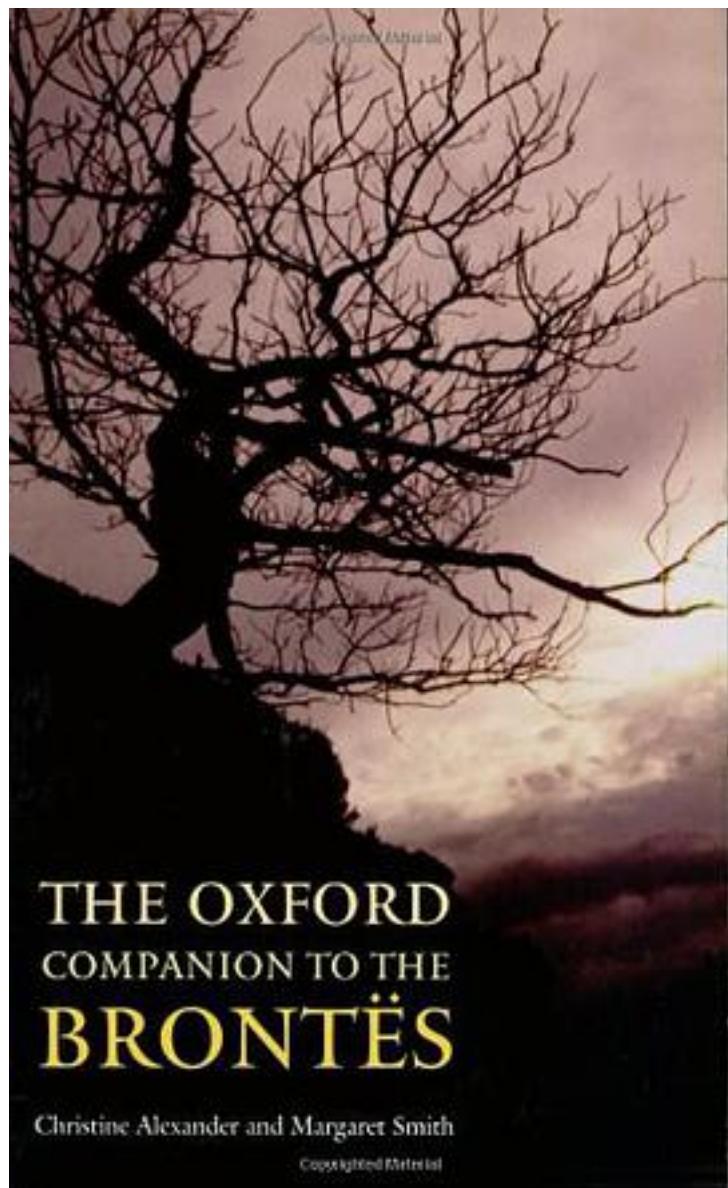


# The Oxford Companion to the Brontës



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The Oxford Companion to the Brontes provides both comprehensive and detailed information about the lives, works, and reputations of the Brontes - the three sisters Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, and their father and brother Branwell - all of whom were published writers. It is the first time so much information about the family has been gathered together in an A-Z reference book. The story of the Brontes has become the stuff of myth: three women living on the wild Yorkshire moors, writing works of weird and wonderful genius. Charlotte Bronte claimed that her sister Emily's novel *Wuthering Heights* was 'hewn in a wild workshop'. Inspired by a deep love of nature and an intensely private imaginative world it certainly was, but Emily's novel, like those of her sisters, is engaged with 19th-century issues and debates. The Brontes lived in a thriving woollen-mill town and participated in local activities - the church, education, concerts, elections, exhibitions. They devoured the latest newspapers and journals, and kept abreast of politics. Their reading was wide and eclectic. A central purpose of the Companion is to evoke the milieu in which they lived and worked, revealing the complex interrelation between their lives, writings, and times. Long entries surveying the Brontes' lives and works are supplemented by entries on friends and acquaintances, pets, literary and political heroes; on the places they knew and the places they imagined; on their letters, drawings and paintings; on historical events such as Chartism, the Peterloo Massacre and the Ashantee Wars; on exploration, slavery, and religion. Selected entries on the characters and places in the Bronte juvenilia provide a glimpse into their early imaginative worlds, and entries on film, ballet, and musicals indicate the extent to which their works have inspired others. This is a unique and authoritative reference book for the research student and the general reader - now available in paperback. The A-Z format, extensive cross-referencing, classified contents, chronologies, illustrations, and maps, both facilitate quick reference and encourage further exploration. Entries are also designed to explore scholarly trends and to reflect contemporary directions in literary study. They offer insight into publishing history, bibliographical studies, collectors and museums, book illustration, and theoretical and critical approaches to the Brontes' writings. This Companion is not only invaluable for quick searches, but a delight to browse, and an inspiration to further reading.

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