Brontë memorabilia was important to save, meaning has been created through the collecting of particular kinds of objects which bear a relationship to the Brontës.⁷³⁴ According to Mieke Bal this is a form of storytelling; 'collecting is an essential human feature that originates in the need to tell stories, but for which there are neither words nor other conventional narrative modes. Hence collecting is a story'.⁷³⁵

Since the 1950s the museum has also focussed on the recreation of period interiors to be able to display those objects in an historically accurate setting. As a 'place of memory', many rooms have an implicit narrative which represent different historical periods from the lives of the Brontës. Hooper-Greenhill points out that 'objects can bring together and give material form to elusive intangible abstract ideas such as "home"'.⁷³⁶ This can be clearly seen in the Dining Room, shown in Figure 12. In this room, narrative is created through the recreation of

⁷³³. Gurian, 'What is the Object of This Exercise', p.270. Emphasis in original.

⁷³⁴. Peter Howard suggests the heritage 'process starts with heritage formation'. Howard, *Heritage*, p.187.

⁷³⁵. Mieke Bal, 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting', in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by J. Elsner and R. Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994) pp.123-145, p.103.

⁷³⁶. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.108. Albano highlights the ways in which objects enable biographical narrative. See Albano, 'Displaying Lives'.

the room itself, the display of a variety of furniture, domestic items and writing implements and the text panel which informs the visitor of the ways in which the room was used by the sisters.⁷³⁷

In other rooms, this narrative construction has also involved the reproduction of furniture and furnishings. Juliet Barker described how the reproduction of Patrick Brontë's bed allowed a whole new set of objects to be displayed, which received 'favourable comments from visitors, particularly children who could never understand where the Brontës slept!'.⁷³⁸ More recently wallpapers have been reproduced based on stratigraphic evidence and archival research.⁷³⁹ Text panels and leaflets provide context for understanding these constructions within the social relations between members of the family and their broader community. In the description of Mr Brontë's Study, for example, the main tour leaflet describes how 'Mr Brontë carried out most of his parish business from this room and also took many of his meals alone here. During his time at Haworth he did a great deal of good [...] on behalf of his parishoners'.⁷⁴⁰ This is a strategy that has been chosen carefully. In talking about the possibility of new technology and interpretation, Ann Dinsdale described how:

we don't want to clutter the historic rooms up with technology [...] because some people, they just like to quietly go round and I don't think they'd be too pleased about audio guides and all that kind of thing all over the house.⁷⁴¹

Thus it can be seen that, through a 'set of professional practices', collection, reproduction, display and text, biographical narrative is the way in which

⁷³⁷. The full text panel is quoted on page 130.

⁷³⁸. Juliet Barker, 'New Bedroom Layout at the Parsonage', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1987), 127-129, p.128.

⁷³⁹. McDermott and Crick Smith, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum Haworth: An Analysis of Decorative Finishes With Focus on the Brontë Period of Occupation*.

⁷⁴⁰. Brontë Society, 'A tour of the Parsonage', [Leaflet] (2014).

⁷⁴¹. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

meaning is created through the interpretive processes of the Parsonage.⁷⁴² This accords with Lois Silverman's observation that 'humans share a basic need to express the meanings we make by telling them, often in the form of stories, to ourselves and to others'.⁷⁴³

This process relies partly on what Susan Pearce has described as the 'power of the "actual object"' to connect us to a particular moment in time.⁷⁴⁴ The sofa displayed in the Dining Room is a good example. It is commonly accepted that Emily died there. Not only does this connect us to the moment of Emily's death and more synecdochically to the underlying narrative of the tragic lives of the Brontës, this also raises our own sense of mortality. Pearce suggests this results because the object will outlast us; through a contemplation of Emily's death we are bound to conceive of the moment of our own dying.⁷⁴⁵ Pearce thus argues that viewing is dialectical, our interpretation of the sofa 'bring[s] out what is in the object and what is in ourselves'.⁷⁴⁶

Key to this dialectic is what Pearce describes as 'consensus'; 'the body of traditional knowledge and expertise which we may call scholarship or curatorship, and the ability to apply this to a particular object or collection in order to extend the boundaries of understanding'.⁷⁴⁷ Similarly, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill uses Stanley Fish's concept of 'interpretive communities' to argue that 'individual meaning-making is forged and tested in relation to communities of

⁷⁴² West and McKellar, 'Interpretation of Heritage', p.166. Albano argues the importance of personal items in the construction of biographical narrative; see Albano, 'Displaying Lives'.

⁷⁴³ Lois H. Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age', *Curator*, 38 (1995), 161-170, p.162.

⁷⁴⁴ Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning', p.25. See also Newman and Bloom, 'Art and Authenticity: The Importance of Originals in Judgments of Value'.

⁷⁴⁵ Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning', p.25.

⁷⁴⁶ Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning', p.27.

⁷⁴⁷ Pearce, 'Objects as Meaning', p.27. Silverman argues this from a similar perspective. In her terms, visitors make meaning by using three particular strategies, one of which is 'special knowledge'. In this case, visitors are highly likely to be familiar with the Brontë life story. See Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162.

meaning-making, which establish frameworks of intelligibility within which individual subjects negotiate, refine and develop personal constructs'.⁷⁴⁸ It is this 'consensus', or meaning established within a community discourse, which connects the meaning-making processes of the Parsonage with those of the visitor. In this context, the CAP needs to be considered in relation to the overall interpretive strategy in use at the Parsonage and the responsibility staff have towards visitors, some of whom consider themselves pilgrims and all of whom, as tourists, are 'seeking authenticity in other times and other places'.⁷⁴⁹ ICOMOS frames this sense of responsibility by setting out that there are limits to what might be appropriate, in that methods need to be 'accepted and scholarly'; that authenticity be respected; and 'inclusiveness' enhanced.⁷⁵⁰

Heritage as a 'discursive practice' has been seen to disinherit as much as it has represented the history of some visitors.⁷⁵¹ In these contexts, contemporary art exhibitions have been seen as a way in which hidden histories can be written back in.⁷⁵² This raises a question about what 'stories' might be written back in by CAP exhibitions, and echoes the question cited earlier from Rachleff regarding whether or not artists and their work could be perceived as having any historic authority.⁷⁵³ Contrasted with this changing of narratives, however, previous research had found that visitors disliked 'disruption', in that any substantial shift from their expectations was seen as problematic. Bergit Arends' aim at the Natural History Museum, for example, was to use artists' interventions as 'disruption' to shift 'engrained perceptions'.⁷⁵⁴ Yet, it has been argued that this can

^{748.} Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.119.

^{749.} Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.10.

^{750.} ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.3.

^{751.} Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.221.

^{752.} See page 50 of the Literature Review for discussion of Matt Smith's work at Nymans House.

^{753.} Rachleff, 'Peering Behind the Curtain', p.208.

^{754.} Arends, 'Contemporary arts in the Natural History Museum London: symbiosis and disruption', p.2.

produce a problematic clash between 'individual expectations and institutional, academic intentions'.⁷⁵⁵ For the Parsonage, McCarthy clearly set out the institutional intention, 'wherever possible, you want these contemporary interventions [...] to reflect in an interesting and perhaps challenging way on the historic collection, whether that be objects within the room or the room itself'.⁷⁵⁶

Despite problems raised by the expectation of visitors, important in recent heritage literature has been the suggestion that new forms of interpretation are required, particularly interpretation which relates to visitors' affective register.⁷⁵⁷ How, though, might an analysis of meaning making in relation to the CAP start? An analysis of objects and meaning making in a museum setting has a different genealogy from an analysis of meaning making in front of works of art. Eileen Hooper-Greenhill sets these out as 'material culture [...] with a focus on the study of artefacts' and 'visual culture [which] addresses the meaning of the image in film, photography, television, advertising, or painting'.⁷⁵⁸ However, Hans-Georg Gadamer suggested that it is in 'the hermeneutic universe' that meaning-making processes in relation to objects with different purposes are united.⁷⁵⁹ Thus, it is through an approach drawing broadly on interpretation and hermeneutics that this analysis occupies a position in relation to both genealogies.

The Parsonage as it is today exists within particular 'epistemological frameworks' which have shaped it in the past, and continue to shape its

⁷⁵⁵. Crane, 'Memory, Distortion', p.57. See also Annette Loeseke, 'Co-Presenting Past and Present: Visitor Studies on the Reception Process', *engage: the international journal of visual art and education*, 31 (2012), 51-58, pp.57-58. Tunbridge and Ashworth highlight how 'all visitors have their own personal pasts and heritages which are then confronted by whatever official heritage is presented by the museum'. Tunbridge and Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', p.218.

⁷⁵⁶. Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁷⁵⁷. Phillip Schorch has argued that 'embodied hermeneutics' as a methodological framework within which to examine visitor experience is important because feelings are already interpretations and represent experiences which can not be translated into words. Philipp Schorch, 'Cultural Feelings and the Making of Meaning', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 20 (2014), 22-35, p.26.

⁷⁵⁸. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.107.

⁷⁵⁹. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.xxviii.

development. It is precisely this long gestation of the current iteration of the Brontë Parsonage that the CAP programme is intended to engage with. Whether the aim remains to 'challenge', or has evolved to focus more on encouraging creative and emotive responses, contemporary art is being included for particular interpretive aims, relating to both cognitive and affective processes. Dinsdale suggested that this is tied to the fact that the Brontës themselves were particularly interested in the arts:

the two things go really well together because [Gaskell] said it's singular how passionate the whole family were about art [...] we know that they were artists themselves, that Charlotte herself considered a career as an artist, so for me, the kind of mixing together of their home with these contemporary art works, it's all kind of in harmony really. I don't see it as being out of place. It fits in with that idea of their lives to me and again it's gets away from that idea of the museum as being a dead place; a mausoleum.⁷⁶⁰

Thus, the Parsonage exists as a narrative construction, borne from 'consensus', in order to communicate the complex history of the Brontë family, their lives in the Parsonage, and their production of influential literature. However, this has also been problematised as 'being a dead place; a mausoleum'. It is clear, therefore, that the role of the CAP seems to be twofold. First, to create a richer narrative around the Brontës as creative individuals interested in all the arts. Second, and perhaps more substantially, to bring the Parsonage to life. This aim clearly aligns with the broad range of projects examined in the literature review which noted that artists were expected to 'animate' sites and collections. To explore this line of reasoning further, it is also important to look at the ways in which visitors bring meaning, especially as Hooper-Greenhill has pointed out that:

exhibitions are produced to communicate meaningful visual and textual statements, but there is no guarantee that the intended meanings will be achieved. Visitors to museum exhibitions respond in diverse ways. They may or may not perceive the

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

intended meanings, and, perceiving them, they may or may not agree with them, find them interesting, or pay attention to them.⁷⁶¹

The starting point of this thesis was the contention that the ways contemporary art might facilitate meaning making within a heritage context is not well understood. Museum professionals' knowledge of their visitors has increased substantially in recent years and there is a better developed understanding of how visitors engage with heritage sites and museums, but in the early stages of this research process both Jenna Holmes and Andrew McCarthy noted their lack of basic information about visitors and their engagement with the CAP.⁷⁶²

Holmes suggested that they had a sense of where people were coming from but 'we don't have a marketing person or an audience development person so we don't really have someone to work with all this data; we keep records [...] especially because we gift aid; we have a lot of visitor information, but we just don't have the resource to make the most of that really'.⁷⁶³ Like many museums, the Parsonage seems caught between a marketing approach to interventions based on what Hal Foster characterised as 'art tourism', and a desire to implement radical new experiences for existing visitors to a period home.⁷⁶⁴ Surprisingly, from these statements it seems that the CAP is based on the 'perception' that visitors feel the parsonage is 'dead' rather than a substantial understanding of visitors' experiences.

Lois Silverman has suggested that 'visitors "make meaning" through a constant process of remembering and connecting'.⁷⁶⁵ Perhaps to Samaurez Smith,

⁷⁶¹. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.4.

⁷⁶². Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012; Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷⁶³. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

⁷⁶⁴. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p.197.

⁷⁶⁵. Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162. Laurajane Smith suggests that 'remembering' is one way in which the past is used to navigate the present. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.66.

this definition may be an oversimplification, but it is a valuable point of orientation, and demonstrates that while Saumarez Smith may be more interested in institutional museological processes, Silverman's attention is firmly on the visitor.⁷⁶⁶ Following Susan Vogel, this chapter uses both these points of reference, the way in which the Parsonage creates meaning, and the fact that meaning is substantially a process of visitor engagement. The notion of 'remembering and connecting' offers a way to think about visitors' engagement with the Parsonage:

It is always a delight to return & remember these dear writers.

Already 50 years ago my sisters and I in Holland read the books of the Brontë sisters, see films about them etc etc. It is fascinating at last to be here.⁷⁶⁷

Truly fascinating a real privilidge[sic] to be here.⁷⁶⁸

Visitors here were 'remembering' the writers, and making 'connections' to the Brontës' lives and their own memories of reading the novels, perceiving this experience as a 'privilege'. Hooper-Greenhill suggests that 'tacit knowledge remains at an emotional, reactive level, and as it remains non-verbal, unarticulated, [it] cannot be analysed and assessed'.⁷⁶⁹ These comments point toward visitors who have experienced strong emotion and thus simply 'being' in the house in which the Brontës lived and wrote is a significantly meaningful experience.

This 'being' in the house extends to a bodily exploration. It is very common to observe visitors passively following the visitor route, spending little time looking in each room. However, other visitors actively explore in the way

^{766.} Susan Vogel considers meaning making as consisting of these two elements. See Susan Vogel, 'Always True to the Object, in Our Fashion', in *Grasping the World: The Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) pp.653-662.

^{767.} 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

^{768.} 'General Visitor Comments Book' (2015).

^{769.} Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.116.

that Molly Behagg has described as 'sensory and empathic [...]. It is the perceptive bodily experience [...] that creates individual narratives, by situating the visitor within the house as a context of interpretation'.⁷⁷⁰ Behagg further argues 'the temporary habitation of the space encourages a kind of learning that is the creation of embodied personal narratives'.⁷⁷¹ One group of three women I observed in April 2015 walked from room to room, and back again, a number of times. They were reading the visitor guide to each other, picking out information which described how the Children's Study, Later Emily's Room 'was reduced in size during Charlotte's alterations to the house in 1850'.⁷⁷² Walking between the Study and Charlotte's Room, one of the group declared to the others 'apparently this room used to be wider'.⁷⁷³ Their physical exploration and 'text echo' showed they were establishing the layout of the house through walking, and also imaginatively thinking through how the house was, and how it is now.⁷⁷⁴

Visitors' empathy with the tragic element of Brontë narrative is reflected in many comments, and underpins a deeper meaning behind the fact that the museum is seen as a 'dead' place.⁷⁷⁵ On a visit in 2014, I overheard one visitor remark to their companion 'you don't expect to outlive your kids do you'. These two visitors, who could have been mother and daughter, clearly found this a relevant and powerfully emotional issue which resonated between them.⁷⁷⁶ In his consideration of the way in which tourists engage with difficult historical events, MacCannell suggested that while the pain of the event is over, 'only the living,

⁷⁷⁰. Molly Behagg, 'Museums of the Self: House Museums, Emotional Space and Personal Narratives', *engage: the international journal of visual art and gallery education*, 31 (2012), 59-71, p.68.

⁷⁷¹. Behagg, 'Museums of the Self', p.68.

⁷⁷². Brontë Society, 'Brontë Parsonage museum', [Leaflet].

⁷⁷³. Field notes, 1 April 2015.

⁷⁷⁴. For her analysis of visitors' use of language, particularly the ways in which label text is shared amongst social groups, see Paulette Mcmanus, 'Making Sense of Exhibits', in *Museum Languages, Objects and Texts*, ed. by Gaynor Kavanagh (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991) pp.49-61, p.40.

⁷⁷⁵. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

⁷⁷⁶. Field notes, 6 November 2014.

the tourists, can hold within their souls thoughts of life's joys and of the suffering of the dead'.⁷⁷⁷

These comments serve as examples of ways in which visitors express how their experience of the parsonage is meaningful to them. In relation to the CAP, these experiences are key, because they show that visitors are already emotionally invested in the site, and it is possible to argue that this is a result of their lives having been significantly 'intervened' in already through their encounter with the literature of the Brontës. This counters McCarthy's argument that the legacy of the Brontës is not visible in the house. In fact the Brontë legacy is clearly visible, being embodied in the visitors who would not have been there otherwise.⁷⁷⁸ Furthermore, it also counters the suggestion that the Parsonage is 'dead' for visitors. Rather, a deep richness of visitor experience can be inferred from the textual traces examined. How then, does the additional 'intervention' of an artist connect with the ways visitors already bring meaning with them to a place that might not be so 'dead' as was thought?

Su Blackwell, 'Remnants'

Su Blackwell is an artist based in London who works with books, creating sculptural objects from them which are inspired by the content of the books themselves. In 2010 Blackwell was commissioned 'to create new work in response to the Brontës and the museum collection'.⁷⁷⁹ It is clear from Jenna Holmes, Contemporary Arts Officer, that the selection of Blackwell was intuitive, and the expectation was high, 'I approached her to work with us because I really liked

⁷⁷⁷. MacCannell, *Sightseeing*, p.179.

⁷⁷⁸. I am indebted to my colleague and friend Helen Graham for the many office conversations we shared which helped me see this more clearly.

⁷⁷⁹. Brontë Parsonage Museum, 'Remnants', [Leaflet].

her work and I knew she would do something incredible for us'.⁷⁸⁰

The exhibition leaflet explained the connections Blackwell made in her work:

'Remnants' responds to *Wuthering Heights* as well as themes of childhood, imagination and storytelling. The delicate interventions suggest the Brontës' imaginary worlds and hint at a spirit world still present. Displayed amongst original artefacts, the exhibition draws connections with the Brontës' own use of paper as a precious material.⁷⁸¹



Figure 30: 'Remnants': Book with Mechanical Pages..

The aims of the artist and the aims of the Parsonage for this particular exhibition were clearly connected, if not exactly congruous. Blackwell described her aim as 'to bring out the spiritual, but mostly 'creative' essence of the Brontës[sic]. My main focus was on the women (the sisters and their house keepers[sic])'.⁷⁸² In the unpublished evaluation report written for the Arts Council

⁷⁸⁰. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010. In contrast to Cornelia Parker who was arguably invited to 'provoke', it is less clear from Holmes's description that 'provocation' remains a central issue.

⁷⁸¹. Brontë Parsonage Museum, 'Remnants', [Leaflet].

⁷⁸². Interview with Su Blackwell, by email. 21 April 2015.

which funded the exhibition, Jenna Holmes noted that their main aim 'was to encourage new ways of looking at the Brontë collections'.⁷⁸³ Thus artist and site shared the desire to provide new experiences of engaging with the Parsonage, although Blackwell's focus seemed to be more on the sisters, whereas Holmes notes a focus on collections.

Each object in the exhibition bore the shared title, 'Remnants', indicating that they should be seen as part of a whole, rather than distinct works in their own right. Subtitled as 'book with mechanical pages', Figure 30 shows that the first work visitors encountered was a very subtle addition to the Dining Room. A book lay open on a side table at the back, under the bookshelves in the alcove. With a hidden mechanism, the work was designed in a way that on timed intervals a page of the book would turn, apparently of its own accord. The label went on to make a direct connection to Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*, the book Blackwell explained as her central influence, by the inclusion of a quote: 'A book lay spread on the sill before her, and the scarcely perceptible wind fluttered its leaves at intervals'.⁷⁸⁴

Thinking of this work as an interpretive device, a clear connection is being made between the room, the absent presence of the sisters, and the subject matter of the novels which, in places, are reliant on ghostly happenings. Jane Eyre, for example, inexplicably hears the voice of Rochester calling out to her 'in pain and woe, wildly, eerily, urgently'.⁷⁸⁵ The work thus relies on a ghostly connection between the present house and its former occupants; the nature of this liminal connection is explored further in Chapter 5.⁷⁸⁶ The quote reproduced on the label

⁷⁸³. Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

⁷⁸⁴. Interview with Su Blackwell, 21 April 2015. Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, p.158.

⁷⁸⁵. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* 9th edn (London: Penguin Books, 2008), p.483.

⁷⁸⁶. Sam Taylor-Wood's project was called 'Ghosts'. 'Remnants', the title of Blackwell's exhibition, points to both the physical and spiritual aspects of the Parsonage as a shrine housing relics. Catherine Bertola's installation bore the title 'Residual Hauntings'.

located Blackwell's book as an 'illustration' of *Wuthering Heights*. Thus the temporal experience of the moving pages implied the actual ghostly presence of the sisters in the Dining Room, causing the book to move, and also connected to the fictional world of the novel. Visitors remarked that this work 'brings the experience to life', or 'made them jump'.⁷⁸⁷

Installed in the ground floor Kitchen, a piece of linen tablecloth had been laser cut with 'a passage from Emily Brontë's diary paper' (Figure 31).⁷⁸⁸ The tablecloth was hung from the ceiling drying rack, the quotidian nature of this occurrence symbolised by the presence of several other pieces of linen. The text appeared to fall from the cloth onto the table where other every day items were displayed, thus connecting the interior imagination of Emily as the author, with the external everyday reality of her life in the house. Unlike Cornelia Parker's *Brontëan Abstract, (Emily Brontë's Burnt Comb)* shown in the Kitchen and discussed in Chapter 3, this work is site-specific, in that the meaning of the work is derived from this room and the well known narrative that this was 'where the children would gather on winter evenings and listen to their servant Tabby's tales of bygone days'.⁷⁸⁹

⁷⁸⁷. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁷⁸⁸. Exhibition label.

⁷⁸⁹. Brontë Society, 'A tour of the Parsonage', [Leaflet].



Figure 31: 'Remnants': Installation view, Kitchen.

The label drew attention to the narrative connections to be made:

The work takes inspiration from the local stories and folklore told to the Brontë children in the kitchen by their servant Tabby. These stories were never written down but evidence of them appears in the Brontë novels and left a lasting legacy on their writing. The words in this piece flow directly from the diary page to the book, sentences fragmenting as they do so, to represent the significance of oral storytelling.⁷⁹⁰

Whitehead points out that labels are an important 'framing' device, whereby certain ways of thinking are emphasised above others; their 'use in art museums

⁷⁹⁰ Exhibition label.

is part of the production of knowledge about art and art history'.⁷⁹¹ This label oriented the visitor towards the connection between the work and the broader narrative the kitchen embodies, as opposed to directing visitors to an engagement with the work on its own terms. The substantial focus of the work was 'to represent the significance of oral storytelling' in the place that it happened. This contrasts strongly with the earlier analysis of *Brontëan Abstract (Emily Brontë's Burnt Comb)* which, while shown in the Kitchen, had no direct connection with that room, and whose label simply bore the name of the work. In contrast, Su Blackwell's work 'captures' and 'makes visible' an aspect of the Brontë Story directly, rather than generally, related to its context. That some visitors made connections was clear:

Some of the pieces are very moving + really connect their experiences + writing with the place – e.g. Emily's thinking of her writing in the kitchen as shown by the linen. Really enlivened the museum – thanks!

Beautiful and delicate + thought provoking exhibition. Particularly impressed by the linen cut in kitchen, both beauty and meaning behind it.⁷⁹²

Unlike 'The Jane Eyre Prints' and 'Brontëan Abstracts' considered in Chapter 3, the general reaction to 'Remnants' was almost unanimously positive. In visitor comments a number of themes emerged. One strong theme was reaction to the Parsonage as a unique setting in which these works are to be seen:

⁷⁹¹. Whitehead, *Interpreting Art*, p.54.

⁷⁹². 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

A lovely setting in which to display such creative installations.

I thought the exhibition integrated into the space with a sensitive and awe-inspiring beauty.

really enjoyed Seeing the exhibition of work – beautifully detailed and complimented[sic] the venue perfectly.⁷⁹³

These comments indicate visitors were exploring the relationship between the work and the site, noting how the work was 'integrated into the space'. Visitors noted strong levels of 'affect', in that the exhibition stimulated strong emotions:

V. evocative pieces – particularly the nightgown + heather - ethereal.

We were absolutely charmed by these wonderful pieces - thoughtful, imaginative & moving. Thank you! A real treat.

Excellent exhibition, wonderful imagery of words and thoughts leaping from fabric and book, a little sad with the solitary footfall, very evocative though.⁷⁹⁴

In articulating that the exhibition was 'evocative', 'moving' and 'wonderful', these responses also reflect Holmes's conclusion that 'Remnants' was a substantially successful 'installation' which enhanced the Parsonage as a whole site.⁷⁹⁵ Thus it could be argued that Blackwell's work was popular because it dealt with the Brontës in ways that visitors themselves hoped to engage with the house; that is, they sought a connection to the Brontës as a result of their understanding of the novels and the tragedy experienced by the family. This idea of 'connection' was echoed by Jane Sellars who suggested visitors 'could connect the Su Blackwell [work] with what the Brontës were all about, about writing and paper and childhood'.⁷⁹⁶ Ann Dinsdale also noted that what was important in the CAP was

⁷⁹³. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁷⁹⁴. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁷⁹⁵. Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

⁷⁹⁶. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

visitors 'being able to see some kind of connection, some kind of reason behind it, that makes a lot of difference to people'.⁷⁹⁷

A small number of visitors were troubled by 'Remnants', indicating their interest was also in congruity, albeit from a different perspective:

The footsteps detract from the atmosphere.

The museum doesn't need an other addition to add to its value.

Su Blackwell exhibits add nothing [...] to the overall experience. A shame to mutilate authentic textiles!⁷⁹⁸

These suggest visitors had used their imaginations to picture the Parsonage without the exhibition and concluded this image was a harmonious whole to which nothing needed 'adding', or that which had been added by Blackwell 'detracted' from their experience.

Blackwell, however, was keen to 'add' something to the house that she felt was missing. According to her, the house was 'quite bland' and she wondered if this was because the rooms were roped off. The fact that visitors are not able to venture into a number of the rooms further than a small area is a significant inhibitor to bodily exploration of each room, and emphasises the scopic and theatrical nature of the experience. Being keen to bring to the house something of the Brontës' creative spirit, her further aim to add something of herself was clear:

I felt very strongly, that my work was to be an extension of the Brontë's[sic] home, but it was from a very personal stance, a personal relationship I have with the moors, with their books, and particularly with *Wuthering Heights*.⁷⁹⁹

According to visitors, 'Remnants' did add substantially to their experience.

Visitors articulated the feeling that the work 'brought the novels alive':

⁷⁹⁷. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

⁷⁹⁸. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁷⁹⁹. Interview with Su Blackwell, 21 April 2015.

What a lovely museum, that is kept so beautifully. It makes my favourite novel – Wuthering Heights – really come to life!

Beautiful, beautiful work ... you really capture the way that meaning hovers over the printed page as the reader engages with the text.⁸⁰⁰

For some visitors, it was the Parsonage as the home of the Brontës that was brought to life:

Particularly relevant in the 'childrens [sic] Room' I loved the storybook Coming to life idea! The clever lighting casts shadows of the stories too – very good & original idea!

Love the way they combine biography, fiction and location.

Haunting, beautiful and captured the delight of children's imagination.⁸⁰¹

Given that few of these visitors noted that theirs was a repeat visit, to articulate that something was 'added', had required them to think what their experience might have been like had the artworks not been there. That visitors were able to articulate that what was 'added' related to their understanding of the house, the life stages of the Brontës and the novels is interesting because they were, perhaps implicitly, comparing a Parsonage which existed in their expectation with their actual experience of it. This indicates a substantial imaginative engagement which accords with the concept of the 'tourist gaze', where tourists develop a strong sense of 'anticipation' about what they will see, thus their expectations are constructed before they arrive.⁸⁰² If, then, the CAP is able to 'add' something beyond that which its visitors expect, is this meeting the aim to 'change' visitors' experiences of the site? Given that these comments reveal that the CAP is able to substantially change experiences, is the change one of

⁸⁰⁰. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁸⁰¹. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁸⁰². Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.4.

'preventing' it from being a cliché or mausoleum?⁸⁰³

The aim of this research has been to tease out ways in which the artworks can be seen to be interacting with the house and collections. It is not possible, and has never been the intention, to draw conclusions about how any particular experience has been modified by the CAP. All of the visitors who left responses to the exhibitions may just as easily have had deeply engaged, positive, imaginative experiences of the Parsonage had Su Blackwell's work not been there. Conversely, they may have been disappointed with an 'unadulterated' Parsonage. However, strong connections can be made with concepts of pilgrimage and tourism examined earlier, which suggested that visitors did in fact have an expectation before they arrived, to which Su Blackwell indeed seemed to have added. The evaluation report set out several interesting criteria of success, which included that the exhibition received 'full support from museum staff and captured the imagination of visitors' and that 'this exhibition met with almost universal delight. This was due to the sensitive 'site specific' design of the pieces'.⁸⁰⁴ Holmes noted that the funding:

enabled the museum to commission for the first time a craft-based response to the collections and house a series of site-specific installations within the historic rooms.⁸⁰⁵

Despite the sense that the commission was thought of as based in 'craft' rather than 'art', this research does not treat the analysis of 'Remnants' differently from the other exhibitions examined. The aims of this exhibition were broadly the same as the programme as a whole and were not, for example, focussed on

⁸⁰³. Robins suggests that one aspect of 'intervention' is to 'prevent something "undesirable" from continuing to take place'. Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.2.

⁸⁰⁴. Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

⁸⁰⁵. Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

changing viewers' understanding of craft as a practice.⁸⁰⁶ However, Blackwell's exhibition did mark a turning point from what might be seen as 'exhibiting' works in the interior, to an explicit attempt to create homogenous installations. Claire Bishop suggests that the distinction between 'an installation of art and installation art', in many cases, is subtle and changing.⁸⁰⁷ That 'Remnants' required visitors to explore the Parsonage as a building in relation to their imagining of the Brontës living there, accords with Bishop's view that, 'rather than imagining the viewer as a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a distance, installation art presupposes an *embodied* viewer whose senses of touch, smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision'.⁸⁰⁸ Blackwell was aware of this change:

As I understood it, an artist had not to this point interfered with the structure of the building, and artefacts on display there. Previously, it had been photographs and painting hung on walls, alongside the Brontë exhibits. I was keen to work into the fabric of the building and within the items on display, to change the already existing exhibits with new things, and to challenge people's perceptions.⁸⁰⁹

It is notable at this point in the history of the CAP that the conception of the relationship between the artworks and the site seem to have changed from 'exhibition' to 'installation'. However, it is important not to draw a binary from this and suggest that previous iterations were substantially different. The 'site-specificity' of all the exhibitions in the CAP is certainly worthy of a separate analysis, contextualising them within histories of site specific practice and public art, which Kwon has suggested is a relationship that needs further

^{806.} In contrast, *Ceramics in the Expanded Field*, a project discussed in the Literature Review, was focussed strongly on using artists' work with collections to explore the nature of ceramics as a practice. See 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field', [accessed 20 December 2013].

^{807.} Bishop, *Installation Art*, p.6.

^{808.} Bishop, *Installation Art*, p.6. I would argue embodied 'affect' is also an aspect of installation art that is distinct from the ocular-centric concept of the disembodied viewer.

^{809.} Interview with Su Blackwell, 21 April 2015.

consideration.⁸¹⁰ However, the substantial conflation of artwork and period interior is a notable development, and appears to represent a growing confidence in understanding how to incorporate artwork into a 'dense' heritage site:

This was a major leap forward for the museum in terms of its visual arts programming; exploring the limits of what is possible in such a heavily conserved environment, the ways visual art can interact with the collections and encourage visitor responses and provided a valuable learning opportunity for the Arts Officer to build on in the future.⁸¹¹

That the report highlights 'such a heavily conserved environment' follows the issues discussed in Chapter 3, that the building itself, in its nature as a heritage site, creates a particular set of curatorial issues which need to be navigated. The way in which the rooms are curated leaves little space for the addition of artworks, neither is it straightforward to remove existing works, or hang artworks on walls where adding holes is simply not possible. I experienced this when curating 'Artists of Faith' in 2014; Diane Howse also noted it as a problem for her curation of 'The Silent Wild'.⁸¹² Despite these limitations, according to Holmes, encouraging visitors to respond to visual art 'was to encourage *new* ways of looking at the Brontë collections'.⁸¹³

If that which has been 'added' might be connected to the aims set out by the Parsonage staff, it is important to think about what might have been meant by 'collection', in order to consider whether 'the collections' were experienced in a new way. A part of Susan Pearce's definition is useful, collections 'have been assembled with some degree of intention (however slight) by an owner or curator who believed that the whole was somehow more than the sum of its parts'.⁸¹⁴ Few, if any comments drew attention to what might be thought of as cognitive

⁸¹⁰ Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p.2.

⁸¹¹ Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

⁸¹² Interview with Diane Howse, Leeds, 29 July 2015.

⁸¹³ Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011). My emphasis.

⁸¹⁴ Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections*, p.7.

assimilation of factual information about any individual object. Instead, the overwhelming 'message' received from visitor comments is that 'Remnants' enabled substantially meaningful experiences.⁸¹⁵ These experiences might thus be seen to match that aspect of collections which, in Pearce's definition, is not attributable to any individual object, but the part of the collection which is 'more than the sum' of those things. Or, as Eileen Hooper-Greenhill suggests, this is tacit, felt knowledge; 'unarticulatable' feelings of being in the Parsonage, feelings relating to evoked memories of reading *Wuthering Heights* or *Jane Eyre*, rather than factual knowledge about 'collection items'.

Phillip Schorch has argued that feelings are already interpretations.⁸¹⁶ In this way, 'Remnants' did provide visitors with substantial interpretive experiences, which 'brought alive', 'captured' and 'enlivened'. Thus, Blackwell's work clearly met the suggestion, found in many projects explored in the Literature Review, that artists are able to 'animate' through their work. 'Animate', which being derived from the Latin for 'instilled with life', is clearly a substantial 'addition' to the experience of the Parsonage. What was added by Blackwell's installation? Life; life in relation to the lived experiences of the Brontës in the Parsonage as their home, and in relation to the ability of visitors to remember and connect their experiences with the layered narratives of the Brontës at the Parsonage.

This suggests that Blackwell's work did not operate in the realm of interpretation as explicative method, relating to the cognitive absorption of information. Instead, the work dealt with emotive experience and provoked people to make new connections. These connections were not a hidden 'truth' waiting to be revealed, but one way in which the configuration of objects,

⁸¹⁵. Here, I draw on Sellars' point that 'you ignore at your peril if a message is coming over to you'. See note 497 on page 126.

⁸¹⁶. Schorch, 'Cultural Feelings and the Making of Meaning', p.24.

artworks and visitors in the Parsonage allowed connections to be made; a making of memory in the present through a rich connection with the past. In this sense, Blackwell's work should not be seen as being separate from the 'process' called 'heritage'.

Charlotte Cory, 'Capturing the Brontës'

Charlotte Cory's exhibition 'Capturing the Brontës' was exhibited at the Parsonage from October to December 2013. It was organised in conjunction with the Mercer Art Gallery in Harrogate, where a further exhibition 'Charlotte Cory - Visitoriana' was held from September 2013 to January 2014. Charlotte Cory is both an artist and a writer and is well known for her surrealist collaging of Victorian photographs, where humans are reimagined as animal and human hybrids. Like Blackwell, Cory already had a connection to the Brontës from childhood, but Cory's developed further, 'the truth is my relationship with this place is ridiculous; absolutely ridiculous'.⁸¹⁷

[Cory] joined the Brontë Society as a Life Member in 1967 at the age of 10 using a postal order she won in a local library short story competition. She has never quite managed to escape her youthful passion. Today she is best known for her 'Visitoriana' - a complete fantastical alternative 19th Century based on recycled Victorian photographs and taxidermy.⁸¹⁸

She was also a Trustee of the Society for a time. Jenna Holmes described how 'it seemed [a] really exciting opportunity and she's worked with the John Soane's Museum and Shakespeare's Globe. She has a history of working with these sort of venues so it seemed like a good project for us to go for'.⁸¹⁹ Holmes also suggested that Cory had already been working on a project with the Mercer Art

⁸¹⁷. Interview with Charlotte Cory, Haworth, 5 July 2013.

⁸¹⁸. Cory, *Capturing the Brontës*, p.i.

⁸¹⁹. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

Gallery, when its curator, Jane Sellars, suggested that there was a strong connection which was worth thinking about.⁸²⁰

The concept of Cory's exhibition was based on quite a common museum strategy, that of the 'alternative tour' woven into the permanent collection. These tours usually employ a paper or digital guide to lead the visitor around a series of 'highlights' and sometimes include additional objects put on display or collection items replaced with less well known substitutes. As an 'alternative' trail, 'Capturing the Brontës' was a complete reimagining of their world, absorbing the reality of Brontë history into the surreal, fictional world of the Visitorians, populated by strange and humorous creatures where Charlotte Brontë is depicted as a dog and Elizabeth Gaskell becomes a cockatoo. Cory's exhibition was doubly complex as the guide leaflet hinted:

The exhibition takes visitors on an alternative 'Visitorian' tour of the Brontë Parsonage Museum, to uncover some of the stranger facts and fictions surrounding the Brontë story.⁸²¹

In a museum which is already a liminal bridge between the facts of the Brontës lives and their fictional novels and the repository for many objects which are only 'reputed' to have belonged to them, that the 'alternative' exhibition dealt with both fact and fiction was perhaps a portent for the problems it was to generate.

The trail leaflet drew visitors' attention to the idea of both Brontë history and Cory's interest, that of being a visitor and gaining entry:

By the time you read this you are very likely *inside the front door* of the Brontë Parsonage Museum - congratulations! You have succeeded where many dedicated visitors before you have failed. Pause a moment and savour what this means. You are following in the footsteps of the countless thousands who made their way here from all over the world *to see for themselves* where the Brontë sisters lived and died.

⁸²⁰. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁸²¹. Brontë Society, 'Capturing the Brontës by Charlotte Cory', [Leaflet] (2013).

1. THE HALLWAY

A proud Visitorian savouring the moment.



Figure 32: 'Capturing the Brontës', visitor leaflet.

In her interview, Cory discussed her visit to the Parsonage when she was ten years old, and how central her memory of this visit was to her entire relationship with the Brontës, the Society and the Parsonage: 'I'd got here at last, got into the Parsonage; looked at everything, and all the labels; I was absolutely fixated [...] It quite shocks me how profound that visit was'.⁸²² In this context, the first image in the leaflet of a 'proud Visitorian savouring the moment' is a direct autobiographical reference to Cory's own experience of being a visitor conflated with her deep understanding of the history of pilgrimages to this site (Figure 32). Crossing the 'threshold' into the house is important as homes are sacred spaces.⁸²³ According to Cory, 'actually, the history of visiting is just as important as the Brontë Story'.⁸²⁴

Where visitors might have been forgiven for not noticing Blackwell's moving book in the Dining Room, Cory's installation in this room was altogether

⁸²². Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

⁸²³. Bollnow, *Human Space*, p.134.

⁸²⁴. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

different; there were substantial changes and additions.



Figure 33: 'Capturing the Brontës'. View of the Dining Room.

The chalk portrait of Charlotte Brontë from 1850 by George Richmond, which normally hangs above the fireplace is an important element in the recreation of this period interior. Charlotte's publisher George Smith commissioned the work as a gift for Patrick Brontë. The original is now in the National Portrait Gallery, but the copy which hangs here is an important element in the historical recreation of the Dining Room, based on Elizabeth Gaskell's observation of the original in that location.⁸²⁵ Cory replaced this with her 'Visitorian' portrait of Charlotte in the guise of a dog.

Installed to the left of the dining table, Cory depicted the visit to the Parsonage made by Elizabeth Gaskell in 1853, representing each writer with a chair upholstered with their photographic portrait as Visitorians, along with a range of small objects and writing implements.⁸²⁶ Among the other additions to

⁸²⁵. Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, p.411.

⁸²⁶. Barker, *The Brontës*, p.738.

the room, Cory added the comb seen in Figure 34, explaining in the catalogue that the Dining Room was:

Where Emily Brontë died on the sofa, refusing to acknowledge she was ill and letting a comb slip from her hair into the fire. Burnt combs inevitably became standard fare amongst Brontë souvenirs being offered for sale - and we have a Visitorian one here.⁸²⁷

As discussed in Chapter 3, the comb that the museum owns is displayed and labelled as the one which it is 'thought' Emily dropped, its provenance not being clear. Cory was clearly interested in the history of objects with a dubious provenance.⁸²⁸



Figure 34: 'Capturing the Brontës', *Burnt Comb*.

All the objects Cory added to the Parsonage were identified by blue 'Visitorian Society' labels. Alongside the standard floor pillar text panel on a red background, each room also had Cory's version on a blue background; the blue colour matching her labels, catalogue, and corresponding Contemporary Arts

⁸²⁷. Cory, *Capturing the Brontës*, p.183.

⁸²⁸. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

Programme leaflet. James Putnam noted this as one substantial category of artists' work with museums, where artists 'apply museological methods [...]. They are inspired by [...] their broader institutional context, since the fact of being exhibited in a museum confers on objects an aura of importance and authenticity'.⁸²⁹ The extent to which the Dining Room was modified by Cory's installation was matched in many of the other rooms.

In Patrick Brontë's Bedroom, another tableaux was created depicting Maria Branwell's chest of belongings (Figure 35). Maria had asked for her belongings to be sent to her, but the ship was lost at sea.⁸³⁰ This was a well-known fact to Brontë historians, but Cory undertook archival research at the National Maritime Museum and discovered which ship it was that had foundered; a historical fact which hitherto had not been established. Taking this one step further, Cory's installation created what it might have looked like had the chest of belongings been found, thus quite literally transforming the Parsonage into 'an alternative Visitorian museum within the museum' where fact was blurred substantially with fiction.⁸³¹

⁸²⁹. Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*, p.34.

⁸³⁰. Barker, *The Brontës*, p.57.

⁸³¹. Brontë Society, 'Capturing the Brontës by Charlotte Cory', [Leaflet].



Figure 35: 'Capturing the Brontës', view of Patrick Brontë's Bedroom.

Within the context of the aims of the CAP, trying to understand Cory's motivations is difficult as she seemed to harbour both a deep respect for the Brontës and the museum at the same time as a frustration with aspects of the Brontë obsession. She explained, 'I've always been fascinated by the way people will be interested in the Brontës but they don't even read the books. You'd be amazed by the number of Brontë Society people who've never read *Jane Eyre*'.⁸³² In relation to the extent to which she modified the museum, Cory noted, 'So I have my Visitorian Society, it's a homage to the Brontë Society. Or you might say a send up'.⁸³³ When asked about what kind of responsibility she might feel towards 'pilgrims', Cory explained:

I don't want to destroy the experience. I really want people to be able to come and walk round that Parsonage and have that Brontë experience without feeling I've imposed [...] I would hate somebody to come from America, come all this way, [...] then go in, [and think] bloody hell, it's strewn with Charlotte Coryisms. I

⁸³². Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

⁸³³. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

mean I really don't think that's fair.⁸³⁴

When asked a similar question in relation to her project 'A Hope's Whisper' for the CAP, Rebecca Chesney was clear that her role was only to make good art, any 'responsibility' towards visitors and interpretation lay with the Parsonage.⁸³⁵

However, Cory, later in the interview, was more mischievous:

Well I'm sort of hoping, I mean I'm actually hoping we get some quite irritated response, 'cos I mean if it doesn't provoke something, it hasn't done anything. [...] If it all fitted in comfortably, it wouldn't be doing anything.⁸³⁶

Prior to the exhibition, I asked Jenna Holmes whether visitors were ready for Cory's playfulness. Holmes was hopeful:

We are going to find out aren't we! I think it will be popular just based on curiosity on these pictures. I think they are quite... they are a bit bonkers, but in an intriguing way that I think people will have an instant connection to without even understanding all of the rest.⁸³⁷

Further, in our conversation about how the Cory installation might need to be interpreted:

you don't want to totally overbear the work, any work should just be able to sit and stand for itself shouldn't it, you don't want to have to have explanation boards for every piece of work. But, it's also exciting to tell people that connection, to sort of invite them in, to engage with it a little bit, so that is going to be something we have to think through exactly how we do that.⁸³⁸

'Capturing the Brontës' can be seen as an effort to 'transform a shrine into a "contact zone"' by bringing the Brontës and visitors into more dialogic contact, despite being 'historically separated'.⁸³⁹ By making visible a number of Brontë-

⁸³⁴. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

⁸³⁵. Interview with Rebecca Chesney, 17 February 2012.

⁸³⁶. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

⁸³⁷. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁸³⁸. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁸³⁹. Coles, 'An Ethnographer in the Field', p.70; James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), p.194.

related narratives, Cory performed an interpretive role, opening up the space of the Parsonage by allowing visitors to explore both what things 'do' mean, and what they 'could' mean; according to Levinson, 'could mean' interpreting is 'ludic, liberated, and freedom-seeking'.⁸⁴⁰ Cory sought to 'tell stories' about important events in the Brontës' lives; she sought to provoke thinking about how authenticity relates both to souvenir hunters in the nineteenth century and reflects on the status of objects in the collection today; she also sought to emphasise that visiting the Parsonage is an important aspect of the Brontë history within which every visitor is implicated. Cory pointed out, 'the thing about art is that it's transforming. It's how you can take fact, and give it physical presence'.⁸⁴¹

The reaction visitors had to 'Capturing the Brontës' is instructive in thinking through what these installations 'do' in the context of the Parsonage. The extent to which visitors almost unanimously expressed profound dislike for 'Capturing the Brontës' in contrast to Blackwell's 'Remnants' is instructive to consider, not to demonstrate that polarised responses are possible, as this as a conclusion would be no surprise and of little use. Instead, the issues raised, and language used by, visitors can be explored in relation to the aims of the CAP, offer a way to interpret, or move towards a nuanced understanding, of the relationship between contemporary art and heritage in this situation.

If the aim to provoke remains part of the CAP, then there is no doubt that 'Capturing the Brontës' achieved this. Visitors spoke of insult, desecration and abuse:

An insult to the Brontë memory.

The seagull heads on that longed-for sight of the reproduction of

⁸⁴⁰. Levinson, *Contemplating Art*, p.279.

⁸⁴¹. Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

Branwell's portrait was a desecration.

Why abuse the walls of this historical building with an appalling [sic] distasteful exhibition - money?⁸⁴²

These demonstrate a consistent anger that this exhibition had 'disturbed', 'distracted from' or 'ruined' the experience. This disturbance was often disappointment relating to the temporal or spatial dimension of visitors' pilgrimage:

As a life long fan of the Brontë novels, having waited years to finally come to Haworth, I was extremely disappointed to find the 'art' all over the place.

What a shame about the animal heads - big distraction 240 miles to get here to see something you expect to be 'authentic' Big disappointment... why do it?⁸⁴³

Both these aspects relate to the sense of 'ritual' attached to a visit to the Parsonage. Foucault wrote that ritual is one aspect of entering a heterotopic site, which accords with Carol Duncan's suggestion that engaging with art takes place through ritual 'performance'.⁸⁴⁴ For these visitors, the 'ritual' of engagement with the Brontës had been disturbed. Also, many visitors were simply confused:

Confusing - too many interspersed with the genuine artefacts, which made it hard for my daughter + friend to relate to.

Have found it really disconcerting, and distracting. The blue handwritten cards take some working out too - not easy to read. My eye has wandered away from the Brontës to the strange artefacts. Do not like it.⁸⁴⁵

Visitors were very disappointed and frustrated that the copies of George Richmond's portrait of Charlotte and Branwell's portrait of the three sisters had been removed and replaced with Cory's versions:

We travelled a long way to see the Parsonage and many famous

⁸⁴². 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁸⁴³. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁸⁴⁴. Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.378; Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals*, p.12.

⁸⁴⁵. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

exhibits are in storage - A GREAT SHAME!

At least you could have left the iconic portrait of the 3 sisters on the stairs and the portrait of Charlotte. Really did not like the whole thing.

I thought that the exhibition was very interesting; however, having not visited the Museum before, I was disappointed that some of the original work was not available to see.

I was looking forward to seeing the portrait of the three sisters (the copy, held here) and was very sad to see it replaced by a portraits with birds' heads. This is a shame, I would think the exhibition could have been separate, rather than replace famous items.

Shame the portrait replica is not here.

I came with my wife on my 2nd visit but her 1st expecting to see the full Brontë exhibit yet am confronted by a display of someone elses [sic] "interpretation". The fact that at least two iconic portraits (Charlotte by Richmond & the Branwell Brontë portrait of his 3 sisters) are replaced by animal caricatures is, in my mind, an insult to the Brontë memory.⁸⁴⁶

While these comments express different views of the exhibition, there was obviously an expectation that certain key works would be part of the experience; although, it is interesting to note that the George Richmond portrait was replaced with a work by Sam Taylor-Wood during her exhibition 'Ghosts' but the comments book for 'Ghosts' did not contain a single comment complaining about its absence. While it is not clear the extent to which visitors during Cory's exhibition understood that what had been removed were copies, perhaps what matters here is the authenticity of the experience, given that it has been argued;

an understanding of the experiential thought processes and reactions of tourists to their surrounding environment arguably provides a greater insight into the nature of what is actually being derived from visiting, than a concern for whether factual knowledge has been attained.⁸⁴⁷

That there are many different views expressed accords with what Mieke

⁸⁴⁶. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁸⁴⁷. McIntosh, Alison J. and Richard Prentice, 'Affirming Authenticity', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26 (1999), 589-612, p.609.

Bal argued in 'Exposing the Public', that it is important to treat visitors as a plurality of audiences, rather than a singular group.⁸⁴⁸ Visitors' comments showed an engagement with each other, as if they were establishing a sense of agreement about whether the exhibition was appropriate or not. These comments often related to whether the Brontës themselves would have appreciated the intervention, suggesting the agency of the Brontës within the conversation:

An excellent exhibition. Lots of fun. I think the Brontes would have loved it.

We felt the Brontes would have been fans of Charlotte Cory's addition. Don't be disheartened by other comments.⁸⁴⁹

The dialogue evident between comments demonstrated the negotiation of ideas in a way that accords with the concept of 'interpretive community', in that consensus about what is appropriate is forged dialogically amongst groups of like-minded individuals.⁸⁵⁰ A small number of visitors strongly defended Cory for producing the work, and the Parsonage for their risk taking:

Interesting to see the comments on Charlotte Cory's work: I found the juxtaposition of her images made me think: congratulations to the Society for giving me the chance to use my imagination. Much as the Brontës did in this place.

I love the intermingling of the surrealist art and the Brontë exhibits. A very novel idea, tastefully done that adds to the museum in a myriad of interesting ways. To the naysayers I say bah humbug!

I feel the need to defend Charlotte Cory's exhibition. We have travelled expressly to see it having enjoyed her exhibition at the Mercer Gallery, Harrogate. I find the animals, charming, amusing and whimsical and her research on the Brontës much enriches the Parsonage.⁸⁵¹

The negotiation of ideas which can be inferred from these comments, and many others like them, further supports the sense that 'meaning develops in dynamic

⁸⁴⁸. Bal, 'Exposing the Public', p.525.

⁸⁴⁹. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁸⁵⁰. Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.119.

⁸⁵¹. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

relationship with the expectations, conclusions, judgments and assumptions of the interpreter'.⁸⁵²

Despite this sense that meaning is negotiated within the experience, visitors certainly expressed a strong belief that the Brontë Society was 'responsible' for the site and had been irresponsible in their choices:

I am amazed that permission has been given for this exhibition as it will confuse visitors, especially those from abroad, and trivializes[sic] the work of the Brontës.

Having made a 750 mile trip to revisit the Parsonage, I am horrified and disappointed to see how the Brontës's[sic] exhibition has been so adulterated by the pointless exhibition of Cory - this is without any merit. The Brontë trustees should be ashamed!⁸⁵³

The issue of authenticity has been related to the 'authority' of the message, less convincing messages being seen as less authentic.⁸⁵⁴ This echoes Leary and Scholes' conclusion that authenticity relates to 'the degree of congruity between heritage presentations and current knowledge about the past; authenticity in this sense is contingent on expert judgements'.⁸⁵⁵ Capturing the Brontës could, in this light, be seen as a degradation of the Parsonage's authenticity, given that to 'respect' authenticity, interpretive infrastructure needs to be 'appropriate'.⁸⁵⁶

It was not only visitors who saw that the Parsonage was somehow 'degraded' by this exhibition. Christine Went, Heritage and Conservation Officer and Council member of the Brontë Society, wrote a substantial polemic against what she felt was a 'contraven[tion] of our policy', in which she went on to point out that the policy 'clearly states the house must be presented as a home and all

⁸⁵². Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.119.

⁸⁵³. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁸⁵⁴. Spencer R. Crew and James E. Sims, 'Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.159-175, p.163.

⁸⁵⁵. Leary and Scholes, 'Authenticity of Place and Voice', pp.50-51.

⁸⁵⁶. ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', [accessed 10 June 2013], p.3.

items which are extraneous to this should be removed as far as possible'.⁸⁵⁷ Went also suggested that, by providing activities of the incorrect period, 'we distort history and our integrity is lost [and we] are, frankly, so far from truth as to be ridiculous'.⁸⁵⁸ Given that much of Cory's exhibition was an interpretation of known Brontë history, including the difficulty or tenuousness of provenance, Went, and the visitors who wrote the comments above, can be seen to be exploring their own responses to Rachleff's question, 'who possesses historical authority?'⁸⁵⁹

Crew and Sims have explored 'the problem of history and authority', and argue that 'authenticity is not about factuality or reality. It is about authority. Objects have no authority; people do. It is people on the exhibition team who must make a judgement about how to tell about the past'.⁸⁶⁰ Further, they argued that 'authenticity' can be a reflection of 'the interpretations presented in exhibitions'.⁸⁶¹ In the initial few weeks of 'Capturing the Brontës', the Parsonage staff responded to the complaints with two initiatives, both of which can be seen as an effort to strengthen the 'authority' of the message. First, the portrait of Charlotte Brontë by Richmond, and Branwell's portrait of his three sisters were rehung in the Exhibition Room so that those who had travelled a long way would be able to see them. To put them back in their original location would have undermined the sense of commitment to the CAP. However, given that they are copies, it is likely that their presentation in this alternative location, significantly diminished the experience of them, since their 'authenticity' is based on their role within the presentation of the Brontës' home.

⁸⁵⁷. Christine Went, 'The Charlotte Cory Exhibition, the Contemporary Arts Programme and our exhibitions', (2013). Went's analysis was included in a range of complaints letters provided by Louisa Briggs, Arts Officer in 2013. I presume that as Heritage and Conservation Officer, Went has the authority to invoke the ICOMOS charter.

⁸⁵⁸. Went, 'The Charlotte Cory Exhibition' (2013), para 3.

⁸⁵⁹. Rachleff, 'Peering Behind the Curtain', p.209.

⁸⁶⁰. Crew and Sims, 'Locating Authenticity', pp.162-163.

⁸⁶¹. Crew and Sims, 'Locating Authenticity', p.168.

A second strategy was to introduce a 'Live Guide' into the house. A student intern was asked to spend a short time each day acting as an informal 'guide' to 'Capturing the Brontës', inviting visitors to discuss their reactions. Jordan Blackman, a student from the University of Leeds was the first to take on this role. Asked to summarise how visitors responded to her presence in the museum, Blackman explained:

A lot of people say move it. They don't want it in the Parsonage. They said if it was in the exhibition room or the Bonnell Room, fantastic. But the fact that it is in among their things, is maybe confusing or, I use the word offensive, only because it has been used by other people [...] They say, I am offended by it.⁸⁶²

When asked to give an example of what visitors were offended by, Blackman's immediate response was 'The Pillar Portrait', because Cory had put goose heads on the portraits of the three sisters; 'people do do pilgrimages [...] if they are massive, massive Brontë fans [...] and also putting animals heads on bodies seems to be a real stigma for some people'.⁸⁶³ Further, her perception of the way in which visitors were disoriented by Cory's deliberate obfuscation of provenance was revealing:

It's really this kind of, it's a real imaginarium of their things, and people I think try [...] to wrap their heads around that. They go to a museum for truth, and the label says, this is Charlotte's bracelet, so the fact that it isn't her bracelet, to them is unthinkable. Well you've told me it is, it's in a museum, it's in a museum cabinet, it's in their house, the label says it's hers, and now you are saying it's not hers. Who is this Charlotte Cory woman and where can I find her?⁸⁶⁴

Sellers suggested visitors responded badly, partly because 'it's not promoted as a place where you can come and meet somebody as fantastically

⁸⁶². Interview with Jordan Blackman, 22 November 2013. The Bonnell Room is a small exhibition space at the end of the visitor circuit which is used for temporary exhibitions.

⁸⁶³. Interview with Jordan Blackman, 22 November 2013.

⁸⁶⁴. Interview with Jordan Blackman, 22 November 2013.

lunatic as Charlotte Cory. It's not promoted like that. No wonder it's a shock!'.⁸⁶⁵

Despite these problems, Sellars suggested that the negative reactions of visitors formed an important interpretive 'provocation':

those people who've reacted to that exhibition there are exploring their own thoughts about the Brontës as well as about what Charlotte's doing. It encourages them to disagree; what's wrong with that? To see [...] there's a different perspective; I don't like it, or I hate it or whatever. But the feeling that that has produced, I think that's very healthy.⁸⁶⁶

Although Sellars felt that there was room in the interpretation of the Parsonage for visitors to be provoked, she went on to suggest:

I felt it would have worked better and not been so annoying to people who are going to be annoyed anyway, if it had been a little more discreet. [...] it could have been played down a bit more, and been more effective.⁸⁶⁷

Further, Sellars suggested 'it wasn't really an option. It was like well, you are going to have to deal with this'.⁸⁶⁸ In exploring the relationship between architecture and art, Andrew Brighton argued that a strong difference between architecture and art is the way in which attention is demanded. According to Brighton, art requires 'effortful understanding [...] rather than being *experienced inattentively* it requires reflective attention'.⁸⁶⁹ Dinsdale suggested that making connections is important but that:

coming in cold to Charlotte's exhibition, there's going to be quite a few people who really struggle with it; because it's not always so obvious.⁸⁷⁰

Visitors articulated a strong sense of being 'distracted' from the aim of

⁸⁶⁵. Sellars and Cory are friends and this was certainly expressed with fondness, but it does draw attention to the fact that as an artist with a surrealist leaning, Cory was very likely to be interested in shock.

⁸⁶⁶. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁸⁶⁷. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁸⁶⁸. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014.

⁸⁶⁹. Brighton, 'Space Invaders', p.46. Emphasis in original.

⁸⁷⁰. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

their visit to engage with the Brontës. Thus, while in Silverman's terms 'connecting' was a powerful motivator for visitors who were seeking connections between the Brontës, their writing and the artworks, few visitors were able to make any meaningful connections through Cory's work. In many cases, their 'imagination' may have been curtailed, because Cory's exhibition demanded too much attention, or as Christine Went put it, 'no space [was] left to allow the mind of the visitor to populate the rooms in imagination'.⁸⁷¹

Gesamtkunstwerk

In order to explore the issues raised by these two exhibitions and the very different responses to them articulated through visitor comments and interviews, there are two potential approaches. First, to think of ways in which these exhibitions can be considered from the perspective of experiencing artworks in a heritage context. This perspective relates to the broader idea that, by inserting contemporary art in heritage spaces, a contemporary art audience might be drawn in or 'encultured' as a new audience for heritage. Second, to think about ways in which heritage is experienced, when artworks are included as a method of interpretive engagement. This correlates with another aspect of audience development, which is to think that visitors to heritage sites might enjoy and be stimulated by experiencing art that they might not otherwise have encountered.⁸⁷² Yet this binary may limit rather than enable a productive analysis. Given that these artworks were acting in concert with the individual objects and the period interior around them - demonstrably their purpose - dealing with them as independent is not possible. As Mieke Bal argues, the ways in which the narratives of artefacts are 'read' in comparison to works of art, while often seen as

⁸⁷¹. Went, 'The Charlotte Cory Exhibition' (2013).

⁸⁷². The MOU between the Arts Council and the National Trust is predicated on these two aspects of audience development.

different, are not clear cut.⁸⁷³

Exploring 'Remnants' and 'Capturing the Brontës' from the perspective of interpretation suggests experiences of them are not reducible to being only the result of the artwork. Su Blackwell's work in the Kitchen, a representation of the oral storytelling of Tabby the servant, relied as much on the materiality of the kitchen table, fireplace and kitchen implements as it did on the laser cut linen and the visitors' knowledge of this Brontë narrative that they either brought with them or learned while there. A similar argument can be made about Charlotte Cory's representation of the meeting between Elizabeth Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë in the Dining Room. As Crew and Sim point out, 'objects, ideas and people are met in the interpretive exhibition, a kind of narrative form'.⁸⁷⁴

In this 'form' of narrative, artworks shown in the historic interiors can be thought of as an installation, where 'the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity'; or *gesamtkunstwerk*, where 'the whole setting is a kind of fully comprehensive work of art encompassing the total field of our awareness of which the individual work of art then becomes the focal centre'.⁸⁷⁵ This effect has been argued elsewhere; Albena Yaneva has argued it is incorrect to assume that when an artwork is installed, the museum is a stable construct which 'contains' the new artwork.⁸⁷⁶ Arguably then, each exhibition produces a new Parsonage, necessarily different from all other iterations of CAP exhibitions. In relation to complexity theory these could be seen as 'various "orderings" of similar objects, topics, fields, [that] do not always reinforce the same simplicities or impose the same silences. Instead they may

⁸⁷³. Mieke Bal, 'The Discourse of the Museum', in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996) pp.201-218, p.206.

⁸⁷⁴. Crew and Sims, 'Locating Authenticity', p.173.

⁸⁷⁵. Bishop, *Installation Art*, p.6; K. Mitchells, 'The Work of Art in Its Social Setting and in Its Aesthetic Isolation', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 25 (1967), 369-374, p.372.

⁸⁷⁶. Yaneva, 'When a Bus Met a Museum', p.126.

work - and relate - in different ways'.⁸⁷⁷ Thus each exhibition and different approach to display within the CAP can be seen to have produced a variety of readings of the historic interiors, in which 'art' and 'heritage' are not distinguishable as separate elements.

Instead, what is produced in each iteration of the CAP is a Parsonage in which a Brontë story is narrated in a particular way, 'making visible' some aspects, while omitting others.⁸⁷⁸ This is transformative; however, this transformation must not be confused with the idea that pre-existing truths are revealed, only that the lives of the Brontës can be told in any number of ways, each of which is different, and will strongly relate to the needs of the audience at the time.⁸⁷⁹

The 'transformation' that is suggested by the sense of 'addition' and 'bringing to life' that visitors describe, appears to be from a cognitive engagement with biographical and domestic detail, to an affective engagement with Brontë narrative. In many ways, this echoes Lucasta Miller's concern about factual biography; she is critical of the kind of sociological detail that is offered by biographies like Juliet Barker's: 'while this sort of research can give us an objective sociological picture, it does not tell us how the young Brontës experienced their home subjectively'.⁸⁸⁰ Further, Miller argued, 'although textual scholars can aspire to accuracy and historians can establish certain sorts of fact beyond reasonable doubt, the subject's inner life will only ever be reachable by a creative act of imagination'.⁸⁸¹ Thus, the somewhat quotidian materiality of the

⁸⁷⁷. *Complexities*, ed. by Law and Mol, p.7.

⁸⁷⁸. Crew and Sims, 'Locating Authenticity', p.173.

⁸⁷⁹. Conrad, 'Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights: Do We Need New Film Versions?', *The Observer*, 21 August 2011, p.14.

⁸⁸⁰. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.42.

⁸⁸¹. Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.169. Christine Alexander has pointed out that the way the Parsonage is interpreted 'requires more complex observation and a more nuanced response to the notion of interiority'. Alexander, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', p.93.

period domestic interiors belies the reality of the Brontës' experiences and imaginative interior life and both exhibitions can be seen to have shifted focus towards what Garden has called 'vividness of experience'.⁸⁸² However, each had a very different effect on visitors' perception of authenticity and neither necessarily helped visitors understand that heritage is 'protean', something Garden suggests is helpful in understanding spaces properly.⁸⁸³ Also, there is strong evidence from visitor comments that these kinds of affective experiences take place within the Parsonage when there is no CAP exhibition, and despite it when art is there.

Visitors to 'Capturing the Brontës' were mostly angry that the experience had not been what they expected, and that this exhibition was an inappropriate way to interpret the Brontës. For 'Remnants', the main response was that it had facilitated powerful emotional feelings about the Brontës and visitors' experience of the house. Visitors invoked the Brontës and whether they would wish their house to be treated in this way. This suggests the success of 'Remnants' was that it richly and beautifully enhanced adulation by adding only very slightly to the Brontë narrative, precisely one of the things it was not supposed to do. With this subtle intervention, Blackwell's work opened 'potential gateways to other possible worlds'.⁸⁸⁴ Perhaps, in John Shotters' terms, this is because visitors were able to look 'through it, to see other things in [the]world in its light', rather than the 'looking at' which 'Capturing the Brontës' required.⁸⁸⁵

Earlier, in relation to Claire Twomey's 'butterflies', I asked what it was about that artwork which meant it was deemed an appropriate way to encourage visitors to think about the luxury of Brighton Pavilion. Peter De Bolla's consideration of aesthetic experience points towards a possible answer. He

⁸⁸². Garden, 'Heritagescape', p.273.

⁸⁸³. Garden, 'Heritagescape', p.273.

⁸⁸⁴. Gregory and Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', p.265.

⁸⁸⁵. Shotter, 'Real Presences', (2002) [accessed 27 February 2015] para 19.

suggests the art, or the material component of art work (he is clearly drawing on Heidegger's notion of the 'work' that art does), lies in the experience of it rather than the object; thus, according to De Bolla, it is the experience of the artwork that needs attention, rather than the artwork itself.⁸⁸⁶ This can be seen to reflect recent heritage critique which notes that heritage is not within the objects, but in the processes by which meaning is made from them, as constituted by both the museum and the visitor.⁸⁸⁷ Considering visitor comments as evidence of emotional responses to Cory's and Blackwell's exhibitions points toward the fact that the 'work' these installations did was to facilitate powerful 'affective' experiences of remembering and connecting, although some of those feelings were of disappointment and frustration. Dorota Golańska argued that cognitive and affective responses should be understood as relating to each other along a spectrum.⁸⁸⁸ In relation to art's ability to open up a broader 'spectrum' of response, Virginia Rushton has agreed that affect was a good place to begin:

don't you think the emotional reaction is the first stage of engagement with the place and then there has to be a way of leading people on from their own feelings to a reflection and to drawing out some ideas, some signposts for another kind of experience?⁸⁸⁹

Given the way in which these exhibitions are a result of a perceived problem in communicating the creative legacy of the Brontës, it can be asked whether this 'other experience' relates to the 'legacy' of the Brontës and what the legacy of the Brontës is; and furthermore, whether this is assumed to be pre-existing or can and should be shaped through the programme.

Unlike Matt Smith, who was able to permanently write a hidden history

⁸⁸⁶. De Bolla, *Art Matters*, pp.11-12..

⁸⁸⁷. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.83.

⁸⁸⁸. Dorota Golańska, 'Affective Spaces, Sensuous Engagements: In Quest of a Synaesthetic Approach to 'Dark Memorials'', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, (2015), 1-18.

⁸⁸⁹. Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

of homosexuality back into the interpretive narrative of a National Trust property, neither Blackwell nor Cory offered a sustainable challenge to either the period interior of the museum, nor dealt with any of the social or political issues that (if the Brontës can be invoked), the sisters would have found interesting today.⁸⁹⁰ Despite Cory's questioning of authenticity in relation to artefacts in the collection, there has been no substantive change. Given that Stuart Hall proposed that more radical representation is needed to create greater cultural diversity within heritage, it is perhaps instructive to think that few CAP artists have tried to deal with this in any concrete manner.⁸⁹¹ In this way both exhibitions were 'anodyne' and less challenging to the status of the Parsonage than is actually suggested by the horror of visitors' reactions to Cory's work, or the almost universal love of Blackwell's. Perhaps, as Lucasta Miller suggested at the end of her book, 'it is time to turn the tables and put the writings first'.⁸⁹²

These two examples of exhibitions from the programme are instructive not simply because one was welcomed and the other was controversial, but because they raise a deeper question about legacy. This connects to the heritage of both institutional critique and the Brontës. The substantive thrust of much institutional critique work has been to challenge the political ideological structure of museums as bastions of problematic ideology. The exhibitions at the Parsonage seem not to challenge this in any serious way.

In the context of the ICOMOS charter, it could be suggested that the installations were intrusive infrastructure; however, 'Remnants' and 'Capturing the Brontës' highlight the complex subjectivity of this, recalling the origin of the

⁸⁹⁰ *Unravelling Uppark*, ed. by Heffernen, Smith and Harknett, p.7.

⁸⁹¹ Rebecca Chesney's project was perhaps the most 'current' in its engagement with ideas of weather, however, there too, the connection to climate change and biodiversity were only implicit, rather than drawn out as a connection to the Brontës' interest in the living and working conditions of their fellow Haworth residents.

⁸⁹² Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.255.

Society which emerged from the desire 'that the Brontë name should be perpetuated in as suitable manner as possible'.⁸⁹³ Both were similarly intrusive in that they had significant physical presence in the house, but raised a wide range of reactions that, while polarised, in reality indicated a depth of engagement with the work of both artists.

One difficulty with visitor comments as a source is that it is less common for people to ascribe comments to individual works. This suggests further research to explore specific aspects of CAP installations might be productive. For example, during Diane Howse's installation in 2015 'The Silent Wild', I spent two days interviewing visitors.⁸⁹⁴ With some interviews I concentrated the conversation on one piece, the installation of an iPad on the Dining Room table, which showed a film. For some of these interviewees, it was clear that it was not the fact that this was 'contemporary art' that bothered them, but simply that the 'contemporaneity' of the iPad was incongruous and inappropriate. Several of the people I interviewed, however, felt they were simply able to ignore it. The same interviewees were less troubled by the 'contemporaneity' of the artworks which were paper-based prints, elsewhere in the exhibition. Howse suggested that few people might be making the connection between the Brontës' writing technology and their enthusiasm for letter writing, with the iPad as a tool of writing, and the ubiquitous email.⁸⁹⁵

According to Pierre Bourdieu, engaging with and understanding works of art 'requires a more or less complex code which has been more or less completely mastered'.⁸⁹⁶ Further, meaning-making processes between visitors and objects are

⁸⁹³. Brontë Society, 'First Annual Meeting', p.7.

⁸⁹⁴. For a sample transcript, see Visitor Interviews, 'The Silent Wild' on page 363 of Appendix 2.

⁸⁹⁵. Interview with Diane Howse, 29 July 2013.

⁸⁹⁶. Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), p.218.

highly dependent on the individual and their prior experiences.⁸⁹⁷ In her exploration of the problematic gap between constructivist approaches in the museum and the still extant prioritisation of aesthetic experiences of contemporary art, Jane Deeth suggests that it is 'the mismatch between codes, which challenges sensibilities to such an extent that positive engagement with contemporary discursive art becomes well nigh impossible for many members of the public'.⁸⁹⁸ It might be easy to assume that those who visit the Brontë Parsonage are unlikely to have both a knowledge of the Brontës and a mastery over engaging with or 'deciphering' contemporary artworks.

Unfortunately, no conclusion can be drawn from the 2013 visitor survey about the 'deciphering ability' of visitors, which reported that 'an existing interest in the Brontë sisters and their work is clearly at the heart of the visit for the vast majority',⁸⁹⁹ but 'only 2% of visitors were motivated to visit because of the [contemporary art] programme'.⁹⁰⁰ This statistic merits attention, for it points towards the issue of 'audience development' which lies at the heart of contemporary art interventions. In the context of Andrew McCarthy's central aim for the CAP, to 'change' existing visitors' experience, this low statistic is not relevant. However, more recent issues in relation to museums and their financial stability suggest that maintaining and growing audiences is important and as Hal Foster has pointed out, these projects are often seen as 'social outreach, public relations, economic development and art tourism'.⁹⁰¹ Perhaps, seen in this light, some rethinking is necessary, given this apparently low awareness of the programme amongst visitors, particularly, as a central theme of visitor objection

⁸⁹⁷. Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri, *Making Meaning in Art Museums 1: Visitors' Interpretive Strategies at Wolverhampton Art Gallery*, p.iii.

⁸⁹⁸. Deeth, 'Displaying Lives', p.9. Andrew Brighton has argued it is visitors' 'cultural capital' which resulted in the rejection of his experimental approach to exhibition design at the Serpentine Gallery in 1989. See Brighton, 'Space Invaders', p.51.

⁸⁹⁹. Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.12.

⁹⁰⁰. Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.16.

⁹⁰¹. Foster, *The Return of the Real*, p.197.

to 'Capturing the Brontës' was that visitors weren't expecting to see it.

Silverman's 'connecting' offers a way to deal with Bourdieu's problematic affirmation that the meaning-making process is solely reliant on previous learning, as it is too narrow a conception of what happens in the visitor encounter. As⁹⁰² Rather than attempting to 'decipher' based on prior understanding, the evidence of meaning-making studied here has been seen to be locationally specific, with visitors making connections as a result of new experiences. This also counters any negativity which may be attached to the very small proportion of visitors Wafer Hadley reported were there because of the CAP.

The hermeneutics of Gadamer required that in order to make new meaning, the past is engaged with rather than simply looked upon.⁹⁰³ That visitor comments demonstrate aspects of Silverman's meaning-making strategies of 'remembering and connecting' suggest the CAP is a productive way of ensuring that the past is not simply gazed upon, but understood to have real and present relevance for visitors who were able to make substantial affective connections.⁹⁰⁴ By formulating new ideas that are important, in fact visitors are being 'creative'.⁹⁰⁵

The aim of this chapter has not been to establish a method of qualitative judgement, but to consider the relative merits of the exhibitions in relation to the stated aims of the programme, which is to enable visitors to experience the Parsonage creatively. If an exhibition reinforces the nature of the Parsonage as a shrine, then there is perhaps no significant shift in understanding in hermeneutic

^{902.} Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.216. For critique of Bourdieu, see for example Hanquinet, Roose and Savage, 'The Eyes of the Beholder: Aesthetic Preferences and the Remaking of Cultural Capital', p.17; Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.92.

^{903.} Zuckert, 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', p.206.

^{904.} Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162.

^{905.} Margaret Boden, 'Creativity', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, 2nd edn, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.477-488, p.477.

terms, in that no connection is made to present concerns other than those which visitors brought with them. Robins characterised these type of installations as 'not in the spirit of intervention *qua* intervention but more akin to a complementary contemporary element, signifying continuity'.⁹⁰⁶ The majority of comments reflect a deeper engagement with the Parsonage as a heritage experience. While this in itself is a positive outcome, there seems little connection to some of the issues for which the Brontës are well known, and the heritage remains 'safe'.⁹⁰⁷ As Simon Warner has argued, we do not remember the Brontës for their domesticity, we remember them for their radical approaches to the socially restricted and politically turbulent world of which they were part.⁹⁰⁸ In this light, while many exhibitions produce positive experiences, there is not yet a strong argument to suggest that contemporary art is a necessary strategy to achieve this. A question thus remains, how might the CAP enable a hermeneutic 'circle' to be completed through an engagement with contemporary issues? If unable to do so, the Parsonage risks being 'incapable of moving forward because of the absorbing fantasy before us'.⁹⁰⁹

^{906.} Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.5.

^{907.} Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139.

^{908.} Interview with Simon Warner, 4 October 2013.

^{909.} Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, p.139.

Chapter 5 Numen and New Heritage

When we, through ghosts, make space place, we treat that spirited space with ritual care [...] We resent as defilement practices that fail to do homage to the ghost or ghosts within [...] Simply put, we treat a place as a shrine.⁹¹⁰

In reflecting on her pilgrimage to the Brontë Parsonage, home to the authors of the 'unimaginably famous' *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*,⁹¹¹ Virginia Woolf wrote in 1904:

it was due to the courtesy of the present incumbent that we were allowed to inspect [the house]; in his place I should often feel inclined to exorcise the three famous ghosts.⁹¹²

'To Be Forever Known', an installation by Catherine Bertola, was commissioned for and shown at the Parsonage in 2011. It was part of a broader project, 'Personal Tempest', curated by Tereza Kotyk and included exhibitions at South Square Gallery Thornton, before moving to other venues in the UK and Austria. The title work, a sound installation in the Dining Room, was a reference to Charlotte Brontë's desire to be famous, expressed in a letter to Robert Southey, Poet Laureate, to whom Charlotte had written for inspiration in 1836; Southey famously replied that she had 'no worthwhile future' as a writer.⁹¹³ Residual Hauntings, shown in Figure 36, a triptych of black and white photographs was also part of the exhibition. Depicting three spaces in the Parsonage, in each image, the ghostly apparition of a woman can be seen. A triptych is a device most commonly associated with church altars and religious subjects. In using this form, Bertola is clearly asking visitors to consider further the nature of their relationship with the Brontës as deified figures. References to ghosts in this

⁹¹⁰ Michael Mayerfeld Bell, 'The Ghosts of Place', *Theory and Society*, 26 (1997), 813-836, p.820.

⁹¹¹ Stoneman, 'The Brontë Myth', p.236.

⁹¹² Woolf, 'Haworth, November 1904', p.275.

⁹¹³ Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.26; Barker, *The Brontës*, p.262.

'family [sepulchre]' ,⁹¹⁴ are often evident within the contemporary art shown at the Brontë Parsonage Museum. Su Blackwell's exhibition featured a book that seemed to turn pages by itself and an audio work that sounded footsteps faintly through the Parsonage; Cornelia Parker's exhibition featured psychics who tried to contact any remaining spirit presence; Sam Taylor-Wood's exhibition was called 'Ghosts' and Bertola's main work in the dining room, *Residual Hauntings*, hinted at ghostly voices.



Figure 36: *Residual Hauntings*.

Catherine Bertola's work is a rich starting point, as it suggests ways to think of the Parsonage as a place in which the practices of museum making and art making converge. The issue of the Parsonage as a shrine lies at the heart of this case study. In particular, whether the period interior restoration has rendered the site a 'cliché' requiring amelioration through artists' interventions. Chapter 2 explored the way in which many visitors are self-declared pilgrims

⁹¹⁴ Adorno, *Prisms*, p.175.

and the way that this marks the Parsonage as a place 'set apart' as sacred:

the feature common to the set apart sacred is its valuation beyond utility, and that this mental setting apart of certain things, sometimes accompanied by a literal setting apart, is largely based on non-rational (which is not necessarily to say irrational) feature, like their emotional value.⁹¹⁵

However, in contrast to the fixed notion of a shrine, the CAP can be seen as a challenge to this heritage, seeking instead to dispel the notion of pilgrimage and create a place of imagination and creativity, 'transforming' the site for each exhibition.

Earlier chapters have also demonstrated the value visitors place on being in the home of the Brontës, that many visitors have harboured a sustained ambition to visit, and that, in visiting, expect a special experience. In this context the CAP has been seen to be transformative, but it has not always enabled visitors to connect with the past in a way they perceived as desirable.

This chapter is structured around two discrete but related sections. The first, explores several works from the Contemporary Arts Programme including Bertola's *Residual Hauntings*, in order to consider the potential for this conflation of heritage interior and artwork to facilitate the kinds of experiences Gatewood and Cameron have described as 'numinous'.⁹¹⁶ In doing so, this section argues that, while some artworks are able to support powerful experiences of awe and wonder, many are not, and provoke what could be called 'affective dissonance'. In the second section, the CAP will be examined in the context of relational aesthetics and dialogism. This is in order to build on the idea that numen, as a form of affect, suggests that the CAP is both a form of dialogic contemporary art

⁹¹⁵. Matthew T. Evans, 'The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts', *Review of Religious Research*, 45 (2003), 32-47, p.39.

⁹¹⁶. John B. Gatewood and Catherine M. Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims at Gettysburg National Military Park', *Ethnology*, 43 (2004), 193-216, p.194.

and a form of 'new heritage'.⁹¹⁷

Numen

Gatewood and Cameron suggest that it was Rudolph Otto who first used the concept of numen in his 1958 book *The Idea of the Holy*, and that he described 'it as a religious emotion or experience awakened in the presence of something holy'.⁹¹⁸ In their research, Gatewood and Cameron used "'numen" to describe a transcendental experience that people can have in contact with a historic site or object in an exhibit'.⁹¹⁹ This clearly accords with the more recent work examined in Chapter 4, which argued for more affective experiences of heritage sites. One such analysis was by Uzzell and Ballantyne, who suggested that providing cognitive experiences is limiting and does not address the whole person.⁹²⁰

Kiersten Latham points out that 'numinous experiences (also referred to as reverential, pivotal, profound) with any museum objects/exhibits are akin to aesthetic experiences with objects of art and encounters with the beautiful'.⁹²¹ This suggests numen is a good concept with which to explore the CAP, because it allows for an inclusive concept of experience which does not differentiate between the heritage and the contemporary art.

This conceptualisation is not without problems. Andrew McCarthy expressed a desire:

to look at how we could draw attention to the fact that the house was a stage set in many respects. When you go round those period rooms there's this kind of illusion that the Brontës have just stepped out of the room, which is fine, I think it is something visitors like, that feeling, but at the same time it's quite nice to puncture that and make people question that and think about that

⁹¹⁷. Fairclough, 'New Heritage'.

⁹¹⁸. Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past', p.109.

⁹¹⁹. Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past', p.110.

⁹²⁰. Uzzell and Ballantyne, 'Heritage That Hurts', p.512.

⁹²¹. Kiersten F. Latham, 'The Poetry of the Museum: A Holistic Model of Numinous Museum Experiences', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 22 (2007), 247-263, p.247.

a bit more..⁹²²

This might not accord with numen-seeking, or with experiences of 'flow', 'empathy' or 'awe'. Jenna Holmes, however, was clear that she works with artists who she feels would fit the site.⁹²³ Her, perhaps intuitive, approach to employing artists who fit well with the site might be a better fit with 'numen'.

Despite this, Cameron and Gatewood's research is apt in relation to the Parsonage. In one piece of research, they examined Gettysburg National Military Park.⁹²⁴ This is not to compare the Parsonage to a battlefield memorial; however one consistent theme of Brontë discourse is the extent to which the family experienced tragedy, illness and early death. Visitors' reflections on this have been seen to provide them with a poignant and meaningful experience of the past. In particular, the places in the house where someone died, for example Emily's death in the Dining Room and Branwell's death in Patrick Brontë's Bedroom, are clearly important in the visitor experience where visitors might connect with their own sense of mortality. Similarly, Gatewood and Cameron note that 'battlefields and military cemeteries came to be seen as holy places, sanctified by the death of soldiers'.⁹²⁵ In this text, they further clarify their concept of numen:

a most interesting discovery is that a certain portion of visitors want to consume history in a deeper, affective, and personal way. They speak of attempts to go back in time and imagine what actors were feeling. We have labeled this impulse numen-seeking.⁹²⁶

Their research led them to identify three particular aspects of numen. The first, 'deep engagement or transcendence', they relate to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow experience where the visitor is so engaged they 'lose the sense of

⁹²². Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

⁹²³. Interview with Jenna Holmes, 29 April 2013.

⁹²⁴. Gatewood and Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims'.

⁹²⁵. Gatewood and Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims', p.193.

⁹²⁶. Gatewood and Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims', p.194.

time passing'; the second, is figured around 'empathy [...] in which the individual tries to conjure the thoughts, feelings, and experiences, including hardships and suffering, of those who lived at an earlier time'; the third, 'awe and reverence', relates to being in the presence of something holy'.⁹²⁷ This sense of awe and reverence is very close to Stephen Greenblatt's concept of 'wonder', which occurs when objects 'evoke an exalted attention'.⁹²⁸

There is a wide range of general comments in which visitors have expressed feelings that accord with these three aspects of numen. In those which show a shift in experience of time, many visitors have expressed a sense of being brought closer to the Brontës, often by being moved through time:

What an experience. Going back in time. Lovely day at Haworth with my friend June.⁹²⁹

I can feel the years pass away looking at there artefacts, brings me one step close to those that held them. Wonderful!⁹³⁰

Lovly [sic] being here, take's [sic] you back in time - timeless elegance. Wonderful.⁹³¹

The fact that these statements are drawn from a variety of comment books from different years, shows a consistent theme that visitors feel temporally closer to the Brontës when in the Parsonage, and that pleasurable emotions are the result. In this way, the 'space' of the Parsonage is heterotopic, that is, connected to a 'slice of time' which has 'accumulated' in the Parsonage and thus allows visitors access to the Brontës across time.⁹³²

Empathic responses to the widely known tragedies of the Brontë family are also very common:

⁹²⁷. Gatewood and Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims', p.208.

⁹²⁸. Greenblatt, 'Resonance and Wonder', p.20.

⁹²⁹. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁹³⁰. 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book' (2011).

⁹³¹. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁹³². Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', p.377.

A real insight into the lives and work of the Brontë sisters.

A moving experience for us all. An intimate insight into this talented but tragic family!

It is very moving to walk through the house and to see where such genius was created.⁹³³

Its [sic] very touching to know that the family died at or before the age of thirty.⁹³⁴

These comments reflect a connection with the quality of the sisters' lives, and show empathy for the sadness they experienced.

The last element of numen is the sense of being in touch with something holy, or, in secular terms, the feeling of awe and reverence. Comments that express this tend to refer to the importance of objects, or the importance of 'being' in the house:

It is inspiring to be in the presence of the history & to see the many possessions of this awesomely gifted family.⁹³⁵

I did not know the Museum had so many personal belongings to this famous family. Outstanding display, one I will never forget.⁹³⁶

Very thrilling to be in presence of greatness.⁹³⁷

Staff too share the same feelings. Ann Dinsdale described:

one of the important things for me is the atmosphere of the place. I like the position of it with the moorland at the back of the house and what would have been the industrial village, all at the front. It's kind of like on a borderline. I think there's something quite striking about its situation. And for me it's kind of like the fact that it's - my view of it is coloured by my knowledge of the Brontës and what happened in the rooms - so it is quite a special place.⁹³⁸

These responses to the Parsonage reflect experiences which can be

⁹³³. 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book' (2011).

⁹³⁴. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁹³⁵. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁹³⁶. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁹³⁷. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁹³⁸. Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

matched to Cameron and Gatewood's conceptualisation of numen, suggesting strongly that visitors are 'numen-seekers' and that the Parsonage is a powerful place in which to 'expect intimate personal communion with famous strangers'.⁹³⁹ That these are general comments, not ones about the CAP, highlights both that it is hard to think of the Parsonage as 'cliched' and 'dead', and that examining visitor comments needs to be approached carefully. Even without 'interventions', visitors express profound connections to the place.

The consideration of 'Remnants' and 'Capturing the Brontës' in Chapter 4 demonstrated that interventions at the Parsonage are able to create meaningful experiences for visitors, and thus might themselves be seen as part of a heritage process. In exploring further examples from the CAP that might be seen to accord with Cameron and Gatewood's expanded notion of numen, it would have been possible to begin my analysis by focussing on visitor comments as one way to establish which works facilitated numinous experiences. The selection of works focussed on here, however, was based on the sense gained from working with the site and general conversations with staff that these did in fact generate rich and positive responses that were worthy of attention.

⁹³⁹. Linda Young, 'Magic Objects, Modern Objects: Heroes' House Museums', in *The Thing About Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation*, ed. by Sandra Dudley et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.143-158, p.155.



Figure 37: *Residual Hauntings*, detail.

Residual Hauntings is a photographic work that comprises three long exposure photographs of the artist herself "performing" domestic rituals and actions described in written records'.⁹⁴⁰ Small in size, with each image 15cm x 23cm, at first glance they could be nineteenth century rather than the contemporary images they are. As well as the blurring reminiscent of that caused by the slow shutter speeds of early cameras, this may also stem from the fact that they are silver gelatine prints, one of the earliest form of photograph. These are favoured by Simon Warner, the photographer who worked with Bertola on these images.⁹⁴¹ The exhibition leaflet described that 'these simple ghostly vignettes reanimate the spaces of the Parsonage as they once were'.⁹⁴² Bertola used similar language to describe how these images were 'animating' the space of the museum.⁹⁴³ Here, the

⁹⁴⁰. Brontë Society, 'To be forever known: Catherine Bertola', [Leaflet] (2011).

⁹⁴¹. Email to the author, 6 July 2015.

⁹⁴². Brontë Society, 'To be forever known', [Leaflet].

⁹⁴³. *Wildness Between Lines*, ed. by Nick Cass, (Leeds: Leeds College of Art, 2012), p.9.

concept of animation is being used in subtly different ways that suggest a giving of life. 'Animate' suggests the giving of life where none had been before, whereas 'reanimate' suggests that life has been given back to something that had lost it. Whether this suggests differing conceptualisations of the heritage process or just imprecise use of language, it is possible to read this 'life-giving' within the images, and without.

Within the image of the Dining Room (Figure 37), the space is animated through the conflation of a ghostly apparition with the reconstructed historic interior. It is in the Foucauldian 'non place of language', in this case visual language, that the object 'ghost' can be manifested with the museum object 'Brontë dining table'.⁹⁴⁴ Bertola's ghost walking around the dining room table is also a reconstruction, relying on visitors' desire for a spiritual connection, or 'a transcendental experience [from] contact with a historic site or objects'.⁹⁴⁵ This desire is predicated on the fact that 'sites and displays that conjure in visitors a visceral or emotional response to an earlier event or time (one that could allow them to achieve a connection with the "spirit" of times or persons past) are especially valued'.⁹⁴⁶

One visitor, for example, noted:

Residual hauntings gave a sense of presence to each of the rooms - making me look deeper into the pictorial representation of each room.⁹⁴⁷

While the illusion of the Dining Room is disrupted within Bertola's image, a common complaint regarding other 'interventions', visitors here are seeing what surely belongs within their desired experience, a 'Brontë sister', walking around

^{944.} In Foucault's introduction to *The Order of Things*, he discusses the way in which language allows things to exist across the boundaries of normal categories. See Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970).

^{945.} Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past', p.110.

^{946.} Cameron and Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past', p.110.

^{947.} 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book' (2011).

the table, as they were known to have done while they discussed and wrote their novels.

The second conflation of artwork and interior is this time external to the image. When shown at the Parsonage, the triptych was displayed in Mr Nicholls' Study.⁹⁴⁸ The effect of this external disruption is perhaps less obvious; the work was surrounded by a range of objects relating to the family, including objects displayed in a traditional glazed museum case.⁹⁴⁹ In this externality, it is the visitors themselves who animate the space of the museum and the artwork. Given that photographs that deal with representation in museums have been characterised as 'thinking objects', visitors can be seen to embody this 'bringing to life' through their 'conversational elaboration, that is, talk occurring during and after a museum visit that demonstrates how meaning, experiences, and interpretation develop and are intertwined'.⁹⁵⁰

This 'dialogue' points to a third conflation. These photographs animate the space of the imagination, as it is the psychological interiority of the visitor that reads Bertola's image as a Brontë sister walking around the table. More vicariously, a visitor could imagine themselves in Bertola's position, performing this ritual of walking. Roland Barthes' concept of 'punctum' suggests that the ghostly figure pierces the imagination; 'it is this element which rises from the scene, [...] and pierces me'.⁹⁵¹ Instead of the 'puncturing' of the illusion suggested

⁹⁴⁸. In my conversation with the artist, Bertola remembered that this work had been displayed upstairs in Charlotte's bedroom. However the installation image shows a flagged stone floor, which suggests strongly that this work was displayed downstairs. Mr Nicholls' Study is the most likely location. Jenna Holmes's archive records were thrown away during her first maternity leave. This fact has significantly impaired my ability to access archive material relating to the genesis and manifestation of each project.

⁹⁴⁹. In contrast to all the exhibitions studied here, no visitors commented that their visit had been disrupted by these works.

⁹⁵⁰. Miranda Baxter, 'Seeing for the First and Last Time in Thomas Struth's Museum Photographs', *Photographies*, 7 (2014), 201-216, p.203; Falk and Dierking, *Learning From Museums*, p.93.

⁹⁵¹. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 1993), pp.26-27.

by McCarthy, however, Bertola's work is an affective piercing of the temporal gap between the visitor and the Brontës which 'relies' on the illusion of the Brontës' home.

To Be Forever Known, the title work of the installation, was a sound piece. To make the work, Bertola recorded herself in the Dining Room reading Charlotte Brontë's correspondence with her friend Ellen Nussey. Bertola then played the recording aloud, again in the Dining Room, and re-recorded it. Repeating this process over and over again until all intelligibility was lost through distortion, the resulting sound was an eerie audible trace of the original reading. After previous issues with sound works, the curatorial decision in this case was to arrange it so that visitors could hear the short work once every twenty minutes. From listening to the work, the natural sounds of the Parsonage and the ghostly echo of Charlotte's words combined to form an encompassing experience. Visitors wrote:

Very strong sense of presense in the dining room installation.
Haunting and very moving.

Very poignant and moving experience. Beautiful feel to everything.⁹⁵²

The affective space of the imagination is well served by 'aurality'.⁹⁵³ 'Haunting', 'poignant' and 'touching' all indicate experiences of deeply felt emotion. That 'moving' is defined as 'producing strong emotion, especially sadness or sympathy', reinforces that these experiences are numinous.⁹⁵⁴

'Remnants', the installation by Su Blackwell in 2010, employed sound, moving objects and paper and fabric sculpture to collapse the temporal space between

⁹⁵². 'To Be Forever Known: visitor comments book' (2011).

⁹⁵³. Siobhán McHugh, 'The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio', *Oral History Review*, 39 (2012), 187-206, p.195.

⁹⁵⁴. *OED*, ed. by Simpson and Weiner.

visitors and the lives of the Brontës. Blackwell installed the sound of barely audible footsteps that, in echoing gently within the Parsonage, suggested that the Brontës were literally present within the house. The mechanical book in the Dining Room (Figure 30), whose pages turned of their own accord, suggested this was a ghostly presence of the sisters still a 'remnant' in the space. A substantial element of 'Remnants', seen in Figures 38 and 39, was the installation of a paper 'battle scene' in the Children's Study inspired by the Brontë children's complex imaginary worlds.



Figure 38: 'Remnants', installation view, Children's Study.

These fictional battles from the children's writing were literally enacted across the furniture through the depiction of castles, soldiers and weapons. In addition to the traces of children's drawings still extant on the walls, which are thought to be by the Brontë children, 'Remnants' layered the space with additional narrative from their real and fictional worlds, in a space that, it has been argued, is

'physically insignificant', but of great importance in the 'interior lives of the young writers'.⁹⁵⁵



Figure 39: 'Remnants', installation view, Children's Study.

For staff and visitors, this exhibition was an undoubted success. The evaluation report noted:

In previous exhibitions there has been debate about the role of art within a historic space such as the Brontë Parsonage Museum, but this exhibition met with almost universal delight.⁹⁵⁶

This 'universal delight' was articulated very strongly by visitors in the comments book:

⁹⁵⁵. Alexander, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', p.102.

⁹⁵⁶. Holmes, 'Su Blackwell Evaluation Report' (2011).

Neil and Lucy Cook found the Brontë Museum to be beautiful, charming and memorable. Will recommend this to friends. Su Blackwell's images help to create a lasting impression of such a beautiful place. Thank you.

We were absolutely charmed by these wonderful pieces - thoughtful, imaginative & moving. Thank you! A real treat.⁹⁵⁷

As seen with the previous exhibitions discussed in Chapter 4, a substantial concept used by visitors was the language of 'addition' to articulate their responses:

Hard to imagine that anything could add to the museum but this exhibition adds magic.

Please keep this artwork as a permanent exhibition – it adds so much to the experience.

Excellent artistic expression adding a new layer of meaning to the museum.

Fantastic interpretation – both dress and sound brought me to a fuller understanding of the author.⁹⁵⁸

These comments demonstrate that the artwork is not only able to generate the empathy, awe and reverence characteristic of numinous experiences, but that there is an intangible quality of additionality, which one visitor above qualified as 'magic'. Some visitors expressed more particular aspects of meaning-making:

I enjoyed your additions to the parsonage museum, the footsteps in particular allowed me to imagine a world where the house was full of Brontës!

Fascinating paper sculptures in their own right, but in addition so appropriate & creative for the particular rooms. The dress with heather gave such a feeling of fragility; the childrens [sic] study toys, adventure but insubstantial. Thank you.⁹⁵⁹

The first comment here indicates that this visitor experienced the shift in time and space which contact with heritage can provoke. The second drew a

⁹⁵⁷. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁹⁵⁸. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

⁹⁵⁹. 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

distinction between the works themselves and the value of the creative juxtaposition which resulted in a 'feeling of fragility'. Rather than provoke or remind visitors of the illusory stage set, these works added to 'the atmosphere', to 'the experience', enabling 'imagination' and 'feeling'.

The counter to this language of 'addition' was 'subtraction':

Su Blackwell exhibits add nothing [...] to the overall experience. A shame to mutilate authentic textiles!

The museum doesn't need an other addition to add to its value.

These comments implicitly deal with subtraction in the sense that the works 'added nothing'. Given that Su Blackwell's exhibition generated few negative comments, it is necessary here to draw in earlier examples. Other exhibitions from the CAP have generated stronger reactions. For example, Cornelia Parker's *psychic voices* prompted:

I found the voices very disturbing, instead of adding to the atmosphere, it took from it.

Contrapuntal ⁹⁶⁰psychic commentary both adds to & detracts from the exhibition.

That 'atmosphere' is important to visitors appears in other ways:

Very enjoyable visit apart from the awful recording. Very distracting and irrelevant, spoils the atmosphere completely.⁹⁶¹

One plausible explanation for the themed nature of narrative within visitor comment books is that visitors read and respond to previous entries, and often refer to others in either agreement or disagreement. This suggests that it is not always easy to know what to write, and that visitors read previous comments for inspiration and guidance, often making similar comments and using the same or similar words. This can be seen as an aspect of dialogic meaning making;

⁹⁶⁰. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

⁹⁶¹. 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

exploring the views of others to assist in generating a response. However, the consistency with which this trope appears throughout all the different comment books since 2004 suggests that this is not an adequate explanation.

It is reasonable to conclude that visitors' positive experiences of the CAP, relate to art's ability to transform space, to articulate ways of thinking, being and feeling in such a way as to affect the atmosphere. This in turn, generated a rich range of emotional reactions that may not otherwise have been possible; as Gadamer pointed out, 'through a work of art a truth is experienced that we cannot attain in any other way'.⁹⁶² Cameron and Gatewood's concept of 'numen' is thus helpful in defining the quality of these positive experiences; however, another concept is needed to account for the substantially negative reactions visitors sometimes express.

Dissonance

The nature of the Parsonage as a place in which 'remnants' of the Brontës are 'residual hauntings' that can be 'captured' raises the idea that ghosts are part of the heritage. Despite Woolf's suggestion in the epigraph to this chapter that they should have been exorcised (if she lived there), they seem to remain, 'for in silence, in gaps, there is presence'.⁹⁶³ There are of course, notable ghostly occurrences in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. The fact that ghosts, as they persist in our imagination, are often found in old houses which the modern world of change has passed by,⁹⁶⁴ suggests a point made by Myra Shackley about tourists visiting revered places:

It becomes important that the site appears to be untouched by the modern world, even if in practical terms this is romantic but

⁹⁶². Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p.xxi.

⁹⁶³. Gregory and Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', p.265.

⁹⁶⁴. Christine Berthin, *Gothic Hauntings Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.1.

impossible since the building will have been continually modified since its construction. The tourist, however, sees it as a space to be preserved rather than used, to be gazed upon but not changed. Thus, when attempts are made to radicalise the use of that space, whether by the physical modification of the site or by the introduction of some commercial activity, a dissonance arises.⁹⁶⁵

Shackley suggests that dissonance might occur when a site that is sacred is 'radicalised' in a way which does not meet with people's expectation. It is possible to connect this concept of radicalisation with the CAP and the effect it has had on visitors as articulated through the dialectic of 'addition' and 'subtraction'. Each aspect suggests a strong sense of affective experience, either harmonious or dissonant.

Leon Festinger's concept of Cognitive Dissonance, has found traction in many other areas of thought, including museums.⁹⁶⁶ For example, echoing Myra Shackley, Tunbridge and Ashworth suggest that the relationship between various uses to which heritage is put can be a source of 'dissonance'.⁹⁶⁷ Joel Cooper has asserted that Festinger's unique contribution was his use of the concept of 'cognition'.⁹⁶⁸ Festinger argues that cognitive dissonance occurs when elements of cognition are incompatible with each other in some way.⁹⁶⁹ He defines 'cognition' as 'any knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, about one's self, or about one's behaviour'.⁹⁷⁰ The effort to reconcile what are irreconcilable 'cognitions' produces 'psychological discomfort'.⁹⁷¹

Whereas the basis of the original theory is that these conflicting cognitive

⁹⁶⁵ Myra Shackley, 'Service Delivery at Sacred Sites: Potential Contribution of Management Science', *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 1 (2005), 33-40, p.36

⁹⁶⁶ Joel Cooper explores Cognitive Dissonance in a range of settings and contexts including culture and psychotherapy. Joel Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory* (London: Sage, 2007).

⁹⁶⁷ Tunbridge and Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', p.207.

⁹⁶⁸ Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance*, p.6.

⁹⁶⁹ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957), p.3.

⁹⁷⁰ Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, p.3.

⁹⁷¹ Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, p.3.

elements are held by the same person, Cooper suggests an approach which is more useful in the context of the CAP, that of 'vicarious cognitive dissonance'. Rather than being the product of the internal conflict of an individual, vicarious cognitive dissonance is socially constructed among people who identify with each other in some way.⁹⁷² This is closely related to the suggestion that common meaning and value arises from 'interpretive communities', in that 'one powerful reason that causes people to feel close to one another is common membership in important social groups'.⁹⁷³

Cooper explains that if he saw somebody 'produce an aversive outcome [...] I may be motivated to change my attitudes and cognitions. The experience of the dissonance is vicarious because it was not *my* behaviour that produced an unwanted outcome'.⁹⁷⁴ The 'tension and discomfort' experienced in this situation is the result of the actors 'shar[ing] a social identity caused by [their] belonging to the same social group'.⁹⁷⁵ This is especially true of Charlotte Cory's 'Capturing the Brontës'. This exhibition was born from her lifelong commitment to, and passion for, the Brontës. In this way Cory shares much with 'pilgrims' to the Parsonage, despite which, most visitors experienced severe 'dissonance' as a result of her artwork:

I do adore this house, its atmosphere, incredibly well preserved artifacts/furniture/items from Brontë family history - but the Charlotte Cory portraits are ahistorical and dissonant - they marred the whole experience for me.⁹⁷⁶

Many visitors also expressed strong dissatisfaction with those responsible for allowing the exhibition, perceiving it as an 'aversive outcome':

Whoever decided on having an artist to do this ridiculous exhibition needs their head examining. Talk about spoiling

⁹⁷² Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance*, p.118.

⁹⁷³ Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance*, p.119.

⁹⁷⁴ Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance*, p.121.

⁹⁷⁵ Cooper, *Cognitive Dissonance*, p.121.

⁹⁷⁶ 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

something so FABULOUS!!!!!!

Absolutely appalling! I have travelled a long way to visit Haworth. I am very upset and annoyed at this pointless, disrespectful portrayal of what should have been a wonderful experience, who authorised this?⁹⁷⁷

Thus vicarious dissonance was produced through the decision of the staff in allowing this to happen.

In this way, Festinger's theory offers a way to think about the motivation for visitors to write comments. One of the key aspects of his theory is that 'the existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable, will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance'.⁹⁷⁸ The comments cited in this analysis have all shared a strong emotional reaction. In addition, some have included aspects pointing to both 'reduction' and 'avoidance', which Festinger noted is the resulting behaviour in response to an inability to alter the circumstances producing the dissonance. For example, one significant effort to reduce dissonance was to ask that the works be removed:

Please remove this exhibition & return the home to its original state.

Please take this abomination away as soon as possible. I have loved coming here over the years and this has totally ruined it for me.

It's nonsense and a mistake - please rectify forthwith.⁹⁷⁹

A further reaction was to suggest a return visit would be necessary for a 'proper experience', visitors thus replacing their current frustration with the promise of a better experience in the future, and with the implicit message that art would not be wanted:

Totally agree with previous comments. Will have to return again

⁹⁷⁷. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁹⁷⁸. Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, p.3.

⁹⁷⁹. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

to see "The Parsonage" in all it's[sic] near to original glory!

Spoils the museum - will return when it has been removed!

My heart sank as I climbed the stairs and saw that the beautiful painting of the sisters by their brother replaced by geese. Will come again when the house is restored to its original beautiful displays.⁹⁸⁰

Trying to affect other people's visit was another theme of dissonance reduction:

I would advise anyone thinking of visiting the parsonage to wait until next year when this exhibition has gone.⁹⁸¹

A final strategy, 'avoidance', was that of simply ignoring the work wherever possible. Visitors to 'The Silent Wild' who I interviewed in July 2015 employed this strategy in relation to the iPad that Diane Howse had installed on the Dining Room table to show a short film. Visitor behaviour and comments can thus be seen as an active attempt to moderate both the exhibition's immediate effect, moderate it for future visitors who might experience the same exhibition and create the possibility that this 'radicalisation' of the Parsonage is limited, in the future, to a separate exhibition space.

That 'vicarious cognitive dissonance' has its basis in social identity as constructed through shared ideas and values, suggests Festinger is helpful in understanding the space of the Parsonage as one of dialogue. Vicarious cognitive dissonance is dialogic, because visitors think the Parsonage is a shrine, but experience dissonance when the actions of somebody else impinges on their expectations and values. The result of this experience is that they attempt to ameliorate the effect for the social group, through the forms of communication available to them, the comments book, conversations with staff, social media and, in some cases, written complaints. Therefore, more attention needs to be paid to

⁹⁸⁰. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

⁹⁸¹. 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

the idea that the CAP may be dialogic in nature and thus the Parsonage is not a fixed and unchanging site.

To further elucidate this conceptualisation of the CAP as dialogic, it is necessary to go beyond Festinger's concept of 'cognitive elements'. Because 'cognition' signals more conscious knowledge, it does not account for the full range of precognitive feelings towards which the comments examined here point, and are especially suggested by the prevalent descriptions of the Parsonage's atmosphere. It is not possible to articulate a full and complete experience of the Parsonage, any more than it is possible to fully articulate the experience of art. As Michael Holquist has summarised of Mikhail Bakhtin's view, 'all transcription systems - including the speaking voice in a living utterance - are inadequate to the multiplicity of the meanings they seek to convey'.⁹⁸² What is thus necessary, perhaps, in terms of understanding the effect of the CAP exhibitions studied here, is to conceive of 'affective dissonance'. This is because the artworks were so profoundly against what visitors were expecting, the reaction to their presence was more than an intellectual disagreement, it was deeply felt 'affective dissonance' which is a more appropriate paired opposite to a numinous experience. Thus, the 'operating' power of the artwork with which the dialectic of 'add' or subtract' can be aligned, is an axis that has at one end 'numinous consonance' and at the other 'affective dissonance'.

While this is productive in exploring broader ideas about what it is that artworks can offer heritage sites, in the case of the Parsonage it shows that the CAP does offer new ways of engaging with the heritage, but it does not necessarily influence the idea that it is a shrine. Where contemporary art has been

⁹⁸² Michael Holquist, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990), p.xx. The question relating to the relationship between the world and the ability of language to describe it can be traced back to Plato. See *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, ed. by Ted Honderich, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.490-491.

rejected by visitors as an inappropriate 'intervention', the underpinning rejection is founded precisely on the notion that the site is a shrine and a tribute to the Brontës. Also, the Brontës' memory has regularly been invoked to argue that the artwork is not welcome because they themselves would not have appreciated it.

Where artworks appear to have been particularly successful, the substantive underpinning notion has been that they have facilitated a rich affective connection to the Brontës as the subject of visitors' reverence, again reinforcing, rather than disrupting, the notion of a shrine. The key behaviour here is of visitors revering the past, rather than engaging with a more critical questioning of how the Brontës might be relevant to today's concerns. This is not to undervalue visitors' remembering the Brontës as an important process, but rather to articulate a problem that remains in trying to identify what critical work the CAP might be able to do in this context. A further issue relates not to how the heritage might be changed by the 'insertion' of artworks, but to whether the artworks have yet been adequate to the heritage. Perhaps, by drawing out 'hidden', 'forgotten', or 'neglected' aspects of the life struggles and posthumous influence of the Brontës, the CAP could do more critical transformative work.

It is the relationship of 'affect' to more recent writing about heritage that might yet point to ways in which contemporary art could open up a space within which both a reverential and a critical engagement might be possible. How, then, might the CAP be defined as a form of heritage, rather than an 'intervention' from across the disciplinary boundary of the separate discourse of art?

A 'new' heritage process?

The importance of being able to articulate more clearly the role, value and effect of the CAP can be deduced from the Wafer Hadley visitor survey from 2014. It concluded that the majority of visitors attend either to see Brontë-related

artefacts or period interiors.⁹⁸³ Despite this, the purpose of the CAP has been to develop the visitor experience in order to try to move away from the caricature of the period interior being a 'shrine to the Brontës'. The inclusion of artwork has resulted in implicit tensions between interpretive approaches, between the iterative development of a more 'scientifically accurate' period interior and the purpose of the CAP to remind visitors that this is only an illusion. However, as noted at the end of the previous chapter, as few as 2% of visitors in the 2014 survey cited the CAP as inspiring their visit.⁹⁸⁴ While this small proportion could be seen as a problem from the perspective of bringing new audiences to the Parsonage, one aim of the CAP is to allow existing visitors to develop their own creative responses; thus it is possible to argue that the Wafer Hadley report, while interesting, should not signal that the CAP is not worth pursuing, but rather that it is necessary to understand more fully what place the programme actually has within the Parsonage and how artworks might be part of an overall interpretive structure for visitors. The figures used in the report must also be taken with caution. To ascertain their likely veracity, it would be instructive to look carefully at the questions Wafer Hadley used to construct their report. In many ways, the problems of identifying exactly what visitors 'get out of' their experience are exacerbated by the use of blunt market research methodology which, in this case, generated little rich insight into what are complex motivations.

With this in mind, the purpose of this part of my analysis is to explore the CAP through two related discourses. First, the lens of recent writing on heritage, in particular, notions of new heritage and Russell Staiff's work on heritage interpretation.⁹⁸⁵ It has been argued by Duncan Light that Russell Staiff's book

⁹⁸³. Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.3.

⁹⁸⁴. Wafer Hadley, *Visitor Survey*, p.4.

⁹⁸⁵. Harrison, *Heritage*; Fairclough, 'New Heritage'.

'may come to be recognised as a ground-breaking manifesto which transforms the theory and practice of heritage interpretation'.⁹⁸⁶ Light's review suggests a failure to acknowledge the ways in which heritage is already being transformed from within, along the lines Staiff suggests. It is hoped this research will help establish that 're-imagined' heritage already surrounds us. Secondly, writing connected to relational forms of art practice, Nicolas Bourriaud and Grant Kester in particular, in order to explore the ways in which their concepts of relational aesthetics and dialogic artwork might connect to the ways in which heritage as an 'industry' is being encouraged to engage more collaboratively with its 'consumers'. By bringing these parallel discourses together, these interpretive tensions and the role of contemporary art at the Parsonage can be productively explored.

Much of the heritage critique discussed in Chapter 1 argued the need for change from a concept of heritage as a fixed quality embedded in objects and buildings, to an understanding that heritage is a process. This reflects a broader move in museums generally to think more carefully about their relationship with audiences.⁹⁸⁷ A growing body of literature has explored what has been called 'new heritage'; a conceptualisation of heritage 'more as a verb rather than a noun, "heritage" is something we do, rather than something that is'.⁹⁸⁸ 'New heritage' has also been conceptualised as a broader effect of new media.⁹⁸⁹ This not only allows heritage sites to provide interpretation for visitors in significantly new ways but also can be a factor in changing the conception of what heritage might be. This is interesting in that it corresponds with Nicolas Bourriaud's notion that

⁹⁸⁶ Duncan Light, 'Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, (2014), 1-3.

⁹⁸⁷ Black, *Transforming Museums*, pp.10-11.

⁹⁸⁸ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.2.

⁹⁸⁹ Yehuda Kalay, Thomas Kvan and Janice Affleck, *New Heritage: New Media and Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2008)

the internet has 'chang[ed] mental space' and been a significant factor in contemporary art.⁹⁹⁰

Graham Fairclough suggested that new heritage represents a broadening of horizons, in what counts as heritage and the methods used for engaging with it.⁹⁹¹ In providing an introduction to a range of case studies, which for him represent changes in the 'scope', 'scale' and 'ambition' of heritage practice,⁹⁹² Fairclough wrote: 'these new approaches try to create greater democratic involvement in the heritage process, recognising this can lead experts to revise their views on what (and why) society values something'.⁹⁹³ Many of the case studies about which Fairclough has written are practical, rather than academic, approaches, developed 'to deal with specific identified problems that traditional Heritage paradigms do not resolve'.⁹⁹⁴

While Fairclough was summarising extant approaches, museums are instructed to 'change or die' by Black who appends his bleak assessment with the declaration that sustainability lies in 'the self-initiated, self directed, self sustaining, collaborative engagement between the museum and its users'.⁹⁹⁵ While Black is speaking more of museums, the same call is evident in more specific heritage literature. Rodney Harrison has suggested that 'heritage is not a passive process, but an active assembling of a series of objects, places and practices'.⁹⁹⁶ It 'emerges from the relationship between, people, "things" and their environments as part of a dialogue or collaborative process of keeping the past alive in the present'.⁹⁹⁷ Both Harrison and Staiff have argued that heritage interpretation has prioritised cognitive processes allied to a constructivist

⁹⁹⁰. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction* 2nd edn (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), p.14.

⁹⁹¹. Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.298.

⁹⁹². Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.302.

⁹⁹³. Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.297.

⁹⁹⁴. Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.297.

⁹⁹⁵. Black, *Transforming Museums*, p.1.

⁹⁹⁶. Harrison, *Heritage*, p.228.

⁹⁹⁷. Harrison, *Heritage*, p.216.

learning agenda, and that this has been at the cost of more embodied, affective processes that take account of the multiple registers within which a heritage experience operates.⁹⁹⁸ Staiff goes on to argue that there is a need to dissolve the binary view of sites and visitors by acknowledging that they are not ontologically separate:

Heritage places are *produced* by the interactions and engagements of the visitors; the place and the visitor cannot be separated because both only have meaning in relationship with the other.⁹⁹⁹

If the Parsonage can be seen to be the result of the ways in which its visitors interact, where might evidence of a dialogic relationship be found?

One statement made about the CAP described it as intending 'to enable visitors to experience the Parsonage's period rooms (which have remained largely unchanged for decades) in a new and thought-provoking way'; another statement suggests it exists to 'marry the very traditional aspects of the museum with a more contemporary imagination'.¹⁰⁰⁰ Conceiving of these statements as referring to the majority of visitors who do make a one-off visit (as Wafer Hadley suggested from their survey), there are a number of problems with this as a narrative description of the programme. Primarily, this makes the assumption that visiting the museum without contemporary art requires neither imagination nor creativity; as the funding application for Parker's 'Brontëan Abstracts' cited, it is this innovative programme of events that would 'allow' visitors to be creative. However, the broad post-structuralist view that meaning is always a creative act of the reader rather than the author, suggests viewing is both creative and

⁹⁹⁸. Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.55.

⁹⁹⁹. Emphasis in original. Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.24. Stuart Hall 'warned' that his definition of heritage included the 'active production of culture and the arts as a living activity'. Hall, 'Whose Heritage', p.220.

¹⁰⁰⁰. Application to Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to fund the 2006 Cornelia Parker exhibition; 'Brontë Parsonage Museum: Leaving Home Exhibition', (2005) [accessed 12 December 2014];

significantly complex.¹⁰⁰¹ Hooper-Greenhill's concept of the 'post-museum' is built upon this recognition of the role of audiences:

Processes of interpretation are not singular, but multiple, and they proceed from a range of starting points. According to the role being played by the visitor at the time (parent, scholar, tour guide, artist, recluse) different aspects of potential meaning will be mobilised from the materials provided by the museum. Meaning is produced by museum visitors from their own point of view, using whatever skills and knowledge they may have, according to the contingent demands of the moment, and in response to the experience offered by the museum.¹⁰⁰²

Not only has it been shown that visitors will make their own meanings in spite of a dominant narrative within a museum,¹⁰⁰³ it has also been argued that to instrumentalise artists as providers of creative experience is a form of commodification that reduces authentic experience of public space.¹⁰⁰⁴ In this way, rather than increase creativity, the CAP may in fact deprive visitors of the possibility of their own creative experience and instead 'choreograph' creativity for them vicariously.¹⁰⁰⁵

In a collaborative approach to heritage as a process, visitors are conceptualised as more equal partners, and thus, in the case of the Brontës, part of a broader group of people sharing a socially-constructed appreciation of the Brontës. Russell Staiff wonders about the behaviour of visitors:

we look, we hear, we smell, we touch (if we are allowed), we walk, we ramble, we climb, we rest, we interact with our companions, we imagine, we feel, we recall memories, we may laugh, we may cry, we may feel anger, anxiety, maybe disorientation, we may feel loss, we may feel pain, we may feel numb. We photograph (a lot), we read signs, we listen to audio-tours, we trail after a guide, we

¹⁰⁰¹ See especially Roland Barthes, who argued that 'a text is made of multiple writings, [...] there is one place where this multiplicity is focussed and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author'. Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), p.148.

¹⁰⁰² Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture*, p.5.

¹⁰⁰³ Merriman, *Beyond the Glass Case*, p.17.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Tania Carson, 'Cultural Ambiguity in an Urban Development Master Plan: Deception or Miscalculation?', in *Interventions*, ed. by Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005), p.26. see also Kwon, *One Place After Another*, p.1.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Michelle Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006), p.3.

consult guidebooks, we may attend a lecture or multi-media presentation, we pore over maps, we closely observe models and diagrams, we watch a performance, we refer to Google on our iPhones, we download an e-tour, we chat with our companions or on our phones, we think about something quite removed from where we are, we reflect, we may argue, we may feel confronted, we may feel small, we may feel proud, we may feel like a cosmopolitan or we may feel patriotic. We may feel nothing. We may feel overwhelmed.¹⁰⁰⁶

While Staiff suggests that the 'common denominator' here is the fact that 'all these interactions focus on the visitor', these behaviours are equally applicable to all people who are, or have been, involved with the Parsonage.¹⁰⁰⁷ I certainly recognise many of these behaviours in myself, whether as artist, museum employee, visitor or tourist; Staiff obviously includes himself through the use of 'we' as a pronoun.

Given both Harrison and Staiff focus on the fact that heritage ought to be a more dialogic process, it is interesting to note that none of these behaviours are particular to heritage sites. This raises a question about whether it is possible to identify what is unique about what people 'do' at heritage sites, and what the relationship might be between what people do, and what they experience, and whether there is necessarily a causal connection between the two. At the very least, within a dialogic conception of heritage, it is necessary to think more carefully about the range of people who create the place through their engagement with it. In relation to the Parsonage, Jenna Holmes suggested that it is particularly difficult to understand exactly why people visit, but a picture of visitors to the Parsonage needs to be expanded beyond the concept of the 'once in a lifetime' pilgrim.¹⁰⁰⁸

In *Re-imagining Heritage Interpretation*, Staiff explores the visuality which surrounds heritage, proposing that people develop a picture in their minds made

¹⁰⁰⁶ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.2.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.2.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Interview with Jenna Holmes, 5 November 2010.

up from the variety of ways in which culture is represented:

through a multitude of observational technologies, heritage places, objects, monuments and landscapes are mapped, drawn, painted, photographed, filmed and scanned. These representations, because they have a life of their own, [...] help create a visual experiences that in turn both instructs and informs the way visitors "see" and interpret places.¹⁰⁰⁹

In these terms, visitors' experience of the Parsonage will not only be informed by their own interpretation of the Brontë's work with which they are familiar, but by their amalgamation of all of the other ways in which they have experienced Brontë discourse. This is Urry and Larson's 'tourist gaze':

Places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as film, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze.¹⁰¹⁰

This visuality might range from the humorous YouTube video depicting the sisters as 'powerdoll' superhero toys, successfully destroying a male dominated publishing industry,¹⁰¹¹ or Andrea Arnold's deeply affecting film version of *Wuthering Heights* which is notable for its lack of a musical soundtrack and being the first film to depict Heathcliff as black, which Ann Dinsdale described as being most like the book.¹⁰¹² This gaze is not passive:

Gazing is not merely seeing, but involves cognitive work of interpreting, evaluating, drawing comparisons and making mental connections between signs and their referents, and capturing signs photographically. Gazing is a set of practices. Individual performances of gazing at a particular sight are framed by cultural styles, circulating images and texts of this and other places, as well

¹⁰⁰⁹ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.84.

¹⁰¹⁰ Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.4.

¹⁰¹¹ Chris Miller and Phil Lord, 'Brontë Sisters Power Dolls', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NKXNThJ610>> [accessed 28 October 2014];

¹⁰¹² *Wuthering Heights*, dir. by Andrea Arnold, (Artificial Eye, 2011). Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013. See also Conrad, 'Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights: Do We Need New Film Versions?', *The Observer*, 21 August 2011, p.14.

as personal experiences and memories.¹⁰¹³

Thus, despite the fact that the period interiors of the Parsonage can be seen as static and separated from the visitor through the dividing tactic of the proscenium arch,¹⁰¹⁴ visitors are demonstrably already being creative, by making meanings in their own ways through a process Chris Rojek has called dragging; 'dragging refers to the combination of elements from separate files of representation to create a new value. Selections of images, symbols and associations are drawn from representational files to create new values for the site'.¹⁰¹⁵

Staiff extends Rojek's work by noting that the concept of 'dragging' is limited to 'the geographic precision of specific locations [and] specific topographies' relating to his interest in tourist sites. Staiff suggests instead that it is necessary to move towards a 'more general relationship between heritage and 'files of representation'.¹⁰¹⁶ This is important because it suggests that it is necessary to consider the ways in which the Parsonage is part of a broader process of meaning making in which a visit is part of an ongoing relational engagement with Brontë discourse, rather than a site specific experience that ends when the visitor departs.¹⁰¹⁷

¹⁰¹³ Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.17.

¹⁰¹⁴ Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014. In this interview, Rushton spoke about the 'divide' of the proscenium arch, and asked 'how do you get over it?'. It is perhaps a question whose heritage can be traced to art's separation from life in the museum, and the effort of the early avant garde to close the gap. Cf. Adorno, *Prisms* and Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins*.

¹⁰¹⁵ Chris Rojek, 'Indexing, Dragging and the Social Construction of Tourist Sights', in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997) pp.52-74, p.54.

¹⁰¹⁶ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.86.

¹⁰¹⁷ In fact, using the concept of pilgrimage, Urry and Larson are again useful in showing how a 'pilgrimage' to the Parsonage occurs in stages; the last of which is that the visitor 'reintegrates' into their every-day life, albeit with newly-formulated social capital. This highlights the way in which the experience of the Parsonage resonates with the visitor well beyond their actual visit. See Urry and Larson, *The Tourist Gaze*, p.12.

This expanded notion of 'visitors' also needs to include staff. Many staff have shown that they are Brontë enthusiasts. Ann Dinsdale, for example, described her long association with the Brontës and the hold the house has over her:

I've got a really strong passion for the novels and it fascinates me to think that they were written here [...] I want to know everything about them, you know I want to know what makes them tick. So they have a huge hold over my imagination.¹⁰¹⁸

Front of house staff, with whom I have had a long and informal interaction during my research visits to the Parsonage, are very protective of the site and its integrity. Both KM and Lynne Howell, members of front of house staff, were born locally and remember the Brontës and the moors from childhood, especially as teenagers.¹⁰¹⁹ Having returned to the area later in life, KM was first a volunteer, then 'jumped at the chance' of a job. Both also agreed that the way staff introduce the house is very personal, especially in relation to the contemporary art installations, some staff completely leave out an explanation of the interventions to visitors if they do not like them.

This level of engagement with the Brontës and the Parsonage as a visitor can also be seen amongst the artists who have been involved in the programme. Paula Rego had already made the *Jane Eyre Prints* because of her interest in the Brontës.¹⁰²⁰ Su Blackwell had a firm relationship with the Brontës from childhood:

I was an avid reader as a child, and *Wuthering Heights* was one of the first 'adult' books I read. [...] I struggled understanding it the first time around, but it stuck with me, and I have since re-read it several times as an adult, and am interested in all things associated with *Wuthering heights*, be it film or theatre, or song. I became more interested in the story of the sisters themselves, and in what they

¹⁰¹⁸ Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

¹⁰¹⁹ Discussion with KM and Lynne Howell, at the Parsonage, 19 December 2014. KM, having given approval for her responses to be included here, wished to only be identified by her initials.

¹⁰²⁰ Bury, 'Creative (Mis)reading', p.2.

managed to achieve.¹⁰²¹

Simon Warner, an artist and photographer who has had several exhibitions at the Parsonage, is a local resident and steeped in the history of the moors:

there is something about that atmosphere, that special atmosphere, that other people speak of and I can't really pin it down but something about the combination of open space and the literary history that's quite kind of resonant and affecting I think.¹⁰²²

Charlotte Cory's work both recalls the significance of her visit to the Parsonage when she was a young girl and builds upon her lifelong engagement with the Brontës and the museum as visitor, Brontë Society member and Trustee. Cory explained 'the truth is my relationship with this place is ridiculous; absolutely ridiculous. Aged nine, I read *Jane Eyre* and I mean I have to confront myself; this is what is happening when I come here'.¹⁰²³

In this way, as Brontë enthusiasts, artists have significant agency within the site, given their ability to shape the perceptions of a significant number of visitors. They are also part of the production of factual knowledge. Rebecca Chesney's residency at the Parsonage uncovered the relationship of rainfall to tuberculosis death rates in Haworth, a significance which had not been discovered before.¹⁰²⁴ McCarthy suggested that Cornelia Parker was wilfully engaging with 'things left out of the Brontë story or just beyond acknowledged areas of Brontë study', and suggested that her 'Brontëan Abstracts' were 'a kind of Brontë apocrypha'.¹⁰²⁵ Dinsdale was very clear that Charlotte Cory had brought new knowledge; 'we all read in the biographies about this trunk and it's quite well known. But no one's ever actually identified the very ship that was wrecked.

¹⁰²¹ Interview with Su Blackwell, 21 April 2015.

¹⁰²² Interview with Simon Warner, 4 October 2013.

¹⁰²³ Interview with Charlotte Cory, 5 July 2013.

¹⁰²⁴ Rebecca Chesney, 'The Brontë Weather Project 2011-2012', *Brontë Studies*, 39 (2014), 14-31, p.26.

¹⁰²⁵ *Brontëan Abstracts*, ed. by Brontë Society, p.34.

So that's new knowledge that Charlotte has produced'.¹⁰²⁶ Many pieces of artwork have been purchased for the Brontë Society collection and, as such, become part of the official Brontë story as presented by the Society. Thus, artists as invited participants in a dialogic process are able to exert an agency over the ways in which experiences are constructed at the Parsonage, and are a valuable contributor to ongoing knowledge generation.

During the period of this research project, 2010 to 2015, I too have moved from being a visitor for whom the Parsonage was an interesting case study, to someone who has now read a variety of Brontë works, curated a number of related exhibitions and organised a conference with a focus on new interpretations.¹⁰²⁷ Both Lucasta Miller and Juliet Barker, two authors fundamental to contemporary Brontë discourse, have explained that their interest is more than academic; Lucasta Miller cited her early experience of the Brontës as a significant factor in both her childhood and adult life;¹⁰²⁸ Juliet Barker, as the author of numerous books about the Brontës and one-time curator of the Parsonage, 'has lived within a few miles of Haworth all her life'.¹⁰²⁹ This way of thinking more richly about visitors instead of perceiving them as individuals who make a single visit, reveals the variety of relationships a rich network of people have to the Brontës, the Parsonage and thus the processes of knowledge production and meaning-making.

The issue here is not that 'thought provoking' is a poor choice of words to describe the aims of the CAP, but to highlight that 'visitors' do not share a single identity, neither are they are passive, nor is art necessarily the only way to

¹⁰²⁶ Interview with Ann Dinsdale, 4 October 2013.

¹⁰²⁷ For an overview of the exhibitions and conference see Nick Cass and Elizabeth Stainforth, 'Re-Visioning the Brontës: An Introduction', *Brontë Studies*, 39 (2014), 3-5. The volume also contains several papers published from the conference.

¹⁰²⁸ Miller, *Brontë Myth*, p.ix.

¹⁰²⁹ Barker, *The Brontës*, p.ii.

mobilise creativity. Mary Gillespie has pointed out, 'our ideas about audiences are shaped by competing discourses which define them in different ways: as vulnerable or creative, powerful or powerless'.¹⁰³⁰ The danger here is that visitors to the Parsonage have been *perceived* as uncreative in relation to their consumption of ' clichéd' displays, rather than that they *are* so. Staiff suggests 'a visual repertoire, something that is a constitutive part of heritage place construction [...] becomes entangled with the place/site/landscape/object in a way that cannot be managed'.¹⁰³¹ Thus, with or without an art intervention, visitors to the Parsonage are already drawing on a vast array of visual material and, crucially, are able to use both authorised interpretive material and a wide range of other sources to create their own meanings.

However, there are still efforts to control the perception of authenticity within the Parsonage interior. In 2014, a new Heritage and Conservation Policy was written by Christine Went, the Conservation Officer for the Society. Notable in its timing, it followed a period of great difficulty when the Council of Trustees sought to prevent any further contemporary art being shown in the museum in the aftermath of the controversial 2013 exhibition by Charlotte Cory.¹⁰³² The policy sets out the legal responsibility of the Society to preserve the grade one listed building, but also states:

the internal appearance of the original Parsonage should be maintained to resemble as closely as possible any chosen period during the Brontë family's residence. Temporary museum cases and/or displays, should be kept to an absolute minimum and all that does not reflect the appearance of a home should, as far as possible, be removed. From time to time the Council of Trustees may authorise the installation of appropriate and relevant temporary exhibitions in the historic rooms. Any such installations must, however, neither detract from, nor overwhelm the authentic

¹⁰³⁰ *Media Audiences*, ed. by Marie Gillespie, (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005), p.224.

¹⁰³¹ Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.86.

¹⁰³² Sellars notes the fact that this exhibition was indeed controversial amongst staff and trustees. Interview with Jane Sellars, 8 January 2014. See also the discussion of Christine Went's objection to the 'Capturing the Brontës' exhibition on page 234.

room settings and displays, nor must they cause any damage to the fabric.¹⁰³³

The policy is based upon a notion that the rooms are 'authentic'. Not only has it been shown that the authenticity of these interiors is problematic, but that some trustees are more aware of the illusory nature of these interiors than others;

Virginia Rushton pointed out:

the decorative scheme, whatever anybody says about it that Dining Room, that parlour, is not how it was when those girls were growing up and writing their first stories. And so, to that extent, the notion of the shrine has already been compromised.¹⁰³⁴

Thus the perspective embodied in the conservation policy is rooted in older conceptions of museum practice and visitor experience and is indicative of internal conflict, given that this policy directly conflicts with the continuing effort of the CAP to be provocative. The fact that the policy states it is 'the Council of Trustees' who will control temporary interventions, rather than the curatorial staff, can be interpreted as a continuing effort to apply a top down process. Rushton described this tension, 'the council members talk about [...] the public [who] comes to see the historic rooms where the books were written, where the children, the girls were brought up, but [the Parsonage] isn't like that anymore anyway'.¹⁰³⁵ These conflicts have been conceptualised recently as 'blocks' and 'sticking' points, preventing a more horizontal heritage process in which control over heritage resources is more equally distributed.¹⁰³⁶

The status of those who cross the threshold into the Parsonage within this dialogic process is thus complex. Robins has suggested that enhancing the agency of visitors is difficult; and that while discussion lies at the heart of

¹⁰³³ Brontë Society, 'Heritage and conservation policy' (2014).

¹⁰³⁴ Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

¹⁰³⁵ Interview with Virginia Rushton, 16 July 2014.

¹⁰³⁶ 'How should heritage decisions be made: increasing participation from where you are', (2015), <<http://heritagedecisions.leeds.ac.uk/publications/>> [accessed 17 September 2015], p.19.

dialogue, 'museums [...] are not renowned for their propensity to bring strangers together actually to discuss their differences'.¹⁰³⁷

In the Parsonage, however, it is possible to suggest that even the 'one-time' visitor has both agency and a voice, firstly, in dialogic relationship with other visitors, and secondly in relation to those 'responsible' for the museum's interpretation. Extracts of visitor books in this thesis have included examples of 'dialogue' between visitors, where the conversations can be seen to be exploring the validity of contemporary art as an interpretive method, and ways in which art enhanced the experience. McCarthy recalls how interesting this was as part of Paula Rego's lithographs shown in the first CAP exhibition:

the good thing about that was the visitors book in a sense became a kind of dialogue or debate where visitors, you know, somebody would come along and write, I hate these, and somebody else would come along and say, Don't you understand, this is what it is about. So [...] it made a really interesting change from what can tend to be fairly kind of pedestrian comments that you normally get in the visitors book.¹⁰³⁸

This can be found in many of the other comment books for subsequent CAP exhibitions. Su Blackwell's exhibition 'Remnants' in 2010 featured an artwork made through the destruction of a Victorian dress. One comment from the visitor book, 'terrible to ruin old dress' was followed with 'I love the dress - the exhibition is beautiful. We love it'.¹⁰³⁹ This dialogue can also be seen in the visitor book for the exhibition of Paula Rego's *Jane Eyre Prints*. One comment, 'an excellent museum full of fascinating and delightful objects - I enjoyed it very much! However, the Paula Rego work got in the way and wasn't appreciated' was followed with 'Well, I thought the Paula Rego ex [sic] proved a refreshing 21st century view of Jane Eyre. Good for you! Don't be put off by the

¹⁰³⁷ Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.187.

¹⁰³⁸ Interview with Andrew McCarthy, 6 July 2012.

¹⁰³⁹ 'Remnants: visitor comments book' (2010).

traditionalists'.¹⁰⁴⁰ As Chaim Noy has argued, in this way 'place-sensitive writing surfaces are employed by visitors as stages for public expression' and furthermore, comment books 'in heritage museums [are suggestive of] writing as a political action'.¹⁰⁴¹

This 'political action' of visitor writing has implications in relation to the installations as a socially constructed form of interpretation. For the 'Brontëan Abstracts' in 2006, Cornelia Parker installed a recording of psychics attempting to connect with any spirits who might be in the house. Initially this was played through speakers but many visitors disliked the way in which the 'ghastly intrusive chattering of these wretched ladies' impinged on their 'visit to this wonderful museum'.¹⁰⁴² The level of 'feedback' from visitors resulted in the work being adapted through the addition of headphones as a solution to cut out the disturbance. More recently, in 2013, during Charlotte Cory's 'Capturing the Brontës' exhibition, the replacement of the copy of John Richmond's portrait of Charlotte Brontë hanging above the fireplace in the dining room caused many, many complaints. To mitigate, staff put the Richmond copy on display in the Exhibition Room, along with the copy of Branwell's portrait of his sisters that had also been removed temporarily. This went some way towards ameliorating the visitor reaction to this alteration in the display. Thus visitors' reactions as expressed on these 'public writing surfaces' have, on a number of occasions, delimited the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable forms of 'intervention' as interpretation.

Many museums have significantly expanded this form of dialogue beyond the 'sender' and 'receiver' model of linear communication; strategies such as comment walls and interactive voting boards are just a few of the more popular

¹⁰⁴⁰ 'Jane Eyre Prints: Visitor comments book' (2004).

¹⁰⁴¹ Noy, 'Writing in Museums', p.4.

¹⁰⁴² 'Brontëan Abstracts: Visitor Comments Book' (2006).

versions of facilitating increased dialogue.¹⁰⁴³ That the Parsonage still relies largely on the comment books suggests Robins's view is applicable in this case; there is a limited engagement with the visitor voice in the Parsonage and better technologies of dialogue exist. However, the level of perceptive and thoughtful dialogue which the visitor books represent is instructive in thinking through visitors' engagement and influence within the discourse of the Parsonage as a heritage site.

In these ways, the complex nature of the site is 'produced' through the engagement of visitors; 'in short, people are their place and a place is its people, and however readily these may be separated in conceptual terms, in experience they are not easily differentiated'.¹⁰⁴⁴ An expanded notion of visitors which includes artists and staff with different interests can thus be seen to correlate with descriptions of new forms of heritage production. A defining characteristic of this new understanding of heritage as a process is the dialogical relationship between those involved. At the same time, a similar shift has taken place in relation to contemporary art, in that the relationship between artists, sites of display and audiences has been conceived of as 'relational'.¹⁰⁴⁵ That these strands of theorising have taken place at the same time suggests that CAP ought to be considered in relation to both of these discourses.

Contemporary Art and 'New Heritage'

The development of the CAP can be seen in this context of a broader cultural shift which has included the role of education as a key driver of social change. Claire Bishop suggested that 'New Labour use[d] a rhetoric almost identical to that of socially engaged art to steer culture towards policies of social

¹⁰⁴³ Hooper-Greenhill, 'A New Communication Model for Museums'.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), p.34.

¹⁰⁴⁵ See especially Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 2002).

inclusion'.¹⁰⁴⁶ The Parsonage, like many museums and galleries, has been ideally placed to benefit from increased funding for projects tied to social outcomes.¹⁰⁴⁷ That artists have been able to benefit from the range of opportunity created by this increase in funding is undeniable; Douglas and Fremantle have suggested that 'artists are uniquely placed to mobilise thinking and creative development in public life' and go on to suggest that artists are now seen as knowledge workers.¹⁰⁴⁸ This clearly accords with the notion of bringing artists into the Parsonage to enhance the ways in which visitors experience the site and represents a paradigmatic shift from institutional critique, which was predicated on challenging the ideological structure of the museum rather than enhancing visitors' experience of it.

There is a long history of artists working with museums, collections and museological processes that is well documented elsewhere.¹⁰⁴⁹ The contemporary manifestation of the 1970s 'institutional critique' of Hans Haacke, Daniel Buren and Marcel Broodthaers can be traced through the work of Andrea Fraser and Mark Dion to the Brooklyn-based art collective Not an Alternative who propose that their Natural History Museum is less an 'institutional critique' but more a process of 'occupying institutionality'.¹⁰⁵⁰ In the past decades, attention has focussed on the ways in which artists have explored processes that engage the audiences in new ways. This participatory practice is described and conceptualised in a number of ways. Nicolas Bourriaud uses the term 'relational

¹⁰⁴⁶ Claire Bishop, 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', *Artforum*, February 2006, pp.178-183, p.180.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Anne Douglas and Chris Fremantle, 'Leading Through Practice: Framing the Discussion', *an magazine*, (2007) <<http://www.a-n.co.uk/publications/shortcut/article/346273>> [accessed 31 October 2014].

¹⁰⁴⁹ Putnam, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium*; Pearce, 'Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?'; McShine, *The Museum as Muse*; Robins, *Curious Lessons*.

¹⁰⁵⁰ 'The Museum Divide: Beyond Institutional Critique', (2014) <<http://thenaturalhistorymuseum.org/tv/the-museum-divide-beyond-institutional-critique/>> [accessed 4 May 2015]. See also <http://thenaturalhistorymuseum.org>.

aesthetics' to describe a form of art practice in which the field of art is an 'intersubjective' encounter.¹⁰⁵¹ Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of Dialogism, Grant Kester describes a form of art which works through 'a cumulative process of exchange and dialogue rather than a single, instantaneous shock of insight precipitated by an image or object'.¹⁰⁵² These analyses recognise that since the 1990s there has been a significant shift towards participatory forms of art practice. In *Relational Aesthetics*, which Bishop described as 'the defining text of relational practice',¹⁰⁵³ Bourriaud proposed that these kinds of 'artworks' have no material presence and only exist within social relations.¹⁰⁵⁴ In *Postproduction*, Bourriaud noted that his broader philosophical project relates to the fundamental cultural shift represented by the arrival of the internet, and that another phenomena arising from globalisation is that artists are using pre-existing forms as a raw material and museums have become 'a catalogue of forms, postures, and images for artists - collective equipment that everyone is in a position to use, not in order to be subjected to their authority but as tools to probe the contemporary world'.¹⁰⁵⁵

In this 'relational' definition of form, artists are dealing with the network of social meanings between sites, objects and people, even when making what might be seen as object-based work. Kester suggests that a defining characteristic of relational practice is that meaning-making is an integral part of the making of a work, not something that takes place afterwards.¹⁰⁵⁶ A correlation can thus be

¹⁰⁵¹ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p.22.

¹⁰⁵² Grant Kester, 'Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art', *Variant*, 9 (1999), 1-8.

¹⁰⁵³ Bishop, 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', *Artforum*, February 2006, p. 178-183, p.179.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, p.43.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, p.9. There is also a strong relationship between 'new heritage' and technology. See Kalay, Kvan and Affleck, *New Heritage: New Media and Cultural Heritage*.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), p.10.

mapped between relational or dialogic contemporary art practice, and the shift in understanding of heritage as a process of engagement rather than a physical quality inherent in objects.¹⁰⁵⁷ In *The Social Production of Art*, Wolff argued that artists are only a small part of a process in which the art is the resultant object.¹⁰⁵⁸ From this perspective, artworks which are part of the CAP are co-authored by a wide variety of people involved in the process.¹⁰⁵⁹ This may be a direct form of participation; Rebecca Chesney, for example, employed a range of local volunteers who made weather observations for her year-long weather project.¹⁰⁶⁰ A more subtle collaboration was seen during the development of Diane Howse's 2015 exhibition 'A Silent Wild', where she worked with a group of artists recording sounds in the Parsonage. Collections manager Ann Dinsdale was a significant influence on the kinds of sounds the group chose to record, to the extent that one artist suggested that Ann's contribution needed to be credited.¹⁰⁶¹

Another correlation between relational aesthetics and a more dialogic heritage process can be seen in Bourriaud's notion of micropiracy. Drawing on Michel DeCerteau, Bourriaud suggests that 'consumption' is always a form of production within which 'what matters is what we make of the elements placed at our disposal'.¹⁰⁶² These 'elements' draw to mind Rojek's concept of 'dragging' discussed earlier, in which visitors to heritage and tourist sites create their own meanings from a wide variety of resources available to them. At the heart of contemporary art and new heritage practices there seems to be a shared concern over how these processes are implicated in meaning-making processes of subjects.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Janet Wolff, *The Social Production of Art* 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1993), p.25.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Observed on 6 November 2014.

¹⁰⁶⁰ For a full description of this project, see Chesney, 'Weather Project'.

¹⁰⁶¹ Observed on 6 November 2014.

¹⁰⁶² Bourriaud, *Postproduction*, p.24.

This parallel is indicative of a further connection between discourses, that of art's ability to 'correct' the perception of defective subjects, and the passive subjects of the 'dominant ideology thesis' discussed in Chapter 1.¹⁰⁶³ In forming his articulation of dialogical aesthetics, Grant Kester traced the history of avant garde practices in the twentieth century and argued that art, prior to its new dialogic formulation, had always treated the spectator as needing improvement: 'the viewer [is] an inherently flawed subject whose perceptual apparatus requires correction'.¹⁰⁶⁴ In these terms, artwork is 'orthopaedic' and the artist is the 'superior being' who is able to 'see' the realities of the world more clearly.¹⁰⁶⁵ It is here the suggestion that the CAP is dialogical might founder; Kester suggests that in more dialogically arranged relationships, each 'agent' is able to help the other move from a position of lesser, to a position of greater understanding. However, the CAP statements and policy documents discussed in this thesis point towards a viewer who is flawed, in that they have an imperfect perception of the Parsonage that must be adapted, they must become 'more creative', and the artist is the 'superior being' who is able to facilitate this kind of perceptual transformation.

Here though, the idea that artists and staff are also visitors becomes useful. Kester goes on to argue that the effect of dialogical projects can be traced along a number of axes.¹⁰⁶⁶ The first dialogic axis is between the artist and the collaborators in the project; if the staff of the Parsonage occupy the role of collaborators, then it can be argued that they are sharing an experience in which understandings of Brontë discourse are reformulated. This would suggest a return to the 'bottom up' conceptualisation of the Brontë Society as a group of local admirers, rather than the 'top down' conceptualisation of Authorised

¹⁰⁶³ See discussion on page 61.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.88.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.88.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.115.

Heritage Discourse.¹⁰⁶⁷ The second axis is between the collaborators themselves; this clearly corresponds to the Parsonage as an institution wrestling with its own identity formation in which contemporary art as a method of visitor engagement is contested. The third axis is between collaborators and the wider community, Kester suggests 'dialogical works [...] can challenge dominant representations of a given community and create a more complex understanding of, and empathy for, that community among a broader public'.¹⁰⁶⁸ In this sense, dominant narratives of the Brontës might be challenged and rethought. While actual participation in art projects at the Parsonage is limited and, for the large part, these projects still rely on 'specular experience provided by object based practices',¹⁰⁶⁹ framing the CAP with a conception of dialogical aesthetics is productive in changing the conception of visitors, by broadening the understanding of the range of participants in the process of meaning making.

Having argued that both art and heritage are dialogic processes rather than things, it could be suggested that these conceptualisations overlook the materiality of the ways in which relations between subjects are produced. As Harrison argued, heritage 'emerg[es] from the relationship between people, objects, places and practices'.¹⁰⁷⁰ Things remain an important agent within the hermeneutic circle. While in *Relational Aesthetics* Bourriaud argued relational artworks' only existence is within social relations, his more recent essay in response to a critique by Jacques Rancière, clarifies that 'at no time are the artistic positions analysed in "Relational Aesthetics" described as social relations that are

¹⁰⁶⁷ Here, rather than suggesting a geographical 'locality', I am using Laurajane Smith's suggestion that 'local' can be seen as the community for whom the heritage resource is seen as important, which can be global. Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.72.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.115.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Grant Kester, *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), p.15.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Harrison, *Heritage*, p.4.

not mediated by forms, nor do any of them answer to that description'.¹⁰⁷¹ Objects, then, still have a part to play in relational works. At the Parsonage subjective relations are formulated through encounters with both Brontë related objects and artworks; in the process of moving from a position of lesser, towards greater understanding produced by dialogical aesthetics, no difference need be drawn between these two kinds of artefacts. Further, Kester argued that 'the "meaning" of a given work is not centred in the physical locus of the object [...] the work "means" differently in different locations and times'.¹⁰⁷² This has implications when considering artworks created as site responsive, but are then exhibited elsewhere, in that the discourse can be seen to extend beyond the heritage site, both in the objects and in the embodied perceptions of the people who have, and will, engage with them.¹⁰⁷³

This effort to draw a connection between relational approaches to heritage, the CAP and theoretical formulations of dialogic art practice, has not yet raised the most well known critique of relational aesthetics. In her response to Bourriaud, Claire Bishop pointed out that 'the *quality* of the relationships [...] are never called into question'.¹⁰⁷⁴ A key problem is thus 'what *types* of relations are [...] produced, for whom, and why?'.¹⁰⁷⁵ In her analysis, Bishop goes on to argue that the artists Bourriaud champions produce work which is convivial, resulting in easy social experiences between people who already understand each other. Thus a connection can be suggested between Bishop's critique that relational

¹⁰⁷¹ Nicolas Bourriaud, 'Precarious Constructions', *Open*, 17 (2009) <<http://www.skor.nl/eng/search/item/open-17-a-precious-existence-vulnerability-in-the-public-domain>> [accessed 4 November 2014], p.21.

¹⁰⁷² Kester, 'Dialogical Aesthetics', p.4.

¹⁰⁷³ Charlotte Cory's 'Capturing the Brontës' was shown at Long and Ryle Gallery in London, in 2014. I included the work of Su Blackwell, Catherine Bertola, Victoria Brookland and Lisa Sheppy in an exhibition at Leeds College of Art in 2013. See *Wildness Between Lines*, ed. by Cass.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Claire Bishop, 'Art of the Encounter: Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *Circa*, 114 (2005), 32-35, p.65.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Bishop, 'Art of the Encounter: Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', p.65.

artworks are only 'convivial' with Claire Robins's argument regarding 'benign' interventions and with Kevin Walsh's notion that heritage as a process risks preserving 'safe' images.¹⁰⁷⁶

In her analysis, Bishop used the work of Thomas Hirshhorn and Santiago Sierra to argue that a more critically challenging 'aesthetic' experience is both possible and more desirable. Rather than the creation of a momentary place of utopia, the work of Hirschhorn and Sierra produce the kind of antagonism that is, in fact, more central to democratic freedom and dialogical exchange.¹⁰⁷⁷ According to Bishop, the way forward is 'to analyse *how* contemporary art addresses the viewer'.¹⁰⁷⁸

¹⁰⁷⁶ Claire Bishop, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *October*, 110 (2004), 51-59, p.56; Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.4; Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.139.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Bishop, 'Antagonism', pp.69-70.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Bishop, 'Antagonism', p.78. Emphasis in original.

Conclusion

Interesting to see the comments on Charlotte Cory's work: I found the juxtaposition of her images made me think: congratulations to the Society for giving me the chance to use my imagination. Much as the Brontës did in this place.

The extreme close ups of hair are macabre and extraordinary. Made me feel the weirdness of Brontë obsession. Gave a new take on the cult of celebrity. Will people hoard JK Rowling ephemera? How strange if they do.¹⁰⁷⁹

Claire Bishop's critique of relational practice suggested what is needed is a consideration of 'how' art speaks to the viewer, but also that part of this analysis needed to 'assess the quality of the audience relations it produces'.¹⁰⁸⁰ At the Parsonage, the more encompassing focus of trying to elucidate the complexity of contemporary art as part of this heritage site would be on the idea of 'dialogue'. Dialogue offers a 'place between' art and heritage, between the 'past and present', and between the 'relationships people create'.¹⁰⁸¹

Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism is a form of 'authoring'; 'the world addresses us and we are alive and human to the degree that we are answerable, i.e. that we can respond to addressivity'.¹⁰⁸² Thus, in Bakhtin's dialogism, the very nature of 'being' is a dialogue, a dialogue in which 'I am always answerable *for* the response that is generated *from* the unique place I occupy in existence'.¹⁰⁸³ Rather than this being an earlier version of Roland Barthes' concept of 'death of the author', a concept which would emphasise the 'authoring' role of the visitor and deny artists any form of agency as part of the dialogue, Bakhtin's dialogism is more productive in thinking about the relationship between the CAP and visitors to the Parsonage.¹⁰⁸⁴ Rather than the visitor being entirely responsible for

¹⁰⁷⁹ 'Capturing the Brontës: Visitor Comments Book' (2013).

¹⁰⁸⁰ Bishop, 'Antagonism', p.78.

¹⁰⁸¹ Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p.2.

¹⁰⁸² Holquist, *Dialogism*, p.30.

¹⁰⁸³ Holquist, *Dialogism*, p.30. Emphasis in original.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, pp.142-148.

the meanings they generate or that the artworks address the visitor as a linear form of communication, the concept of dialogism would suggest;

understanding and response are dialectically merged and mutually condition each other; [...] thus an active understanding, one that assimilates the word under consideration into a new conceptual system, that of the one striving to understand, establishes a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the word and enriches it with new elements. It is precisely such an understanding that the speakers count on.¹⁰⁸⁵

Given that, for Bakhtin, the 'literary genre of the novel is an allegory for representing the condition of life as authoring', here his use of 'the word under consideration' is allegorically related to any experience which is in need of assimilation.¹⁰⁸⁶ This brings the hermeneutic circle, or 'conversation',¹⁰⁸⁷ that is the CAP and the consonant or dissonant responses to it, into a space which can be conceived of as heteroglossic, a space in which, according to Bakhtin;

there is neither a first word nor a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future. Even meanings born in dialogues of the remotest past will never be finally grasped once and for all, for they will always be renewed in later dialogue. At any present moment of the dialogue there are great masses of forgotten meanings, but these will be recalled again at a given moment in the dialogue's later course when it will be given new life. For nothing is absolutely dead.¹⁰⁸⁸

Proposing the term 'critical spatial practice', Rendell argues that contemporary art beyond the walls of the gallery 'holds a special potential for transforming places into spaces of social critique', which operate as a trialectic, that is, across time, space and social relations.¹⁰⁸⁹ Thus the 'space' created by contemporary art within the period interiors of the Parsonage is one in which the dialogue between past and present is in polyvalent and polyvocal relation. It is

¹⁰⁸⁵ Bakhtin, 'The Dialogic Imagination', p.283.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Holquist, *Dialogism*, p.30.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.10.

¹⁰⁸⁸ M. Bakhtin, 'Author and hero in aesthetic activity', cited in Holquist, *Dialogism*, p.39.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Rendell, *Art and Architecture*, p.2.

not linear but allows for processes, people and things to exist in productive tension.¹⁰⁹⁰ This tension is animating, that is, the tension is 'life giving' in a way which is exactly the 'intersubjective dialogue' Kevin Walsh suggested was necessary in heritage processes.¹⁰⁹¹

Su Blackwell's exhibition 'Remnants' demonstrated that visitors were able to connect across time to the Brontës, bringing the past and the present into close relation. According to my research, the visitors' understanding of the Brontës was enhanced by her intervention; this developed in the context of powerful experiences of 'being' in the Parsonage, 'there-ness' being substantially amplified.¹⁰⁹² Part of this 'amplification' is enabled through the ability of the CAP to bring the literature of the Brontës into sharper focus within the period interiors. In doing so, through contemporary art, visitors are able to make substantial connections between their own experiences as readers and the sisters' experiences as authors. A further amplification, or 'heterotopic' effect, is that the lives of the Brontës can be brought 'closer' to visitors, such that they are able to connect the factual and emotional reality of their own lives with the experiences of the Brontës. One role, then, of the Contemporary Arts Programme has been to create powerful 'affective' experiences for visitors. The analysis of visitor comments as a substantial source is productive in illuminating these emotional responses to the home of the Brontës. In this way, the CAP can be seen as a new form of heritage in which the whole person is addressed.

Given the nature of this site, however, the evidence used to draw this conclusion is also the evidence that destabilises it. An examination of more general comments has shown that visitors have emotional reactions to being in the Parsonage that are unrelated to the CAP. Thus, when using visitor comments

¹⁰⁹⁰ Harrison, *Heritage*, p.4.

¹⁰⁹¹ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.3.

¹⁰⁹² David Crouch in Staiff, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation*, p.49.

as a source, it cannot be argued that contemporary art is the only way to enable these kinds of responses. Furthermore, while the CAP can be considered 'new' heritage as a result of the way in which it promotes engaging affective experiences, Andrew McCarthy, in setting up the CAP, was more interested in the Brontës' legacy than in promoting alternative forms of reverence.

The Legacy of the Brontës

Under this notion of the Parsonage as a heteroglossic space within which 'the work of art can be viewed as a kind of conversation - a locus of differing meanings, interpretations, and points of view',¹⁰⁹³ meanings relating to the Brontës are 'recalled again [and] given new life'.¹⁰⁹⁴ If a further role is to give the legacy of the Brontës new life, what might that legacy be?

What has been evidenced here is that the CAP reinforces the idea that the Parsonage is a place of reverence. Given the value of 'remembering and connecting' at heritage sites, this is not necessarily a problem, although the legacy of reverence may obscure the potential for both the literature of the Brontës and the artists' work in the CAP to be transformative. If Rendell is right when she says that art in this context has the potential to change the space of the Parsonage into one of 'social critique' and the CAP were to focus on a deeper critical engagement with the Brontës' social, political and ideological legacy, visitors may be more able to engage substantially with this voice in relation to the reality of the contemporary world in which they exist today.¹⁰⁹⁵ Thus, the Parsonage as 'the heritage' would cease to be seen as a fixed and static refuge from present day concerns within which contemporary art is unwelcome, and become a place of dialogic meaning making within which contemporary art forms one of many

¹⁰⁹³ Kester, *Conversation Pieces*, p.10.

¹⁰⁹⁴ M. Bakhtin, 'Author and hero in aesthetic activity', cited in Holquist, *Dialogism*, p.39.

¹⁰⁹⁵ Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162.

ways in which the legacy of the Brontës can be seen to be related to the present day. A CAP able to facilitate a living connection between current and past social and political struggles would be a powerful affective and pedagogic interpretive programme through which, 'in the process, our understanding of ourselves and the world changes as we incrementally integrate current experiences with past memories'.¹⁰⁹⁶

If the CAP embodies the potential to 'reanimate' the social consciousness of the Brontës through contemporary artistic work, further work with the visitors is necessary. A substantial reaction to CAP exhibitions has been to articulate that they were not expected. In maintaining what has been argued is an artificial distinction between contemporary art as 'intervention' and heritage as 'site', the static concept of heritage is conversely maintained, rather than productively destabilised. This is because, as 'interventions', visitors are able to construe that the presence of and the issues raised by contemporary art exist in a different physical or intellectual space. Were efforts made to develop the understanding of artworks in heritage sites as simply one of many technologies of interpretation, a greater degree of critical engagement might be possible with the nature of the heritage. By actually reducing the sense that the art is a 'critical intervention', the ability of the art to generate critical engagement may, in fact, be increased substantially.

This theoretical suggestion, however, needs to have practical traction for a heritage site in which visitors find their encounter with contemporary art problematic. As Robins has noted, interventions 'continue to embody contradiction [...] this complex phenomenon is an emergent, rather than an established one'.¹⁰⁹⁷ A central question asked at the start of this thesis was simply,

¹⁰⁹⁶ Zuckert, 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', p.206.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Robins, *Curious Lessons*, p.214.

'what is the role of contemporary art at the Parsonage'?

In the spirit of a more dialogic heritage process, substantial work needs to be done with visitors; that is, collaboratively, to build their expectation that contemporary art forms one of the ways in which they will encounter the Brontës, not as 'temporary intervention', but as a central part of a rich interpretive programme. Given the importance of the visitor narrative in the history of the Brontës, one way in which this might be facilitated would be to pay even greater attention to visitors' writing. Chaim Noy suggests that comment books:

invite and allow visitors to become rhetors and to engage in ritualistic and public modes of writing. Upon doing so, visitors become participating / contributing members of a community, and their texts instantly join the institution's material and textual rhetoric.¹⁰⁹⁸

As a form of 'participatory writing', the method by which visitors are asked to 'converse' through text might be adapted and experimented with in order that it be made more a 'conduit' of communication.¹⁰⁹⁹ As studied here, visitor comments demonstrate that a dialogue is already taking place. Some simple rethinking of how these books might be used in relation to contemporary art might offer new ways for the 'legacy' to be made visible through visitors' voices.

This thesis has also argued that the artists involved with the CAP should be conceived of as 'visitors'. This offers a further possibility for 'practical traction'. Rather than working with artists who are already Brontë enthusiasts, perhaps the dialogic nature of the CAP could focus on bringing artists to the site who have never encountered the Brontës, or artists for whom social and political struggle are central. By conceiving of artists as an audience, rather than a facilitator of interpretation, a wider range of 'voices in the conversation' could be heard and

¹⁰⁹⁸ Noy, 'Writing in Museums', p.2.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Noy, 'Writing in Museums', p.11.

offer these visitors, and others, an experience of new ways to respond to 'the heritage'.

I began with a strong conviction that a fundamental reason the CAP was productive was 'juxtaposition'. This has not changed. What has changed, is a sense that exhibiting art in a separate space could be equally, if not more, productive, because this would allow a greater engagement with a wider variety of work not appropriate for the period rooms. This may offer a much stronger way for the 'legacy' to be made visible, without needing to struggle against the density of the reverential experience a majority of visitors seek. This suggestion goes beyond the current 'contemporary art space' near to where visitors buy tickets and extends to facilitating exhibitions in other spaces, in other cities and in other countries; the Brontës' 'local' community is global; however, contemporary art in the period interiors should not be neglected.¹¹⁰⁰

Sheila Watson argued that more attention needs to be paid to 'historiographic needs and historical perception of audiences' so that they 'might more effectively articulate community identities and a sense of place'.¹¹⁰¹ This seems to be at the heart of McCarthy's original aim to better articulate a sense of place. The CAP has been seen to do that, but still risks leaving out important aspects of why the Brontës are famous in the first place. If artworks within the period interiors can be conceived of as objects to think with, perhaps Watson's suggestion could be useful.¹¹⁰²

In the narrative of the Brontës, made manifest through the period interior of the museum, the Dining Room and Mr Brontë's Study are key to visitors'

¹¹⁰⁰ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, p.72.

¹¹⁰¹ Sheila Watson, 'History Museums, Community Identities and a Sense of Place', in *Museum Revolutions*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson (Taylor & Francis, 2007) pp.160-172, p.160.

¹¹⁰² Baxter, 'Seeing for the First and Last Time in Thomas Struth's Museum Photographs', p.203.

historiographic needs. The idea of pilgrimage suggested that the transition from the everyday world to that of the site containing relics is a complex transition. The transition, or crossing the threshold into the Parsonage, is an importance experience. In this context, the Entrance Hall, Dining Room and Mr Brontë's Study are key to the visitor experience, in that it is these two rooms in particular which orient the visitor to the narrative of the Brontës and their home. The Dining Room is the literal embodiment of the sisters writing (as a physical act) in that a key trope of the Brontë narrative is their habit of walking around the dining table, and that Charlotte did this alone after her sisters' deaths. Mr Brontë's study is key too, as it represents his patriarchal role in bringing up his remaining children, despite the way he did so being misrepresented by Elizabeth Gaskell. These are thus central to the needs of visitors and, as such, interventions need to reflect the reality of the way in which visitors 'use' these room to orient themselves within the house in relation to their expectations and the Brontë story. Art in these rooms can substantially enhance the visitor experience, however, to 'disrupt' here is possibly too early in the process. It may be that, here, Silverman's 'remembering' is more important as a meaning-making strategy.¹¹⁰³

Later in the visitor circuit, there are rooms which are less 'period interior' and more 'museum display' of objects in cases; the Servants Room is one example. Building on Silverman's concept of 'connecting', perhaps it is in these locations in the house that more interpretive play is possible.¹¹⁰⁴ For example, this could render more potent connections between the 'fierce class conflict, political turmoil and call[s] for legislative and parliamentary reform [... that inflected] the Brontës' writings throughout their careers' and contemporary concerns, which are, on occasion, dealt with in the Bonnell Exhibition Room, ('Sex, Drugs, and Literature' was one curatorial exhibition held in the museum from June 2009 to

¹¹⁰³ Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162.

¹¹⁰⁴ Silverman, 'Visitor Meaning-Making', p.162.

June 2011), but are largely, and curiously, absent from the CAP.¹¹⁰⁵ Branwell's death from alcoholism, slavery, the prevalence of disease in Haworth and the social subjugation of women are all examples of issues drawn from the 'legacy' of the Brontës and all reflect social issues still important today.

By increasing the dialogic nature of the Parsonage, as a place in which contemporary art forms a central part of heritage process, the 'why' the Brontës are remembered can be shared productively and democratically, rather than 'preserved' in one location with contemporary art seen only as a temporary addition.¹¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, the 'authenticity' that would be preserved would not be of a static, 'scientifically accurate' theatrical representation of a home, but one of dialogue, struggle, art and life; truly, a legacy of the Brontës.

¹¹⁰⁵ Avery, 'Politics', p.262. 'Sex, Drugs and Literature' for

¹¹⁰⁶ Fairclough, 'New Heritage', p.297.

Bibliography

- Adorno, Theodor W., *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967)
- Albano, Caterina, 'Displaying Lives: The Narrative of Objects in Biographical Exhibitions', *Museum and Society*, 5 (2007), 15-28
- Alexander, Christine, 'Myth and Memory: Reading the Brontë Parsonage', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.93-110
- Alexander, Christine and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)
- Alexander, Christine and Margaret Smith, *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Anderson, David, *A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 1999)
- Anon, 'Sale of the Brontë Relics', *Observer*, 3 July 1898
- , 'The Brontë Museum at Haworth', *Manchester Guardian*, 1895
- Arends, Bergit, 'Contemporary Arts in the Natural History Museum London: Symbiosis and Disruption', 8(2), (2009) <<http://jcom.sissa.it/archive/08/02/>> [accessed 14 January 2015]
- Arnaud, Danielle and Jordan Kaplan, eds., *Tatton Park Biennial 2008*, (Knutsford: Tatton Park, 2008)
- Arnold, Andrea, dir., *Wuthering Heights*, (Artificial Eye, 2011)
- Art Connections, ed., *Inspired By Heritage*, (Harrogate: Chrysalis Arts, 2010)
- Arts Council England, *Great Art and Culture for Everyone: 10 Year Strategic Framework 2010 - 2020*, (London: Arts Council England, 2013)
- , 'Museummaker', (2011) [accessed 20 December 2013]
- , 'Trust New Art', <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/arts-council-initiatives/trust-new-art/>> [accessed 23 April 2012]
- , *Understanding the Value and Impacts of Cultural Experiences*, (Manchester: Arts Council England, 2014)
- Arts Council England and National Trust, 'Memorandum of Understanding Between Arts Council England and the National Trust', <<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/collaboration-and-partnerships/>> [accessed 20 December 2013]
- Ashworth, G. J. and J. E. Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: John Wiley, 1995)
- Association for Heritage Interpretation, 'What is Interpretation?', <http://www.ahi.org.uk/www/about/what_is_interpretation/> [accessed 30 June 2014]
- Atkinson, Rebecca, 'Chair of Brontë Society Steps Down After One Month in Role', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/15102014-chair-of-Brontë-society-steps-down>> [accessed 10 November 2014]
- , 'Developing a Social Media Strategy', *Museum Practice*, (2011), <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/social-media-basics/>>

- 15032011-strategy> [accessed 3 September 2015]
- Avery, Simon, 'Politics', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.261-268
- Babbage, Benjamin, *Public Health Act (11 & 12 Vict., Cap. 63.) Report. On a Preliminary Inquiry Into the Sewerage, Drainage, and Supply of Water, and the Sanitary Condition of the Inhabitants of the Hamlet of Haworth* (London: H.M.S.O., 1850)
- Bal, Mieke, 'Exposing the Public', in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald (London: Blackwell, 2007) pp.525-542
- , *Louise Bourgeois' Spider* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)
- , 'S-Words', *Journal of Visual Culture*, 11 (2012), 145-148
- , 'Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting', in *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. by J. Elsner and R. Cardinal (London: Reaktion Books, 1994) pp.123-145
- , 'The Discourse of the Museum', in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996) pp.201-218
- Baldwin, Jessica, 'Pilgrims Damaging Brontë Parsonage', *Sunday Telegraph*, 16 December 1990
- Barker, Emma, 'Heritage and the Country House', in *Contemporary Cultures of Display*, ed. by Emma Barker (London: Yale University Press, 1999) pp.200-228
- Barker, Juliet, *The Brontës* rev. and updated edn (London: Phoenix Press, 2001)
- , 'The Haworth Context', in *Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.13-33
- , 'Changes in the Museum', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1987), 172-174
- , 'New Bedroom Layout at the Parsonage', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1987), 127-129
- Barthes, Roland, *Camera Lucida* (London: Vintage, 1993)
- , *Image, Music, Text* (London: Fontana, 1977)
- Baumber, Michael, 'Haworth in the Time of the Brontës', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.9-17
- Baxandall, Michael, 'Exhibiting Intention: Some Preconditions of the Visual Display of Culturally Purposeful Objects', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.33-41
- Baxter, Miranda, 'Seeing for the First and Last Time in Thomas Struth's Museum Photographs', *Photographies*, 7 (2014), 201-216
- Baylor University Institute for Oral History, *Style Guide: A Quick Reference for Editing Oral History Transcripts* (Waco: Baylor University, 2013)
- Beevers, David, 'A Dark Day in Paradise', <http://www.claretwomey.com/a_dark_day_in_paradise_info.html> [accessed 16 June 2014]
- Behagg, Molly, 'Museums of the Self: House Museums, Emotional Space and Personal Narratives', *engage: the international journal of visual art and gallery*

- education*, 31 (2012), 59-71
- Bell, Acton, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1848)
- Bell, Acton, Currer Bell and Ellis Bell, *Poems* (London: Aylott and Jones, 1846)
- Bell, Currer, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* Smith, Elder and Co., 1847)
- , *Shirley* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1849)
- Bell, Ellis, *Wuthering Heights* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847)
- Bell, Michael Mayerfeld, 'The Ghosts of Place', *Theory and Society*, 26 (1997), 813-836
- Belova, Olga, 'The Event of Seeing', in *Museum Objects: Experiencing the Properties of Things*, ed. by Sandra Dudley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.117-133
- Benn, Diane, 'Press Release: Cornelia Parker Exhibition', <<http://bronteparsonage.blogspot.co.uk/2006/07/cornelia-parker-exhibition.html>> [accessed 2 April 2015]
- Bennett, Tony, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- Berthin, Christine, *Gothic Hauntings Melancholy Crypts and Textual Ghosts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
- Birchall, Danny, 'Institution and Intervention: Artists' Projects in Object-Based Museums' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of London, 2012)
- Bishop, Claire, 'Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *October*, 110 (2004), 51-59
- , 'Art of the Encounter: Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics', *Circa*, 114 (2005), 32-35
- , *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005)
- , 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', *Artforum*, February 2006
- Black, Graham, *Transforming Museums in the Twenty First Century* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- Black, W. L., 'Early History of the Brontë Society', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1962), 38-40
- Blazwick, Iwona, *Cornelia Parker* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013)
- Boden, Margaret, 'Creativity', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.477-488
- Bollnow, Otto Friedrich, *Human Space* (London: Hyphen Press, 1963)
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993)
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Alain Darbel, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991)
- Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Postproduction* 2nd edn (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002)
- , 'Precarious Constructions', *Open*, 17 (2009), <<http://www.skor.nl/eng/search/item/open-17-a-precarius-existence-vulnerability-in-the-public-domain>> [accessed 4 November 2014]
- , *Relational Aesthetics*, (Dijon: Les Presses du Reel, 2002)
- Bradford Metropolitan District Council, 'Discover Bradford District', <<http://>

- /www.visitbradford.com/discover/> [accessed 6 July 2015]
- , 'Discover Haworth and Brontë Country', <<http://www.visitbradford.com/discover/>> [accessed 6 July 2015]
- Bradford Tourism Department, 'Visitbradford.com', (2011) <http://www.visitbradford.com/Brontë_Country/Haworth.asp> [accessed 29 March 2012]
- Branagan, Mark, 'Turbine Scheme Provokes Wuthering Gale of Protest', *The Independent*, 6 April 2012
- Brighton, Andrew, 'Is Architecture or Art the Enemy?', in *Space Invaders: Issues of Presentation, Context and Meaning in Contemporary Art*, ed. by Nicholas de Ville and Stephen Easter (Southampton: John Hansard Gallery, 1997) pp.43-53
- Brodsky, Joyce, 'How to 'See' With the Whole Body', *Visual Studies*, 17 (2002), 99-112
- Brontë Parsonage Museum, 'Contemporary Arts Programme: April to September 2013', [Leaflet] (2013)
- , 'Remnants: Su Blackwell', [Leaflet] (2010)
- 'Brontë Parsonage Museum: Leaving Home Exhibition', (2005) <<http://www.haworth-village.org.uk/news/large.asp?id=49>> [accessed 12 December 2014]
- Brontë Society, 'A Guide to the Brontë Parsonage Decorative Scheme', [Leaflet] (2013)
- , 'A Tour of the Parsonage', [Leaflet] (2014)
- , 'Brontë Parsonage Museum', [Leaflet] (n.d.)
- , 'Brontë Society Annual General Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 21 (1996), 382-394
- , ed., *Brontëan Abstracts*, Cornelia Parker, (Haworth: Brontë Society, 2006)
- , 'Capturing the Brontës By Charlotte Cory', [Leaflet] (2013)
- , 'First Annual Meeting of the Brontë Society', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 1 (1895), 5-8
- , 'From a Museum Into a Home', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 13 (1959), 339-341
- , 'Heritage and Conservation Policy', (2014)
- , 'History', (2010) <http://www.Brontë.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=22&Itemid=45> [accessed 8 July 2014]
- , 'Museum Attendances: Some Comparisons', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 11 (1950), 336
- , 'Notes From Our Public Visioning Meeting With Haworth', <<http://www.bronte.org.uk/bronte-society/notes-public-visioning-meeting>> [accessed 20 January 2015]
- , 'Pylons on the Moors', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1966), 41-42
- , 'To be Forever Known: Catherine Bertola', [Leaflet] (2011)
- , ed., *Ways to the Stone House: Simon Warner*, (Haworth: The Brontë Society,

- 2012)
- Brontë, Charlotte, *Jane Eyre* 9th edn (London: Penguin Books, 2008)
- Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights* rev. edn (London: Penguin Classics, 2008)
- Glen, Heather, ed., *Charlotte Brontë: Tales of Angria*, (London: Penguin, 2006)
- Brown, Glen R., 'Intervention, Interaction and the Will to Preserve', (2012) <<http://www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com/essays/alun-graves-gb>> [accessed 28 March 2013]
- Bryant, Julius and Hetty Behrens, 'The DEMHIST Categorisation Project for Historic House Museums: Progress Report', *International Committee for Historic House Museums*, (2007), <http://demhist.icom.museum/shop/data/container/AASLH_Kykuit_Findings.pdf> [accessed 18 June 2012]
- Buren, Daniel, 'Function of the Museum', in *Institutional Critique: An Anthology of Artists Writings*, ed. by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2009) pp.102-106
- Bury, Laurent, 'Creative (Mis)reading: Paula Rego's Jane Eyre', *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal*, 7 (2009), [accessed 18 March 2013]
- Butler, Christopher, *Pleasure and the Arts: Enjoying Literature, Painting and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Calle, Sophie, *Appointment* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005)
- Cameron, Catherine M. and John B. Gatewood, 'Excursions Into the Un-Remembered Past: What People Want From Visits to Historical Sites', *Public Historian*, 22 (2000), 107-127
- Carman, John and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, 'Heritage Studies: An Outline', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.11-28
- Carman, John and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen, eds., *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009)
- Carr, David, 'A Museum is an Open Work', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 7 (2001), 173-183
- Carson, Tania, 'Cultural Ambiguity in an Urban Development Master Plan: Deception or Miscalculation?', in *Interventions*, ed. by Malcolm Miles and Tim Hall (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2005)
- Cass, Nick, 'Claire Robins, Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions, Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013', *Museum and Society*, 12 (2014), 116-131
- Cass, Nick, ed., *Wildness Between Lines*, (Leeds: Leeds College of Art, 2012)
- Cass, Nick and Elizabeth Stainforth, 'Re-Visioning the Brontës: An Introduction', *Brontë Studies*, 39 (2014), 3-5
- Catania, Saviour, 'Landscape Living: Yoshida's Arashi-Ga-oka and the Frost/fire Heart of Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights', *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 247-254
- 'Ceramics in the Expanded Field', <<http://www.ceramics-in-the-expanded-field.com>> [accessed 20 December 2013]
- Charity Commission, '529952 the Brontë Society: Charity Overview', (2015) <<http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/>>

- CharityWithPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=529952&SubsidiaryNumber=0> [accessed 14 January 2015]
- Charmaz, Kathy, *Constructing Grounded Theory* 2nd edn (London: Sage, 2014)
- Chesney, Rebecca, 'The Brontë Weather Project 2011-2012', *Brontë Studies*, 39 (2014), 14-31
- Chilvers, Ian and John Graves-Smith, 'Contemporary Art', (2009) </ /www.oxfordreference.com /10.1093/acref/9780199239665.001.0001/acref-9780199239665-e-581> [accessed 15 June 2015]
- Clifford, James, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997)
- Cobbing, William, *The Gradiva Project* (London: Camden Arts Centre, 2008)
- Cole, Ina, 'Suspending Frictions: A Conversation With Cornelia Parker', *Sculpture Magazine*, (June 2009),
- Coles, Alex, 'An Ethnographer in the Field: James Clifford Interview', in *Site Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. by Alex Coles (London: Black Dog, 2000) pp.52-71
- Collins, Robert, ed., *The Hand of the Arch-Sinner: Two Angrian Chronicles of Branwell Brontë*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)
- Commissions East, 'Contemporary Art in Historic Places: Discussion Summary', (2005) <<http://www.commissionseast.org.uk/html/casestudies/comtemporaryartinhistoricplaces/contemporaryartdiscussion.htm>> [accessed 7 December 2013]
- Conrad, Peter, 'Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights: Do We Need New Film Versions?', *The Observer*, 21 August 2011
- Cooper, Joel, *Cognitive Dissonance: Fifty Years of a Classic Theory* (London: Sage, 2007)
- Copeland, Tim, 'Constructing Pasts: Interpreting the Historic Environment', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.83-95
- Corrin, Lisa, 'Mining the Museum: An Installation Confronting History', in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. by Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2004)
- Cory, Charlotte, *Charlotte Cory: Capturing the Brontës* (London: Colville, 2013)
- Crane, Susan A., 'Memory, Distortion and History in the Museum', *History and Theory*, 36 (1997), 44-63
- Crawford, Donald W., 'Kant', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.55-69
- Crew, Spencer R. and James E. Sims, 'Locating Authenticity: Fragments of a Dialogue', in *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. by Ivan Karp and Steven Lavine (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991) pp.159-175
- Crimp, Douglas, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993)
- Crouch, David, 'The Perpetual Performance and Emergence of Heritage', in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.57-71

- Crouch, David and Luke Desforges, 'The Sensuous in the Tourist Encounter: Introduction, the Power of the Body in Tourist Studies', *Tourist Studies*, 3 (2003), 5-22
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly and Rick E. Robinson, *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter* (Los Angeles: Getty Education Institute for the Arts, 1990)
- Culture 24, 'Museummaker Commissions Major East Midlands Artworks', (2006) <<http://www.culture24.org.uk/art/craft/art35908>> [accessed 16 June 2014]
- Curtis, Penelope, ed., *Private View: Contemporary Art in the Bowes Museum*, (Leeds: Henry Moore Institute, 1996)
- Davidson, Christina, 'Transcription: Imperatives for Qualitative Research', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8 (2009), 1-52
- De Bolla, Peter, *Art Matters* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001)
- de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London: University of California Press, 1984)
- Deeth, Jane, 'Engaging Strangeness in the Art Museum: An Audience Development Strategy', *Museum and Society*, 10 (2012), <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumstudies/documents/volumes/albano.pdf>> [accessed 10 April 2012]
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport, *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* (London: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2000)
- Desai, Dipti, 'The Ethnographic Move in Contemporary Art: What Does it Mean for Art Education', *Studies in Art Education*, 43 (2002), 307-323
- Dewey, John, *Art as Experience* (London: Penguin Books, 2005)
- Dezeuze, Anna and others, 'Mark Dion in Conversation With Anna Dezeuze, Julia Kelly and David Lomas', 4, (2006) <<http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/papersofsurrealism/journal4/index.htm>> [accessed 12 January 2015]
- Dickie, George, 'Evaluating Art', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 25 (1985), 3-16
- Dinsdale, Ann, *At Home With the Brontës* (Stroud: Amberley, 2013)
- , *The Brontës at Haworth* (London: Francis Lincoln, 2006)
- Dinsdale, Ann and Kathryn White, *Brontë Parsonage Museum* (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1998)
- , *The Brontë Parsonage Museum* (London: Scala Arts & Heritage, 2013)
- Douglas, Anne and Chris Fremantle, 'Leading Though Practice: Framing the Discussion', *an magazine*, (2007), <<http://www.a-n.co.uk/publications/shortcut/article/346273>> [accessed 31 October 2014]
- Dowson, Emily Sarah, 'A Visit to Haworth in 1866', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1968), 255-257
- Duncan, Carol, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995)
- Endt, Marion, 'Beyond Institutional Critique: Mark Dion's Surrealist Wunderkammer at the Manchester Museum', *Museum and Society*, 5 (2007), <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumstudies/>

- documents/volumes/endt.pdf> [accessed 19 September 2015]
- English Heritage, 'The National Heritage List for England', (2013) <<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/mapsearch.aspx>> [accessed 7 July 2015]
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, 'Annual Report and Accounts 2006', <<http://esmefairbairn.org.uk/who-we-are/governance/annual-reports/>> [accessed 31 March 2015]
- , 'Applying to the Main Fund: Guidance Notes', <<http://www.esmefairbairn.org.uk/funding/main-fund.html>> [accessed 31 March 2015]
- Evans, Matthew T., 'The Sacred: Differentiating, Clarifying and Extending Concepts', *Review of Religious Research*, 45 (2003), 32-47
- Fairclough, Graham, 'New Heritage: An Introductory Essay - People, Landscape and Change', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) pp.297-312
- Falk, John and Lynn Dierking, *Learning From Museums: Visitor Experiences and the Making of Meaning* (Plymouth: Altamira press, 2000)
- Festinger, Leon, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957)
- Filipucci, Paola, 'Heritage and Methodology: A View From Social Anthropology', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.319-325
- Fisher, Elizabeth and Rebecca Fortnum, eds., *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*, (London: Black Dog, 2013)
- Flint, Kate, 'Women Writers, Women's Issues', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.170-191
- Flood, Alison, 'Bonnie Greer Resigns From Floundering Brontë Society After Months of Infighting', *Guardian*, 'Books', 9 June 2015, <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/jun/09/bonnie-greer-resigns-bronte-society-yorkshire>> [accessed 14 July 2015]
- Foster, Hal, *The Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996)
- Foucault, Michel, 'Of Other Spaces', in *Grasping the World, the Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) pp.22-35
- , *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970)
- Freud Museum, 'Exhibition Archive', <<http://freud.org.uk/exhibitions/archive/>> [accessed 15 September 2015]
- Gadamer, Hans George, *Truth and Method*, trans. by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, revised 2nd edn (London: Bloomsbury, 2004)
- Garden, Mary-Catherine E., 'The Heritagescape: Looking at Heritage Sites', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.270-291
- Gaskell, Elizabeth, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Penguin Books, 1997)
- , *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1857)
- Gatewood, John B. and Catherine M. Cameron, 'Battlefield Pilgrims at

- Gettysburg National Military Park', *Ethnology*, 43 (2004), 193-216
- Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973)
- Gell, Alfred, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998)
- Gielen, Pascal, 'Museumchronotopics: On the Representation of the Past in Museums', *Museum and Society*, 2 (2004), <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumssociety/documents/volumes/gielen.pdf>> [accessed 23 April 2012]
- Gillespie, Marie, ed., *Media Audiences*, (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2005)
- Golańska, Dorota, 'Affective Spaces, Sensuous Engagements: In Quest of a Synaesthetic Approach to 'Dark Memorials'', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, (2015), 1-18
- Greenblatt, Stephen, 'Resonance and Wonder', *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 43 (1990), 11-34
- Gregory, Kate and Andrea Witcomb, 'Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Heritage Sites', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.263-275
- Groves, Nancy, 'Arts Head: Tom Freshwater, National Trust Contemporary Art Programme', <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/mar/20/interview-tom-freshwater-national-trust>> [accessed 17 March 2013]
- Gunther, Charles F., 'Museumgoers: Lifestyles and Learning Characteristics', in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1994) pp.286-297
- Gurian, Elaine Heumann, 'What is the Object of This Exercise: A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums', in *Reinventing the Museum: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on the Paradigm Shift*, ed. by Gail Anderson (Lanham, MD: Altamira, 2004) pp.269-283
- Hale, Charles, 'An American Visitor at Haworth, 1861', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 15 (1967), 126-138
- Hall, Stuart, 'Whose Heritage: Un-Setting 'the Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008) pp.219-228
- Hammersley, Martyn and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* (London: Routledge, 2007)
- Hampton, Michael, 'Human Nature', *Art Monthly*, December 2012
- Hanquinet, L., H. Roose and M. Savage, 'The Eyes of the Beholder: Aesthetic Preferences and the Remaking of Cultural Capital', *Sociology*, (2013), 1-22
- Harrison, Rodney, 'Forgetting to Remember, Remembering to Forget: Late Modern Heritage Practices, Sustainability and the 'Crisis' of Accumulation of the Past', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 19 (2013), 579-595
- , *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (London: Routledge, 2012)
- Heal, Sharon, 'The End of an Era: What Have Tony Blair and New Labour Done for Museums?', *Museums Journal*, 107 (2013), 13

- Heffernen, Caitlin, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett, eds., *Unravelling the Manor House*, (Hove: Unravelled, 2010)
- Heffernen, Caitlin, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett, eds., *Unravelling Uppark*, (Hove: Unravelled, 2014)
- Hems, Alison, 'Thinking About Interpretation: Changing Perspectives at English Heritage', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockey (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.189-199
- Hendrix, Harald, 'Writers' Houses as Media of Expression and Remembrance: From Self-Fashioning to Cultural Memory', in *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, ed. by Harald Hendrix (London: Routledge, 2012) pp.1-11
- Henning, Michelle, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006)
- Herbert, David T., 'Heritage as a Literary Place', in *Heritage, Tourism and Society*, ed. by David T Herbert (London: Mansell, 1995) pp.32-48
- Hewison, Robert, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen Publishing Ltd., 1987)
- Holgate, Ivy, 'A Pilgrim at Haworth 1879', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1961), 29-37
- Holmes, Jenna, 'Contemporary Arts', (2013) <http://www.Bronte.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=154&Itemid=206> [accessed 5 July 2015]
- , 'The Land of Far Beyond: Su Blackwell Evaluation Report', (2011)
- Holquist, Michael, *Dialogism: Bakhtin and His World* (London: Routledge, 1990)
- Honderich, Ted, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Philosophy*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean, 'A New Communication Model for Museums', in *Museum Languages, Objects and Texts*, ed. by Gaynor Kavanagh (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991) pp.49-61
- , *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean and Theano Moussouri, *Making Meaning in Art Museums 1: Visitors' Interpretive Strategies at Wolverhampton Art Gallery*, (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2001)
- Hope, C. A. and M. S. Klemm, 'Tourism in Difficult Areas Revisited: The Case of Bradford', *Tourism Management*, 22 (2001), 629-635
- 'How Should Heritage Decisions be Made: Increasing Participation From Where You Are', (2015) <<http://heritagedecisions.leeds.ac.uk/publications/>> [accessed 17 September 2015]
- Howard, Peter, *Heritage: Management, Interpretation, Identity* (London: Continuum Books, 2003)
- Howarth, Brigid and Susie O'Reilly, 'Sharing the Impact of Museummaker', (2011) <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/AJA_museummaker_SummaryDocument_web.pdf> [accessed 15 June 2015]
- Hutton, Joanna, 'Curator's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1964), 64-65
- ICOMOS, 'Charter for the Interpretation and Presentation of Cultural Heritage Sites', <<http://www.international.icomos.org/charters/>>

- interpretation_e.pdf> [accessed 10 June 2013]
- , 'The Nara Document on Authenticity', (1994) <<http://www.icomos.org/en/179-articles-en-francais/ressources/charters-and-standards/386-the-nara-document-on-authenticity-1994>> [accessed 3 September 2015]
- 'In Haworth a Century Ago', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 16 (1973), 219-221
- Inch, Charlotte, 'Contemporary Art in English Country Houses: An Exploration of Current Practice' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Leicester, 2010)
- Ingold, Tim, 'Anthropology is Not Ethnography', in *Proceedings of the British Academy: Volume 154, 2007 Lectures*, ed. by Ron Johnston (London: British Academy, 2008)
- Innovate Heritage, 'Innovate Heritage Conference 2014: Artists and Speakers', (2014) <<http://innovateheritage.com/conference-2014/artists-and-speakers>> [accessed 8 September 2015]
- Jandhtml, 'Well Presented and Informative', (2013) <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g186409-d211789-r175895980-Bronte_Parsonage_Museum-Haworth_Keighley_West_Yorkshire_England.html> [accessed 5 June 2015]
- Johnson, Edward Hotspur, 'Wuthering Heights: Bombay Style', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1989), 325-327
- Jorgensen, D. L., *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies* (London: Sage publications, 1989)
- Kalay, Yehuda, Thomas Kvan and Janice Affleck, *New Heritage: New Media and Cultural Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2008)
- Kaplan, Janet and others, 'Give and Take Conversations', *Art Journal*, 61 (2002), 68-91
- Kellett, Jocelyn, 'The Brontë Portrait Exhibition', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 18 (1985), 408-410
- Kendall, Geraldine, 'Brontë Society Egm Fails to Resolve Dispute With Members', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/07112014-Brontë-society-egm-fails-to-resolve-dispute>> [accessed 10 November 2014]
- , 'Brontë Society in Turmoil as Members Call for Egm', (2014) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/27082014-Brontë-society-in-turmoil>> [accessed 10 November 2014]
- Kester, Grant, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004)
- , 'Dialogical Aesthetics: A Critical Framework for Littoral Art', *Variant*, 9 (1999), 1-8
- , *The One and the Many: Contemporary Collaborative Art in a Global Context* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011)
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998)
- Knight, Charmian and Patsy Stoneman, eds., *The Brontë Influence*, (Haworth: The Brontë Society, 2004)
- Kromm, Jane, 'Visual Culture and Scopic Custom in 'Jane Eyre' and 'Villette'',

- Victorian Literature and Culture*, 26 (1998), 369-394
- Kwon, Miwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004)
- Langland, Elizabeth, 'Careers for Middle-Class Women', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.303-310
- Langlois, Emile, '100 Years Ago: A Frenchman's Visit to Haworth', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 16 (1973), 222-223
- Lankford, Louis E., 'Aesthetic Experience in Constructivist Museums', *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 36 (2002), 140-153
- Latham, Kiersten F., 'The Poetry of the Museum: A Holistic Model of Numinous Museum Experiences', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 22 (2007), 247-263
- Law, John and Annemarie Mol, eds., *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*, (London: Duke University Press, 2002)
- Leary, Thomas E. and Elizabeth C. Sholes, 'Authenticity of Place and Voice: Examples of Industrial Heritage Preservation and Interpretation in the U.S. And Europe', *Public Historian*, 22 (2000), 49-66
- Lemon, Charles, *A Centenary History of the Brontë Society, 1893-1993* (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1993)
- Lemon, Charles, ed., *Early Visitors to Haworth: From Ellen Nussey to Virginia Woolf*, (Haworth: Brontë Society, 1996)
- Levinson, Jerrold, *Contemplating Art: Essays in Aesthetics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006)
- Levy, Deborah, 'Slip of the Pen', in *Brontëan Abstracts, Cornelia Parker*, ed. by Brontë Society (Haworth: Brontë Society, 2006) pp.5-10
- Light, Duncan, 'Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, (2014), 1-3
- Linton Andrews, W., 'The Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 14 (1963), 37-38
- Lloyd Evans, Barbara and Gareth Lloyd Evans, *Everyman's Companion to the Brontës* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1985)
- Loeseke, Annette, 'Co-Presenting Past and Present: Visitor Studies on the Reception Process', *engage: the international journal of visual art and education*, 31 (2012), 51-58
- Lord, Beth, 'From the Document to the Monument: Museums and the Philosophy of History', in *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) pp.355-366
- Lowenthal, David, 'History as Heritage: The Past Made Present', (2012) <<http://criticalheritagestudies.org/content/publications/history-heritage-past-made-present>> [accessed 4 May 2015]
- , *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (London: Viking, 1996)
- Lumley, Robert, 'The Debate on Heritage Reviewed', in *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, ed. by Gerard Corsane (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) pp.15-27

- Lyon, Mary, ed., *Books and Portraits*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1978)
- Holquist, Michael, ed., *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays By M. M. Bakhtin*, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas, 1981)
- MacCannell, Dean, *The Ethics of Sightseeing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011)
- , *The Tourist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989)
- Macdonald, Sharon, 'Accessing Audiences: Visiting Visitor Books', *Museum and Society*, 3 (2005), <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumstudies/documents/volumes/macdonald.pdf>> [accessed 21 April 2012]
- Maines, Rachel P. and James J. Glynn, 'Numinous Objects', *Public Historian*, 1 (1993),
- Maleuvre, Didier, *Museum Memories, History, Technology, Art* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- Mann, Paisley, 'The Madwoman in Contemporary Adaptations: Depictions of Rochester and Bertha in Recent Jane Eyre Film and Television Adaptations', *Brontë Studies*, 36 (2011), 152-162
- Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* 2nd edn (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1974)
- McCarthy, Andrew, 'Brontës Inspire Education at Haworth Parsonage', *Brontë Studies*, 29 (2004), 266-267
- McDermott, Allyson and Crick Smith, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum Haworth: An Analysis of Decorative Finishes With Focus on the Brontë Period of Occupation*, (Lincoln: University of Lincoln, 2011)
- McDougall, Ashleigh, 'Place and Collaboration: Contemporary Art Curation Within Historic Sites', (2013) <<http://desearch.co.uk/home/category-2013/20-place-and-collaboration-contemporary-art-curation-within-historic-sites-by-ashleigh-mcdougall>> [accessed 23 February 2015]
- McFarland, 'Retrace Your Steps: Remember Tomorrow', (2000) <<http://www.frieze.com/article/retrace-your-steps-remember-tomorrow>> [accessed 4 March 2014]
- McHugh, Siobhán, 'The Affective Power of Sound: Oral History on Radio', *Oral History Review*, 39 (2012), 187-206
- McIntosh, Alison J. and Richard Prentice, 'Affirming Authenticity', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 26 (1999), 589-612
- McLean, Fiona, 'Museums and the Construction of National Identity: A Review', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 3 (1998), 244-252
- Mcmanus, Paulette, 'Making Sense of Exhibits', in *Museum Languages, Objects and Texts*, ed. by Gaynor Kavanagh (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991) pp.49-61
- McShine, Kynaston, *The Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1999)
- Merriman, Nick, *Beyond the Glass Case: The Past, the Heritage and the Public in Britain* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991)
- Message, Kylie, *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006)

- Milano, Ronit, '(Re)staging Art History: Jeff Koons in Versailles', *Museum and Curatorial Studies Review*, 2 (2014), <http://www.macs-review.com/MACSR_Vol2_No1/03--Milano_MACSR--2.1.pdf> [accessed 25 January 2015]
- Miller, Chris and Phil Lord, 'Brontë Sisters Power Dolls', <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-NKXNThJ610>> [accessed 28 October 2014]
- Miller, Lucasta, *The Brontë Myth* (London: Vintage, 2002)
- Minnesota Historical Society, *Transcribing, Editing and Processing Guidelines* (Saint Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2001)
- Mitchell, W. R., *Hotfoot to Haworth: Pilgrims to the Brontë Shrine* (Giggleswick: Castleberg, 1992)
- Mitchells, K., 'The Work of Art in Its Social Setting and in Its Aesthetic Isolation', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 25 (1967), 369-374
- Morra, Joanne, *Art, Curating and Site Responsibility* (London: I B Taurus, forthcoming)
- 'Patti Smith Makes Literary Pilgrimage to Play Benefit Gig for Brontë Parsonage Museum', (2013) <<http://www.culture24.org.uk/history-and-heritage/literature-and-music/art417732>> [accessed 29 December 2013]
- Mulhearn, Deborah, 'Inspired Choices', *Museums Journal*, 106 (2006), 30-33
- Museums Association, *Code of Ethics for Museums*, (London: Museums Association, 2008)
- New Expressions, *Sharing the Impact of New Expressions 3: Unlocking the Creative Potential Collections and Spaces in South West England*, (Plymouth: New Expressions, 2012)
- Newhouse, Victoria, *Art and the Power of Placement* (New York: Monacelli Press, 2005)
- Newman, G. E. and Paul Bloom, 'Art and Authenticity: The Importance of Originals in Judgments of Value', *Journal of Experimental Psychology General*, 141 (2012), 558-569
- Noy, Chaim, 'Writing in Museums: Toward a Rhetoric of Participation', *Written Communication*, March (2015), 1-25
- O'Doherty, Brian, *Inside the White Cube* expanded edn (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999)
- Odyse-Barot, Francois, *Histoire De La Literature Contemporaine En Angleterre, 1830-1874* (Paris: Charpentier et Cie, 1874)
- Office for National Statistics, 'Census 2001 Key Statistics: Urban Areas in England and Wales Ks01 Usual Resident Population', <<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/datasets-and-tables/index.html>> [accessed 10 September 2013]
- Okumura, Maki, 'Intrusion of the Stranger: Yoshishige Yoshida's Version of Wuthering Heights', *Brontë Studies*, 29 (2004), 125-134
- Oliver, Daniel G., Julianne M. Serovich and Tina L. Mason, 'Constraints and Opportunities With Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research', *Social Forces*, 84 (2005), 1273-1289
- Otero-Pailos, Jorge, Jason Gaiger and Susie West, 'Heritage Values', in *A History of Heritage*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.47-87

- Ousby, Ian, *The Englishman's England: Taste, Travel and the Rise of Tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990)
- Palmer, Catherine, 'Reflections on the Practice of Ethnography Within Heritage Tourism', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.123-139
- Papastergiadis, Nikos, *Spatial Aesthetics* (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2006)
- Parr, Carol, 'Public Art: Its Role as a Medium for Interpretation', in *Heritage Interpretation*, ed. by Alison Hems and Marion Blockley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006) pp.123-140
- Parsons, Michael J., *How We Understand Art: A Cognitive Developmental Account of Aesthetic Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987)
- Pearce, Susan, ed., *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994)
- , 'Museums of Anthropology or Museums as Anthropology?', *Anthropologica*, 41 (1999), 25-33
- , *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University, 1992)
- , 'Objects as Meaning: Or Narrating the Past', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) pp.19-29
- Perry, Grayson, *The Tomb of the Unknown Craftsman* (London: British Museum Press, 2011)
- Philips, Deborah, 'Mapping Literary Britain: Tourist Guides to Literary Landscapes 1951-2007', *Tourist Studies*, 11 (2011), 21-35
- Pillow, Kirk, 'Beauty: Subjective Purposiveness', in *Immanuel Kant: Key Concepts*, ed. by Will Dudley and Kristina Engelhard (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014) pp.155-169
- Pocock, D. C. D., 'Haworth: The Experience of a Literary Place', in *Geography and Literature*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1987) pp.135-142
- Pollock, Griselda, *Art in the Time-Space of Memory and Migration: Sigmund Freud, Anna Freud, and Bracha L. Ettinger in the Freud Museum* (Leeds: Wild Pansy Press, 2013)
- Poria, Yaniv, Avital Biran and Arie Reichel, 'Visitors' Preferences for Interpretation at Heritage Sites', *Journal of Travel Research*, 48 (2009), 92-105
- Poster, Mark, ed., *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988)
- Prentice, Richard, 'Perceptual Deterrents to Visiting Museums and Other Heritage Attractions', *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 13 (1994), 264-279
- Prickett, Stephen, 'The Philosophical-Intellectual Context', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp.224-231
- Putnam, James, *Art and Artifact: The Museum as Medium* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001)
- Rachleff, Melissa, 'Peering Behind the Curtain: Artists and Questioning Historical Authority', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia:

- The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321
- Raistrick, Marjery, 'Custodian's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 19 (1989), 382-383
- , 'Custodian's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 18 (1983), 251-252
- Read, Wendy, 'What's the Story: Contemporary Art at Historic Houses and the Trust New Art Programme' (unpublished MA dissertation, Bournemouth University, 2011)
- Relph, Edward, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976)
- Rendell, Jane, *Art and Architecture: A Place Between* (London: I B Taurus, 2006)
- Renfrew, Colin, *Figuring it Out: The Parallel Visions of Artists and Archaeologists* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003)
- Rice, Danielle, 'Museums: Theory, Practice, and Illusion', in *Art and Its Publics: Museum Studies at the Millennium*, ed. by Andrew McClellan (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003) pp.77-94
- Risnicoff de Gorgas, Mónica, 'Reality as Illusion, the Historic Houses That Become Museums', *Museum International*, 53 (2001), 10-15
- Roberts, Sarah, 'Accreted Histories', in *Unravelling Uppark*, ed. by Caitlin Heffernan, Matt Smith and Polly Harknett (Hove: Unravelled, 2014) pp.12-20
- Robins, Claire, *Curious Lessons in the Museum: The Pedagogic Potential of Artists' Interventions* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)
- Robins, Claire and Miranda Baxter, 'Meaningful Encounters With Disrupted Narratives: Artists' Interventions as Interpretive Strategies', in *Museum Making: Narratives, Architectures, Exhibitions*, ed. by Suzanne Macleod, Laura Hourston Hanks and Jonathan Hale (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.247-256
- Rojek, Chris, 'Indexing, Dragging and the Social Construction of Tourist Sights', in *Touring Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, ed. by Chris Rojek and John Urry (London: Routledge, 1997) pp.52-74
- Saeko, Yoshikawa, *William Wordsworth and the Invention of Tourism* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)
- Saumarez Smith, Charles, 'Museums, Artefacts, and Meanings', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989) pp.7-21
- Schorch, Philipp, 'Cultural Feelings and the Making of Meaning', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 20 (2014), 22-35
- Schwandt, Thomas A., 'Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000) pp.189-213
- Scott-Kilvert, Ian and Jay Parini, eds., *British Writers*, (New York: Scribners, 1979)
- Sellars, Jane, 'Director's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 20 (1990), 105-106
- , 'Director's Report', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 20 (1991), 234-237
- , 'Director's Report to the 1993 Brontë Society Annual General Meeting', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 21 (1993), 44-47
- , 'Paula Rego's Jane Eyre Prints: Exhibition at the Brontë Parsonage

- Museum 7 August –19 September 2004', *Brontë Studies*, 30 (2005), 83-86
- Selwood, Sarah, *Making a Difference: The Cultural Impact of Museums*, (London: National Museums Directors Council, 2010)
- Serota, Nicholas, *Experience or Interpretation* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000)
- Severs, Denis, *18 Folgate Street: The Tale of a House in Spitalfields* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2001)
- Shackley, Myra, 'Service Delivery at Sacred Sites: Potential Contribution of Management Science', *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 1 (2005), 33-40
- Shaw, Christopher and Malcolm Chase, 'The Dimensions of Nostalgia', in *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*, ed. by Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989) pp.1-17
- Shotter, John, 'Real Presences: The Creative Power of Dialogically Structured, Living Expression', (2002) <<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~jds/KCCOutline.htm>> [accessed 27 February 2015]
- Shusterman, Richard, 'Pragmatism: Dewey', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002) pp.121-131
- Shwarzer, Marjorie, Paula Marincola and Benjamin Filene, 'Mining the Museum Revisited: A Conversation With Fred Wilson, Paula Marincola, and Marjorie Schwarzer', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321
- Silverman, David, 'Analyzing Talk and Text', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. by Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (London: Sage, 2000) pp.821-834
- Silverman, Lois H., 'Visitor Meaning-Making in Museums for a New Age', *Curator*, 38 (1995), 161-170
- Simpson, John and Edmund Weiner, eds., *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)
- Smith, Laurajane, *Uses of Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006)
- Smith, Matthew, 'The Art of Unravelling the Past', *engage: the international journal of visual art and education*, 31 (2012), 72-78
- Sorensen, Marie Louise Stig, 'Between the Lines and in the Margins: Interviewing People About Attitudes to Heritage and Identity', in *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches*, ed. by John Carman and Marie Louise Stig Sorensen (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009) pp.164-176
- Staiff, Russell, *Re-Imagining Heritage Interpretation: Enchanting the Past-Future* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)
- Stecker, Robert, 'Interpretation', in *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*, ed. by Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005) pp.321-334
- Steel, Patrick, 'DCMS Funding to Sponsored Bodies and Renaissance Cut By 15%', (2010) <<http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/20102010-comprehensive-spending-review-museums>> [accessed 15 September 2015]
- Stoneman, Patsy, 'Adaptations, Prequels, Sequels, Translations', in *The Brontës in*

- Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- , *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* (London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996)
- , 'The Brontë Myth', in *Cambridge Companion to the Brontës*, ed. by Heather Glen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.214-241
- Teeling, Mary, 'A London Travelogue: Visiting Dennis Severs' House', in *Letting Go: Sharing Historical Authority in a User Generated World*, ed. by Bill Adair, Benjamin Filene and Laura Koloski (Philadelphia: The Pew Centre for Arts and Heritage, 2011) pp.304-321
- Sarah Tetley, 'Visitor Attitudes to Authenticity at a Literary Tourist Destination' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Sheffield Hallam University, 1998)
- 'The Museum Divide: Beyond Institutional Critique', (2014) <<http://thenaturalhistorymuseum.org/tv/the-museum-divide-beyond-institutional-critique/>> [accessed 4 May 2015]
- Thormählen, Marianne, 'Introduction', in *The Brontës in Context*, ed. by Marianne Thormählen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- Thrift, Nigel, *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008)
- Tilden, Freeman, *Interpreting Our Heritage* 4th edn (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007)
- Tilley, Christopher, 'Interpreting Material Culture', in *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, ed. by Susan Pearce (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994) pp.67-75
- Tripadvisor, 'About Us', (2013) <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/PressCenter-c6-About_Us.html> [accessed 5 May 2014]
- Tunbridge, J. E. and G. J. Ashworth, 'Dissonance and the Uses of Heritage', in *Cultural Heritage*, ed. by Laurajane Smith (London: Routledge, 1996) pp.206-248
- UNESCO, 'Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage', (1972) <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>> [accessed 30 June 2014]
- University of Leicester, 'How to Interview: Summaries and Transcriptions', <<http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/howtointerview/summaries.html>> [accessed 13 May 2014]
- Urry, John, 'How Societies Remember the Past', in *Theorising Museums*, ed. by Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996) pp.45-65
- Urry, John and Jonas Larson, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* 3rd edn (London: Sage Publications, 2011)
- Uzzell, David and Roy Ballantyne, 'Heritage That Hurts: Interpretation in a Postmodern World', in *The Heritage Reader*, ed. by Graham Fairclough and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008)
- Vergo, Peter, 'The Reticent Object', in *The New Museology*, ed. by Peter Vergo (London: Reaktion, 1989) pp.41-59
- Voase, Richard, 'Visiting a Cathedral: The Consumer Psychology of a Rich Experience', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 13 (2007), 41-55
- Vogel, Susan, 'Always True to the Object, in Our Fashion', in *Grasping the World:*

- The Idea of the Museum*, ed. by Donald Preziosi and Claire Farago (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004) pp.653-662
- , 'Miss: Exhibition Proposal', (2014)
- Wafer Hadley, *The Brontë Parsonage Museum: Visitor Survey Analysis and Recommendations*, (Leeds: Wafer Hadley, 2014)
- Walsh, Kevin, *The Representation of the Past: Museums and Heritage in the Post-Modern World* (London: Routledge, 1992)
- Warner, Marina, 'An Artist's Dream World', *Tate Arts and Culture*, 8 (2003), <<http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/an-artists-dream-world-paula-rego>> [accessed 29 July 2015]
- Waterton, Emma and Steve Watson, 'Introduction: A Visual Heritage', in *Culture, Heritage and Representation: Perspectives on Visuality and the Past*, ed. by Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010) pp.1-16
- Watson, Sheila, 'History Museums, Community Identities and a Sense of Place', in *Museum Revolutions*, ed. by Simon J. Knell, Suzanne Macleod and Sheila Watson Taylor & Francis, 2007) pp.160-172
- West, Susie and Jacqueline Ansell, 'A History of Heritage', in *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.7-46
- West, Susie and Elizabeth McKellar, 'Interpretation of Heritage', in *Understanding Heritage in Practice*, ed. by Susie West (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) pp.166-204
- White, Rebecca, 'Fresh Eyre? How Original is Sandy Welch's Televised Jane Eyre?', *Brontë Studies*, 33 (2008), 136-147
- Whitehead, Christopher, *Interpreting Art in Museums and Galleries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012)
- Whitehead, Stephen, 'The Haworth the Brontës Knew', *Brontë Studies*, 32 (2007), 181-192
- Wiggins, Colin, 'Trust New Art With the Arts Council Collection', ed. by National Trust (London: Arts Council, 2012)
- Wilson, Fred and Howard Halle, 'Mining the Museum', *Grand Street*, 44 (1993), 151-172
- Wilson, Fred and Ivan Karp, 'Constructing the Spectacle of Culture in Museums', in *Thinking About Exhibitions*, ed. by Reesa Greenberg, Bruce W. Ferguson and Sandy Nairne (Abingdon: Routledge, 1996) pp.251-267
- Wolff, Janet, *The Social Production of Art* 2nd edn (London: Macmillan, 1993)
- Wollen, Roger, *The Methodist Church Collection of Modern Christian Art: An Introduction* (Oxford: Trustees of the Methodist Church Collection, 2000)
- Woolf, Virginia, 'Haworth, November 1904', *Brontë Society Transactions*, 17 (1979), 272-275
- Wright, Patrick, *On Living in an Old Country* (London: Verso, 1985)
- Yaneva, Albena, 'When a Bus Met a Museum: Following Artists, Curators and Workers in Art Installation', *Museum and Society*, 1 (2003), <<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/museumstudies/museumsociety/documents/volumes/msyaneva.pdf>> [accessed 23 April 2012]
- Yellis, Ken, 'Fred Wilson, PTSD, and Me: Reflections on the History Wars',

Curator: The Museum Journal, 52 (2009), 333-348

Young, Linda, 'Magic Objects, Modern Objects: Heroes' House Museums', in *The Thing About Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation*, ed. by Sandra Dudley and others (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012) pp.143-158

Zuckert, Catherine H., 'Hermeneutics in Practice: Gadamer on Ancient Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, ed. by J. Robert Dostal (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002) pp.201-224

Appendices

Appendix 1 Chronological List of Interviews

Jenna Holmes. Arts Officer, Brontë Parsonage Museum. 5 November 2010,

Catherine Bertola, Artist. 9 August 2011.

Andrew McCarthy, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum. 6 July, 2012.

Rebecca Chesney, Artist. 22 August 2012.

Jenna Holmes. Arts Officer, Brontë Parsonage Museum. 29 April 2013.

Charlotte Cory, Artist. 5 July 2013.

Simon Warner, Artist. 4 October 2013.

Anne Dinsdale, Collections Manager, Brontë Parsonage Museum. 4 October 2013.

Jordan Blackman, Intern, Brontë Parsonage Museum. 22 November 2013.

Brass Art, Artist Collective. 4 December 2013.

Louisa Briggs, Arts Officer, (Maternity Cover), Brontë Parsonage Museum, 15
November 2013.

Jane Sellars, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum (1989 - 1997), 8 January 2014.

Visitor Interviews, 25 June 2014.

Virginia Rushton, Brontë Society Council Member, 16 July 2014.

Lynne Howell and KM, Visitor Assistants, Brontë Parsonage Museum, 19
December 2014.

Roy Voss, Artist. 26 March 2015.

Su Blackwell, Artist 21 April 2015.

Visitor Interviews, 10 & 13 July 2015.

Diane Howse, Artist, 29 July 2015.

Appendix 2

Interview Summaries and Transcripts

Jenna Holmes, Arts Officer, Brontë Parsonage Museum

Jenna Holmes was appointed as Arts Officer for the museum in 2006. Holmes is responsible for the selection of artists, the negotiation and development of each project, and guiding the installation within the museum. She was interviewed twice as part of the project, both times at the museum. We also had a significant, ongoing dialogue throughout the five years of the research project which included phone calls and meetings.

5 November 2010

The interview begins with a brief discussion of the research project as a whole and sites I had been considering as potential case studies. We discuss the programme of exhibitions at Belsay Hall; Holmes compares the logistical problems that the Parsonage has to Belsay. Holmes explains they have little data on visitors, particularly, whether people have come specifically to see the contemporary art, or just encounter it as an unexpected part of a visit they had planned anyway.

Holmes does think that there is evidence more people have visited during the exhibitions, and along with the very positive response there has been to the current Su Blackwell exhibition, there is enough evidence that it is worth keeping the programme going. The Brontë Society are supportive, and without the contemporary art 'it would feel really empty now if we didn't have it'.

Holmes describes the origin of the programme, and how this relates to broader events that the museum offers, target audiences and funding agendas. We discuss communication theory and the difficulties associated with historic recreations of the past, and the complexity of putting contemporary art

installations in such contexts.

Holmes then shares the material she has brought to the meeting which includes past brochures and Visitor Comment Books, drawing my attention to the way in which visitors engage with each other. We discuss the various exhibitions, and the forthcoming Catherine Bertola exhibition, and ways in which visitor expectation has an agency in defining what is possible to do within the house. This leads to a brief discussion of Pierre Bourdieu, and his research into ways in which people engage with museums.

29 April 2013.

Interview Questions

1. Can you reflect on the Rebecca Chesney exhibition; what were its strengths?
2. Weaknesses?
3. Any unexpected outcomes?
4. Charlotte Cory project: Can you describe the process which led to Charlotte's selection?
5. What is it about her work that you think makes her appropriate for the Parsonage?
6. What is it that you expect she can add to the visitor experience?
7. Are there any kinds of limits to what Charlotte could propose?

Interview Summary

This interview begins with a discussion of Rebecca Chesney's exhibition, and what this 'added' to the visitor experience. Holmes describes that this kind of project was new and would feed in to more general interpretation at the museum. We discuss how this project, along with Cornelia Parker's exhibition, worked as a 'residency' and how this related to the kinds of outcomes each project generated.

Holmes then describes how the Simon Warner project came about, and that having a good budget for this project allowed them to use a range of technology in the house, but working with technology in the house is

difficult. Having asked about what themes emerged from the Visitor Comment Books, Holmes suggested few people had any issues with the presence of the 'discreet devices'. What was clear to Holmes, was the way in which he was able to interpret the broader connections between the landscape, and the legacy of the Brontës, and that part of this was the result of his connections to the locality as a resident of nearby Stanbury.

The interview then moves on to a discussion of Charlotte Cory's forthcoming exhibition. In particular, the hope that Cory's exhibition will add another layer of 'playful' interpretation. Holmes describes the need for balance between 'interpreting' the artworks, and allowing them to act in their own terms.

In describing briefly the process of 'inviting' artists she feels are 'appropriate', Holmes suggests this provides a kind of limiting factor, in that the artists are already likely to be a 'fit with the museum', but that the 'physical limits are the tricky parts'.

Catherine Bertola, Artist

Catherine Bertola is based in Gateshead. She has worked extensively with museum collections and heritage sites. Bertola agreed to respond to interview questions by email. The following questions and answers are as returned by her on 9 August 2011.

Transcript

NC: What I am interested in is the idea that the installation of 'contemporary' art in heritage spaces is a kind of interpretation for the public. In that it is used as a means to enhance their understanding of a particular site. I have this idea that this strategy creates a kind of 'hybrid' experience for the visitor, not 'heritage' and not 'art' in the way that we might describe them normally, but something which is more akin to a 'didactic' experience perhaps. This is what I am trying to get to the bottom of. I guess the questions I have in my head are:

NC: What do you feel you were adding to the visitor experience at the Parsonage? Were there any particular aims?

CB: I always want my work to exist quite subtly and discreetly within the spaces it is made for. I suppose I want my work to enhance people's experience of spaces, perhaps get them to look and consider the space in a different light, present a different perspective on the place. I am interested in the hidden and overlooked aspects of history, as an artist I am interested in drawing out the past to the surface, to perhaps challenge people's preconceptions of history and place. It's about providing a 'pause for thought', and encouraging people to look deeper.

NC: Do you feel that exhibiting in these kinds of 'heritage' spaces is different from showing work in a more traditional 'exhibition' context?

CB: It is different in so many ways, on a practical level it can be much more complicated to install work, particularly if you are working with listed properties or sites that are archaeologically sensitive. Conservation issues can have a huge impact on how work can be produced and installed. The audiences for heritage sites are often different from art galleries, and while I don't think work should in any way be watered down for different 'non art' audiences, I think it is something to be sensitive to, and to be aware of in relation to interpretation material.

When I am making work in response to a particular space, there is always a symbiotic relationship between the work and the place, often quite physically so the work and space co-exist in a way that is often difficult, impossible to recreate in a gallery setting. Although I do produce work that is not reliant on specific spaces and can hold it's own in traditional gallery / exhibition spaces.

NC: What is your feeling about the idea of site specificity and the work you created in response to the Parsonage; particularly as, I believe, it is being exhibited elsewhere?

CB: I think the photographic work *Residual Hauntings*, are easier to display in other contexts, and they are self-contained objects, they are there own little worlds and define there own space. The sound work, *To be forever known*, is also being shown in a 'gallery' show, at this point I have no idea of how it will work, until it's installed and the sound fills the air of the space. The idea of projecting Charlotte's thoughts, as written in her personal correspondence, back into the very space they were penned was integral in the original conception of

the work. The work was produced and relied on the unchanged acoustic resonances of the Parsonage, how the work will resonate in another space, both in terms of how it will sound and also how it will be understood is quite an interesting prospect.

I would say most 'site-specific' work I make does not transfer to other spaces, because of the intricate and intimate relationship between the work and the site. Perhaps with sound, it might be more adaptable, as the idea and experience is slightly more abstract, it's more of a visceral than visual or physical work.

NC: How might you respond to the idea that many visitors to the Parsonage, (and other heritage sites such as the National Trust) find contemporary art an intrusion to the site and shouldn't be there?

CB: I think it's important to present different perspectives and ways of looking at historic sites. We have so many preconceptions and notions about history, and how it is interpreted and understood, which is often from a wealthy male viewpoint. I think it's important that these notions and expectations are challenged, and that art can play a powerful role in doing that.

NC: There is a great deal of criticism of 'heritage' which highlights the fact that it can be seen as an indoctrinating ideological strategy. Museums are also criticised in this way; i.e. that they are reinforcing the social order of the dominant and subordinate classes. How does your work fit within this debate (if at all....)?

CB: I think heritage can often be about preserving a particular view of history. I often think they sometimes to trap and stop time too specifically, some

of the most interesting museums and places are those where the history is alive and multi dimensional, so it becomes a way of understanding the past different, challenging existing notions and ideas, as well as helping to consider the present time.

My interest in the forgotten and overlooked stories of the past, hopefully means that my work presents people with a different view of sites.

Andrew McCarthy, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum

Andrew McCarthy joined the museum as Education Officer in 1999, became Audience Development Manager in 2003 and Director in 2008; leaving the museum in 2012. This interview took place at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 6 July 2012.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the origin of the Contemporary Arts Programme?
2. Is the CAP influencing the way in which the house is interpreted more generally?
3. Can you describe the need to change the visitor experience?
4. What have been the challenges of the Programme?
5. Is there a strategy regarding the artists you select (e.g. big names, and more local artists)?
6. What are your thoughts about how 'complex' the experience of juxtaposition might be?
7. As I'm at the early stages of the research process, what questions might you want answering?
8. How important is gender within the programming?

Interview Summary

This interview broadly covers three main issues in relation to the CAP. First, the initial development of the programme. Secondly, the relationship between the exhibitions and the interiors and, lastly, the increasing acceptance of the programme.

McCarthy described his enthusiasm for developing arts activity as part of encouraging people to be creative, and that the origin of the programme came because a friend of his who ran a gallery in Hebden Bridge was exhibiting Paula Rego's Jane Eyre Prints and he had suggested it would make sense to show them at the Parsonage. It was a challenge because the house was not a gallery, so the aim was to 'juxtapose'. On reflection, there were problems with the exhibition,

but the comment books were important in revealing a 'dialogue or debate' between visitors.

When asked about how the CAP might be affecting interpretation in the house more generally, McCarthy thought the CAP has affected the way in which the house is interpreted, but the example he gave was limited to the fact that they now had a contemporary art collection. He added though, that the programme was now seen as 'a core function'. Further to a question about the 'need to change [...] the visitor experience' McCarthy answered that it was more important that those who did come to the museum were able to understand the broader influence of the Brontës, which was less visible in the museum. When visitors were 'resistant' to this form of interpretation, McCarthy described the need for visitors to understand the rationale of the programme, but that some mistakes have been made.

Rebecca Chesney, Artist

Rebecca Chesney is based in Preston, Lancashire. Her work deals with themes of landscape, the environment and the effects of human interaction with their surroundings. During her residency at the Parsonage in 2012, I met Rebecca Chesney on a number of occasions to discuss her work. On the 22nd August, rather than conduct a formal interview, Chesney and I undertook to walk to Top Withens, reputedly the farmhouse inspiration for *Wuthering Heights*. Recording our conversation under these conditions was not possible, so I made a brief set of notes afterwards which are summarised here.

During our walk, we discussed Chesney's project, 'Hope's Whisper', extensively. Chesney described her volunteers as the 'eyes and ears' of the project, given that she could not be on site as much as she would have liked. What interested her most though, was the humanness of the relationship to weather observations, rather than cold data. One issue I was most interested in was the way in which I felt some of her work might be obscure, or difficult for some visitors to the Parsonage to engage with. Chesney responded by arguing that her priority, and responsibility as an artist was to make good work, and that it was the staff of the Parsonage who had the responsibility of 'interpreting' her work for visitors if that was necessary. In order to make good art work, Chesney felt it was important not to 'second guess' the audience. This led to a discussion of a previous project by Chesney at Bolton Museum during which there had been particular interpretive problems caused by the requirements to be 'family friendly'. Chesney had felt under pressure to amend her use of Latin, as this had not been deemed 'accessible' language. In contrast, Chesney described that the Parsonage was a significantly different place to engage with, given that it was independent, as as

such felt that her work was able to retain more 'integrity' although the practical reality of the building would have an effect on 'authorship'.

Charlotte Cory, Artist

Charlotte Cory is an artist based in London. She is best known for her surreal, all encompassing alternative nineteenth-century universe. The interview took place in Haworth on 5 July 2013.

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little bit about your work generally. What is it that interests or motivates you as an artist?
2. What is your relationship to the Brontës?
3. And to the Parsonage itself?
4. How important are the novels to you? (in comparison, for example, to Brookland and Blackwell, who both say that the books have been important in their lives).
5. Can you describe to me the thinking which has taken place during these stages of developing the project?
6. What is it that you are trying to achieve with the project?
7. Putting work into the Parsonage, is an 'addition'. What do you think will happen to the carefully constructed 'heritage' space of the Parsonage when you add your work?
8. Do you feel that exhibiting in these kinds of 'heritage' spaces is different from showing work in a more traditional 'exhibition' context?
9. What happens when you show that work elsewhere?
10. How might you respond to the idea that many visitors to the Parsonage, (and other heritage sites such as the National Trust) find contemporary art an intrusion to the site and shouldn't be there?

Interview Summary

The interview ranged widely, and didn't follow the planned questions, as Cory's enthusiasm dominated the interview process. Cory described her background, education, and early relationship to the novels. Her reading the novels as a child had a significant impact, as did a visit to the Parsonage when she was eleven. Cory described her memories of visiting, and how these still inform her relationship to the Parsonage.

Cory brought a portfolio of work, and described the project, and many of the characters to be included, some of which were still in development. Here,

Cory talks about the importance of Carte de Visites, their history, and that it is the anonymity of these that she finds fascinating. Cory elaborates on two important aspects of her research for the exhibition. First, her research into the shipwreck and the loss of Maria Branwell's case, describing how she intends to 'return' this lost trunk to the parsonage. Secondly, Cory described her interest in the house that Arthur Bell Nicholls lived in when he returned to Ireland.

In discussing the expectation of visitors, Cory first hopes that she doesn't ruin the visit for anybody, but hopes people realise that the exhibition is really about them, in the sense that it focusses on the idea of visiting the Parsonage. Later however, Cory suggests she hopes that some visitors might be 'irritated' because the exhibition should 'provoke something'.

Of further interest to Cory, is the nature of authenticity and provenance of Brontë artefacts; the 'aura' of these coming from placing them in a museum case. More broadly, Cory questioned the accuracy of the relationship between the presentation of the Parsonage and the reality of the Brontës' lives.

Simon Warner, Artist

Simon Warner is an artist and photographer. He has lived near to Haworth since 1976. The interview took place at Simon's home, Whitestone Farm, on 4 October 2014.

Interview Questions

1. What is your relationship to the Brontës?
2. How important are the novels to you (in comparison, for example, to Brookland and Blackwell, who both say that the books have been important in their lives)?
3. Can you tell me about the process you went through when choosing where to locate your works in the BPM? (How important was the identity of each room?)
4. Putting work into the Parsonage, is an 'addition'. What do you feel you were adding to the visitor experience at the Parsonage. Were there any particular aims?
5. Do you feel that exhibiting in these kinds of 'heritage' spaces is different from showing work in a more traditional 'exhibition' context?
6. What is your feeling about the idea of site specificity and the work you created in response to the Parsonage. What happens when you show that work elsewhere?
7. How might you respond to the idea that many visitors to the Parsonage, (and other heritage sites such as the National Trust) find contemporary art an intrusion to the site and shouldn't be there?

Interview Summary

Simon described the origin of his interest in the Brontës stemmed from his work as a landscape photographer with a particular interest in the English landscape. Warner then describes his involvement with the Parsonage, from early projects with them in the 2000s, and then a one person exhibition in 2005 during which Warner projected onto the front of the Parsonage.

The novels have not been particularly important, but the poetry has been of more relevance; particularly the relationship between the poems and the 'moors being opened up to an infinity of space and experiences; I think that's the

thing that I've almost appreciated more'. Engaging with literature over the last fifteen years has allowed Warner to develop the intellectual content of his work, along with video as a significant part of his practice.

Warner described 'Collecting Place', a project with Andrew McCarthy in which he built a camera obscura and worked with partially sighted children and goes on to suggest that he's been able to use the 'museum as a test bed for all kinds of things', particularly because of living nearby. When asked what he was 'adding' to the Parsonage, Warner suggested his work has provided a strong link between the 'closed interior' of the museum and the 'wildness' of the natural world, but that 'adding' is particularly difficult because 'there is no room to put anything up'. Also, 'Ways to the Stonehouse' added a depth of understanding to the history of Top Withens, to which the exhibition catalogue was a permanent record of this history, and the relationship between a range of artists and the site.

For the siting of the works in 'Ways to the Stonehouse', Warner discussed the technical limitations of iPods and battery life, but also that the subtlety of their size was important, in that the moving images 'had something feminine about them' and that this was almost an 'invisible undercurrent within that very domestic interior' that you could actually miss quite easily because they were so small. Warner felt that working with collections is 'extremely fertile' and that 'it's enhancing the visitor experience by playing things off against each other'. According to Warner, his iPod films could not be shown anywhere else because they needed the 'context' of the museum.

Ann Dinsdale, Collections Manager

Ann Dinsdale is Collections Manager for the Parsonage, and author of a wide range of books about the Brontës, the Parsonage and Haworth. The interview took place at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 4 October 2013.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe the Parsonage. What sort of place is it?
2. What is your relationship to the novels (When did you first read them)?
3. From your experience, why do visitors come to the Parsonage?
4. What are your thoughts about the idea that it is a shrine to some people?
5. Can you describe your role as Collections Manager?
6. What is it you feel that artists bring to the Museum?
7. Can you speak about the development of the period interiors?
8. What is your perspective on the broader 'heritage landscape' that is Haworth?
9. What is the relationship between the local community and the Parsoange?
10. What is the relationship between the Brontë Society and the museum?
11. Is there a tension between the 'contemporary' art, and the 'period' museum?

Interview Summary

The interview begins with Ann describing how important the Parsonage is to her, and the relationship she has with it is one of both knowing and understanding, but also one of discovery of new things about the Brontës. Central to her, is a 'strong passion for the novels', which she first read as a child.

Visitors to the Parsonage, according to Dinsdale, come for a whole variety of reasons, but an ambition to visit having read the novels is a strong reason. She finds the idea of literary tourism interesting and suggests that visitors have a need to physically explore the landscape of Haworth - despite the fact that the Brontës actually travelled a lot and were influenced by much more than just Haworth.

Dinsdale describes her role as collections manager, and explains it was

Andrew McCarthy who was responsible for initiating the CAP and working with the Arts Officer is extremely important. The interview then moves on to cover various artists' work, including Charlotte Cory's and Rebecca Chesney's. A key aspect of the discussion here is the fact that according to Dinsdale, both Cory and Chesney were important in that they brought new perspectives and new knowledge of the Brontës as a result of their projects.

For Dinsdale, contemporary art and the Brontës are natural pairing, because of the broad connection the Brontës had to art, but she also recognises many visitors see 'these works as being some kind of obstruction'. Discussing the Cory exhibition, Dinsdale suggests there is a joint responsibility between the artist and the site to facilitate a productive visitor experience and part of that is getting staff who might not like the exhibition to be more open to it. She suggests the CAP has been influential in bringing a new audience to the museum and a key role for the CAP is for it to be a 'living thing that inspires people'.

Dinsdale then describes the origin of Brontë society with 'passionate individuals' but that now despite being a professional organisation the elected council are very similar to those first enthusiasts. For the society and museum, the development of the interior is really important and they don't pander to visitor expectation but draw accurately on evidence where it exists, even if this means changing things that some visitors might not immediately like.

Jordan Blackman, Intern.

Jordan Blackman was an intern working at the Brontë Parsonage Museum. As well as carrying out visitor surveys, Blackman was asked to be a 'live guide' in the museum for the duration of 'Capturing the Brontës' by Charlotte Cory. The interview took place at the museum on 22 November 2013.

Transcript Summary

Blackman describes her involvement with the installation of Charlotte Cory's exhibition 'Capturing the Brontës', and then goes on to describe the process of live-guiding. She describes how she adapted the process as she began to understand more about the ways visitors were reacting to Cory's exhibition.

After briefly describing the visitor survey she is carrying out and the dynamics of how family groups respond to the survey Blackman returns to the problems of live-guiding, and explains the ways in which discussing Cory's exhibition with visitors is difficult, particularly when some visitors don't want to engage with her. Blackman goes through common objections to Cory's work, and ways in which she has found to guide them to a deeper understanding of the connection between the exhibition and the history of the Brontës. Blackman describes her difficulty in having conversations with visitors who have complained, without being defensive. One common theme of visitor reaction is that the work simply should not be in the Parsonage, and that visitors are offended by the work.

Blackman describes what it is that visitors are offended by, which is largely the idea that the Brontës have been covered up by animal heads. Blackman then describes a typical conversation whereby she would move from general questions to more specific ones, and then explains what visitors have

liked about the exhibition. The fact that some visitors commented on the Maria Branwell's sea chest which Cory had re-imagined, leads to a discussion of authenticity, and the fact that an underlying problem caused by Cory is that it caused visitors confusion, particularly Cory's own descriptions which are not easy to read, being handwritten.. We then discuss interpretation, and whether the Parsonage has provided enough explanation, particularly the ways in which Cory's work does actually engage with Brontë narratives, but that this isn't clear to a significant proportion of visitors. Blackman wonders about the connection between the historic lives of the Brontës, and the lives of the fictional characters, and whether these get conflated.

The interview concludes with Blackman describing her own opinion of the exhibition, and then explaining why she is of the opinion that many visitors are on a pilgrimage when they visit the Parsonage.

Brass Art, Artist Collective

Brass Art are a collective of three artists based in the north of England who have worked with a wide range of heritage sites and museum collections. The interview took place on 4 December 2013 at Huddersfield Art Gallery. Two members of Brass Art were present, Anneke Pettican and Chara Lewis. Brass Art were, at the time of the interview, exhibiting an installation at Huddersfield Art Gallery 'The Imagining of Things', based on their response to the Brontë Parsonage Museum.

Interview Questions

1. What is the basis of your interest in the Brontës?
2. And in the parsonage?
3. What was the origin of the project - how did it come about?
4. What is your responsibility towards/ within a Brontë discourse?
5. Can you describe the experience of working in the Parsonage?
6. How 'authentic' or 'valid' do you feel your interpretation of the Brontës home is, in contrast with more traditional forms of museum interpretation?
7. What do you feel is the relevance of the Brontës today? To you?
8. Do you have a broader interest in heritage?
9. Are there any questions I should have asked?

Interview Summary

Chara Lewis and Anneke Pettican describe their practice, in particular a 2008 AHRC funded project in which they explored the possibilities of body scanning. They then developed this at the Parsonage using the 'Connect' scanner, which is part of X-Box gaming technology. Following this, Pettican describes her love for the Brontës, and that the work of Brass art often emerges through their enthusiasm for reading.

Ideas for a project about the Brontës emerged after Pettican visited the Parsonage in 2013. Pettican and Lewis describe their interest in space, and that the layered nature of the Parsonage was important, especially the resonances of tragedy. Their project was not really about the writing initially, but that magical

realism is a key reference point. Brass art approached the Parsonage, and were interested in the reproduction wallpapers, but shifted to concentrate much more on their experience of being in the space. When asked about responsibility, Pettican explains that responsibility lies in being sensitive to people and places, but that the issue of responsibility for artists is not straightforward. Lewis explains they don't try to make their work accessible, but do feel it is layered enough to provide lots of ways for different audiences to engage with it.

Lewis and Pettican explore the differences between how artists can interpret and tell stories, and how curators need to behave towards objects and audiences. Here, the concept of authenticity is important, and the nature of reproduction in relation to both objects and artworks. Further, the discussion explores the nature of provenance, and how this as a concept can be treated entirely differently by artists. Pettican and Lewis suggest that for artists, objects can be valuable whatever their provenance and artists are able to bring a different kind of attention to objects. This is what makes them valuable in relation to 'interventions', and that this really does have the potential to stimulate new audiences.

The interview then covers the contemporary relevance of the Brontës, and that it is their writing that is most important, but that the Brontës remain important from a feminist perspective. Lewis and Pettican discuss the challenges of creating an installation in Huddersfield Art Gallery, and how they had to respond to the problems with the gallery space.

The conversation then explores ways in which the installation can be 'read' by visitors, and the connection that I observed between their 'performing' in the Dining Room, and Bertola's re-performance of domestic ritual. Pettican and Lewis were very clear that knowledge of what they actually did in the Parsonage was not important in order to respond work as installed in the gallery.

Pettican and Lewis then discuss their use of mirrors and the liminality of the projections because they make visible that which is normally not seen. (The data used in the scanning process).

The interview concludes with a discussion of heritage, time, objects and the nature of the modern world in relation to museum collections and sites. In particular, issues related to the archiving of social media and related communication.

Louisa Briggs, Arts Officer, (Maternity Cover), Brontë Parsonage Museum

Louisa Briggs took over from Jenna Holmes during the last stages of the Charlotte Cory exhibition development in 2013. Briggs was experienced working with contemporary art, but had less experience of working in a small heritage organisation. For this interview, I wanted to discuss the Charlotte Cory exhibition broadly and did not have a list of fixed questions. The interview took place at the Brontë Parsonage Museum on 15 November 2013.

Interview Summary

The interview begins with a discussion of Ann Sumner's (Director of the Brontë Society) presentation at the University of Leeds, and the challenges of running the museum. Briggs describes that Sumner had brought in some new advisors and trustees to help move the organisation forward.

Briggs reflects on the nature of working in a heritage site, which, as a contemporary art curator, is very new to her. This is important, because the attention brought by the Charlotte Cory exhibition has been a very positive thing in terms of raising debate, but that the museum doesn't necessarily have the infrastructure to deal with the problems raised by the visitor and staff reaction. Briggs discusses the unusually involved relationship between the trustees and the museum and the potential impact their response may have on the long term viability of the CAP. Problems were raised by the way in which the show was interpreted, and that Charlotte Cory was doing some really interesting work, but there was no information which really helped visitors engage. They were confused, especially by the unclear provenance of many objects.

We discuss the differences between Charlotte Cory and Su Blackwell's work, and why it is that visitors responded so well to one, but not the other. One problem with the Cory show, was how much work there was, and that it was

overwhelming, people couldn't ignore it. The removal of the Richmond portrait and Branwell's portrait of his sisters brought complaints, and Cory kept adding new things to the exhibition as it went along.

According to Briggs, Cory wasn't at all troubled by the complaints in the visitor book, only that she felt many visitors had missed the point of the exhibition. Briggs then raises a concern about how comments in the visitor book might be misconstrued by staff and seen as representative of the general visitor voice whereas it might not be representative.

In her role as curator, Briggs needs to work closely with staff who have actually expressed that they don't like the exhibition, and that some staff have discussed their personal opinions with visitors, though some have developed particular ways of speaking to visitors who are unhappy or even aggressive as a result of their anger at the exhibition. Briggs then describes some of the strategies they use to deal with the various questions visitors raise, and describes their decision to use a 'live guide' every day to field visitor questions.

For Briggs, this is interesting in relation to working in an art gallery, where there is much more understanding that it is a place to encounter art, and that staff at the Parsonage don't necessarily have that background.

Briggs then describes the ideas behind the 'Artists of Faith' exhibition, and the fact that Cory's exhibition has caused such problems that there is a great deal of resistance from staff and trustees to any further exhibitions in the period rooms, particularly because there will be a new contemporary art space in the remodelled extension, and for some, the contemporary art should only be shown here.

The interview finishes with Briggs describing the new ticket desk and visitor route.

Jane Sellars, Director, Brontë Parsonage Museum

Jane Sellars was Director of the Brontë Parsonage Museum between 1989 and 1997. I had become aware of the longer history of artists being involved in the Parsonage. I wanted to discuss this with Sellars, and also explore further the nature of the museum and her perceptions of visitors. The interview took place at the Mercer Art Gallery on 8 January 2014.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe your role at the museum?
2. What are your thoughts on the status of the Parsonage as a Shrine?
3. What importance was attached to the visitor comments at the Parsonage?
4. Can you talk about the Contemporary Art Programme and the need for Change.
5. Why artists in particular - what is it that they can bring?
6. What is the role of the trustees, and what are their views of the programme (Andrew McCarthy for example described a resistance to the programme)
7. What have been the responses to Charlotte Cory at Harrogate?

Interview Summary

The interview begins with Sellars suggesting that Jenna Holmes was important in getting the CAP started properly. We discuss the seminars that took place at the Mercer Art Gallery and Huddersfield Art Gallery in 2010, and the artists who were involved in those, including Kate Whiteford.

Sellars was clear the CAP should be seen in the context of earlier developments in interpretive practice, such as the Ilkley Literature Festival during which there were artist in residence projects. After she arrived in 1989, a big change was the appointment of an Education Officer who helped develop a range of events, and brought in some artists, such as Sarah Hutton to run workshops. Following this, Sellars describes that Andrew McCarthy was the next

Education Officer, and then discusses the opening of the Paula Rego exhibition, for which McCarthy was responsible. Subsequent exhibitions are discussed, and whether these fitted in the interiors and why it is that some exhibitions seemed to work, and some were less popular with visitors.

Sellars goes on to describe her interest in the Brontës and women artists, and then the ways in which she found making changes to the Parsonage challenging. The idea of the Parsonage as a shrine is considered as important, and Sellars traces this idea back to Elizabeth Gaskell's biography which created a strong emotional connection to Charlotte Brontë for many people. It is this sense of tragedy which, perhaps, many contemporary visitors identify with. Though, the creation of a heritage landscape such as 'Brontë Country', Sellars finds strange, and a risk to the nature of the Parsonage as a literary museum.

The need for change at the Parsonage is discussed, Sellars suggesting a need to bring in younger audiences who would care for the Brontës was a motivation. This leads to a discussion of the use of Contemporary Art as an intervention, in order to find new forms of interpretation, and that this could be seen in other places, such as an exhibition curated by Penelope Curtis at Barnard Castle in the 1980s. The interview then focusses on a discussion of Charlotte Cory's 'Capturing the Brontës' exhibition, and the problems and issues this created; issues with visitors being confused about provenance, and issues with visitors who have travelled long distances being particularly disappointed, despite the fact that Cory's work is deeply connected to the Brontës.

Sellars then describes the importance of visitor books at the Parsonage, and the role that they play, but also that other forms of engaging with visitors are necessary, but it is difficult to measure the effect of the CAP.

In relation to visitor confusion, interpretation and need for clarity is discussed again, but Sellars suggests if you are being provocative there's a need

to stand by that decision. Things might not always benefit from clarity, sometimes complexity is necessary too. We then discuss the disagreement amongst staff and trustees which was caused by 'Capturing the Brontës' but Sellars notes it is necessary to see this in the context of the whole programme, which has been a great achievement.

Visitor Interviews, 'Artists of Faith'

In order to evaluate visitor response to the exhibition 'Artists of Faith' which I curated, I spent a number of days in the exhibition observing visitors and talking to visitor assistants. On 25 June 2014, however, I approached a number of visitors with the specific request to discuss their response to the exhibition in relation to my research. These discussions were not recorded, but I took summary notes which I transcribed afterwards. Conversations were held with seven individual or groups of visitors.

Sample Notebook Transcript

Visitors A

Short discussion with two (self identified) Australians, who might have been mother and son. The woman identified that she was a teacher, and her son was a curator. She thought that it was a fine line to keeping the place as a traditional museum, but recognised the need to refresh the museum to keep it interesting. Noted that they had read *Wuthering Heights*; and that it is on the curriculum in Australia. The woman taught English Literature and was interested in the museum from that point of view. The man (son?) was a curator, but very reserved and didn't really say very much.

Visitors C

Adult pair, male from Sheffield, woman from Warrington. Described themselves as 'traditional' and 'older'. Weren't certain that artworks belonged, although this seemed to be more of a default response, rather than a genuinely thought through reaction to this particular example. Male then looked at the Maggie Hambling in the Servants Room and said 'but I do like that'.

Lynne Howell and KM, Visitor Assistants, Brontë Parsonage Museum

The research process was informed, throughout, by an ongoing dialogue with the whole range of staff I encountered in the museum. My discussion with Lynne Howell and 'KM' on 19 December 2014, however, was specifically related to my interest in the background of the people who worked in the museum and, as such, was slightly more 'formal' than other discussions. 'KM' asked to be identified only by her initials. As this interview was carried out in the museum whilst they were working, the conversation was not recorded. Summary notes were taken of the conversation which focussed specifically on their interest in the Brontës and experiences working in the museum, both generally and related to visitor perceptions of the Contemporary Art Programme.

Virginia Rushton, Brontë Society Council Member

Virginia Rushton has been a trustee of the Brontë Society since 2008. While my focus was not on the governance of the museum, the status of the CAP in the eyes of the Trustees was something that emerged in many conversations.

Rushton was very supportive of the programme when I met her at the opening of Charlotte Cory's exhibition. I felt she would be able to comment on the perception of contemporary art amongst the trustees. The interview took place at the Queens Hotel in Leeds on 16 July 2014.

Interview Questions

1. Could you briefly describe your role with the trustees?
2. Where does your interest in the Brontës stem from?
3. How did you come to be a trustee?
4. Can you describe the role of the society?
5. Can you say a little bit about its relationship to the museum?
6. Can you say a little bit about its relationship to broader museum practices? (professionalism)
7. Can you describe, from your perspective, the development of the Contemporary Art Programme?
8. Why do you think it exists?
9. I'm aware there is a range of opinions amongst the staff about the programme. Could you say anything about that?
10. What role do the comments in the visitor books play?

Interview Summary

Rushton describes her role with the trustees, and the extent of her experience in the museum. Following, is a description of the Brontë Society, and the various responsibilities it has, such as finance and the need to develop audiences, as income from membership is a very small part of the overall financial picture. We then discuss why it is that the museum must move forward

in its interpretation; this is because the world has changed, and there is potential to reach a wider audience, especially with new technology. Rushton then describes ways in which the Brontës remain inspiring for artists.

Rushton then describes her childhood memories of reading *Jane Eyre* and how this is connected to her adult love of opera. This leads to a discussion of how readers relate to characters in the novels, and the broader link to contemporary issues that always remain relevant, despite the novels' historical nature.

There is a long response to a question regarding the challenges of being a private museum. In particular, the Parsonage's location, but also a disconnection from a wider professional heritage community. Rushton describes the bicentenary of Charlotte Brontës birth as being an opportunity to develop new partnerships. A brief discussion of the possibility of a touring exhibition drawn from the CAP exhibitions, Rushton describes the origin and development of the CAP, and that the scope of what is possible might be limited, but the fact that the audiences are relatively small suggests scope for more experimentation. Rushton suggests that after ten years of the programme, some changes are necessary to break out of what has become a comfortable pattern.

Rushton then describes what it is that visitors see as being important for their visit, and that it is a shrine for many people. Myths have created a very romanticised notion of the sisters and their home, but a visit to the Parsonage can affect subsequent re-readings of the novels.

A discussion of the relative importance of comment books, is followed by Rushton describing various problems with them, but that they certainly should be taken seriously within a broad range of visitor engagement strategies. Rushton then describes ways in which the CAP exhibitions are in dialogue with the house; while inserting contemporary art raises complex issues, she describes her support for keeping exhibitions in the period interior. Whether the parsonage is

'authentic' is discussed, and the relationship between ideas of authenticity and resistance to change. There is a link between the notion of the 'shrine' and the fact that many schemes to improve and develop the site have been rejected by the society.

We discuss *Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*, and Rushton argues that it is important to re-read them, and then return to discuss the CAP. Here, Rushton describes what some of the objections the programme have been, and that these usually relate to the authenticity of the interior. We discuss differences between the Parsonage and Dickens' House, and visitors' ability to walk in and around the rooms of each house.

Rushton then describes issues which were raised by Charlotte Cory's exhibition, and the relationship between this exhibition, and others, which were seen as being more successfully integrated with the interior. The fact that the site is very layered is important here, and this complexity means difficulties arise with the idea that the CAP might 'provoke', however Rushton describes ways in which the programme needs to develop in order to allow visitors to move between forms of interpretation, which supports their moving between different kinds of experience.

Roy Voss, Artist

Roy Voss is based in London and is represented by Matt's Gallery. His work is largely based around his interest in language and words. Voss's exhibition 'Miss' was at the Parsonage from 29 May - 30 Sept, 2014. The interview took place by Skype, on 26 March 2015.

Interview Questions

1. Could you describe your connection to the Brontës?
2. And to the Parsonage itself? (When did you first visit?)
3. Can you briefly describe how the project with the Parsonage came about?
4. Can you describe what is it that you were trying to achieve with the installation?
5. Can you describe the practicalities of working with the site? (teasing out whether it was challenging in any way)
6. The parsonage has been very carefully constructed/restored to provide a 'stage set' experience of the house in the 1850s, just after Charlotte Brontë became well known. Putting artwork into the Parsonage, is an 'addition'. What do you think happened to the carefully constructed 'heritage' space of the parsonage when you added your work?
7. Do you feel that exhibiting in these kinds of heritage spaces is different from showing work in a more traditional 'exhibition' context? If so, in what way?
8. What were your feelings towards the visitors to the house during your exhibition?
9. Can you tell me anything about how the exhibition was received/understood?
10. Has the project influenced your work in the longer term?
11. Is there anything else I need to understand in relation to your work at the parsonage?

Interview Summary

Voss describes his connection to the Brontës and the museum, which is a more generalised awareness of the myths which surround them and an interest in language. He describes the choice of 'miss' as the central word for his exhibition, and the many ways this can connect to the Parsonage as a mausoleum representing a celebration of the dead. Voss describes a concept of 'expected respect' towards the Brontës.

Voss responds to how visitors might react to his artworks, given their

expectations of their visit to the Parsonage, and describes his interest in the ways signs work by pointing your attention towards something. He describes his attempt to use one word to create a complex narrative, but that it is impossible to understand how visitors might be changed by their encounter with either the site or the artwork, and the project he was involved with was more for the museum than for visitors.

Voss then discusses the concept of heritage, and ways in which he understands that his work fits within heritage contexts, and his thoughts about what visitors might think of his work at the Parsonage. Voss compares the Parsonage to the project he is currently working on at Lydney Park Estate, and reflects on how his work has changed slightly as a result of working at the Parsonage. This is partly to do with the fact that, previously, his text-in-the-landscape works were to be seen as photographs, rather than as a work in the landscape. He then explores whether his signs at Lydney might be shocking or not, but that he can't control how people react to his work. After describing his postcard project which was shown at Matts Gallery, Voss says he isn't able to comment on artworks in heritage sites, but doesn't think there is necessarily a conflict. He then explains his interest in being 'polite' with his installation at the Parsonage, because he didn't want to 'intefere' too much. We then discuss the novels, which Voss hasn't read; he explains his rationale for reading certain things but not others is idiosyncratic and personal.

Su Blackwell, Artist

Su Blackwell is based in London, and makes artworks from paper and books, often inspired by the contents of the books themselves. Su Blackwell's exhibition 'Remnants' had been held at the Parsonage from 21 Aug - 28 Nov 2010. Su Blackwell agreed to respond to interview questions by email. The following questions and answers are as returned by Blackwell on 21 April 2015.

Transcript

Could you describe your connection to the Brontës?

I was an avid reader as a child, and Wuthering Heights was one of the first 'adult' books I read. It was given to me by my nanna, who told me I would enjoy it. I struggled understanding it the first time around, but it stuck with me, and I have since re-read it several times as an adult, and am interested in all things associated with 'wuthering heights', be it film or theatre, or song. I became more interested in the story of the sisters themselves, and in what they managed to achieve.

And to the Parsonage itself? (When did you first visit?)

I went to Bradford College of Art, and I had visited Haworth on numerous occasions while out walking and climbing in the Moors, but I had never visited inside the Parsonage until the commission came about.

Can you briefly describe how the project with the Parsonage came about?

I gave a talk about my work at Bradford College of Art, and Jenna Holmes, 'the art co-ordinator' from Brontë Parsonage was in the audience. She approached me afterwards with a proposal for a residency/ commission.

Can you describe what is it that you were trying to achieve with the installation?

To bring out the spiritual, but mostly 'creative' essence of the Brontë's. My main focus was on the women (the sisters and their house keepers).

What were the challenges of working with the site?

There were challenges, but the parsonage staff were very good at helping me to get around these challenges. As I understood it, an artist had not to this point interfered with the structure of the building, and artefacts on display there. Previously, it had been photographs and painting hung on walls, alongside the Brontë exhibits. I was keen to work into the fabric of the building and within the items on display, to change the already existing exhibits with new things, and to challenge people's perceptions. Some things I wasn't allowed to do, but in the whole, the team were AMAZING!

The parsonage has been very carefully constructed/restored to provide a 'stage set' experience of the house in the 1850s, just after Charlotte Brontë became well known. Putting artwork into the Parsonage, is an 'addition'. What do you think happened to the carefully constructed 'heritage' space of the parsonage when you added your work?

I played with it, I bent it out of shape, I placed little bits of magic in there.

Do you feel that exhibiting in these kinds of heritage spaces is different from showing work in a more traditional 'exhibition' context? If so, in what way?

Yes, in a big way, because the house is already imbued with meanings, while a gallery is a blank canvas, white walls, etc..

I believe it's important to work in unison with the building, to be sympathetic to what already exists there, and to simply add another, more contemporary voice.

What responsibility, if any, did you feel towards the visitors to the house during your exhibition?

I wasn't too concerned with feeling responsibility towards the visitors.

Most visitors found your work to be an overwhelmingly wonderful addition to the Parsonage. One visitor wrote for example 'It adds a new dimension as I have been several times before. Sensitively done and thought provoking, wonderful!' This is in contrast to the later Charlotte Cory exhibition which the majority of visitors had extreme negative reactions to. Why do you think your exhibition was so well received?

It's very humbling to hear that, I haven't read the comments, so I don't know. Although, I would like to.

I suppose it's because I was conscious of making the exhibition immersive for the viewer/audience, and I wanted to reach out to them, in a similar way the Brontë's reached out to people with their writing, particularly to women. I was sensitive to the house, and the family that once lived there, I didn't want my own ego to overshadow. I wanted the work to be an extension of the house, to what already existed there. I wanted the work to seem like it had been there all along, but just out of view.

For the children's room I wanted for it to seem like children were playing in there, and in the kitchen to seem as though stories were being read, but I did it in a way that I could, through cutting up books, and linen material.

Some of the audience were really shocked, even angry, and I hadn't banked on that reaction. They thought I had used original artifacts and cut them up, (but I guess that is what I wanted people to think). I took inspiration from Charlotte Brontë's writing, and from the written notes I found from biographers, about the servants and nannies that also lived in the house. I wanted their

presence to be felt too. I felt it was important, that the house wasn't just about the Brontë's, but also about their house keeper's lives. While researching in the archives, I read about the writer's habits, and that gave me the idea to record my own footsteps walking around the table.

I read a caption in *Wuthering Heights*, which gave me the idea for a mechanical book, with mechanical turning pages. I worked with an engineer for this. The reaction of people viewing the house was interesting. Some people didn't notice the book, others thought it was a gust of wind turning the pages, one group, screamed and ran out of the building! I wish I had installed a hidden camera, and videoed people's reactions.

On the whole, I found the museum to be quite bland, and it didn't really give out much of the Brontë's wonderfully creative spirit, I wanted to bring that side out more. I suppose one reason for this is that the rooms are closed off, what I did find the most interesting wasn't the rooms but the objects, artifacts, and small notebooks they kept, a lot of these items are kept in the archive away from people's view.

I spent much time looking through the archives, and handling the objects. I felt very strongly, that my work was to be an extension of the Brontë's home, but it was from a very personal stance, a personal relationship I have with the moors, with their books, and particularly with *Wuthering Heights*. I feel so much of the moors, and the landscape of where they lived cannot but have inspired and fuelled their creativity greatly.

Has the project influenced your work in the longer term?

No, I don't think it has. I would like to have said it had, and that I had gone on to do other similar things in public places, but that hasn't been the case. No other opportunities like this have arisen so far...

Visitor Interviews, 'The Silent Wild'

Short interviews were carried out with visitors to the Parsonage during Diane Howse's exhibition 'The Silent Wild'. Twenty interviews were completed on 10 July, 2015. A further ten interviews were carried out on 13 July, 2015. These were recorded and transcribed. Visitors were given a numeric identifier.

A variety of questioning strategies were used, adapted during the series of interviews. For example, as issues slowly emerged as relevant from the earlier interviews, later visitors were asked directly about these issues.

Sample Transcript, 10 July 2015

[recording misses beginning]

Visitor 12

It's fascinating. I haven't been for some years and it's changed a lot in the meantime. There's a lot now that we don't remember seeing before.

NC

Anything in particular?

Visitor 12

Well the exhibitions and certainly the things about their Sagas, I don't remember that from before. We learned a lot from that.

NC

Is there anything from the house that stuck in your mind?

Visitor 12

Well the personal artefacts, there's definitely a certain frisson with those I think. You look at them and think crikey, these are the actual objects that they owned and they used. That certainly brings it home that they were real people.

NC

There's a contemporary art exhibition on in the house today, was that part of your visit. Did you look at that work?

Visitor 12

Briefly yes, but we were a bit time poor so we had to concentrate on the literary side I think.

NC

Okay, so it was about choosing what you spent your time looking at?

Visitor 12

Yeah.

NC

One last quick question if that's alright. Even though it wasn't part of your visit today, do you think it's productive to have contemporary art here in the house.

Visitor 12

I certainly think it's worth having a changing exhibition. Whether contemporary art is the right thing to have is perhaps more debatable. Certainly, things change from time to time.

NC

Okay, that's brilliant, so thank you.

Diane Howse, Artist

Diane Howse is an artist based in Yorkshire. Howse is also Countess of Harewood, responsible for the development of the Terrace Gallery and programme of contemporary art interventions at Harewood House. Howse's exhibition 'The Silent Wild' was being held at the Parsonage, 27 June - 25 Sept 2015. The interview was not recorded; instead, I took a range of notes. The purpose of this interview was to discuss 'The Silent Wild', and also to reflect on the conclusions for my thesis. The interview took place in Browns Cafe, Leeds on 29 July 2015.

Interview Summary

We spent some time discussing 'The Silent Wild', and in particular, the objections that visitors had expressed to the iPad on the Dining Table during my interviews carried out the week before, on 13 July. This led to a consideration of the way in which the programme is integrated with publicity for the site, whether all staff feel ownership over the programme, and whether visitors are appropriately informed about what they might encounter on their visit. Howse noted that she was not asked to give a talk to staff, nor was an education pack produced; Howse then reflected on the process of curation; and whether it was easy or not to actually fit works in to the period interiors. Instead, it might be interesting to invite guest curators to work with the objects.

We discussed the nature of the experience of being in the Parsonage, and ways in which the developments in accuracy of representation might not necessarily change the quality of experience of the house for visitors. A final aspect of this discussion was related to how much a knowledge of the Brontë's works was necessary, and whether the museum assumed visitors had more knowledge of the Brontës than they actually had in reality.

Appendix 3 Contemporary Art Programme Exhibitions

2004

Paula Rego	The Jane Eyre Prints	07 Aug - 19 Sep
------------	----------------------	-----------------

2005

Simon Warner	Leaving Home	12 Mar - 31 Mar
--------------	--------------	-----------------

2006

Cornelia Parker	Brontëan Abstracts	16 Sep - 31 Dec
-----------------	--------------------	-----------------

2008

Fay Godwin	Elmet	19 May - 25 Jul
------------	-------	-----------------

Annelise Strba	My Life Dreams	01 Aug - 31 Oct
----------------	----------------	-----------------

Bob Littleford	Resurgam	08 Mar - 19 Apr
----------------	----------	-----------------

2009

Sam Taylor-Wood	Ghosts	17 Jul - 02 Nov
-----------------	--------	-----------------

Victor Buta	Alter Ego	08 Feb - 31 Mar
-------------	-----------	-----------------

2010

Su Blackwell	Remnants	21 Aug - 28 Nov
--------------	----------	-----------------

Lisa Sheppy	Charlottes Dress	18 Oct - 19 Dec
-------------	------------------	-----------------

Victoria Bookland	Wearer Unkown	21 May - 18 Jul
-------------------	---------------	-----------------

2011

Catherine Bertola	Residual Hauntings	16 Apr - 08 Jul
-------------------	--------------------	-----------------

2012

Rebecca Chesney	Hope's Whisper	22 Jun - 5 Sep
-----------------	----------------	----------------

Simon Warner	Ways to the Stonehouse	28 Sep - 3 Dec
--------------	------------------------	----------------

Franklin	The Garden of Oblivion	2-Mar - 5-Apr
----------	------------------------	---------------

2013

Victoria Brookland A thousand thousand gleaming fires 06 Jun - 29 Jul

Charlotte Cory Capturing the Brontës4 Oct -31 Dec

2014

Various Artists of Faith 2 May - 27 Jun

Roy Voss Miss 29 May - 30 Sep

2015

Diane Howse The Silent Wild 27 June - 25 Sept

Appendix 4 Contemporary Art Programme Funding

2004

Esme Fairbairn: Arts & Heritage Grants

'Towards the cost of commissioning and exhibiting a new art project'

Amount: £12593

2006

Esme Fairbairn: Arts & Heritage Grants

Amount: £14935

2007

Esme Fairbairn: Arts & Heritage Grants

'towards enabling the organisation to develop its plan for sustainability over three years'

Amount: £91718

2010

Arts Council Award: Grants for the Arts Scheme

Date of Award: 25 February 2010

Project Title: The Land of Far Beyond

Amount: £5000

Esme Fairbairn: Main Fund

'Towards the salary of the Arts Officer and programming costs. Over thirty six months'

Amount: £48694

2011

Arts Council Award: Grants for the Arts Scheme

Date of Award: 28 April 2011

Project Title: The Land of Far Beyond

Amount: £5000

2014

Arts Council Award: Grants for the Arts Scheme

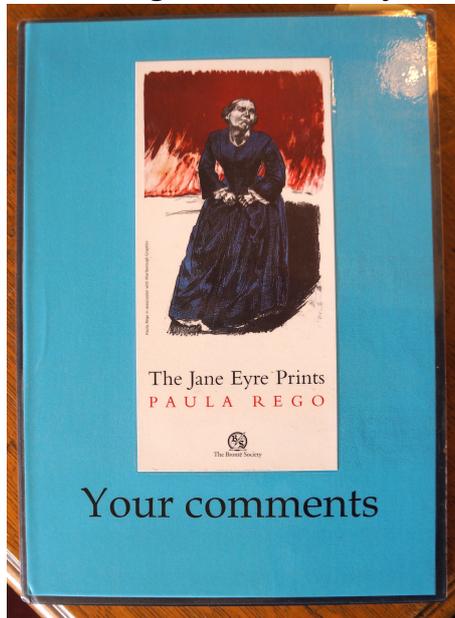
Date of Award: 30 September 2014

Project Title: Charlotte Brontë's Bicentenary

Amount: £99178

Appendix 5 Visitor Comment Book Summaries

Paula Rego, 'The Jane Eyre Prints', 2004.



84 pages

722 comments.

240 comments related to the Paula Rego Prints.

88 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

138 visitors expressed a negative reaction.

Pilgrimage/Ambition to visit

I have wanted to visit this exhibition for years. After reading some books on the Brontes recently I decided to come & see the Parsonage - finally! It was a unique atmosphere despite all the tourists passing through on a daily basis. I have really enjoyed my visit - thank you to all who make it possible! I didn't like the exhibition (Paula Rego) at all - what is the point of sticking these ugly pictures in front of the things we are trying to look at? Horrendous!

REALIZATION [sic] of LIFE AMBITION! ([Name] age 92)

I've wanted to visit since seeing the amazing cast of Jane Eyre on Broadway in New York City. What a wonderful tribute to the lives of the Brontes. I loved seeing all of the letters. :) Thanks for making my birthday a special one.

I've always dreamed of visiting here. At last that dream's come true.

Made it at last - born here 73 years ago!

[Name] from Japan | with my husband and 6 friends | I have wanted to be here since I read "The Wuthering Heights"

Long anticipated & not disappointed. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit.

Comments on other comments

Agree with the last comment! However - the childrens [sic] guide was well appreciated.

Would agree with the above. They detracted from the Brontë exhibition.
Unnecessary.

I disagree completely! They were wonderful to look at as we walked around.

I agree with the first comments on this page.

Worth seeing I do not think they distracted from the rest. They were an added attraction to be looked at individually.

We agree with the tone of the previous comments, Rego's artwork, though clearly inspired by the harsh life endured although very briefly by the Bronte sisters do not add to the exhibition, particularly those in the dining room distract from the importance of the site.

I agree!

On balance, I have to agree with negative comments & suggestions that Rego prints should have been separately displayed. [Name] P.S. You need two separate comments books!

The majority of comments indicate that the exhibition is regarded as an intrusion, Please take these comments on board, the visitors have paid to visit!

I agree with the above.

Delighted to see how many people upset by the pictures.

The exhibition should be elsewhere

Horrible. Why not have the pictures on show somewhere else - apart from the other exhibits?

The pictures detracted from the atmosphere of rooms, also obscured some of the exhibits. Not in keeping, should be elsewhere.

I don't think the museum is the right venue for the exhibition - sorry!

I would have preferred the pictures to be in their own room.

Should have been exhibited seperately

Excellent pictures but not very fitting in the rooms.

It would be better if they could have been in a room by their selves [sic] so we could se the house as close as it was to real life

I think they distract from the rooms and would suggest you display them elsewhere in the museum away from the original artefacts.

Lovely work but it detracts from the artifacts in the room. Perhaps dipslay them in another room so we can see their intense beauty alone.

The history to exhibits are very interesting, giving me knowledge totally new. Pictures by Paula could be exhibited better elsewhere.

Very irritating while looking round this excellent exhibition. Perhaps they could be displayed somewhere else for those who wish to see them.

Authenticity

They spoil the authenticity of the rooms. It would be an improvement if they were in a separate room as they are large and made it difficult to view the rooms.

I ignored them as I wanted to see authentic Brontë memorabilia.

Not appropriate in the rooms. We came to see authentic pieces connected with the Brontes and how they lived not a warped interpretation of their books & ugly faces.

They should not be displayed in the authentic rooms as we cannot experience what it once was like.

I agree with the above comments. I was disappointed to see the pictures in every room and felt they took away the authenticity of the Bronte atmosphere within the parsonage.

Distracting

We felt that these exhibits interfered with our discovery of the interiors to the rooms. In particular in the dining room, when we wished to see the book collection -

Great information on the items & antiques, although there were some restrictions in the rooms

Loved the museum and its artefacts but the paintings on display were in the way of some of the exhibitions.

I felt that I couldn't see the rooms properly and the pictures got in the way. They should be exhibited separately in my opinion.

They distract from the view of the room. I didn't like them, they did not suit the character and the mood of the house,

I agree with most comments there [sic] very beautiful but they distract attention from the rooms.

As already suggested, the pictures detract from the house + contents and are too large for small rooms. A display in the school would be better.

The Rego works are too striking a sight in comparison with the dull and drab rooms. They consequently affect the ambience of the entire parsonage and so 'dilute' the experience. Whilst technically sound, and 'eye-catching', Rego's works 'dominate' the museum a little too much for my taste.

Atmosphere

By all means show the paintings but do not put them in the rooms that have been restored to 1850 period they ruin the ambience I do like the museum though

Displaying the paintings in the rooms ruins the 'feel' one tries to obtain for the Brontes. Some of the paintings are quite unpleasant and one positively offensive.

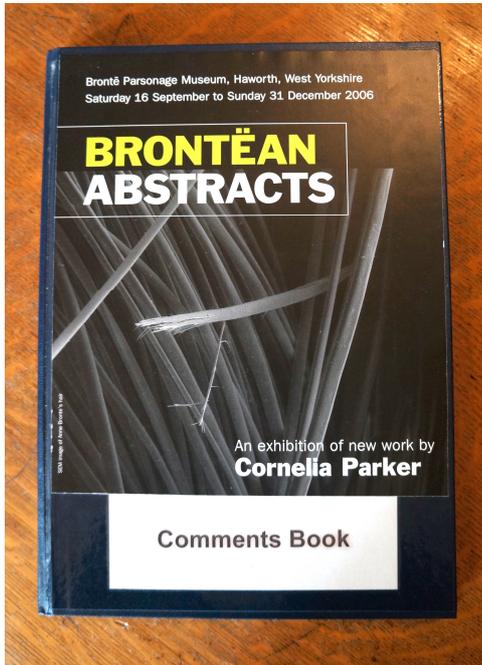
You can really fill [sic] the atmosphere of the past...

Disturbs the atmosphere of the house - we preferred the rooms without the pictures, but apart from that, they're ok.

Atmospheric + interesting. Enjoyed our visit as much as the first time in 1975

The Bronte Museum was extremely interesting but marred for us by the Paula Rego paintings. We felt that they intruded on the atmosphere.

Cornelia Parker, 'Brontëan Abstracts', 2006.



79 pages

595 comments

101 comments related to the Brontëan Abstracts.

57 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

29 visitors expressed a negative reaction.

7 visitors expressed a mixed reaction.

Pilgrimage/ambition to visit

A dream come true visiting the home

have wanted to visit for many years, glad we came today

LIFE LONG WISH EVENTUALLY FULFILLED. THANK YOU.

I have fulfilled today my ambition to visit Haworth. It has been a pleasure

Worth the long Journey

Absolutely wonderful - very enjoyable, wanted to come for many years, Made it today well worth the Journey. Named my daughter - 'Emily - Jayne'. Loved every minute Keep up the good work.

I come from Spain, quite a long way; but I would take it a second and a third time just to see such a wonderful museum about such an extraordinary family. Wuthering Heights was an unputdownable novel for me.

I have always wanted to come to the Brontë Museum. I really loved going round, reading about the Brontës and looking at portraits.

This visit was something I wanted to do for years - Today, I am very glad I did.

I read "Jane Eyre" at the age of 12 and this began my love affair with England. The Brontës, especially Charlotte, will forever hold a special place for me. Visited with [Name], the love of my life, Nov 2006

after 50 yrs - here at last!

Wonderful, my dream came true, well done. You bring an indescribable joy.

Adds Nothing/Subtracts from the Experience

Conversations between 'mediums is [____?] banal and intrusive. I'm astonished that the Bronte Society lends itself to such unacademic posturing.

Museum wonderful. Psychics (sic) terrible. Spoils it all.

A/V not needed | Everything else is excellent

[Name] (frequent visitor + one time member of the Bronte Society) SILENCE PLEASE??!

The voices are very distracting! The TV presentation[sic] needs to be clearer! The museum is excellent.

Very enjoyable visit apart from the awful recording. Very distracting and irrelevant, spoils the atmosphere completely.

Enjoyed this very much. Like the above named person, did not feel any affinity with the psychics, not necessary. We can all be wise after the event!. [Australia]

I found these voices irrelevant and distracting. It interfered with my concentration and enjoyment of the Parsonage Museum.

I found the voices of the mediums very distracting and inappropriate.

Very much enjoyed except the irrelevant and distracting voices - I could not concentrate as well as I have on previous visits.

An illuminating exhibition for Bronte aficionados (sic) BUT - Get rid of the ongoing background commentary. Very distracting. One needs to contemplate the exhibit without background noise. Thank you!

Lovely museum, dreadful background noise. Suggest you turn it off.

Fascinating museum - finding it was very difficult due to inadequate signage | Disliked background noise.

Fantastic waited a long time to visit so glad I did too much Background Noise though Thank you. Extremely fascinating.

Atmosphere

The museum is wonderful. Could transcripts of letters on bureaus be made available please. I endorse the comments of the person before me. I found the chattering very obtrusive and contrary to the atmosphere of the parsonage which caused the children to create their fantasy world.

One can take or leave the visual artwork - sadly not the ghastly intrusive chattering of these wretched ladies - I refused to let them spoil my visit to this wonderful museum - full of atmosphere and fascinating fact and enhanced by helpful and knowledgeable stewards - So away Ms Parker et al

I found the voices very disturbing, instead of adding to the atmosphere, it took from it.

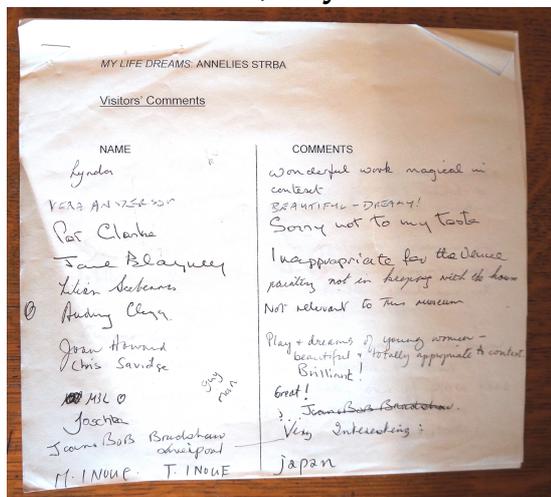
Please turn those voices of psychics off. They are distracting if you want to soak up the atmosphere for yourself. Apart from the crackling noise of the voices, it was lovely. The exhibition was very interesting and gave another view into the historical side of the museum.

The speaking voices take away the atmosphere from the museum.

Very enjoyable visit apart from the awful recording. Very distracting and irrelevant, spoils the atmosphere completely.

WONDERFUL MUSEUM, BUT I HAVE TO AGREE ABOUT BACKGROUND
"MEDIUM VOICES" - AWFULL!! WE WOULD PREFER SILENCE TO SOAK UP
ATMOSPHERE

Anneliese Strba, 'My Life Dreams', 2008



58 pages.

313 comments.

221 comments related to My Life Dreams.

114 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

94 visitors expressed a negative

reaction.

13 visitors expressed a mixed reaction.

Extracts

Adds nothing/subtracts from the experience

These images give me absolutely nothing in this environment!

The paintings take away from the ambience completely!

Don't see the point of them, there is so much to see don't need anything else.

Distracting & irritating - they add nothing to the experience of visiting this house.

Interesting art, but should have been displayed elsewhere, as I feel it detracts from the atmosphere of the house.

Great pics but spoil rooms here.

I tried to ignore the paintings | they were not the reason I came here and detracted from the atmosphere of the place.

Incongruous

We appreciate your artwork - it is very impressive - however, it is not appropriate for the Brontë museum and it is not in keeping with the purpose of this memorial. But we do like the artwork! Very innovative!

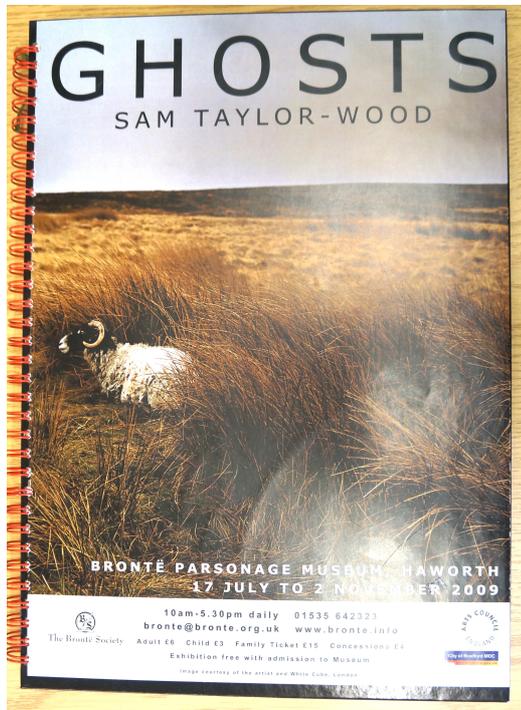
With an increased number of genuine Brontë artefacts etc to be seen - which have increased my enjoyment - I find the modern images very intrusive.

Modern art has no place here. Otherwise a charming house...

These paintings should be featured in a gallery not a museum that's [sic] heaped with history.

I like the paintings but they don't fit in very well with the Bronte Museum
 Great place but the modern prints really don't work. The rest is fab though!
 Not the right setting to view these pictures - too "modern" & colourful, detracting from content of both pictures and house.
 These pictures spoil the museum. They are totally out of character of the otherwise beautifully preserved history.
 Pictures awful, totally out of place and not needed at all.
 Totally detracted from my enjoyment of the "Bronte experience" - they clashed and jarred - wrong place for this exhibition.
 Very intriguing yet disturbing. A bit out of place.
 Some of the art very nice but not able appreciate [sic] it in this setting.
 Some are beautiful others just so out of place with the peace & atmosphere of a lovely house.
 I think it makes the house look modren [sic] and that isn't good because this is a musiem [sic] to show how it looked back then
 Ghastly - totally out of character.
 Good in themselves, but not here please.
 [Name] (Frequent visitor!) Much prefer the house without the pictures.
 Don't like these pictures in this setting - the tenuous connections with the 3 sisters is trite.
 I feel the modern canvasses do not fit in with the house and are unsuitably placed within the house.
 These paintings should not be in a place like this and it's a real disgrace.
 Definitely did not like the modern photographs. There is a place for them but its [sic] not here.
 Very odd but although not in sympathy with the house, the art form unusual & would be better in a room on their own to be perused at length.
 I'm sorry but the modern pictures are not in keeping with the historical context of the house.
 Totally out of place - would have preferred to look around the parsonage without them being in every room!
 The digitised imagery is striking but is wholly inappropriate here.
 "Contemporary Arts" within the context of a museum dedicated to a period far from now is an incongruity.
 Not at all in keeping with the house. Much more appropriate to use the fascinating information in the folders to display on the walls.
 Seems out of place in this parsonage. Would prefer to see such art in an art gallery.
 NICE ART - BUT SHOULD NOT BE DISPLAYED THROUGHOUT WHOLE MUSEUM. SHOULD BE DISPLAYED IN ONE AREA AS NOE EXHIBITION. DOES NOT FIT CORRECTLY WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL ROOMS.

Sam Taylor-Wood, 'Ghosts', 2009



29 pages.

179 comments.

83 comments related to 'Ghosts'.

52 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

24 visitors a negative reaction.

7 visitors expressed a mixed reaction.

Extracts

Atmosphere

I think Sam Taylor Wood really captures the atmosphere of the "moors" in a way that Emily would have liked. the pictures are Bleak, remote and desilate and I feel they are like windows onto the moors.

Very atmospheric! Captures the bleakness of the surroundings beautifully.

Captures the essence of what it must have been like. Stunning!

Really captures the feeling of the moors. I often walk there and its just like being there looking at the scene again.

Give a real atmosphere of drama and wildness. Excellent

Moody and atmospheric

Juxtaposition

a very inspiring exhibition. As an artist I can see how they relate to the atmosphere of the parsonage and the feelings and creative skills of the Brontë family.

Inspirational photographs in an ideal setting. The beauty of nature is unsurpassed.

I thought that the photographs were brilliantly integrated into the permanent exhibitions. The moors are such a part of the Brontës work. I cannot think of a more suitable (albeit temporary) addition.

Excellent. Very atmospheric. Captures the mood. Good idea mixing it with the museum pieces etc. Came especially to see the work. Well worthwhile.

Comments on other comments

Even some comments seem to me rather nasty, the pictures are good. Whether or not Emily Jane B would approve, it does not matter. Thank you Mr Taylor.

This does not work for me. The tweaking (in Photoshop) is a bit off. It would be great to see a different photographic take on the location. As someone notes above, pretty standard approach.

I heard lots of people comment on how the photographs "ruin" the period feel of walking round the house. Good photos though!

Like it x disagree with photo comment at top x

Su Blackwell, 'Remnants', 2010. Visitor Comment Book Summary

42 pages

833 comments.

316 comments related to 'Remnants'.

303 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

11 visitors expressed a negative reaction.

1 visitor expressed a mixed reaction.

Extracts

Pilgrimage/Ambition to visit

I was here again for the fifth time in 55 yrs.

Wonderful to be here at last.

A lifetime wish fulfilled to visit the Brontës .

Long-cherished dream to visit this place. Wonderful + impressive.

from Japan. I read the novel, and came to see the Peniston Hall and Brontës fall.

It was an exciting and unforgettable experience to visit my beloved writer. I cried and it is worthwhile for me to travel from China.

I'm from Poland. I'm very exiting at this place. Now I'm 65 years old. When I was pregnant (at 1975) I read "Jane Eyre" When I was finishing read this book my older daughter was coming, now my youngest daughter lives at Blackpool with my son-in-law.

Oklahoma USA Englit major in college! Wanted to visit here ever since.

The Brontës always favorites of mine so glad to have visited at last!

A dream to come here - thank you.

A schoolgirl dream finally comes true! Thanks.

My dream has come true.

Worth coming all the way from Canada for- Thank you.

A dream come true to be in 'The Brontes' parsonage.

Absolutely fascinating - a dream come true to visit their home.

Wonderful - all the way from the U.S. just to see Bronte Country.

2nd Pilgrimage to the parsonage. Wonderfull feelings here.

Adds something to the experience

It adds a new dimension as I have been several times before. Sensitively done and thought provoking, wonderful!

The artwork really adds something to the experience without being intrusive. It works really well.

Really adds something. Do keep it.

Fantastic interpretation – both dress + sound brought me to a fuller understanding of the autor.

Really adds a further dimension to the museum by providing an intimate and heartfelt expression of historical memory. Thank you, [Name] – Newcastle, Australia.

An excellent artistic expression, adding a new layer of meaning to the museum

Interesting and adds to the visit.

Su Blackwell's installation adds an interesting dimensions to a well organised exhibition. Very enjoyable.

This is my second visit to the Parsonage, the first was in 2006. I love this part of the world. It is wonderfully full of atmosphere, memories and some sadness too. I am sure it will always retain these quality. The exhibition is a chance to gain imagination and for reflection. If you 'know' the bronte ['story' ?] an exhibition like this will always add a little something to your visit to the parsonage.

Su's work is superb - to me it enhanced the visit to the Parsonage

Incredulously imaginative installation - to me it coveys the sense of the family lives perfectly

I enjoyed your additions to the parsonage museum / The footsteps in particular allowed me to imagine a world where the house was full of Brontes!

[Name] and [Name] found the Brontë Museum to be beautiful, charming and memorable. Will recommend this to friends. Su Blackwell's images help to create a lasting impression of such a beautiful place. Thank you.

What a wonderful Art experience - it really adds to the rooms.

Interesting and subtle installations - really added to the atmosphere. Particularly loved the cloth and letters in the kitchen.

Fascinating paper sculptures in their own right, but in addition so appropriate + creative for the particular rooms. The dress with leather gave such a feeling of fragility; the childrens study toys, adventure but insubstantial. Thank you.

I enjoy the exhibition! It adds some artistic qualities to the house.

The exhibition was so cool! Very creatively gave us more detail about the Bronte family & enhanced the experience!

An imaginative way to link the spirit of the Brontes to contemporary objects. I particularly appreciated the cloth piece in the kitchen & the dress of leather.

Found the sculpture added to the meaning, explained the thought processes which went on here.

Excellent - really adds to the atmosphere. Congratulations! Loved the 'footsteps'...

Please keep the artwork as a permanent exhibition - it adds so much to the experience. Thank you - a beautiful place.

The artwork displayed is so wonderful and truly captures another dimension to the house, giving it a totally different feel. Fantastic - thank you.

Very appropriate exhibition - really enhances the atmosphere of this beautiful place.

Thank you, the sculpture added much to the experience of this atmospheric house. Memorable, appropriate and thoughtful.

Hard to imagine that anything could add to the museum but this exhibition adds magic

Love Su Blackwell's work. The house is interesting + great to see on my second visit = the art installation absolutely beautiful

Evocative - taking inspiration from the family & adding something - a different dimension - to the house.

Catherine Bertola, 'Residual Hauntings', 2011

15 pages.

109 comments.

24 comments related to 'Residual hauntings'.

24 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

Extract of comments relating to the exhibition

The sound installation was so beautiful - delicate & fitting as it made the room feel alive./ Residual hauntings gave a sense of presences to each of the rooms - making me look deeper into the pictorial representation of each room./ Really beautiful - Thank you.

Very strong sense of presense in the dining room installation. Haunting and very moving.

Very poignant and moving experience. Beautiful feel to everything.

Thanks for opportunity to stop and think & be absorbed by the sound and visual experiences you've created, from your ideas and understanding of the place & people.

Very informative and interesting. A nice addition to the already fascinating rooms and information.

Awesome. Should be able to take pictures though, but very interesting.

Very nicely integrated with the room

me and my husband found this brilliant!

we found the sound system very interesting and insightful

An interesting and effective idea - very affecting.

It is wonderful that the Parsonage is prepared to be so experimental. Long may it continue! This is how museums can continue to thrive in the 21st century. I applaud your courage & vision.

Very informative and interesting. Thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition. Thank you.

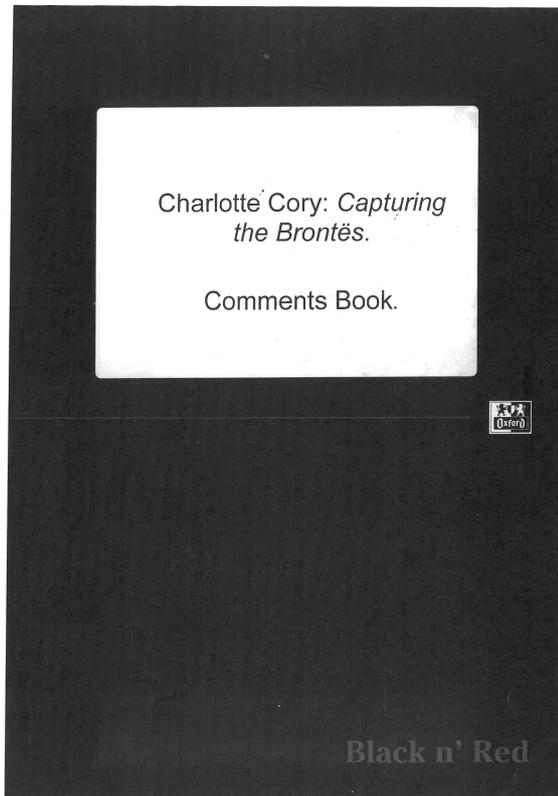
Very interesting and thought provoking experience

Residual hauntings! Sounds spooky!

It sound (sic) quite spooky! Charlotte, Emily and Jane, sound like good writers thogh. [Name] age 10.

I liked my visit, it was really interesting and this house is very pretty. The hauntings were creepy, but interesting aswell. [name] Age 13

Charlotte Cory, 'Capturing the Brontës', 2013



122 Pages

853 comments.

646 comments related to 'Capturing the Brontës'.

149 visitors expressed a positive reaction.

478 visitors expressed a negative reaction.

19 visitors expressed a mixed reaction.

Adds nothing/subtracts

An intrusion adding nothing except confusion.

DISTRACTED & CONFUSING. NOT PLEASANT TO VIEW.

Adds nothing and spoiled my pleasure in the Parsonage

Why? This exhibition doesn't add anything to the experiences of visiting the Brontë parsonage. It is confusing & detracts from the overall experience.

A COMPLETE TRAVESTY! DOES NOTHING TO ENHANCE THE VISIT.

Detracted from the parsonage, could not see originals. Awful - a disappointment. Don't understand purpose - ruined.

A detraction rather than an addition.

Detracts from what we wanted to see.

totally negative reaction - an unnecessary distraction. Surrealism - why? Adds nothing.

THE CORY EXHIBITION IS A DISGRACE. IT DETRACTS FROM THE ETHOS OF THE MUSEUM AND I DREAD TO THINK WHAT FOREIGN VISITORS WOULD MAKE OF IT.

The exhibition detracts too much for me. Love the house and the remaining artefacts.

Responsibility

I am amazed that permission has been given for this exhibition as it will confuse visitors, especially those from abroad, and trivializes the work of the Brontës.

Having made a 750 mile trip to revisit the Parsonage, I am horrified and disappointed to see how the Brontës exhibition has been so adulterated by the pointless exhibition of Cory - this is without any merit. The Brontë trustees should be ashamed!

Whoever decided on having an artist to do this ridiculous exhibition needs their head examining. Talk about spoiling something so FABULOUS!!!!!! | A Disgruntled visitor.

Authenticity

It's a shame you can't see the house as it was left. But it's beautiful.

Loved how everything is still as it was when the Brontës lived here. Not too keen on the animal exhibition.

What a shame about the animal heads - big distraction 240 miles to get here to see something you expect to be 'authentic' | Big disappointment... why do it?

A great disappointment to have this exhibition take the place of paintings and pictures. Should have kept originals and displayed exhibits alongside.

Loved Charlottes room, with her possessions & pictures so carefully laid out and labelled. Incredibly moving to see her clothing and the baby's cap, and the poems are a really fitting addition. | However, really find the exhibition with animal heads very confusing, as to what is potentially genuine but altered and what is purely imagined, and it is quite upsetting at times for a first time visitor (e.g. Branwell's portrait of the three sisters) and just too invasive. | However, I will visit again and do appreciate your keeping the parsonage alive with the spirit of art, despite this! Thank you.

A wonderful experience to stand where favourite books were written & where the authors lived. Tried to ignore the odd animal pictures - did not like these. Please keep the Parsonage true to itself.

I'm sure there's a place for this exhibition but not here - leave it as much as possible as it was. Don't intrude with other things please - it detracts too much.

The parsonage is wonderful however I'm finding the Cory exhibition intrusive - so what is 'Brontë' and what is original. Especially with the furnishings - why do the chairs. I guess people come from all over the world to see 'Brontë! Don't try too hard to be something else - popular culture. What next - Hockney at the parsonage?

I thought that the exhibition was very interesting; however, having not visited the Museum before, I was disappointed that some of the original work was not available to see.

Ruins the experience. Was looking forward to seeing genuine artifacts & pictures etc, not all these weird animal heads etc. Last time I visited it was much better as there was no 'art installation' & everything was authentic & just like it had been

when they lived here. Very disappointed I have brought guests along today & I bet they are thinking what is going on?

Not quite sure what she is trying to do here. Would have been better to see some of the original pictures.

I thought the animals were a bit misleading and I got confused with what was Brontë and what was not. I didn't like it.

Confusing - too many interspersed with the genuine artefacts, which made it hard for my daughter + friend to relate to. Disappointing as we had discussed our visit and looked forward to the event.

Interesting but I didn't feel like the building has much remaining authenticity. Everything felt a bit too polished and sleek so it was difficult to imagine the Brontës here. Rather strange exhibition added to this rather distracted feeling! Charlotte's room is beautiful and so fascinating though!

Comments on other Comments

[not contiguous in this extract]

I agree!!

I disagree! I think it's thought provoking and brave, just as the novels were. Unique and quite shocking - I like it!

Fully agree with above.

I don't think people like this - neither do I - a tasteless distraction - when are you taking them down?

Heartily agree with the above. Irrelevant and disrespectful.

I agree.

I totally disagree - it is fab!

I agree with the comment at the top of the page I'm afraid.

Ditto, I want to see the faces of the people in the photos - would get my imagination going much more!

Agreed.

APPRECIATE ART! Quirky. You make yourselves seem very culture deprived.

I couldn't agree more. Want my £7 back. [name and address supplied here]

Love it, stop being nasty

Whoever wrote the above comment is a misery guts - the exhibition is sensitive to its environment, engaging, charming and witty. An absolute delight, in keeping with some of the more odd aspects of Victorian living.

The book is filled with the voice of conservatives who seem to fear change. Had the Brontës lacked creativity - we wouldn't be here in their house. Here's to creative Charlotte's everywhere.

I don't quite agree with the people above, I will ensure I buy an animal postcard.

Interesting to see the comments on Charlotte Cory's work: I found the juxtaposition of her images made me think: congratulations to the Society for giving me the chance to use my imagination. Much as the Brontës did in this place

I love the intermingling of the surrealist art and the Brontë exhibits. A very novel idea, tastefully done that adds to the museum in a myriad of interesting ways. To the naysayers I say bah humbug!

I feel the need to defend Charlotte Cory's exhibition. We have travelled expressly to see it having enjoyed her exhibition at the Mercer Gallery, Harrogate. I find the animals, charming, amusing and whimsical and her research on the Brontës much enriches the Parsonage.

We felt the Brontës would have been fans of Charlotte Cory's addition. Don't be disheartened by other comments.

Was it installed when the curators were on holiday like Banksy @ Bristol? Well done - the comments alone make it worthwhile + prove whoever stuck their neck out was right.

General Comments Book, 2015. Extract.

The following comments are an edited extract from the general comments book, showing comments left during July 2015.

Good to come back here with my wife and daughter. Remarkable place as always.

Have wanted to come here since I was a child and finally made it for my 53rd Birthday! Wonderful - ! [UK]

3rd or 4th time we have been, but still a very moving experience. Just love it here!! [UK]

A wonderful monument to the genius of the Brontes! [Canada]

WANTED TO COME HERE SINCE OUR TEENS!

Completely carried away by the feeling of visiting Haworth. Its so peaceful and beautiful. Bronte sisters belongings were fascinating. Would love to come again. [Pakistan]

Fascinating experience. Evokes the imagination. Inspirational family.

Truly fascinating a real privilidge to be here. [UK]

Absolutely absorbed. Concentration 100%. Fantastic presentations, clear and well executed. Whole experience will not be forgotten & has made the Bronte books even more a "read again" Thank you.

Lovely for my father to return after 58 years. [Eire]

Very interesting. We always wished to visit here. Thank you.

A beautiful collection and a pleasure to view. I very much enjoy visiting here. [New Zealand]

Congratulations! Well kept, well displayed memorabilia. Thanks much. [West Indies]

It was an almost impossibly thorough and interesting view of these strange lives and stories. While it is clearly difficult to represent exactitudes, it is a beautiful effort! [USA]

Wonderful experience to walk and see and feel the environment which created such talented artists. [USA]

Thank you so much. Coming here has meant a great deal to me + it's heartening to see the Brontës treated with such respect. [Australia]

Wondeful as always! Particularly drawn to the moving memoriabilia - fantastically morbid!!!

To the memory of the Brontes and their lives - the Museum is an apt treasure for future generations. [UK]

This ws so fascinating! So wonderful + mindblowing to have stood in the same places as those of the Brontës.

I read Jane Eyre when I was 11 & it is still my favourite book. An experience of a life time for me. Thank you. [South Africa]

Wonderful museum, keeping the memory of the family alive. Very informative.

Really enjoyed visiting the museum. It brought the family alive for me, an English Student. Hope to come back! Loved it!

Finally got to visit the parsonage, amazing history created right here. An honour to see it + for the Brontë memory to live on for future generations.

The Brontes will always hold a special place in my heart and imagination. Thank you for preserving these relics so that they may continue to inspire future generations!

It was awe inspiring. I feel privileged to have been able to view this. Thank you.

Have wanted to visit ever since reading Wuthering Heights in Year 11 Literature class.

Lovely to see the place again. However, please could you put out more of Emily and Anne's things. Almost everything was Charlotte or her husband. Also, do you have any more information about Aunt EB? She sounds like a highly interesting woman. Really want to know more about her, Emily and Anne. Emily once brok up a dog fight with her bare hands! Give her a few more cabinets to show how awesome she is. Anne has equally interesting stories. I'm sure Charlotte wont mind giving her sisters a little extra space.

Never read the books, but its always amazing to see where greatness was fostered.

Thank you for teaching me that the sisters were gutsy political women & that Emily in particular was inspired by the JACOBITES!!! [Scotland]

I absolutely loved this place. It was so lovely to see where the authors I have read so many times lived and wrote. [Australia]

A haunting and inspiring experience. [USA]

Amazing! So eery [sic] and inspiring to walk in the same rooms the Brontës would have walked in.

Amazing! Recaptures the past of an amazing family.

Nice, but the iPad and other things from the "Sounds" project detract from the otherwise wonderful ambience. [USA]

Very interesting visit. I noticed the enlargement of the museum from my last visit nearly 40yrs ago. [Australia].

We're going to read their masterpieces again as soon as we can!

Great to see the stories behind the stories, as it were. [New Zealand]

Very interesting, we learn a lot, and we want to read all the books they've written. We came with our school for one week [sic]! This is the best visit we did yet! [Switzerland]

Have loved being here at this historic place. [Australia]

Absolutely mesmerizing! I almost felt that I am living in 1840s along with the Brontes! [India]

Second time here, so much history so close to home. Love it here.

I studied Wuthering Heights for A level English. Coming to Haworth has made the book come to life. A meaningful journey for any serious student of English.

A pilgrimage from the other side of the world! Thank you!

Interesting, enjoyed our time here.

Very interesting & inspiring!

Jane Eyre is my favourite book - loved it for fifty years. Wonderful visit.

Need to be further explored next time. Touched by their stories.

/Extremely well done, thanks & congratulations to the Brontë Society.

Loved it. Great.

Thoroughly thrilled and enjoyable.

So awe inspiring to be able to be where all those books were dreamed up, and to see their actual handwriting. Thank you for reproducing & preserving everything so carefully.

A very interesting and informative visit Thank you

Planned for 3 years - Got here! Loved it!

Fascinating!!

As a high school English teacher in Illinois (USA), I am in literary bliss. *I teach Wuthering Heights!

Wonderful experience [sic].

Amazing learning and seeing where the Brontë family lived. Would recommend to people.

Remarkable. Truly magnificent. A treasure indeed. Thank you.

Beautiful museum - an absolute treasure. I had goosebumps throughout.

A house with a great feeling of tragedy but well presented.

Lots of information Will come back for the open days.

Loved the displays made me understand her novels more.

The lives of the Brontës sisters although short, will live through the lives of their books.

Awesome!

Always a delightful, enlightening experience visiting Haworth.

What a fascinating and carefully curated museum! The care and attention to detail does ample justice to this remarkable family. A treasure for the nation. "Yes, I am Heathcliff!"

It has been an honour to visit the home of the famous Brontë sisters & family.

It was so interesting to see the lives [sic] of the Brontës and to see where my favourite love story started.

A wonderful treasure to be able to visit - thank you

A lovely tribute to the Brontë family and their writings. Thank you for keeping their memory alive!

A beautiful museum filled with interesting stories and English literary characters.
Well done!

Wonderful! I've been waiting to come here for a long time.

Amazing - worth every penny.

Thank you for a delightful visit! [Sweden]

Thank you for a joyful time! [USA]

Enjoyed the walk through! [USA]

Paintings should all have labels attached.

I was thrilled to walk where Charlotte once walked, and to stand in the room
where my favourite book was written. [USA]

What a beautiful museum! The preservation of these priceless artifacts from
astounding authors is simply inspiring! [USA]

Appendix 6 Intersecting Practices - Event Information

Intersecting Practices

assessing the role and impact of contemporary art in heritage spaces

Events

1. Audience impact of contemporary art and heritage

Speakers:

Jordan Kaplan and Danielle Arnaud, Tatton Biennial

Steve Swindells, University of Huddersfield

3 APRIL. 2.30 – 4.30

University of Leeds, G19, Old Mining Building, LEEDS

In this seminar we aim to explore the kinds of interpretation strategies used when contemporary art is placed in heritage settings. We also hope to address questions regarding how we might evaluate the impact of these kinds of projects, taking into consideration that these projects sometimes create negative reactions by audiences.

2. Strategic impact of contemporary art and heritage

Speakers

Judith King, Arts and Heritage

Peter Sharpe, Kielder Art and Architecture Programme

23 APRIL 3pm – 5.30pm

University of Leeds, G19, Old Mining Building, LEEDS

Based on the presentations by Judith King and Peter Sharpe, this seminar addresses the relationship between contemporary art and heritage in the context of tourism, the visitor economy and regeneration agendas.

Furthering previous discussions regarding audience, we aim to discuss methods which may be used to analyse this impact, particularly with regards economic impact which is notoriously difficult for arts organisations to measure.

3. Research impact of contemporary art and heritage

Speakers:

Tom Freshwater, National Trust;

Laura Guy, Inheritance Projects

Helen Moore, York Minster

15 MAY 2.30 – 4.30

University of Leeds, Baines Wing, Seminar Room 1.13

With three complementary presentations for this final seminar, we are particularly interested in discussing the way in which contemporary art contributes to heritage research. How, for example, can contemporary art speak about other overlooked, marginalised or contentious histories? Building on our central aim, we are interested in finding ways we might capture the benefit of this work for all stakeholders.

Concluding Workshop

28 May, Leeds City Art Gallery, Main Lecture Theatre.

Times to be confirmed.

One of the central purposes of Intersecting Practices is to establish sustainable links between a wide range of organisations and individuals in order to develop more robust working practices; another is to explore the potential for future projects and partnerships. This final workshop is seen as an opportunity for a more discursive engagement with issues that have arisen from the seminars, but also a very practical opportunity to build on the networks we have created.

Further details and booking:

<http://intersectingpractices.wordpress.com>

Contact us at:

artinheritagespace@gmail.com

A partnership project between:

Bronte Parsonage Museum

Centre for Critical Studies in Museums, Galleries and Heritage, University of Leeds

Pavilion

University of Huddersfield

Supported by:

Creative and Cultural Industries Exchange, University of Leeds