

to the adhesive's high acidic content. In addition, these older repairs³⁹ are identifiable as such, as they bear visible acid damage from the iron gall ink that Brontë used—damage that is not yet visible on the more recent repairs made to the manuscript in the twentieth century.⁴⁰

In contrast, four (or 57 %) of the seven leaves bearing partial-leaf excisions in BL-bound volume 3 have been repaired. These patches appear to be made with paper matching the blank, unpaginated, full wove cream-colored leaf (BM f. 22, vol. 1) inserted into volume 1 during the 1976 rebind, as well as the paper of the new guards used to mount the leaves in volumes 1 and 3 as part of the conservation and rebinding process. The paste used to make these repairs does not exhibit the damage evident to the earlier repairs made in volume 2. And, tellingly, the BM stamp appears neither on these repairs nor in the center of unrepaired leaves (as it does in the second volume), but rather on the remaining fragmentary portions at the margins of the leaves (e.g., BM ff. 99 and 100, vol. 3). Why is this so? Either the excised central portions of these leaves were still unrepaired and missing when the BM accessioned and stamped the binding nearly thirty years earlier; or cruder repairs already made in the nineteenth century were replaced by the BL as part of the 1976 conservation of manuscript volumes 1 and 3. Residual damage to the paper affecting the original leaf, but not to the wove repair itself, suggests that the latter could have been the case. No repairs were made to the four excisions in volume 1, beyond the two leaves that Brontë mended herself (BM ff. 126 and 144).⁴¹

2. BRONTË'S ALTERATIONS TO THE MANUSCRIPT

Having established the scope of the binders' and conservators' interventions, we can now turn to Charlotte Brontë's own work with the volumes. This aspect of the manuscript requires more interpretation and bibliographical analysis, as much of the evidence pertaining to Brontë's own alterations has been either destroyed or hidden.

The current manuscript consists of 896 leaves, including both the leaf added during the BL rebind and the replacement leaf added during the nineteenth-century binding of the manuscript. Volume 1 contains 284 leaves; volume 2 consists of 289 leaves; and volume 3 includes 323 leaves. Volume 3 appears to have been originally planned on a scale similar with volumes 1 and 2, but, as we shall see, it was expanded in the late stages of the novel's composition. In all, Brontë's fair copy would have consisted of 895 leaves.

39. See, for example, the repair to BM f. 10, vol. 2.

40. For a detailed description of nineteenth-century writing ink, see chapter three, pp. 33–46, of Thomas Griffiths' *The Writing Desk and Its Contents* (London: John W. Parker, 1844).

41. With respect to BM f. 126, vol. 1, Brontë added a footnote that was likely included to replace a stanza of poetry that was probably excised. With respect to BM f. 144, it appears as though she removed two lines from within the leaf following the poem and preceding the narrator's wry comment about the poem *not* reflecting on the relationship between Caroline and Robert Moore. The fragments were joined by Brontë, but a gap remains unrepaired following "Robin-a-Rec."