

# **JANE EYRE ON THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY SPANISH STAGE: INTERTEXTUALITY AND ADAPTATION IN FRANCISCO MORERA'S VERSION OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S NOVEL**

Sara Medina Calzada, Universidad de Valladolid

Email: smedina@fyl.uva.es

**Abstract:** This paper examines Francisco Morera's *Juana Eyre* (1869), a stage version of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* which can be regarded as the first significant evidence of works by the Brontë sisters appearing in Spain. Morera's text is based on the French stage version by Lefèvre and Royer (1855), which was, in turn, inspired by the German adaptation by Birch-Pfeiffer. The Spanish adaptor creates a conservative rewriting of *Jane Eyre* and introduces relevant changes in Bertha Mason's storyline in order to eliminate the elements that would challenge the moral conventions of the time.

**Keywords:** Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, adaptation, reception, intertextuality

**Resumen:** El propósito de este trabajo es analizar *Juana Eyre* (1869), la adaptación teatral de la novela de Charlotte Brontë compuesta por Francisco Morera, que supone un primer acercamiento a la obra de las hermanas Brontë en España. Está basada en una versión teatral francesa realizada por Lefèvre y Royer en 1855, que a su vez está inspirada en la adaptación alemana de Birch-Pfeiffer de 1853. El autor español lleva a cabo una reescritura conservadora de *Jane Eyre* y modifica la historia de Bertha Mason para eliminar aquellos aspectos controvertidos que no se adecuan a la moral de la época.

**Palabras clave:** Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, adaptación, recepción, intertextualidad

## 1. INTRODUCTION

When Charlotte Brontë published *Jane Eyre* in October 1847, little could she have imagined that her novel would be adapted for the stage only three months after its publication. But this was the case: John Courtney's *Jane Eyre or The Secrets of Thornfield Manor* premiered at the Victoria Theatre, London, in January 1848 (Stoneman 2007: 20). Courtney's play was just the first in a series of dramatic adaptations that were produced in Britain, Continental Europe, and the United States of America in the second half of the nineteenth century. These early stage versions were followed by numerous films, TV series, ballet adaptations, opera productions, musical versions, graphic novels, prequels, sequels, and retellings of Brontë's masterpiece which have appeared over the course of the

last century and a half. *Jane Eyre* has certainly proved susceptible to adaptation and it still inspires new responses and adaptations nowadays, such as the stage production directed by Sally Cookson, which ran at the London National Theatre from September 2015 to January 2016, or the Northern Ballet's version choreographed by Cathy Marston, which premiered in Doncaster on 19 May 2016.

This proliferation of reworkings of Charlotte Brontë's novel forms part of the phenomenon that has been termed "the Brontë myth". This label was coined by Lucasta Miller, who has analysed the process by which the Brontë sisters have become cultural icons (Miller 2003). Readers and critics have not only been fascinated with Charlotte, but also with her sisters, predominantly with Emily and, to a lesser extent, with Anne. In fact, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* has undergone a series of adaptations on a scale similar to that of *Jane Eyre*. The adapted versions of these novels have traditionally been associated with popular culture and, as a result, they have been commonly disregarded by academics. However, over the last few decades, *Jane Eyre*'s "afterlives" have attracted some scholarly attention. The cultural dissemination of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* has been examined by Patsy Stoneman (1996) in her study of the nineteenth and twentieth-century rewritings and cross-media adaptations inspired by these novels. Versions of *Jane Eyre* have been also explored in the collection of essays edited by Margarete Rubik and Elke Mettinger-Schartmann (2007) and published under the evocative title *A Breath of Fresh Eyre*. In addition, the nineteenth-century English stage versions of *Jane Eyre* have been analysed first by Donna Marie Nudd (1989: 38–84) and later on by Stoneman (2007), who has edited eight nineteenth-century plays based on Charlotte Brontë's novel.

As indicated above, dramatic adaptations of *Jane Eyre* were produced in Continental Europe too. They enjoyed considerable success in Germany, as Rubik (2015) indicates in her analysis of the German versions of Brontë's text for the stage. *Jane Eyre* reached the Spanish audience as well thanks to the theatrical adaptation composed by Francisco Morera y Valls, who published *Juana Eyre: drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo* in 1869. This play has been entirely ignored by critics and scholars, even though it is the first significant indication of the presence of Brontë's texts in Spain. On the whole, the reception of the works by the Brontë sisters in this country has received little scholarly attention, although three doctoral dissertations have been devoted to the twentieth-century Spanish translations of *Jane Eyre* (Ortega Sáez 2013) and *Wuthering Heights* (Gil García 1993; Pérez Porras 2015). The Spanish translations of *Wuthering Heights* are also explored by Vicente López Folgado (2011), who analyses the instances of plagiarism that can be found in those translations, and by Eterio Pajares Infante (2007), who examines the process of censorship undergone by the translations of these novels in Francoist Spain. María Teresa Fernández Martínez (2013) also tackles the issue of censorship, but she focuses on a Spanish translation of *Villette*. None of these authors examines Morera's *Juana Eyre*. Hence, in order to fill the gap in current research and to shed light upon the early reception of Charlotte Brontë in Spain, this paper aims to analyse this particular Spanish stage version of *Jane Eyre*. The focus will be on the aspects that were revised by Morera so as to adapt the novel to the Spanish scene. Moreover, special attention will be paid to the connections between Morera's adaptation, the original novel, and the other stage versions on which the Spanish text is based.

## 2. FRANCISCO MORERA AND THE TEXTUAL HISTORY OF *JUANA EYRE*

Francisco Morera y Valls (Tarragona, 1826–Tarragona, 1886) is nowadays completely forgotten, but he was a noteworthy figure in the Catalan society of the second half of the nineteenth century due to his involvement in the fields of politics and literature. He was a lawyer who belonged to the Conservative Party and became the president of the Diputació de Tarragona in 1864. He contributed to the press and founded the periodical *El Tarraconense* (1859–1860). In addition, he wrote poetry in both Spanish and Catalan. According to Edgar Allison Peers (1940: 226), he was an admirer of Lord Byron and Victor Hugo and he imitated some of their poems in his *Cantos poéticos* (1851), but he gradually distanced himself from Romanticism. His Catalan poems were signed under the pseudonym “Lo cantor del Francolí” and were collected in the anthologies *Los trovadors nous* (1858) and *Los trovadors modernes* (1859). He wrote for the stage too and the majority of his plays were based on episodes in the history of Catalonia. These plays include *El castellano de Tamarit o los bandos en Cataluña* (1850), *Fueros y desafueros* (1858) and *Justicia catalana* (1887).

Despite his interest in historical drama, Morera would tackle different issues in his stage adaptation of *Jane Eyre*. His *Juana Eyre: drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo* was printed in 1869, but this is not the date of composition. A manuscript of the play dated February 1859, which is kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España (Madrid), reveals that the adaptation was written at least ten years before its publication in book form. The manuscript has survived thanks to censorship because this is the copy of the text that was inspected by the censor Antonio Ferrer del Río. It should be noted that in the late 1850s Spanish theatre was subject to censorship, so plays had to be examined before their performance. As Jesús Rubio Jiménez notes (1984: 202), until 1857 this was the task of the board of censorship (Junta de Censura), but in order to avoid the discrepancies between the different examiners, a royal order passed on the 24 February 1857 established that there should be only one official theatre censor. From 1857 to 1863, this position was occupied by Ferrer del Río, whose comments can be read on the last page of the manuscript of Morera’s *Juana Eyre* which is kept at the Biblioteca Nacional de España:

Aprobar a condición de que en la escena cuarta del acto cuarto no aparezca que la protagonista se va a casar con un sacerdote, aunque se sobreentiende que es protestante, y devuelta al ministerio el 12 de febrero (Morera 1859: f. 118r).

According to Rubio Jiménez (1984: 205), Ferrer del Río used to be censorious about political and moral issues and, on certain occasions, he even made stylistic corrections. However, in this case his only objection relates to religion: the reference to Juana’s marriage to a priest should be omitted. Ferrer del Río expresses the same objection in the report dated 12 February 1859 that he sent to the Spanish Home Secretary (Ministro de Gobernación), in which he adds that, since the episode was not particularly interesting for the denouement of the story, it was better to suppress that reference than to explain that the priest was a Protestant. This report, which can be found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional (Madrid), reads as follows:

Habiendo examinado el drama en cuatro actos, precedido de un prólogo y titulado “Juana Eyre”, no hallo inconveniente en que su representación se autorice, si se modifica la escena cuarta del acto cuarto, de modo que no aparezca que la protagonista se va a casar con un sacerdote; pues como quiera que a la acción no interesa esta circunstancia,

mejor parece suprimirla que explicar en el diálogo lo que sobreentiende, esto es que dicho eclesiástico es protestante<sup>46</sup>.

Those who have read Charlotte Brontë's novel would easily guess that the scene to which the censor refers relates to St John Rivers's marriage proposal to Jane Eyre after her departure from Rochester's house. Morera introduces several changes in connection with that part of the plot, as I will explain below, but his heroine also leaves her employer's residence and is hosted by the family of Mr Rivers, who wants to marry her. In the Spanish adaptation, these events happen off-stage, so the audience knows about them through the following dialogue, which includes the controversial lines in question:

Clara: ... En la actualidad vive en un pueblecito a ochenta millas de aquí con la familia de un sacerdote llamado Saint-Jhon [sic].

M. Sara: ¿Saint-Jhon [sic]? ¿El párroco de Witeross?

Clara: Sí, un joven que compadecido de las desgracias de Juana se ha enamorado de ella: pretende hacerla su esposa y llevársela a las Indias, adonde pasa como misionero (Morera 1859: f.108r).

Following the recommendation of the censor, this allusion to Juana's marriage to a priest is deleted in the printed version of the text published in 1869 (Morera 1869: 60).

There is no evidence to suggest that censorship prevented the performance of Morera's version of *Jane Eyre* since it was approved by Ferrer del Río in 1859 and is thus included in Vicente Lalama's *Índice general, por orden alfabético, de cuantas obras dramáticas y líricas han sido aprobadas por la junta de censura y censores de oficio para todos los teatros del reino y de ultramar* (1867: 72), a list of the plays approved by the Spanish censors between 1850 and 1866. However, was Morera's play actually staged? Although Leigh Mercer claims that it premiered in Madrid in 1859 and even suggests that Rosalía de Castro could have attended one of the performances (2012: 45), *Juana Eyre* is not mentioned in the exhaustive record of the plays performed in Madrid between 1854 and 1864 provided by Irene Vallejo and Pedro Ojeda (2002). Mercer (2012) may have guessed that the play premiered in Madrid because the title page of the manuscript includes the words "Teatro del Circo", which was a famous theatre in Madrid in the mid-nineteenth century. Nevertheless, at that time there was a Teatro del Circo in Barcelona too. In fact, some of Morera's plays, such as *El marmolista* (1855) or *Fueros y desafueros* (1858), were staged at this Barcelona theatre in the 1850s, as Carlos Cervelló Español indicates in his detailed study of the Barcelona stage in the years between 1855 and 1865 (2008: 112, 275). However, Cervelló Español does not list *Juana Eyre* as one of the plays that were performed either at the Teatro Principal or at the Teatro del Circo in the period covered by his analysis. In addition, I have not been able to trace any reference to the representation of Morera's *Juana Eyre* in the press of the time, so there is not enough evidence to affirm that the play was actually performed in 1859 or at any time before the publication of the text in book form in 1869.

46 AHN, Consejos, Legajo 11394, Exp. 26, f. 3.

### 3. MORERA'S *JUANA EYRE* AND THE EARLY RECEPTION OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË IN SPAIN

Morera's stage adaptation of *Jane Eyre* can be regarded as the first significant trace of the reception of Charlotte Brontë in Spain because her novels were not available in Spanish translation until a later date. It is worth noting that, even if Morera's *Juana Eyre* did not premiere in 1859 or was not staged at all, thanks to the publication of his text in 1869, *Jane Eyre* reached Spain for the first time at a considerably early date if we bear in mind the delay in the reception of British literature in Spain in the nineteenth century. This delay affected the dissemination of the works written by the Brontë sisters and the major phase of their reception in Hispanophone world did not occur until the twentieth century. As the list of the Spanish translations of the Brontës's works included in Appendix 1 reveals, the first Spanish edition of Emily's *Wuthering Heights* was not published until 1921 and Spanish translations of the majority of the novels written by Charlotte and Anne Brontë were first published in Spain in the 1940s. This is the case for *El profesor* (1943), *Villette* (1944), *Shirley* (1944), *Agnes Grey* (1944), and *La inquilina de Wildfell Hall* (1945). The only Spanish translations that were published in the nineteenth century were a translation of Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*, which was printed in Santiago de Chile in 1884, and the several translations of *Jane Eyre* that appeared before 1900 both in Spain and Spanish America.

The first Spanish rendition of *Jane Eyre* was published in La Habana, Cuba, between 1850 and 1851, that is, only three years after the publication of Brontë's novel. However, according to Ortega Sáez (2013: 149–150), this anonymous translation, which is entitled *Juana Eyre: memorias de una aya*, was not based on the original *Jane Eyre*, but on the French abridged version that appeared in *Revue de Paris* from April to June 1849 and was written by Paul-Émile Daurand-Forgues (also known as "Old Nick"). Daurand-Forgues's version was published as *Jane Eyre ou Les mémoires d'une gouvernante*, a title that is echoed not only by the Spanish translation that was released in La Habana between 1850 and 1851, but also by *Juana Eyre: memorias de una institutriz* (1882–1883), the first translation of *Jane Eyre* printed in Spain. This anonymous *Juana Eyre: memorias de una institutriz*, which was published in instalments in the Madrid periodical publication *El Globo* from 9 September 1882 to 7 February 1883, is not a translation of Daurand-Forgues's work, although it was probably based on a French translation of Brontë's novel. It is worth noting that the 1862 French translation of *Jane Eyre* by Eugène Lesbazeilles Souvestre also bears the title *Jane Eyre, ou Les mémoires d'une institutrice* and that translating English works indirectly from the French renditions of those works was a common practice in nineteenth-century Spain. Furthermore, another Spanish translation of *Jane Eyre* was published in New York in 1889 by Leopoldo Terrero, but the first translations edited in book form in Spain were not published until 1928, as Appendix 1 shows.

In the light of all this information on the translations of *Jane Eyre*, it is possible to assert that, although in the nineteenth century there were some timid efforts to introduce Charlotte Brontë's masterpiece to the Spanish-speaking audience on both sides of the Atlantic, the widespread dissemination of this novel in Spain did not take place until the twentieth century, and more particularly, until the 1940s, when Spanish translations of the novels written by the Brontë sisters flooded the literary market. Since Morera composed his

stage version of *Jane Eyre* eighty years before that, he can be regarded as a pioneer in the spread of Brontë's fiction in Spain. He produced a rewriting of *Jane Eyre* at a time when no translation of the text had been published in Spain, so very few of his compatriots could have known about Brontë's work and only the cultural elites may have had access to the English original or rather to the French translations that had been published by that time. Given the limited diffusion of Brontë's novel in Spain, the question now would be: how did Morera know about *Jane Eyre*? In order to provide an answer, it is time to determine the sources on which his stage adaptation was based.

#### 4. JUANA EYRE AND ITS PREDECESSORS

Although Morera introduces notable changes into the tale, ones which I shall explain below, his stage adaptation retains the essence of the plot of Brontë's novel. Jane is an orphan girl who is sent to a boarding school by her cruel aunt. She becomes a teacher and she starts working as the governess of Adele, who is Rochester's ward. She falls in love with her employer and he falls in love with her too, but there is an "impediment" to their marriage. Therefore, the core of the plot is not modified by Morera, but this does not necessarily imply that the novel is the main source of his version. In fact, he may not have read it because his play is undoubtedly based on other stage adaptations of *Jane Eyre*.

According to Stoneman (2007: 151), Morera's *Juana Eyre* is a translation of the German version by Charlotte Birch-Pfeiffer entitled *Die Waise von Lowood*. Birch-Pfeiffer (1800–1868) was a successful German playwright who was disparaged by literary critics, but was acclaimed by audiences for her stage adaptations of contemporary European novels, which include versions of Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* and Wilkie Collins's *The Woman in White*. Her melodramatic adaptation of *Jane Eyre*, which premiered in Hamburg in 1853, was an immediate success and was translated into English, French, Danish, and Italian. In the words of Rubik, Birch-Pfeiffer's *Die Waise von Lowood* was:

the most successful nineteenth-century adaptation of the famous British novel and had in turn exerted an extraordinary cross-cultural appeal throughout Europe, where it had been enthusiastically consumed by audiences in many countries and—for all the disparaging critical comments—seems to have encountered little blockage or misunderstanding in popular reception (Rubik 2015: 301).

There are undeniable similarities between Morera's and Birch-Pfeiffer's texts, especially in the first acts. Both of them simplify the plot so that the action would be limited to Gateshead (Jane's aunt's house) and Thornfield (Rochester's house). The Reed family, that is, Jane's aunt and her children, occupy the place of the Ingrams, so the role of Blanche Ingram is played by one of Jane's cousins. Furthermore, both plays introduce the character of Henry Wytfield, who is the brother of Mrs Reed. However, despite the similarities, I would contend that Birch-Pfeiffer's *Die Waise von Lowood* is not the direct source of Morera's adaptation, but rather that the text that he actually used for the composition of his work was a French version of the German play. This French version, which is entitled *Jane Eyre, drame en quatre actes, précédé de L'orpheline, prologue en un acte*, was written by Victor Lefèvre and Alphonse Royer and premiered in Brussels on 29 November 1855. The

text was printed in that city in the same year and its title page indicates that the play was based on the works by Curren Bell (i.e. Charlotte Brontë's pseudonym) and Birch-Pfeiffer.

Before comparing the Spanish and French stage versions of *Jane Eyre*, it is worth noting that France played a significant role as a cultural mediator in the introduction and dissemination of English literature in Spain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As already mentioned, Spanish translations of English works were frequently based on French translations of the English originals. Given the geographical and cultural proximity between Spain and France, for a Spanish nineteenth-century author it would be easier to access a French text than a German or English one. Nonetheless, the connections between Morera's adaptation and Lefèvre and Royer's play are not based just on conjecture. The analysis of the two texts reveals that the Spanish version is a translation of the French one, although with certain variations. The most conspicuous correspondence between the two works can be found in their structures: both authors organize it in four acts and a prologue, as they indicate in the titles of their works. By contrast, Birch-Pfeiffer's play is organized in two parts, of one and three acts respectively. Consequently, Morera reproduced the organization of the French version instead of following that of the German adaptation, which he may not have known. Furthermore, the Spanish adaptor follows the French text so faithfully that many lines are translated word for word and stage directions appear unchanged. This faithfulness is reflected in the following passages:

ROCHESTER, *il entre par la droite en donnant le bras à Jane qui tient Adèle à la main. Mesdames, je vous présente miss Jane, qui est encore un peu souffrante...*

JANE, *lâchant le bras de Rochester, Merci mylord (Elle salue mistriss Reed et Georgine.)*

MISTRIS REED. Miss Jane peut-être fière du cas que son maître fait d'elle... il y a peu de gouvernantes qui soient traitées avec autant d'égards (Lefèvre and Royer 1855: 75).

ROCHESTER. *(Entra por la derecha dando el brazo a Juan que lleva de la mano a Adela)* Señoras, os presento a la pobre enferma, restablecida, aunque no del todo, de su dolencia.

JUANA. *(Dejando el brazo de Rochester y saluda a Sara y Herminia)* Gracias, milord.

SARA. Muy satisfecha debe de estar la señorita Juana del interés que por ella se toma su amo... pocas ayas son tratadas con tanto miramiento (Morera 1869: 45).

In spite of these similarities, there are also differences between Morera's play and its French source. The Spanish author changes some of the names of the characters, so Judith Fairfax (i.e. Alice Fairfax in Brontë's novel) becomes Mistris Clara and Bertha (i.e. Rochester's wife) is called Carlota in the Spanish play. In addition, Morera tends to shorten the characters's lines, but many of these omissions are irrelevant to the development of the plot. Moreover, as indicated above, due to the recommendation of the censor, Morera does not mention that St John was a priest in the printed version of the play (1869: 60). Religious reasons may have also motivated the omission of a line in which one of the characters complains that one should not be thinking about the dead at all times (Morera 1869: 10; Lefèvre and Royer 1855: 12). Nonetheless, the most notable changes introduced by Morera are connected with the story of Bertha Mason, which is altered significantly in the Spanish text. This is not particularly surprising because the most controversial aspect

of Brontë's novel is the subplot of "the madwoman in the attic", which is revised in many of the versions of *Jane Eyre* that appeared in the nineteenth century. In fact, Rochester's attempt at bigamy is presented in three different ways in the stage versions presented by Birch-Pfeiffer, by Lefèvre and Royer, and by Morera. Given the relevance of this part of the plot, these differences deserve to be thoroughly examined.

First of all, it is necessary to bear in mind that Birch-Pfeiffer's play was essentially a conservative revision of Charlotte Brontë's novel. Although some of the early dramatic adaptations of *Jane Eyre*, such as those by John Courtney (1848) and John Brougham (1856), emphasize Jane's complaints of class oppression (Stoneman 1996: 8–9), Birch-Pfeiffer's play does not show any sign of political radicalism. Jane's rebellious claims for equality are appeased and, as Rubik indicates, class conflict is downplayed (2015: 287). Concerned about the morality of the stage, the German playwright eliminated any trace of immoral behaviour too, so Bertha Mason is not Rochester's wife, but the wife of his late brother and the mother of Adele. Consequently, Rochester is portrayed as a compassionate soul who takes care of his insane sister-in-law and his niece and, according to Stoneman, he "is thus not only blameless but ennobled" (1996: 34). Stoneman's analysis certainly challenges Nudd's feminist reading of the text, which pays special attention to Birch-Pfeiffer's positive portrayal of the heroine and the equality between Jane and Rochester (Nudd 1989: 73–82). Nonetheless, as Stoneman argues (1996: 33), the German play actually reinforces conventional gender roles and, more particularly, the role of man as a protector.

On the other hand, although Lefèvre and Royer based their adaptation on Birch-Pfeiffer's play, they distanced it considerably from its German source regarding Bertha's storyline and they moved it closer to the novel. It is worth mentioning that, as noted above, the title page of the French adaptation indicates that the authors had followed both Birch-Pfeiffer and Curren Bell (i.e. Charlotte Brontë) and their treatment of Bertha's plot reveals that they had actually read the novel. In their adaptation, Bertha is Rochester's wife and is locked in his house. Rochester proposes marriage to Jane, but one of his guests reveals that he was married and that his wife was imprisoned in one of the towers of his castle. After knowing the truth, Jane leaves Rochester's house, but she returns later on, just when Bertha decides to set fire to the house. Rochester fails to rescue his wife, but he is not injured in the fire.

Morera must have felt uneasy with the behaviour displayed by the hero of Lefèvre and Royer's play, so he offers an alternative plot development in order to suppress the controversial or potentially objectionable elements of their adaptation. Bertha, who is called Carlota in the Spanish text, is Rochester's wife, but in the first act Clara (i.e. Mrs Fairfax) tells Juana that Carlota had died in Jamaica the previous year. Morera's version thus omits all the allusions to the apparently mysterious behaviour of Grace Poole, to the frightening laughter that was heard in the house, or to Rochester's secret. However, when Rochester announces that he was to marry Juana, one of his guests reveals the truth: his wife, who suffered from a mental illness, was not dead and was travelling to England with his brother so that Rochester could take care of her. It is not clear whether Rochester was misinformed concerning the death of his wife or whether he spread the news of her death knowing that she was still alive. The ending is similar to that of the French adaptation: Juana goes away and when she returns to Rochester's house, his wife causes a fire in which she dies. At the end, Juana and Rochester are reunited and they pray for the soul of Lady Rochester.

This pious demonstration of mercy for the late wife of Rochester is not an original addition by Morera because this scene also appears in the French version by Lefèvre and Royer. Nonetheless, the Spanish adaptor incorporates an element which is not included in his French source: the repentance of Rochester's wife. Whereas in the French adaptation she is said to have thrown herself to the ground and to have died on the spot, in the Spanish version one of the characters tells the others that in the time elapsed between the fall and her final death, she did not cease to invoke God and ask for forgiveness (Morera 1869: 65). The clear implication is that she must have regained her sanity and, consequently, she must have repented of her past deeds just before dying. Her repentance would have perfectly conformed to the principles of the Catholic faith and provided the audience with a good model of behaviour. But at the same time, by modifying this scene and presenting her as a reformed sinner, the Spanish adaptor seems to be declaring the "madwoman" guilty of her own madness, an attitude that he also adopts when he refers to her insanity for the first time. In the first act, when Juana is told that Rochester was a widower, she is also informed that his wife suffered from a mental illness that had been caused by a hereditary disposition to alcoholism (Morera 1869: 22). No compassion is shown for her because her addiction is presented as a self-inflicted illness and, therefore, she is blamed for her misfortunes and those of her husband. Although Charlotte Brontë herself did not show a particularly sympathetic attitude towards Bertha — after all, her story is told from Rochester's point of view —, at least in the novel the husband's behaviour is questioned and his eventual blindness and disablement can be regarded as a punishment for his past deeds. By contrast, the Spanish version does not explain whether Rochester knew if his wife was alive and, in any case, no objection is raised to the fact that he abandoned her in Jamaica. Rochester is portrayed as a victim and, instead of expressing any feeling of guilt, he gives voice to his suffering, claiming: "¡Oh! ¡Suplicio horrible! Ser el esposo de ese monstruo, ¡estar condenado a vivir siempre con esa furia! ¡Oh! No quiero... no puedo... primero morir" (Morera 1869: 61). After Jane's departure and the arrival of his wife, he seems determined to commit suicide, but when he is on the verge of shooting himself, Juana takes the gun from him and her mere presence convinces him that he should keep on living. Juana, who is repeatedly presented as a virtuous and angelic creature, especially in the last scenes of Morera's play, becomes the saviour of Rochester's body and soul, a role also adopted by the heroine of the French play.

Juana's rescue of her beloved Rochester is a clear departure from Birch-Pfeiffer's adaptation, which precisely reinforces male protection over female weakness, as indicated above. Nonetheless, this does not imply a challenge to conventional gender roles or a reaffirmation of female agency in Morera's play because the stress is placed upon the heroine's virtuousness and her ability to make Rochester happy. The Spanish adaptation can be regarded as a conservative rewriting in which, as in previous stage versions, Charlotte Brontë's claims for social and gender equality are silenced. However, Morera's conservatism was not the result of the censorship of state authorities, but rather of the self-censorship of the author, who would not submit a manuscript to the censor if he was aware that it did not conform to the moral and social conventions of the time or to the taste of the Spanish audience. Self-censorship is after all a matter of adaptation or, more precisely, a type of "contextual adaptation" to use the description of Siobhan Brownlie (2007: 230). Morera's

reworking of *Jane Eyre* is thus governed by its context, that is to say, by the necessity of adapting it to the beliefs and demands of the new target audience in Spain.

Morera's intention of making the play suitable for the Spanish stage is reflected in the title page of the printed version, which indicates that the work had been "arreglado a la escena española." This was a common phrase used when referring to adaptations of foreign works, but it is a significant one because it conveys the idea that the adaptation "improves" or "fixes" the faults of any previous version(s) so as to satisfy the demands of the Spanish audience<sup>47</sup>. Given the nature of the changes introduced in his version of *Jane Eyre*, Morera must have considered that the improvement required by the play was moral, rather than aesthetic. The substantial changes introduced in Bertha's storyline, which are the only aspects that he altered significantly in his version, seem to have been motivated by his desire to eliminate any controversial or questionable element that might challenge the set of social, moral, and religious rules with which the mid-nineteenth-century Spanish society complied.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Stage adaptations of *Jane Eyre* engaged in a complex process of diffusion and cultural exchange by which they contributed to a wide dissemination of Brontë's masterpiece in nineteenth-century Europe. In fact, *Jane Eyre* reached Spain for the first time thanks to Morera's stage version, which, even if it was not staged in the late 1850s, was composed and printed before the first Spanish translations of the novels by the Brontë sisters were published in Spain. Morera's *Juana Eyre* participates in this intertextual and transnational dialogue between the original text written by Charlotte Brontë and the subsequent stage versions that it inspired. By adapting, translating, omitting, transposing, and appropriating, each adaptor creates a new rewriting of Charlotte Brontë's novel, in each case being influenced by different generic, aesthetic, social, and moral conventions. Regarding the Spanish adaptation, although most of the material was extracted from Lefèvre and Royer's version, notable changes were introduced so as to adapt the play to the social and moral conventions of Spanish society in the mid-nineteenth century. This conservative revision of Charlotte Brontë's novel was in tune with other stage rewritings of *Jane Eyre*, which tried to delete the controversial aspects of the original text and disregarded the claims for equality and independence that the British novelist expressed through her heroine. Transforming the first-person narrative to a dramatic work almost inevitably implies that the role of Jane's feelings and thoughts would be downplayed, but these stage adaptations silenced not only the voice of the heroine, but also the voice of the author. Charlotte Brontë is not even mentioned in Morera's adaptation and, ironically, the only Charlotte that appears in the text is Carlota, Rochester's mad wife, who for unknown reasons is not called Bertha as in the novel and in the French version. Brontë's work is thus appropriated by the Spanish adaptor, who suppressed her authority, but at the same time contributed to perpetuate the fame of her novel.

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47 I thank Ignacio Ramos Gay for suggesting that I should pay attention to the sense of improvement expressed by the phrase "arreglado a la escena española", which appears in the title page of Morera's text (1869).

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#### APPENDIX: SPANISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BRONTË NOVELS (1850–1950)

##### Charlotte Brontë

###### *Jane Eyre*<sup>48</sup>

- 1850–1851. *Juana Eyre: memorias de un aya*. La Habana: Imprenta del Diario de la Marina.
1859. *Juana Eyre: drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*. By Francisco Morera. Manuscript. Biblioteca Nacional de España, MSS/14158/4.

48 A list of the Spanish translations of *Jane Eyre* published from 1850 to 2012 can be found in Ortega Sáez (2013: Anexo 6). This list does not record the translation that was published in the periodical *El Globo* from 1882 to 1883.

1869. *Juana Eyre: drama en cuatro actos y un prólogo*. By Francisco Morera. Barcelona: Manero.
- 1882–1883. *Juana Eyre: memorias de una institutriz*. Published in instalments in *El Globo* (Madrid) from 9 September 1882 to 7 February 1883.
1889. *Juana Eyre*. Trans. Leopoldo Terrero. Nueva York: Appleton.
1928. *Juana Eyre*. Barcelona: Mentora.
1928. *Juana Eyre*. Trans. José Fernández. Barcelona: Juventud.
1941. *Juana Eyre*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Juventud Argentina.
1941. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. M. E. Antonini. Buenos Aires: Amadeo Bois.
1943. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Juan G. de Luaces. Barcelona: Joaquín Gil.
1944. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Rafael Jiménez Orderiz. Buenos Aires: Sopena.
1944. *Jane Eyre*. Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag.
1945. *Juana Eyre: novela completa*. Madrid: Revista Literaria «Novelas y Cuentos.»
1945. *Juana Eyre*. Barcelona: Juventud.
1945. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Juan Ruiz de Larios. Barcelona: Bruguera.
1945. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Javier de Zengotita. Barcelona: Reguera.
1946. *Jane Eyre: novela*. Trans. Rafael Jiménez Orderiz. Buenos Aires: Sopena Argentina.
1946. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Rosa S. de Naveira. Barcelona: Molino.
1946. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Fernando M. Ungría. Buenos Aires: W.M Jackson.
1947. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. María Fernanda Pereda. Madrid: Aguilar.
1948. *Jane Eyre*. Trans. Juan G. de Luaces. Barcelona: Iberia.
1948. *Jane Eyre. Alma rebelde*. Graphic novel by Ramón Sabatés. Barcelona: Ediciones Reguera.

### *Villette*

1944. *Villette*. Trans. P. Elías. Barcelona: Librería Nausica.
1945. *Villette: novela*. Buenos Aires: Ayacucho.

### *Shirley*

1944. *Shirley*. Trans. Juan G. de Luaces. Barcelona: Iberia–Joaquín Gil.

### *The Professor*

1884. *El profesor: novela escrita en inglés*. Santiago de Chile: Imprenta La Época.
1943. *El profesor*. Trans. Agustín Esclasans. Barcelona: Nausica.
1947. *El profesor*. Madrid: Revista Literaria «Novelas y Cuentos.»

## Emily Brontë

### *Wuthering Heights*<sup>49</sup>

1921. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Cipriano Montoliú. Madrid: Atenea.
1935. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Madrid: La Nave.
1938. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. María Rosa Lida. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Sur.
1940. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. A. Gomensoro. Buenos Aires: Editorial Albatros.
1942. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Juan G. de Luaces. Barcelona: Destino.
1943. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Manuel F. Chepote. Santiago de Chile: Zig-Zag.
1944. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Madrid: Revista Literaria «Cuentos y novelas.»
1944. *Cumbres borrascosas: drama en tres actos y un epílogo*. By Aurelio Tejedor and Arturo Guasch. Barcelona: La Escena.
1944. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Fernando Durán. Barcelona: Juventud.
1944. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Javier de Zengotita. Barcelona: Reguera.
1945. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Luis Conde Vélez. Barcelona: Bruguera.
1945. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Guillermo López Hipkiss. Barcelona: Molino.
1945. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. Andrés Caballero. Barcelona: Vives.
1946. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. J. L. Izquierdo Hernández. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Jackson.
1947. *Cumbres borrascosas*. Trans. El Bachiller Canseco. Madrid: Aguilar.
1948. *Cumbres borrascosas; y Poesías*. Trans. Juan G. de Luaces and Ignacio Mendizábal. Madrid: Plenitud.

## Anne Brontë

### *Agnes Grey*

1944. *Agnes Grey*. Trans. P. Elías. Barcelona: Nausica.
1947. *Inés Grey*. Trans. Amando Lázaro Ros. Madrid: Aguilar.

### *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

1945. *La inquilina de Wildfell Hall*. Trans. P. Elías. Barcelona: Nausica.

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49 A list of the Spanish translations of *Wuthering Heights* that were published until 1979 is included in Pajares Infante (2007: 84–91).