Brontë's excisions as a deliberate attempt to conceal and "censor" its content from her publishers: "Charlotte came up with a system of revision that allowed her to conceal from her publishers the revision process and bolster her identity as a professional writer. . . . The pressure of conceiving female characters that did not seem to be the schematic creations of a female author meant to Charlotte that she would need to excise passages which might have betrayed personal details about the author."[52] The result, according to Marin, is "a more fragmented narrative."[53] She identifies these excisions as the "symptoms of a writing disorder or disease," which she calls the "'Jane Eyre' complex":

> The Jane Eyre complex describes the author's contradictory desire to reveal and conceal personal, even intimate or offensive, occurrences in her own life. . . . She understood that the interpretation of her first readers (Smith and Williams) was decisive for the publication of her work and thus used the process of revision to withdraw or, more accurately, to censor what seemed to her excessive, exaggerated, or too explicit references to her personal life, even willing to jeopardize the novel's narrative coherence by doing so.[54]

It is unusual to claim that any author who was deliberately preparing a novel for publication would feel the need to censor her own fair copy after writing it out, and Marin does not provide any parallel instances for the purposes of comparison. Instead, she pursues an interpretation that centers on the anxiety of the woman author, and turns to fiction for her answers. Material and mind mimic one another: the novel's apparent fragmentation lacks coherence and serves as a mirror of Brontë's own psychological "disorder." The partial-leaf excisions are evidence of a form of self-censorship and psychological withdrawal. Life, in this instance, imitates art; the process of revising the manuscript reenacts conflicts apparent in the narratives of Brontë's own novels.

This interpretation is problematic for a number of reasons. First, the claim pursues a reading of the manuscript that subjects Brontë herself to the kind of "suspicious" and gendering gaze that, according to Marin, Brontë sought to avoid. In doing so, Marin's analysis reinscribes the flawed, essentialist notion of the woman writer as a neurotic (the infamous "madwoman in the attic" analogy that feminists both invoked and, in some cases, later fought to dispel[55]) without

52. Ileana Marin, "Charlotte Brontë's Heron Scissors: Cancellations and Excisions in the Manuscript of *Shirley*," *Brontë Studies* 38, no. 1 (2013): 19–20. I also cite this study in my article, "Reading the Writing Desk"; see pp. 512–18.

53. Marin, "Charlotte Brontë's Heron Scissors," 27.

54. Marin, "Charlotte Brontë's Heron Scissors," 25.

55. In *The Madwoman in the Attic,* Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar seek to identify the "anxieties out of which this tradition [of women writing] must have grown." Yet their model itself is diagnostic, comparing woman authorship to the "splitting or distribution of her identity"—a kind of "'schizophrenia of authorship.'" Charlotte Brontë is singled out as providing "a paradigm of many distinctively female anxieties and abilities." See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1984), xi, xii, 69. More recently, feminists such as Nina Baym and Marta Caminero-Santangelo have drawn attention to the problematic nature of the "madwoman metaphor" and the kind of dichotomous thinking that "identifies women with irrationality in the first place." See Caminero-Santangelo's book *The Madwoman Can't Speak: Or Why Insanity Is Not Subversive* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 1–2.