



The Oxford Companion to the Brontës

By Christine Alexander, Margaret Smith

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The works of Anne, Charlotte, and Emily Brontë are among the best-known in English literature. From the masterly fusion of romance and realism in *Wuthering Heights* to the passion and drama of *Jane Eyre*, the works of these three sisters have captured the hearts and imagination of readers everywhere. Their tragic, real-life stories only contribute to the timeless attraction to these three brilliant writers. With *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës*, Christine Alexander and Margaret Smith provide a comprehensive volume about the lives, works, and reputations of the Brontë sisters, together with their father, Patrick, an author in his own right, and their brother, Branwell who, along with his sister Charlotte, created the imaginary world of Angria. This authoritative guide is organized in an easy-to-use A-Z format, offers extensive cross-referencing, and provides chronologies of the sisters' work, including a list of juvenilia, first line of poems and Brontë art, as well as maps and illustrations for quick, easy study and further research. In addition, the authors offer insight into the publishing history, biographical studies, collectors and museums, book illustrations, and theoretical and critical approaches to the Brontës' writing. *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* is a unique and fascinating guide that will appeal to all lovers of English literature.

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Editorial Review

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For almost two centuries both general readers and scholars have been intrigued by the writings that sprang from the fertile imaginations of a curate's children raised on the moors of Yorkshire. Covering not only the three Brontë sisters who have attracted the most attention (Anne, Charlotte, and Emily) but also their brother, Branwell, and their father, Patrick, this guide provides a wealth of information about their lives and works and the society in which they lived, as well as historical and critical perspectives on their writings. The more than 1,000 alphabetically arranged entries include lengthy articles on each Brontë and his or her individual works and shorter entries on characters and places in the writings and real people, places, and other entities associated with them. In addition, numerous substantive thematic and topical entries (for example, *Art of the Brontës*, *Health and medicine*, *Psychoanalytic approaches*) help to elucidate the Brontës' world and their creative output. Bibliographical references generally accompany longer entries, and a selective bibliography appears at the end of the volume. The latter provides no references to relevant Internet sites, an unfortunate omission, since useful tools for studying the Brontës are available on the Web. Additional features include a generous network of cross-references, a number of black-and-white illustrations, a chronology, and a section that identifies dialect and obsolete words in the Brontës' writings. Providing an overview of the entire work is a classified index that arranges entries into topical categories, enabling users to find, for example, all entries relating to adaptations of the Brontës' works or to places where they traveled.

As Brontë scholars, Alexander and Smith are highly qualified to have undertaken this project, and they and the seven other contributors have created a valuable compendium of impeccable scholarship. Containing more than twice as many entries as *The Brontës: A to Z* (Facts On File, 2003), this excellent guide is the most comprehensive and scholarly reference companion to the Brontës now available. It is highly recommended for all academic libraries and larger public libraries. *Marie Ellis*

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Review

'wonderfully detailed' Christopher Hirst and Christina Patterson, Independent 'This book is a must...A treasure trove of a book' Brian Maye, Irish Times

About the Author

Christine Alexander is Professor of English at the University of New South Wales. Her books include the multi-volume *Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (1987-91), *The Art of the Brontës* (1995), and the British-academy prize-winning book *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* (1982). She has also published widely on gothic literature, Jane Austen, critical editing, literary juvenilia, and landscape gardening. **Margaret Smith** is Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Research in Arts and Social Sciences, University of Birmingham. She has edited many of the Brontës' works, including *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, *Shirley*, *Villette*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and the Brontë letters.

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