

## The Birth of a Myth The Early Spanish Reception of Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre* (1850s-1901)

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Eight years after the publication of *Jane Eyre*, on March 31, 1855, Charlotte Brontë died in Haworth, already an “idol” in her native country. Her best-known novel had catapulted her to fame. In spite of such prompt success in England and its early translations into other languages such as French, it would take 81 years to have the first renderings of *Jane Eyre* in Spain in book format. Nevertheless, other channels apart from translations contributed to feeding the myth, although it was modest and vague in its early years. This article examines the early reception of Charlotte Brontë in the Spanish press of the nineteenth century and analyses the first manifestations of the novel in, mainly, the Spanish literary system but also in America, which adopted quite varied “shapes” that reveal the ever-expanding quality of this classic book.

Keywords: *Jane Eyre*; Charlotte Brontë; Spanish reception; nineteenth century; afterlife

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## El nacimiento de un mito La recepción temprana de Charlotte Brontë y *Jane Eyre* en España (1850s-1901)

Ocho años tras la publicación de *Jane Eyre*, el 31 de marzo de 1855, Charlotte Brontë murió en Haworth, siendo un “ídolo” en su país. Su novela más popular la había catapultado a la fama. A pesar del inmediato éxito en Inglaterra y las tempranas traducciones a otros idiomas como el francés, aún habrían de pasar 81 años hasta que se publicaran las primeras

versiones de *Jane Eyre* en España en formato libro. Sin embargo, otros canales aparte de las traducciones sirvieron para alimentar el mito, modesto y difuso en sus comienzos. Este artículo examina la recepción temprana de Charlotte Brontë en la prensa española del siglo diecinueve y analiza las primeras manifestaciones de la novela principalmente en el sistema literario español pero también en América, que adoptaron variadas “formas”, revelando la perpetua cualidad transformadora de este texto clásico.

Palabras clave: *Jane Eyre*; Charlotte Brontë; recepción en España; siglo diecinueve; *afterlife*

The Brontë sisters and some of their texts have achieved mythological status and become part of the social imaginary in the Western world. Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* in particular still possess a significant amount of 'symbolic capital', using Pierre Bourdieu's terminology (1987), which has led to the 'consecration' of both the authors and their novels. With regard to *Jane Eyre*, evidence of its long-lasting presence is, for example, the recent streaming on London's National Theatre YouTube Channel of the production directed by Sally Cookson (2015-2016), for housebound spectators on their sofas during the COVID pandemic (April 2020). Neither should the work that has been carried out by the "Prismatic Jane Eyre" research project since 2016, led by Professor Matthew Reynolds at the University of Oxford<sup>1</sup>—founder and chair of the Oxford Comparative Criticism and Translation Research Centre—be overlooked. At the academic level, the project is a highly noteworthy contribution to the task of compiling the numerous translations of the novel around the world, from the nineteenth century to the present day.

International critics have studied the reception and afterlife<sup>2</sup> of some of the works of the Brontës in different geographical and time contexts and have highlighted the mythification of the authors. As regards Charlotte Brontë, this mythification originated shortly after her death. In the first chapter of *The Brontë Myth*, "To Be for ever Known," Lucasta Miller recalled the early popularity of the novelist:

If the twenty-year-old Charlotte Brontë had been told she would one day be a household name, that her picture would hang in a future National Portrait Gallery, and that pilgrims would travel to Haworth on her account from as far away as Japan, she would have been delighted but not altogether surprised. The image of the Brontës presented in Charlotte's own 'Biographical Notice' of her sisters casts them as 'unobtrusive women' shunning fame. [...] By the time she died, at the age of nearly thirty-nine, in 1855, she had indeed become a celebrity. Two years later, with the publication of Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, she became a legend. ([2001] 2005, 3)

Regarding Charlotte's most celebrated novel, in *Brontë Transformations: The Cultural Dissemination of Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* (1996), Patsy Stoneman surveyed the afterlife of *Jane Eyre*, not only revealing the diverse ways in which Western culture has become imbued by the novel, but also how it has been appropriated to serve multiple ideological purposes. Focusing on the English-speaking world, Erica Hateley's article "The End of *The Eyre Affair*: *Jane Eyre*, Parody, and Popular Culture," took a similar line:

*Jane Eyre* (1847) has not been out of print since initial publication, continues to sell well, and has been the source of at least twenty-one films. Beyond this, the novel has sustained a varied

<sup>1</sup> For more detailed information of the project, see Prismatic Jane Eyre: An Experiment in the Study of Translations (<https://prismaticjaneeyre.org/>).

<sup>2</sup> The term was coined by Walter Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" ([1923] 1992).

‘afterlife,’ appearing in or as numerous sequels, prequels, simultaneous tales, stage plays, a musical, comic books, parodies, postage stamps, and, of course, literary criticism. *Jane Eyre*, then, is clearly readable as one of the consistent motifs of our culture’s self-representation. (2005, 1022)

The volume edited by Rubik and Mettinger-Schartmann in Germany positions *Jane Eyre* as an influential and inspiring source. In the introduction to *A Breath of Fresh Eyre: Intertextual and Intermedial Reworkings of Jane Eyre*, the two editors affirmed:

It is not surprising that a work that has intrigued both a wide reading public and a great number of literary scholars should also have exerted a challenge to successive generations of creative writers. Indeed, few literary works have proved their capacity to act as sources of literary inspiration, to be constantly re-assembled, re-contextualised, re-imagined, re-written, so exuberantly as *Jane Eyre*. (2007, 11)

Indeed, Daphne du Maurier’s *Rebecca* (1938), Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Carmen Gómez Ojea’s *No vuelvas a leer Jane Eyre* (1999), Jasper Fforde’s *The Eyre Affair* (2001), Paula Rego’s *Jane Eyre* (2003) and the collection of short stories *Reader, I Married Him: Stories Inspired by Jane Eyre*, edited by Tracy Chevalier (2016), to cite but a few, reveal the on-going influence of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*.

All the foregoing information is applicable to the Spanish cultural field. Aurora Astor Guardiola has claimed that some of the novels of the Brontë sisters have reached a “mythological” dimension similar to that of “fairy tales” (2006, 38). In *Proceso a la leyenda de las Brontë*, the author seems to hint at the decisive role of film adaptations in the incorporation of the Brontë imaginary: “in addition to the hundreds of thousands of people who have read *Jane Eyre* or *Wuthering Heights*, there must be a similar number of people who, without having read the novels, have felt captivated at some point by the gothic house on the moors and by the life of its inhabitants” (25). This may be the case in Spain where the projection of audiovisual material on *Jane Eyre* began in 1919<sup>3</sup> and has flowed incessantly since—both in the cinema and on TV—the most recent version by Cary Fukunaga having premiered in Spanish cinemas on December 2, 2011.

Besides the visual representation, the mythification of Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre* is the result of more than one hundred and fifty years of a continuous presence through, for instance, translations, theatre plays, critical reviews, and teaching materials. It remains contemporary, moreover, given the publication in September 2015 of *Todo ese fuego*, a historical novel by Ángeles Caso<sup>4</sup> based on the life of the Brontë

<sup>3</sup> The newspaper *El Pueblo* (Valencia) announced on November 27, 1919 that *Jane Eyre: las memorias de una institutriz* would be performed that day at the Teatro Principal. The names of the principal actors—Valentina Frascaroli and Dillio Lombardi—were mentioned as well, revealing that the film that was shown corresponded to the Italian adaptation by Riccardo Tolentino from 1917 (*Le memorie di una istitutrice* [*The Memoirs of a Governess*]).

<sup>4</sup> Caso is a prizewinning novelist. She was awarded the Premio Planeta in 2009 for her novel *Contra el viento*.

sisters, and the translation into Spanish of John Pfordresher's *The Secret History of Jane Eyre: How Charlotte Brontë Wrote Her Masterpiece* (2017) by Marta Salís and published by Alba Editorial in 2018. Nonetheless, despite such a vast and prolonged afterlife, there had not been a systematic attempt in Spanish academia to chronicle it until 2013. The situation was remedied with the PhD thesis of Ortega Sáez (2013). The thesis, which analyses the current commercialization of Luaces's censored translation of *Jane Eyre* (originally produced in 1943), includes, in the third chapter, a pioneering study of the reception of Charlotte Brontë's novel in Spain from the nineteenth century to the present entitled "Jane Eyres," which is catalogued in Annex 6 ("Jane Eyres in Spain"). The chapter is divided into five different sections—the nineteenth century; 1900-1939; the Spanish postwar period: 1940-1975; 1976-1999; and the twenty-first century: 2000-2012—and it provides the first compilation of the translations of *Jane Eyre* into four co-official languages in Spain (Spanish, Catalan, Basque and Galician), an exhaustive list of rewritings, play adaptations and critical material from the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>5</sup> The author's catalogue opened up paths for research subsequently taken up by other scholars. Following on from this argument of the Spanish Brontë myth, Medina Calzada (2016) studied the Spanish nineteenth-century theatre version of *Jane Eyre* by Francisco Morera and there have been a few further examinations of the novel: at the undergraduate level there was an end-of-degree dissertation (Casadesús Hernández 2017) and a Master's thesis (Rubio Martos 2019).<sup>6</sup> Needless to say there is still a large void that needs to be filled. Here I will be focusing on the early reception of both Charlotte Brontë and her masterpiece, *Jane Eyre*, in Spanish, mainly on the Iberian Peninsula but also in America, spanning the second half of the nineteenth century, up to 1901, when Queen Victoria's reign ended.

At a time when translation occupied a significant position in the Spanish literary system, and proved detrimental to autochthonous production (Lafarga 2021), the beginning of *Jane Eyre*'s journey was discreet. Unlike the early popularity in Spain of the texts of other nineteenth-century writers like Byron (Cardwell 2004), Scott (García González and Toda 2014), and Dickens (Galván and Vita 2013; Stone 2021), Charlotte Brontë's timid early reception seems to run parallel to that of, for instance, George Eliot.<sup>7</sup> Their novels would not circulate widely until the twentieth century, and in the case of Eliot her complete *oeuvre* is still not available in Spanish (Lorenzo-Modia 2016, 219). Also, the absence of Charlotte Brontë (and Eliot) in Joaquín Henrich y Girona's *Ensayo sobre la literatura inglesa* (1881), considered the "first complete history of English literature written in Spanish" (Medina Calzada 2014, 141), fits with this delayed takeoff.

<sup>5</sup> Along the same lines, the same author contributed a paper at the 38th AEDEAN Conference held at the University of Alcalá (Madrid) in 2014.

<sup>6</sup> The only previous exception is a succinct reference made by Eterio Pajares indicating the late arrival of the novel in Spain (2007).

<sup>7</sup> In spite of these references to authors in the English language, French enjoyed the supremacy in terms of the source language from which translations of novels were produced in Spain (Figueroa 2021).

Given that access to *Jane Eyre* in Spain was quite limited in the first years following its publication in England, it is very likely that the two sources that have been tracked down would not have reached the general public. As advertised on February 5, 1850 in the *Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid*, the so-called “Librería extranjera, científica y literaria de C. Bailly-Bailliere” in the Spanish capital sold copies of certain books in French and in English and invited readers to subscribe to foreign and national newspapers. *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*, the first two novels published in England by Charlotte Brontë, were to be found among the titles advertised. In both cases the authorship was attributed to Currer Bell, Charlotte’s real identity remaining, therefore, quite ambiguous, at least in terms of gender. This corresponds with the situation in Great Britain, since it would not be until a few months later, on December 10, 1850, when, in her “Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell,” in the second edition of Emily’s *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte would put an end to the speculation with regard to the gender of the Bells:

Averse to personal publicity, we veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming Christian names positively masculine, while we did not like to declare ourselves women, because—without at that time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called ‘feminine’— we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice. (1850, n. p.)

Although the text commercialised by C. Bailly-Bailliere in Madrid in 1850 was in English and most probably did not reach a wide readership,<sup>8</sup> the ambiguity regarding the name of the author is significant. This was the earliest reference to the novelist and her novel in Spain, and five years had to pass before Spanish readers would be acquainted with Currer Bell’s authentic identity.<sup>9</sup>

The second version of *Jane Eyre* that might have been available in the Iberian Peninsula, perhaps by the early 1850s, signals the early introduction of the novel in Latin America after the publication of the novel in England by George Murray Smith, director of Smith, Elder & Co.<sup>10</sup> The Biblioteca Nacional de Catalunya (BNC) in Barcelona holds a copy of *Juana Eyre: Memorias de un aya*, a rendering into Spanish

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<sup>8</sup> According to Martínez Martín, illiteracy in Spain was around 75%, although, exceptionally, in Madrid, it was close to 54% (1991, 57). It is therefore not surprising that access to foreign texts was limited to a small number of people, who would belong to the most affluent social classes (81). This is supported by the fact that books were expensive luxury items (Pegenaute 2004, 331).

<sup>9</sup> Before the “Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell” in 1850, Charlotte had in 1848 revealed her identity and that of her sisters Anne and Emily to her publisher. However, publicly, Charlotte’s name remained a secret until some three years later (Gaskell [1857] 1971).

<sup>10</sup> Smith’s passing was announced in Spain and associated with Charlotte Brontë [sic] (*La Lectura* 1901, 129).

of a French version<sup>11</sup> (*Jane Eyre ou Mémoires d'une gouvernante*) by Old Nick, which was a pseudonym of Emile-Daurand Forgues<sup>12</sup> (1813-1883), published in Havana (Cuba). The rendering of Old Nick, so-called, had first been serialised in the *Revue de Paris* (Brussels) from April to June 1849. Before reaching Cuba, the Spanish translation of Old Nick's instalments, *Juana Eyre: Memorias de un aya*, which seems to be the first Spanish version of *Jane Eyre*, was published in book form by Ediciones La Administración del Correo de Ultramar in Paris in 1849 (Reynolds and Vitali 2021).<sup>13</sup> Next, it was serialised in the section "El Folletín" in *El Progreso*, a journal from Santiago de Chile, between February 7, 1850 and April 4, 1850.<sup>14</sup> This same version circulated in Havana (Cuba), too, in the *Diario de la Marina* between December 1850 and February 1851.<sup>15</sup> Thereafter it was commercialised in book format in two volumes, which is the version that reached Spain.<sup>16</sup> The cultural connection between France and South America in this period has been explored by Pegenaute, and he refers to the commercial vacuum that France was trying to fill after the independence of some South American colonies from Spain (2004, 321-96). This may account for the early arrival of *Jane Eyre* to Chile through a rendering published in France, which then travelled to Cuba and other parts of Latin America and eventually reached Spain.

In connection with authorship, both the French text and its Spanish translation are signed by Old Nick (1813-1883), and not a single reference to the name of the British author appears. The potential readers, who may have got hold of *Juana Eyre*, would have associated the text with Old Nick but not with Charlotte Brontë, nor even Currer Bell. The association becomes quite ironic since Elizabeth Gaskell, the first biographer of Charlotte Brontë, declared that had Charlotte been aware of it, she would have been quite displeased with having such a pseudonym preceding her text

<sup>11</sup> The name of such practice is "relay translation", that is, "the translation of a translated text [...] into a third language" (St. André 2008, 230). This was a common phenomenon at the time. The general lack of knowledge of English and the prestige and popularity of French resulted in most translators using renderings into the latter to produce their own versions in Spanish (Crespo Hidalgo 2007, 62). In this respect, Marín Hernández remembers Leopoldo Alas Clarín's words to Menéndez Pelayo in 1888 about Paris being "the center of the world's literary life" (2007, 321).

<sup>12</sup> Emile-Daurand Forgues was a journalist, writer, editor and translator. The catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France inventories French versions of *The Scarlet Letter* (1871), *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1872), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1876), and *The Woman in White* (1882), among others, by Old Nick. See [http://data.bnf.fr/11898752/emile\\_daurand\\_forgues/#rd70-11898752](http://data.bnf.fr/11898752/emile_daurand_forgues/#rd70-11898752) [Accessed March 21, 2021]. In Spain, an obituary note mentions his reputation as a man of letters and denounces the lack of public recognition of his work after his death. His French rendering of *Jane Eyre* is also mentioned (*La discusión* 1883, 3).

<sup>13</sup> The journal *El correo de ultramar* and Ediciones La Administración del Correo de Ultramar were both founded by Xavier Lassalle (for further information see Cooper-Richet, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> *El Progreso* was the first Chilean journal that included the "folletín" section imitating the French and the Spanish periodical publications. It included works of George Sand, Alexandre Dumas, Victor Hugo, Honoré de Balzac and Charles Dickens (Alvarado Cornejo 2018).

<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately, the exact dates cannot be provided because there are some issues of the *Diario de la Marina* missing from the Biblioteca Digital del Caribe.

<sup>16</sup> Apparently, this translation was later reprinted in book form in Matanzas (Cuba, 1851?) and in La Paz both as a serial novel in *La Época* and, then, as a standalone volume (Bolivia, 1851?) (Reynolds and Vitali 2021).

(in Chapple and Shelston [2000] 2003, 130). In March 1855, having just received the printed volume of Old Nick's rendering of *Jane Eyre*, Gaskell sent a letter to Louis Hachette, her French publisher and, incidentally, the publisher of the volume of Old Nick's version of *Jane Eyre*, in which she affirmed:

I am very intimate with Mrs Nicholls<sup>17</sup> [...]. I think I ought to tell you how very offensive such a title-page as the one affixed to the translation of *Jane Eyre*, which you sent me last night, would be to any English author, especially to a lady bearing the high reputation of Mrs Nicholls (Currer Bell). [...] I allude to the words 'Imités par Old-Nick.' I am sure you are not aware of the extreme vulgarity which all the English affix to the expression "Old-Nick." I know that you would not have put any thing of such mauvais ton on one of your books if you had understood how offensive it is to English people. (In Chapple and Shelston [2000] 2003, 130)

As far as the translation itself is concerned, Gaskell goes on to express what she considers would be Charlotte's view:<sup>18</sup>

And in the next place every author of any note is anxious for a correct and faithful translation of what they do write; and, {if from}<sup>19</sup> \ although from / the difference of literary taste between the two nations {ever} \ it may / become {s} desirable to abbreviate certain parts, or even to leave them out altogether, yet no author would like to have a whole volume omitted, and to have the translation of the mutilated remainder called an "Imitation." [...] [I]t is better to say frankly that I cannot ask Mrs Nicholls to give her assent to the present edition of the \ translation / *Jane Eyre*. If I told her, or any English novelist of character, the form of this title page, I am sure that they would not enter into any negotiation whatever, let the pecuniary advantage be what it might. (130)

In this connection, Cachin (2013), who has studied the reception of Victorian novels in France, and Galván and Vita (2013) agree that this abbreviation was not an uncommon practice at the time the Old Nick version was produced, and that these were called "adaptations" or "imitations." In the Spanish rendering some major modifications can be observed. The book comes in two volumes rather than the three in which Brontë's text was originally divided. The first, dating from 1850, includes 13 chapters and the second, from 1851, 14 more.<sup>20</sup> This reveals that in terms of length this version has undergone severe condensation—a "mutilation" had occurred, in the words of Elizabeth

<sup>17</sup> Mrs Nicholls is Charlotte Brontë's married name.

<sup>18</sup> Gaskell would not know that after her death in 1865 Old Nick was to produce French versions of her *Sylvia's Lovers* (1865) and *Cousin Phillis* (1867).

<sup>19</sup> The original typography has been reproduced.

<sup>20</sup> The last chapter figures as number 15; however, there is no chapter 14, and, thus, the total number of chapters amounts to 14.



Gaskell—since the 38 original chapters were reduced to 27. A further difference is the dedication in the Spanish version, which reads to “Mistress T.....y,” who has not been identified. The dedication is followed by an introductory paragraph to Jane’s life, which does not appear in the source text: Jane addresses a girlfriend, described as “honourable and strict”<sup>21</sup> who, according to the narrator, will find her real nature less “perfect” than she had imagined. This friend, whose identity is revealed later on as Isabel (Old Nick 1850: 16), is not only addressed here at the beginning of the text but on numerous occasions, in the majority of chapters. A dialogue is established between the narrator and her friend that serves for the former to share confidences or comment on the events she is reporting. By way of illustration, in Volume 1, Chapter 9, after Richard Mason is attacked by his own sister, Jane asks her friend Isabel: “Without any doubt you’d ask me, dear friend, if I took advantage of such an extraordinary accident to get an explanation from M. Rochester about the mystery we shared somewhat” (122). This question, aimed at the narrator’s friend, could equally be asked by any reader who may have wondered the same, which is precisely what Brontë had originally intended in her novel with the apostrophes to the reader (Bloom 2007; Coperías 2010; Pyrhönen 2010). As has been demonstrated, the loss of this intimacy with the general reader, together with its significant abridgement, are some of the distinctive features of this rendering.

As regards the press in Spain, up until 1855, when Charlotte Brontë died, just one mention of her text had been recorded. On June 11, 1853 *La Ilustración*—which would later report the novelist’s passing—compared Elizabeth Wetherell’s bestselling novel *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) to Currer Bell’s *Jane Eyre* [*sic*] and the work of H. Beecher-Stowe. Indeed, Wetherell’s novel does bear a thematic resemblance to Brontë’s novel in so far as both depict the ordeals of an orphan girl. Furthermore, the article in *La Ilustración* also praises the dramatic effects created by the three novelists.

Eight years after the publication of *Jane Eyre* in England, Charlotte Brontë died in Haworth on March 31, 1855, already a “celebrity” in her native country. It comes as no surprise that her passing went practically unnoticed in Spain since Charlotte Brontë herself and her most cherished novel had been almost unknown to the Spanish reader until that moment. Just two brief references were made in the press in Madrid. The first appeared fifteen days after her death, when *El clamor público* (Madrid) echoed the *Manchester Guardian*’s announcement of the death of Charlotte Brontë (1855). For the first time in Spain, Charlotte Brontë is referred to as “Mistress Nichol [*sic*], before miss Brontë [*sic*],”<sup>22</sup> and it was also indicated that Currer Bell was her *nom de plume*. The brief obituary note lists *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley* and *Villette* as Brontë’s works, and they are projected as novels of note due to the language and the imagery used. On April 23, 1855 *La Ilustración* (Madrid) noted the demise of the author, simply referring to the “celebrated author” Miss Nicol Brontë [*sic*] and providing her pen name. It is striking that a local

<sup>21</sup> The translations into English of the quotes from the texts in Spanish are mine.

<sup>22</sup> The spelling inaccuracies of the name and surname are a constant in this period. They will be reproduced as in the original sources and indicated with [*sic*] throughout the text.

newspaper, the *Diario de Tenerife* (from the Canary Islands), reported the death of Carlota Brontë on March 31 of three different years (1891, 1892 and 1894). This domestication of the name and the typographical errors continued for years, and not only in the case of Brontë, George Eliot also became Jorge Elliot. Towards the end of the century, both authors' names are still misspelled in *El Liberal. Diario Democrático de Menorca* (1889). On the other hand, the newspaper praised both Brontë and Eliot, together with Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Walter Scott, Byron, Shelley, and a great many others, as "a series of continuous literary monuments" from Great Britain (1).

The first Spanish product that derives from *Jane Eyre* seems to be the theatre play by the Catalan jurist and man of letters Francisco Morera y Valls<sup>23</sup> (Medina Calzada [2016]). The manuscript of *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*<sup>24</sup> dates from 1859 and although it remains a mystery whether the performance in fact took place, it was suggested by the theatre censor, Ferrer del Río, that Saint John Rivers's condition as a representative of the Anglican Church be omitted.<sup>25</sup> The 66-page printed volume of the play from 1869, printed in Barcelona by Salvador Manero, maintains the distortion in Saint John Rivers's character and describes Jane Eyre's cousin as "a young man called Saint-John, a young man who, sympathetic with Juana's misfortunes, has fallen in love with her: he wants to marry her and take her to India" (60). Other modifications in the play relate to the cast: there are thirteen characters, some of whom were present in Charlotte Brontë's novel and others who have been incorporated. Lord Rochester, Juana Eyre and Adela are easily identifiable, for instance. However, there are some other names more difficult to place, either because they have been substantially modified or because they were not in the source text. Mrs. Reed, who has become Mistris Sara Hollister, has two children in the play rather than three (Ricardo is John Reed and Herminia Clarens is one of the Reed sisters); Mr. Brocklehurst is now Doctor Blackorst; Mrs. Fairfax is Mistris Clara; and Isabel seems to be a combination of Abbot and Bessie, two servants at Gateshead. The new characters are Sir Guillermo Smith<sup>26</sup> and Capitán Enrique Harding.<sup>27</sup>

Almost thirty years after Morera y Valls wrote his theatre version of *Jane Eyre*, there was renewed interest in his play. On March 4, 1885, *La Publicidad* announced the premiere of *Juana Eyre* that evening in the Romea Theater in Barcelona, and the name of one of the

<sup>23</sup> For more lengthy biographical details, see Masiera (1913, 8) and the *Enciclopedia Universal ilustrada europeo-americana* (1958, 1034).

<sup>24</sup> Following Medina Calzada's argument, the Spanish play is based on *Jane Eyre, drame en quatre actes, précédé de L'orpheline, prologue en un acte*, by Victor Lefèvre and Alphonse Royer, which premiered in Brussels on November 29, 1855 and was also published in book form the same year. The first theatrical version of the novel dates back to 1848, when it premiered in London only three months after the text was published (Stoneman 2007).

<sup>25</sup> Ferrer del Río held the post of official theatre censor between 1857 and 1863. He was the only one responsible for unifying censorship criteria. Medina Calzada refers to the study of Rubio Jiménez (1984) on the censorship of the period and the role of Ferrer del Río, who "used to be censorious about political and moral issues" (2016, 71).

<sup>26</sup> He is a relative of the Reeds, who become the Hollisters in Morera y Valls's version.

<sup>27</sup> He seems to be an acquaintance of the Hollisters who supports young Jane and defends her against the abusive treatment she receives at Gateshead. He may be based on Mr Lloyd, the Reeds' apothecary.

actors, Teodoro Bonaplata (Barcelona 1841-1904),<sup>28</sup> is mentioned. According to some sources, the performance was a fiasco following the opening night. Firstly, *La Vanguardia* recommended the playhouse stop running the show after “the failure of such dramatic nonsense” which had “ridiculed respectable actors such as Bonaplata and the rest of the cast” (1885, 2-3). Similarly, *La Dinastía* made an oxymoronic assessment, speaking of the “distressing success” of the play (1885, 2). What is worthy of attention in these reviews is, once again, the lack of uniformity, this time, regarding the title of the play since both sources refer to *Juan [sic] Eyre*, transforming the gender of Charlotte Brontë’s protagonist, though *La Publicidad* had used the correct title just a few days before.

The following reference to *Jane Eyre* is to be found at the Biblioteca Nacional (Madrid), which holds three editions of the French rendering *Jane Eyre ou Les mémoires d'une institutrice*, from 1865, 1872 and 1875. It is stated in all of these editions that the translation was “traduit avec l’autorisation de l’auteur par Madame Lesbazeilles-Souvestre.” This version, which comes in two volumes, was originally published in 1854 in Paris by D. Giraud and, later, in 1856 by the Libraire de L. Hachette et Cie—the same editor who had been in charge of the Old Nick translation—in the series “Bibliothèque des meilleurs romans étrangers.” The translation by Madame Lesbazeilles-Souvestre was the first French rendering of Brontë’s novel and it originally had the title *Jeanne Eyre, ou les mémoires d'une institutrice*.<sup>29</sup> The presence of these French texts in Madrid could be due to the fact that Lesbazeilles-Souvestre’s version of *Jane Eyre* may have been read by members of elitist circles, where learning French was typical (Cáceres Würsig 2000, 66).

Besides these volumes, during the 1860s and 1870s Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre* would remain quite obscure, with just a small number of succinct references in the press of Madrid, generally expressing admiration for both the author and her novel. Antonio Alcalá Galiano (1789-1865), an Andalusian politician and writer, provided an extensive account of the novel as a genre and discussed several celebrated authors from Germany, Italy, Spain and Great Britain in *La América* (1862, 12-14), to which he contributed. His trips, first to Naples and, years later, his exile in London (1823-1834)—where he taught Spanish literature and language—might have awakened his interest in foreign literature. Alcalá Galiano praises Carlota Brontë’s skills as a writer which, he goes on to say, made her worthy of a biography. The next reference to Brontë can be found in 1866 in the *Revista Hispano-Americana* (106-12), which would supply a translation into Spanish of a text by Hippolyte<sup>30</sup> Taine about English Romantic authors. Such renderings of foreign reviews represent a new source for introducing references

<sup>28</sup> For further information on Bonaplata, see Vila Fernández’s biographical note in the *Enciclopèdia de les arts escèniques catalanes*, which can be accessed at <https://www.institutedelteatre.cat/publicacions/ca/enciclopedia-arts-esqueniques/id1678/teodor-bonaplata-sistachs.htm>.

<sup>29</sup> Williams has studied this French translation (2012). It was a very successful rendering, published into the twenty-first century.

<sup>30</sup> The historian and critic’s first name, provided at the end of the article, is incorrect (Henry). The excerpt translated is from *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, volume III, book IV, *L’âge moderne*. It had been published in Paris by Hachette et Cie in 1863.

to authors from abroad into Spain and for providing information as to the reception of those authors elsewhere. In this particular case, despite the brevity of the allusion, the point made is significant: Currer Bell and Elizabeth Barrett Browning (mistress Browning in the translation) are identified both as prominent writers of the last half of the century and as “pro-feminist”: “defending the initiative and independence of women” (112). In a similar way, Julio Carlier’s essay about *A Histori [sic] of our own Times* by Justin MacCarthy (1879), includes Charlotte Brontë among the leading authors of the Victorian period (*Revista contemporánea* 1879, 351).

Such praise of the author and the brand-new interest in and wider knowledge of English literature (Calzada Medina 2014, 149) may have been what led the daily newspaper *El globo* to serialize a rendering of *Jane Eyre* in the section “El folletín de *El globo*.” This translation, which turns out to be the first translation of *Jane Eyre* published in the Iberian Peninsula, is a version from the French rendering by Mme Lesbazeille-Souvestres, which circulated in Spain. Between September 9, 1882 and February 7, 1883 one hundred and thirty-four instalments of *Juana Eyre, ó memorias de una institutriz* came out on an almost daily basis<sup>31</sup> on the bottom third of the final page of the publication. It is remarkable that *Jane Eyre*, a novel which had not originally been commercialized in Great Britain as a serial publication, experienced this twist of fate in the Spanish literary market. On this occasion the text is attributed to Currer Bell, is catalogued as an English novel and there is no indication of who is responsible for the Spanish rendering. Structurally, although the number of chapters matches the original, each instalment does not correspond to a chapter. In fact, there does not seem to be any kind of systematic logic regarding the division of instalments, apart from accommodating to fill the space left on the page: some even finish with incomplete words that are completed in the following issue. In their study of the reception of Dickens in Spain, Galván and Vita indicate this was a common practice in the nineteenth century: “[o]ften, little or no attention or respect was paid to the form of the original narrative (chapter endings, for example); the length of each day’s fragment was determined by the number of words needed to fill the requisite space or columns” (2013: 172). The so-called “folletín”, a regular section in the flourishing market of periodical publications where *Juana Eyre* was included, became an inexpensive instrument to introduce foreign voices in Spain (Pegenaute 2004, 334). In this connection, and with reference to circulation, *El globo* would have reached 25,000 copies per issue by 1880, which would have made Charlotte Brontë’s novel accessible to the readers of the journal in Madrid.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Eighteen exceptions have been identified that correspond to three different circumstances: (i) on Christmas Day there was no publication of *El globo*, (ii) *Juana Eyre* was replaced by a different text, and (iii) the complete section devoted to “El folletín” was excluded. Apropos of the latter two cases, no allusion was made to the alterations in question, which might have left assiduous readers disconcerted.

<sup>32</sup> In relation to the principal newspapers of the time, *El globo* was not one of the top titles in terms of print run: *La correspondencia de España* and *El Imparcial* each had a circulation of around 40,000 daily copies. However, the majority of newspapers had a much smaller circulation that in many cases did not even reach 3,000 copies (Rueda Laffond 2001: 79).

The rest of the decade of the 1880s produced some five further references in the press. Particularly worthy of note is the review by renowned writer Emilia Pardo Bazán in the Madrid journal *La época* (1883, 3).<sup>33</sup> The author, who is known for having introduced *Naturalism* (Baquero Goyanes 1986) into Spanish literature, describes the historical relevance of both the novel as a genre and novelists in Great Britain. Pardo Bazán mentions that by 1883 Charlotte Brontë was already held in great esteem in her native country, as indicated by the “countless pilgrims” that travelled every year to her hometown of Haworth. Although the merit of the novelist is highlighted in Pardo Bazán’s commentary, the identity of Charlotte Brontë remains hidden once more beneath her pseudonym.

The next time Charlotte Brontë’s novel is mentioned it is connected with the divorce trial of Lord Durham and his wife in England (they had married in 1882, three years before). Although at first sight this piece of information may be deemed irrelevant, the connection established with *Jane Eyre* is of a peculiar nature: Lord Durham alleged that his wife was mentally handicapped before they married, which if true would not grant her any right to properties or money. Three different journals reproduce the same note in 1885 (*El diluvio* from Plasencia, March 4, 1885; *El guadalete* from Jerez de la Frontera, March 11, 1885; and *La crónica meridional* from Almería, March 18, 1885), which indicated that *Jane Eyre*’s plot “incidentally deals with the wedding between a mad woman and Edward Rochester, the hero in the novel.” This reductionist and biased approach to the character of Rochester’s first wife substantially altered the content of the novel but was circulated in at least three different Spanish towns.

On January 15, 1890 the Madrid-based journal *La España artística* praised the publication of Leopoldo Terrero’s Spanish rendering of *Jane Eyre*. The translation had been brought out the previous year by D. Appleton & Company in New York and was reissued in 1898 and 1903. The Spanish journal celebrated the “delightful narrative that interests and captivates from its first pages” (1890, 4; my translation). What is not indicated is the nature of Terrero’s rendering: this new version presents a significant condensation of the source text and the result is another abridged version. The text was preceded by a note written by the translator. Firstly, Terrero focuses on the moral dimension of Brontë’s novel when he states that “the author shows precisely how necessary one’s integrity of character and self-esteem are, not only for men but also for women” ([1889] 2012, 9; my translation). For this reason the translator believes *Jane Eyre* to be an example of the “good modern novel”: “a powerful moral and intellectual element unknown in past times.” Secondly, the paratextual information below conveys the translator’s stereotyped opinion about female novelists, which may have been in keeping with nineteenth-century notions of gender, and hints at some of his decisions in the process of translation:

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<sup>33</sup> In her essay *La cuestión palpitante* (1882), Bazán had already discussed the dissemination of foreign writers in Spain.

The author's style, a characteristically feminine product, is embellished by a distinctive quality that only women know how to award, even to trivialities, as in the case of the delicate materials produced by their hands, which become tangled in the hands of men. Thus, in the case of the present translation, I have attempted to reproduce the complex simplicity of the author's language, slightly concealing on occasions, a certain childish arrogance, but only with the utmost discretion, so as to purposely respect her spontaneous naivety. (Terrero [1889] 2012, 9; my translation)

The reference to the "complex simplicity of the author's language" (Terrero [1889] 2012, 9; my translation) seems to indicate that this version may have been produced directly from English, unlike the Spanish version published in Chile and Cuba, which was translated from Old Nick's French and the translation in *El globo*, which was also a translation from French.<sup>34</sup>

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the Madrid *La correspondencia de España. Diario universal de noticias* serialized "¡Mala Sombra!" from March 17, 1891 to April 1, 1891 in the section "Biblioteca de la Correspondencia de España." The author, whose name is not revealed, was clearly familiar with the plot of *Jane Eyre*, as the following conversation indicates:

My wish, I used to say, would be to love a loyal and generous man, an unknown genius, someone I would worship at my heart's altar, whom I would support with my love and faith in times of trouble... So long as he was really a genius, I would not care much if he were poor, obscure, unattractive...

– And also blind?—interrupted Mira, with an ironic smile—like *Jane Eyre*'s Rochester?

– What is *Jane Eyre*?

– An English novel in which there is a hero, similar to the one your heart dreams of... what you must do is read it. I hate English novels with Puritan heroines, who make a sermon out of love and quote the Bible in the most passionate moments. (March 22, 1891, 1; my translation)

The above dialogue can be interpreted as an instance of what, most probably, was still a case of generalized ignorance about Charlotte Brontë's novel in Spain. The character of Mira talks about Rochester, insists *Jane Eyre* be read and expresses some disapproval of traditional Puritan texts. Later, in another instalment (March 25, 1891, 1), a further reference to the novel is made: one of the character's first encounters with the man of her dreams is compared to Rochester and *Jane Eyre*'s first meeting in the woods on their way to Thornfield.

<sup>34</sup> This very early rendering has been marketed since 2012 by 519 editors in inexpensive paperback and e-book formats. The origin of the text is acknowledged on the copyright page and on the webpage of the publishing house. This is an interesting and praiseworthy attitude given the persistent malpractice on the part of many publishing houses who have used already existing translations from past times and omitting or even changing the name of the translator. On the other hand, what is not disclosed is the condensed character of the text, a fact that has not though been overlooked by purchasers of the book in Amazon.

The latest references that have been found—in the interval between 1897 and immediately after the death of Queen Victoria on January 22, 1901—establish a connection between Charlotte Brontë and the sovereign in two different directions. First of all, the monarch was declared an avid reader with a vast library and Charlotte Brontë was among her favourite writers, together with Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Margaret Oliphant, George Eliot, and many other French and German authors.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, several journals exalted the *grandeur* of the country reigned over by Queen Victoria, making reference to its multiple achievements and progress and highlighting the flourishing of politicians, philosophers and male authors, such as Dickens, Disraeli, Stuart Mill, Thomas Malthus and some “distinguished” female writers such as Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Mary Anne Evans and Charlotte Brontë, who were catalogued as contemporary Sapphos.<sup>36</sup>

In spite of such connections abroad, as the references in the press reveal, members of the Spanish literary circles such as Pardo Bazán and Alcalá Galiano were aware of the repercussion of Charlotte Brontë and her novel in other contexts, although this knowledge does not seem to have reached the general public in Spain in the period under examination. On the one hand, *Jane Eyre* seems to have circulated in English and in French, placing it out of reach for the majority of Spaniards. On the other hand, even if Morera y Valls’s play had been performed in Madrid as well as in Barcelona, it looks as if it was not a remarkable success. And, finally, the serialization in *El globo* only provided limited access to readers in Madrid.

Except for Terrero’s rendering, the creations produced in the Iberian Peninsula, as well as in Latin America, confirm the preeminent position of French during the nineteenth century, since they are translations from versions originally produced in this language. The novel was introduced in the French literary market very soon after its publication in England and adopted varied shapes, which then spread beyond the country. In 1849 the first translation of *Jane Eyre* into Spanish—from Old Nick’s French—was published in Paris, then travelled to Chile, Cuba and Bolivia and only reached Spain afterwards.

Charlotte Brontë herself along with her masterpiece seem to have remained like shadows in the darkness, hidden below a confusing amalgam of identities: Juana, Jane, Carlota, Charlotte, Bronte, Brontë, Bronté, Currer, Bell, Nichols, etcetera. The so-called Brontë myth originated timidly and did not spread widely in nineteenth-century Spain. It was not until decades later that the fate of the Spanish *Jane Eyre* changed: the novel was published for the first time in book format in 1928 and from then on numerous translations proliferated contributing to its incorporation into the collective imaginary.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The journals that discuss this aspect are: *El Bien Público* (May 15, 1897), *La Ilustración Artística* (February 4, 1901, 92), *La veu de Tortosa* (February 10, 1901) and *El Álbum Ibero-Americano* (April 7, 1901, 146).

<sup>36</sup> *El Bien Público* (July 3, 1897) and *La España Moderna* (February 1901, 123 and 131).

<sup>37</sup> Research for this paper was undertaken as part of the TRACE project (Traducción y Censura / Translation and Censorship), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (FFI2012-39012-C04-03).

### Annex 1: Translations and rewritings of *Jane Eyre* into/in Spanish in the nineteenth century in France and America

- 1) 1849, *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya* (Translation into Spanish from Old Nick's *Jane Eyre ou Mémoires d'une gouvernante*. Book form. La Administración del Correo de Ultramar, Paris, France)
- 2) February 7-April 4, 1850, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. (Serial novel in *El Progreso*, Santiago de Chile, Chile)
- 3) December 1850-February 1851, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya* (Serial novel in *Diario de la Marina*, Havana, Cuba)
- 4) 1850, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. Book form. Volume I. (Publisher Imprenta del Diario de la Marina, Havana, Cuba)
- 5) 1851, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. Book form. Volume II. (Publisher Imprenta del Diario de la Marina, Havana, Cuba)
- 5) 1851?, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. Book form. (Imprenta de Gobierno por S.M. Matanzas, Cuba)
- 6) 1851?, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. (Serial novel in *La Época*, La Paz, Bolivia)
- 7) 1851, Reprint of *Juana Eyre o Memorias de un aya*. Book form. (Publisher La Época, Imprenta Paceña, La Paz, Bolivia)
- 8) 1889, *Jane Eyre* (Translation into Spanish by Leopoldo Terrero. Book form. D. Appleton & Company, New York)

### Annex 2: Translations, rewritings and adaptations of *Jane Eyre* in the nineteenth century in Spain

- 1) 1859, *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*, Francisco Morera y Valls (Play)
- 2) 1869, *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*, Francisco Morera y Valls (Printed volume of the play)
- 3) 1882-1883, *Juana Eyre ó memorias de una institutriz* (Serial publication in *El globo*)
- 4) 1885, *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*, Francisco Morera y Valls (Performance of the play, Romea Theater, Barcelona)

### Annex 3: List of articles in the Spanish press which refer to *Jane Eyre* and/or Charlotte Brontë/Currer Bell

- 1) February 5, 1850, *Diario Oficial de Avisos de Madrid* (Currer Bell / *Jane Eyre*)
- 2) June 11, 1853, *La ilustración* (Currer Bell / *Jane Eyre*)
- 3) April 15, 1855, *El clamor público* (Death of Charlotte Brontë)
- 4) April 23, 1855, *La ilustración* (Death of Charlotte Brontë)
- 5) May 31, 1891, *Diario de Tenerife* (Death of Charlotte Brontë)
- 6) May 31, 1892, *Diario de Tenerife* (Death of Charlotte Brontë)
- 7) May 31, 1894, *Diario de Tenerife* (Death of Charlotte Brontë)



- 8) March 6, 1885, *La Vanguardia* (Review of performance of *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*, Francisco Morera y Valls [Romea Theater, Barcelona])
- 9) March 7, 1885, *La Dinastía* (Review of performance of *Juana Eyre: Drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*, Francisco Morera y Valls [Romea Theater, Barcelona])
- 10) November 12, 1862, *La América* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 11) August 27, 1866, *Revista Hispano-americana* (Currer Bell)
- 12) June 15, 1879, *Revista contemporánea* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 13) March 19, 1883, *La época* (Currer Bell)
- 14) March 4, 1885, *El diluvio* (Jane Eyre)
- 15) March 11, 1885, *El guadalete* (Jane Eyre)
- 16) March 18, 1885, *La crónica meridional* (Jane Eyre)
- 17) October 18, 1889, *Diario Democrático de Menorca* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 18) January 15, 1890, *La España artística* (Charlotte Brontë / Jane Eyre)
- 19) March 22, 1891, *La Correspondencia de España. Diario Universal de Noticias* (Jane Eyre)
- 20) March 25, 1891, *La Correspondencia de España. Diario Universal de Noticias* (Jane Eyre)
- 21) May 15, 1897, *El Bien Público* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 22) July 3, 1897, *El Bien Público* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 23) February 1901, *La España moderna* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 24) February 4, 1901, *La Ilustración Artística* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 25) February 10, 1901, *La veu de Tortosa* (Charlotte Brontë)
- 26) April 7, 1901, *El Álbum Ibero-Americano* (Charlotte Brontë)

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