



Cultural and Social History

The Journal of the Social History Society

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rfcs20>

The Language of Love's Lessening. Falling Out of Love and Nineteenth-Century English Literature

Kerstin Maria Pahl

To cite this article: Kerstin Maria Pahl (2020) The Language of Love's Lessening. Falling Out of Love and Nineteenth-Century English Literature, Cultural and Social History, 17:3, 391-406, DOI: [10.1080/14780038.2019.1689025](https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2019.1689025)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780038.2019.1689025>



© 2019 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 27 Nov 2019.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 475



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

ARTICLE



OPEN ACCESS



The Language of Love's Lessening. Falling Out of Love and Nineteenth-Century English Literature

Kerstin Maria Pahl

Center for the History of Emotions, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany

ABSTRACT

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) contains a rather uncommon phrase: 'to unlove,' meaning ceasing to love. Getting back one's heart played a crucial, but often overlooked role in representations and negotiations of love. This article considers literary descriptions and meanings of falling out of love. To unlove reflected social conventions (e.g., ceasing to love the 'wrong person') and characterisations of a person (to unlove as a sign of fickleness). However, from a linguistic viewpoint, the term 'to unlove' also holds epistemological potential: the prefix 'un-' indicates the reversal of an event, implying that the word itself denotes progress and development.

KEYWORDS

The novel and emotions; falling out of love; Charlotte Brontë; *Jane Eyre*; Jane Austen; *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion*; William Hazlitt; *Liber Amoris*

Introduction

At Thornfield Hall, Jane Eyre is miserable. Convinced that her employer Mr Rochester will marry the beautiful, but haughty and unkind Blanche Ingram, Jane Eyre muses on the futility of both her love and her attempts to get rid of it:

I have told you, reader that I had learnt to love Mr Rochester: I could not unlove him now, merely because I found that he had ceased to notice me – because I might pass hours in his presence, and he would never once turn his eyes in my direction; [...]. I could not unlove him, because I felt sure he would soon marry this very lady [...]. There was nothing to cool or banish love in these circumstances; though much to create despair.¹

Jane despairs because she believes that Rochester will marry Blanche even though he is not oblivious to her vanity and cruelty. The turn of phrase Jane uses to express her futile attempts to get Rochester out of her head, 'to unlove,' was and remains rather uncommon, but the phenomenon is not. Getting back one's heart played a crucial, but often overlooked role in representations and negotiations of love, and one could read most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English novels from this reverse perspective. While discussions on love are typically about falling in love or being in love, the attempts to cease loving somebody – varying in their degree of success – are equally important to fictional plots. To name but a few: Marianne Dashwood of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) nearly dies while getting rid of her love for the scoundrel John Willoughby; in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the failure of Heathcliff and

CONTACT Kerstin Maria Pahl  pahl@mpib-berlin.mpg.de  Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Lentzeallee 93, Berlin 14193, Germany

© 2019 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Catherine to stop loving each other is as catastrophic as it is legendary. And Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818) begins after the process of unloving had been completed: Anne Elliott meets Frederick Wentworth again, once considered to be far beneath her by her class-conscious family. Unloving was also dealt with in contemporary conduct books. In Eliza Ware Farrar's *The Young Lady's Friend* of 1836, for instance, 'disappointment in love' is referred to as 'that greatest of trials to a woman,' manageable by education and rules for unloving.²

Unloving can mean regaining one's freedom and maturing, but it can also imply submitting to prevailing, potentially damaging ideologies. It is, however, constitutive to the culture of love because it provides the negative that makes the positive clearer and more defined. As Harriet Beecher Stowe would write in 1859: 'We never know how to love till we try to unlove.'³

While not as popular as falling in love, the end of love has received scholarly attention. Famous studies are Lawrence Stone's *Road to Divorce* (1990) and *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660–1857* (1993),⁴ although they are mainly concerned with the legal and social practices of couples' separation rather than with emotional alienation. The last few years have seen an emerging interest in the end of love. Sally Holloway's *The Game of Love* (2019) includes a chapter on 'Romantic Suffering,' in which she argues that the attention paid to failings at love and marriage connected to adultery, cruelty or desertion has obscured the fact that relationships often 'fell apart as men and women simply changed their minds, fell out of love.'⁵ Most recently, sociologist Eva Illouz's study *Unloving: A Sociology of Negative Relations* explores 'the end of love,' a concept that draws on nineteenth-century sociologist Émile Durkheim. While her focus is on twentieth- and twenty-first-century capitalist societies, she follows a long tradition in arguing that the mid-nineteenth-century was a pivotal point in the history of unloving: concurrent with and arising from the full development of liberalism, capitalism, and industrialism, she identifies the birth of something called 'emotional modernity,' meaning the individual's right to have their body and their emotions at their own disposal, which includes the freedom to unlove somebody.⁶ Most importantly, in his study on *Love as Passion: The Codification of Intimacy* (1982), Niklas Luhmann identified a shift in the semantics of love around 1800, when love became self-referential and self-legitimising: the fact that one is in love suffices as justification for love's existence, so that the beloved no longer needs special characteristics, such as beauty, goodness, or social standing.⁷

There is indeed much to suggest that a sudden interest in falling out of love in post-revolutionary England was not coincidental, but arose from the tension between the emergence of industrial modernity with its new working conditions and new ethics, which favoured subjectivity, and the slowly adjusting social order, which, while enabling social mobility and middle-class ascent, was still informed by older, more nuclear notions of communities and their affective bonds.⁸ The intersection of interest in love and unlove by literary scholars and sociologists is not coincidental: novels chart and prescribe feelings, ethics, and moral codes; they highlight the role that language and discourse play in the conceptualisation, processing, and negotiation of emotions.⁹ To explore the language of unlove, this article will therefore analyse its depiction in English literature from the second quarter of the nineteenth century, that is, from the time when love's lessening began to play a pivotal role in social formation.

Language and literature are one of the various social practices that help shape, convey, and generate both emotions and what Peter and Carol Stearns have called ‘emotionology’: ‘the collective emotional standards of a society.’¹⁰ As anthropologist Monique Scheer and historian William Reddy have argued, the naming and communication of feelings are part of everyday practice. Most visible in media production and consumption, these emotional practices aid people in navigating feelings.¹¹ Historian Ute Frevert describes literature (as well as the visual arts) as ‘emotional scripts’ and ‘moral templates’ for emotions: they serve as models for learning how to embody and perform emotions, for imitation and emulation.¹² Drawing on conceptual and intellectual history and arguing for the special importance of lexica and encyclopaedias as popular genres addressing a wider audience, Frevert has repeatedly drawn attention to the importance of the semantics of emotions, their verbal framing and codifications, and the standardising function of language in understanding social development.¹³ Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels are prototypes of ‘moral templates,’ providing readers with narratives of socially embedded characters whose actions and mindsets are presented as facilitating or hindering their success. In novels such as *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen, in the tradition of *Don Quixote*, used the literary form to reflect on the impact of modelling one’s life (too much) on fictional templates. Part of a four-volume set published in 1818 that included *Persuasion*, the novel features a heroine who believes herself – problematically – to be part of a novel-like plot.¹⁴

Literary representations and artistic renderings of emotions neither entertain unmediated relationships to social practices and historic events nor do they comprehensively chart the various expressions and manifestations of emotions. But as social practices are bound to specific times, the popular discourse on how to unlove, its cultural framing, and the literary tropes, motifs, and registers it employed shed light on and complement historical conceptions of love. Accounts of love’s lessening depicted the nuances of love’s constitution without conflating not-love with its opposites, such as hate or contempt. Ultimately, this enabled them to project a more comprehensive notion of love¹⁵ and thereby contributed to both emotional knowledge and love’s narratability.¹⁶ In short, what was known about love and what about love was important enough to be told and how was it told?

In a wider context, concerns with unlove reveal that forms of non-attachment and non-sociability¹⁷ are not adequately grasped by more common binary conceptions of emotions, such as love and hate or bliss and heartbreak. In addition, emotional reversals or opposites, such as un-love, un-feeling, or in-sensible,¹⁸ can transcend and complement the dualism between emotionality and rationality because they do not fall neatly into the categories of either. They can help to explore forms of social interaction concerned with denials and negations, but also, as will become clear in this article, with development and change.

Reversal in a word: on unlove’s etymology

While the verb ‘to unlove’ can be traced back to the late fourteenth century, it remains a rather unusual term in the wider semantic field of words about failures to love or excite love, such as ‘unlovable,’ ‘unlovely,’ ‘unloving,’ or ‘unlove’ understood as ‘Lack of love; (more strongly) hatred, dislike.’¹⁹ A so-called reversative, the word ‘marks the reversal of

verbal action (*undo*), and [...] removal of something denoted by the base;²⁰ it is a rewinding of an event and a phenomenon – something that also holds true for ‘falling out of love,’ which first appeared towards the end of the sixteenth century.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the English term ‘unlove’ was first used in Geoffrey Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* of 1385. It appears towards the end of the poem in the Trojan Troilus’ monologue about the pain his fellow Trojan Criseyde causes him, who has transferred her affection from Troilus to the Greek Diomedes. While Criseyde has indeed unloved Troilus, Troilus cannot do the same: ‘[...] I see that clene out of your minde | Ye han me cast, and I ne can nor may, | For al this world, with-in myn herte finde | T’unloven yow a quarter of a day!’ (‘I see that clean out of your mind | You have cast me, and I neither can nor may, | For all this world, within my heart find | To unlove you a quarter of a day!’).²¹ The connection between unlove and a period of time (‘a quarter of a day’) that Chaucer draws here is underlined by their combination in a single line of the poem. Unlove has a temporal dimension that is contained in its linguistic configuration: to unlove denotes a process and a development, but because it implies a reversal of things past, it also points simultaneously towards an origin and an end.

In an article on ‘Derived Words in Chaucer’s Language’ from 1978, literary theorist Morton Donner analysed Chaucer’s use of the prefix ‘un-’ and the suffix ‘-less,’ arguing that Chaucer’s choice of words betrays an interest in negation and absence that he applied to better define the positive opposite. Gracelessness, for instance, gives an idea of grace by having one experience its lack. In the case of ‘un-,’ Donner argues that Chaucer works with this prefix to reflect development and simultaneous viewpoints within a narrative of linear progress: things undone are things that are not yet done and not thought of, but that, as an omniscient narrator knows, will be done later: ‘By selecting this construction [...] Chaucer emphasizes [...] that such activities were not merely unperformed but were as yet unconceived.’²² Following his discussion of ‘un-’ as an indicator of ‘not yet,’ Donner then goes on to describe how reversatives such as ‘unlove’ ‘substitute[] [...] for a variety of circumlocutions.’ They are, as Donner calls it, a ‘compacting force,’ collapsing and condensing a lengthy storyline or development into one tight and succinct term:

In this sense too, Chaucer can turn it toward imaginative force of expression, as exemplified again in *Troilus*, where the lovers’ hearts will “unswell” (IV, 1146) as they accept the fact of separation, where death will “unbody” (V, 1550) Hector’s soul and “unsheathe” (IV, 776) Criseyde’s from her breast, and where, at the end of the story, the inevitability of the tragedy is summed up by Troilus’ lamenting that he cannot “unlove” (V, 1693) Criseyde.²³

Donner’s lucid analysis underscores that the first appearance of the term unlove was already tied to ideas and concepts of time and development, with one word contracting the complexities and temporal dimensions of love and its end and containing a narrative in a nutshell.

A similar point on unlove as a form of contracting narrative development was made by the literary critic Eric P. Levy in an article on ‘The Psychology of Loneliness in “Wuthering Heights.”’ Distinguishing between ‘Unlove’ and ‘Overlove’ in order to understand what he calls the ‘defective love’ displayed in the novel, Levy defines ‘Unlove’ as ‘neglect, abuse, rejection’ and ‘Overlove’ as a ‘tendency to overprotect and coddle children, treating them as “petted things.”’ Like Donner, Levy draws attention to

the fact that such derived forms are chosen when causation needs to be implied, writing that ‘The distrust of the Unloved results from the expectation of rejection.’

Unloving is not only about a lack of love, but also about the preceding actions that caused it as well as about the consequences it entails.²⁴

Lengthy longings: Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) and William Hazlitt’s *Liber Amoris* (1823)

Unloving’s temporal dimension has moral implications because quickly transferring one’s inclinations to another person would be a sign of fickle feelings and inconstant character. The long duration of the process of getting rid of love therefore vouches for a character’s emotional veracity and reliability.

In Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), different and very individual styles of unloving are presented. Fickleness is pitted against constancy and feeling against scheming. Most prominently, Marianne Dashwood almost succumbs to illness, which both proves her sincerity and reaffirms that her love for John Willoughby, a charming but spoilt and vain seducer, was a wrong course of life that needed to be reversed. After she has recovered, reflected on her behaviour, and heard his side of the story – namely that he really loved her despite himself, but married another woman for money and is now miserable – she states: ‘It is a great relief to me [...] – I have now heard exactly what I wished to hear. [...] I am now perfectly satisfied. I wish for no change.’²⁵

In the novel, unloving produces a situation in which any wish for systemic change is eclipsed. While this makes way for the narrative to develop, refine, and elaborate on the present state, it also allows for happiness and the denouement of conflict because it frees Marianne from the spell of Willoughby.

Unloving also makes Edward Ferrars free to marry Elinor Dashwood. When Lucy Steele learns that her fiancé Edward has been disinherited, she quickly transfers her preference to his brother, now heir-in-waiting, writing: ‘Being very sure I have long lost your affections, I have thought myself at liberty to bestow my own on another.’²⁶ Lucy is considered a scheming fortune seeker, even derided by Edward as a coarse person with an embarrassing writing style after their split,²⁷ but she deduces quite correctly that Edward unloved her first, which gave her permission to do the same. Notably, Edward’s process of unloving Lucy is actually as quick as hers because, as he writes, the moment he was otherwise engaged, at university and during social interactions, he soon grew tired of her. What makes Edward noble, however, is that he honoured the engagement, meaning he – unlike Lucy – did not let the unloving process dictate his social behaviour. Edward and Marianne prove their veracity through time (long engagement) and depth (grave illness), respectively, while Lucy’s quickness in unloving is cast as morally questionable. However, although different in terms of nuances and character development, Marianne, Edward, and Lucy nevertheless share a common experience: the manifestation of their unloving restores their agency and grants them free choice.

As with women, men who fell out of love had to navigate their way through the thicket, casting off an undesired desire on the one hand without falling into the trap of being perceived as unreliable and volatile on the other. A particularly striking and highly controversial case was William Hazlitt’s semi-autobiographical novel *Liber Amoris* of 1823, the ‘book of love’ being an ironic title given that the book recounts the narrator’s

attempt at unloving.²⁸ Detailing his disastrous extra-marital relationship with his landlord's daughter S. (Sarah Walker),²⁹ the narrator gushes about his obsession, tells of the impossibility of forgetting his beloved despite her ill-treatment of him, and, quoting Shakespeare's sonnet 116, asserts that 'Love is not love that [alters when it] alteration finds.'³⁰ However, over the course of the consciously self-exposing narrative, which includes fictional dialogues, meditations, and reworked letters sent to Hazlitt, he slowly comes to love S. less. One letter from his friend G. P. (Hazlitt's friend George Patmore) advises the narrator that 'if you could make up your mind to break off the acquaintance altogether, it would be the best plan of all.'³¹ Although it is rough going, the narrator slowly progresses towards the end of his love. After the relationship ended, he 'felt almost as sailors must do after a violent storm over-night, that has subsided towards day-break. The morning was a dull and stupid calm [...]'.³² Realising that 'the creature on whom I had thrown away my heart and soul [...] was incapable of feeling the commonest emotions of human nature,' he slowly calms down, concluding: 'I am afraid she will soon grow common to my imagination, as well as worthless in herself. Her image seems fast "going into the wastes of time," like a weed that the wave bears farther and farther from me.'³³ Hazlitt's rendering pits unaltered love against the process of unloving by using time-bound words: 'after,' 'overnight,' 'towards daybreak,' 'morning,' 'soon,' 'will grow,' 'fast,' 'going,' 'farther and farther.' In his description of the final stage of unloving, morning, afternoon, night, and morning follow in quick succession, indicating that the passage of time is beneficial, if not essential for unloving.

Hazlitt's novel connects unloving directly to different forms of temporality, contrasting suddenness and immediacy with duration and length of time or repetition. Because 'to unlove' is a process that needs time to unfold, its narrative form consists not of outward events, but of the emotional development and transformation of the characters.

Unlove to relove: Jane Austen's *Persuasion* (1818)

Jane Austen's *Persuasion*, published in 1818, is the quintessential novel about unloving, as its plot begins where others end: Anne Elliott had been forced to banish Captain Frederick Wentworth from her thoughts eight years ago because he was thought to not befit the rank of a baronet's daughter. He now turns up again. Anne's feelings, however, had only lain dormant: 'How absurd to be resuming the agitation which such an interval had banished into distance and indistinctness!'³⁴ In *Persuasion*, where the need to unlove kicks off the love story – or rather, the re-love story –, Austen employs the temporality of narrative form to characterise the different types of love: the time involved in Anne's process of unloving, meaning her dissolving the engagement, is compressed onto a single page, while falling in love again – the process of discovering that she is still in love and is still loved – is the extensive plot of the novel. Anne's unlove, coupled with her 'latent readiness to love,' is the precondition for the story.³⁵ Time makes a difference, not only in the narration but also in the assessment of love and unlove, as Anne has lived with feelings that 'time had softened down much.'³⁶ Her willingness to forget is aided by the fact that her social circle promotes a mute narrative as well, exhibiting 'perfect indifference and apparent unconsciousness' and seeming 'almost to deny any recollection of it.'³⁷ Frederick's reappearance compels her to reconsider: 'Alas! with all her reasonings, she found that to retentive feelings eight years may be little more than nothing.'³⁸ The author

reflects on the reversal of the classical plot: 'She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older – the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.'³⁹

However, although the eight years seem to have flown by, her body and her looks keep track of her development, having become 'faded and thin' and suffering from 'an early loss of bloom and spirits.'⁴⁰ Accordingly, after she meets the returned Frederick – again told in a contracted fashion as 'it would soon be over. And it was soon over'⁴¹ – she is left to know that 'You were so altered he should not have known you again.' The point that Anne's looks are 'altered' is hammered home. The sentence is repeated and paraphrased on the following pages, where Anne tells herself that she was 'Altered beyond his knowledge!' and 'He had thought her wretchedly altered,' which is all the more mortifying as 'he was not altered.'⁴² At another point, she 'felt that he was looking at herself – observing her altered features, perhaps, trying to trace in them the ruins of the face which had once charmed him.'⁴³ However, in contrast to the view her family, Frederick, and Anne herself have of her appearance, other people – men and women alike – consider her 'very lovely' and find that 'there was no end of Miss Elliot's charms.'⁴⁴ This contrast leaves open to interpretation whether the narrative's insistence on her altered looks reflects her state of mind and the pressure to stifle her feelings rather than her actual exterior appearance.

Austen's plots often employ various forms of insensibility, such as indifference, callousness, apathy, and unconsciousness, but *Persuasion* may arguably be the novel in which it is most forcefully and thoroughly evoked: almost everyone in the novel is indifferent to Anne's plight, and even Anne tries continuously to 'harden her nerves sufficiently.'⁴⁵

For Anne, unloving is supposed to re-establish her capacity to function in society and to reintegrate her into the family circle. Paradoxically, however, it also furthers her detachment from her family, because she refuses to love anyone else except Frederick. Her persistence ultimately brings her unlove full circle, allowing her finally to relinquish her social position in favour of the regained love.

The dangers of unlove

Unlove oscillates between granting freedom and fostering an unhealthy disconnection from society. In 2018, sociologist Eva Illouz published her study *Unloving*, offering the to-date only systematic analysis of the phenomenon of falling out of love on a larger social scale. While her book primarily focuses on current, twenty-first-century developments in social media and dating agencies, it includes a historical perspective. Drawing on sociologist Émile Durkheim, Illouz's book sets out to prove that with the advancement of modernity and capitalism, 'non-sociability' became established. Illouz posits that unloving in mid-nineteenth-century Europe was the first sign of disintegrating social bonds and traditional networks of social relations in the period between the emergence and the completion of what she calls 'emotional modernity.' Emotional modernity describes the rise of individuals' rights to have feelings and their duty to take responsibility for them, their right to control their own body and not be subjected to another person's will, and the freedom – called 'emotional freedom' – to take their feelings as the primary, even sole basis for interactions and relations with another person.⁴⁶ However,

Illouz writes that at the very moment it began to develop – the height of industrialisation – emotional freedom was complemented by the concurrently emerging political idea of liberalism. Liberalism's aim was to grant maximum personal freedom to every individual, not only in what they want to do, but also in what they *don't* want to do: in this case, no longer being in love. Illouz's main assertion is that to unlove and to act accordingly can be both a development and an exaggerated and thus twisted form of personal freedom. To unlove once is fine; to unlove repeatedly indicates the inability to form any social relations,⁴⁷ and can at some point itself become a template.

Illouz's argument relies on Durkheim's concept of anomie, which he developed in his work on the *Division of Labour in Society* (1893) and *Suicide* (1897), the latter of which used data from France from the mid-nineteenth century. Anomie denotes the disintegration of traditional moral frameworks and ethical norms, leading to uncertainty and social disorder.⁴⁸ Durkheim understood human desire to be regulated by a form of implicit feeling for the appropriateness and limitations of one's station and if one's desire reached far beyond this station, it became ridiculous. But since capitalism stretches the boundaries of desire and implies that after one fulfilment, a better one is right around the corner, desire becomes limitless, producing frustration, insecurity, and lack of satisfaction – which in Durkheim's theory can contribute to the decision to end one's life. In this tradition, Illouz is concerned with the way that over-abundant, misdirected, and mutable emotions result in undisciplined, unprincipled, and limitless desire.

While Illouz provides a systematic approach to falling out of love and raises important issues, her historical survey oversimplifies the opposition between love and unlove because simply equating love with sociability and unlove with social isolation misses some of the complexities of emotions and emotion opposites. As the fictional literature analysed above shows, the heart's (at least partial) recovery was necessary not only for the individual's well-being but also for their place in society: unlove could re-establish social ties that had been lost by wrongful affections because, as conduct books were eager to affirm, affection had to be placed where appropriateness, suitability, and congeniality of minds permitted. Eliza Farrar's *Young Lady's Friend* of 1836 considered unloving difficult, but very beneficial to society:

So very common is it for women to be disappointed in their first loves, that an English writer has said, she considered the loss and recovery of the heart, to be to the mind, what the whooping-cough, or measles, is to the body, a necessary disorder to be gone through, after which come maturity and health.⁴⁹

According to Farrar, it was of course best not to fall in love in the first place: 'If one person is becoming uppermost in your thoughts [...] it is time [...] to deny yourself the dangerous pleasure of his company [...]. The beginning of a preference may be checked, it may be stifled to death; it is only by indulgence that it becomes unmanageable.' However, if the undesirable has happened, responsibility must be assumed: 'if you do make the mistake [i.e., of falling in love], take all the blame to yourself, and save your dignity by secrecy, if you cannot keep your heart from loving.' While compassionate, Farrar recommended strict discipline: 'Where the attachment has ever been reciprocal [...] the struggle will of course be harder, and the suffering much greater. I know of no sufficient remedy for this, but vital piety.' This will eventually lead to a disciplined and matured character, which will attract a more suitable partner, a 'superior mind.'⁵⁰ While

not the best course of action, unloving can be turned into an advantage by helping individuals renegotiate their place in society and advancing them to a more mature stage of life. It is a prerogative for becoming a valuable citizen, a development for the greater good.

In a similar line of argument, Mary Wollstonecraft considered romantic love a passion to be firmly controlled, if not eliminated, because of the difficulties that arise when ‘chance and sensation take place of choice and reason.’⁵¹ Since people in general and women in particular should see themselves first and foremost as human beings, improvement should be about the development of ‘sublime emotions,’ about wisdom, goodness, civilisation, and virtue and not about the relationship between the sexes. Romantic love, as Wollstonecraft argued in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), intensified gender differences instead of establishing common ground between the partners in their human-ness. In order to restore people to reason, to make them useful and valuable members of society, love must be firmly controlled, especially within and by marriage, which allows ‘the fever of love to subside’:

[...] friendship or indifference inevitably succeeds love. – And this constitution seems perfectly to harmonize with the system of government which prevails in the moral world. Passions are spurs to action, and open the mind; but they sink into mere appetites [...] when the object is gained [...]. [...] to be able to pursue with vigour the various employments which form the moral character, a master and mistress of a family ought not to continue to love each other with passion. [...] they ought not to indulge those emotions which disturb the order of society, and engross the thoughts that should be otherwise employed.⁵²

In considering marriage a mirror of government on a micro-level, Wollstonecraft advised against relying on love as the connective force. It may be useful as an initial spark, but it is neither sustainable nor in accordance with reason; hence it is better that it subsides, even into indifference. To love helps to create relationships; to turn it into indifference means sustaining them as well as making them consistent and useful. While Wollstonecraft’s advocacy for the tempering of love implies that she subscribed to moderation, her unattainable ideal was to ‘reason love out of the world’:

To speak disrespectfully of love is [...] high treason against sentiment and fine feelings; but I wish [...] rather to address the head than the heart. To endeavour to reason love out of the world, would be to out Quixote Cervantes [...]; but an endeavour to restrain this tumultuous passion, and to prove that [...] to usurp the sceptre which the understanding should ever coolly wield, appears less wild.⁵³

Wollstonecraft advocated for controlling emotions. However, the potential downside was that they might be eliminated altogether, and anxieties about a surplus of non-emotions concerned the very fabric of society because emotions were the glue that held society together. As Enlightenment thinkers and writers such as Francis Hutcheson and Adam Smith purported, feelings forge connections because sympathy – the ‘fellow-feeling’ – aligns people with one another, allows them to imagine life in another’s shoes, and thereby fosters social interaction. A lack of feeling, in contrast, was viewed as socially isolating as well as infuriating because it showed a conscious or involuntary lack of impulses. In Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), lack of emotional involvement is a state of being that undermines social connections and makes a person highly dubious: ‘A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still, and submits to insults, without

attempting either to repel or to revenge them. We cannot enter into his indifference and insensibility, [...] and are as really provoked by it, as by the insolence of his adversary.⁵⁴

For Francis Hutcheson, insensibility showed ‘plain Neglect of the *Good* of others.’⁵⁵ While mostly concerned with advocating a form of sensible sensibility, meaning a reasonable use of emotions, the risk of control turning into absence and the conquering of feelings turning into general indifference and emotional coldness was never far.

Like marble: *Jane Eyre’s* St. John

In *Jane Eyre*,⁵⁶ it is Jane’s pious, stern, and unassailable – and much less discussed⁵⁷ – cousin St. John Rivers who personifies this to the extreme. On various occasions he tells Jane that he is ‘a cold, hard, ambitious man’ and ‘I am cold: no fervour infects me.’ Jane herself describes him as ‘good and great, but severe; and, for me, as cold as an iceberg.’⁵⁸ However, St. John must likewise unlove someone, namely the beautiful Rosamond Oliver, and she him. While he freely admits to his passion for Rosamond, he answers it by intensifying his inner freezing:

When I colour, and when I shake before Miss Oliver, I do not pity myself. I scorn the weakness. I know it is ignoble; a mere fever of the flesh: not, I declare, a convulsion of the soul. *That* is just as fixed as a rock, firm set in the depths of a restless sea. Know me to be what I am – a cold, hard man.

For St. John Rivers, ‘Reason, and not Feeling is my guide,’⁵⁹ but because he understands reason as the elimination of emotions and because he does not meaningfully redirect his love – his love for God is characterised as ambition rather than devotion – it becomes impossible for others to relate to him.⁶⁰ The narrative has him eventually shipped off to a mission in India, where he labours indefatigably, while Jane and his sisters marry and are happy. Elizabeth Imlay argues that because of his anti-social character, St. John is essential to the novel’s narrative logic: first, he acts as the foil of reason to Rochester’s passion. Second, he prevents the reunion of Jane Eyre and Rochester for some time, so that the coldness of his character, ‘dampening down the agony of thwarted passion,’ slows down the narrative before the happy ending – ‘a chilled fish pâté between a main course and a sweet.’⁶¹ Notably, the last pages of the book are concerned with this asocial character:⁶²

St. John is unmarried: he never will marry now. [...] I know that a stranger’s hand will write to me next, to say that the good and faithful servant has been called at length into the joy of his Lord. And why weep for this? No fear of death will darken St. John’s last hour: his mind will be unclouded; his heart will be undaunted; his hope will be sure; his faith steadfast.⁶³

For a book so concerned with love, meaningful emotional bonds, and the congeniality of minds and souls, this penultimate paragraph of the book assembles an astounding variety of non-emotions: no love, no grief, no fear. While St. John presents a non-imitable counter-example to both the emotionally profound characters of the book – Jane, Rochester, St. John’s sisters – and to the emotionally shallow ones – the Ingrams – he also exemplifies an instance of unloving gone too far: no human being is loved by St. John anymore, so that within the narrative logic, his going abroad and nearing death keeps the threat of the non-emotional, non-relatable individual at bay.⁶⁴

Taken too far, unloving facilitates the dissolution of social bonds.⁶⁵ In his *Liber Amoris*, William Hazlitt wrote on how unloving did not set him free, but froze him in a timeless emotionlessness:

I was transformed too, no longer human [...] my feelings were marble; my blood was of molten lead; my thoughts on fire. I was taken out of myself [...]. I had no natural affection left [...]. So I felt then, and so perhaps shall feel till I grow old and die [...]. I started to find myself alone – for ever alone, without a creature to love me.⁶⁶

Contrasting coldness (marble) with heat (molten lead, fire), the narrator depicted his eternal deprivation of ‘natural affection’ as arising out of both torpor and ardour: rather than having emotionlessness only follow an excess of suppression, resulting in elimination, it could also follow an excess of excitement, an uncontainable surplus of emotional engagement.⁶⁷

Conclusion

Reversals of emotions such as unloving show how verbal enunciations partake in the expression, enactment, production, and practice of emotion discourses,⁶⁸ as the negation of an emotion can make that emotion’s definition clearer. To unlove is an ambiguous act. It can mean inconstancy or the restoring of agency and autonomy; it can mean the waning of affection or over-abundant love that needs to be contained and channelled. Marianne Dashwood’s process of unloving casts it as a process ensuring moral, personal, and emotional progress in tune with social ideas. Anne Elliott is free to relove the same person but in different circumstances. William Hazlitt’s narrator recovers his freedom but loses his feelings. Jane Eyre’s refusal to unlove Mr Rochester affirms that she is an autonomous person with a strong will and her constancy in love allows her to undercut social hierarchies. Unloving is about regaining one’s freedom, about restoring order. It does not mean a turn towards contempt, but the progression towards a more balanced attitude.

As Morton Donner’s analysis of Geoffrey Chaucer has shown, it also indicates a conception of society and civilisation as underpinned by a structure of progression. Its linguistic forms connote reversals, developments, and change. It does not just mean ceasing to love, but also getting back one’s heart with a clear view to its being bestowed on a more suitable object – another man or woman, the nation, or God. To unlove means expunging love of the wrong kind and developing the right love; it means consolidating society by steering its members on a clear course and balancing their individual desires with social requirements.

Interpreting unlove as a word signalling development can help to highlight the temporal dimension of emotional language and narratives of emotions more generally, if not the temporality, transience, and historicity of emotions themselves. Because they unfold in a sequence, literary narratives are unavoidably concerned with time.⁶⁹ As philosopher Paul Ricœur writes: ‘The world unfolded by every narrative is always a temporal world. [...] time becomes human time to the extent that it is organized after the manner of a narrative; narrative, in turn, is meaningful to the extent that it portrays the features of temporal experience.’⁷⁰ In narratives of love and unlove, transience is enmeshed both in the narrative rendering and in the emotions treated in the narrative

because both processes involve opposing temporal states: love means constancy and duration; unlove is used to indicate change.⁷¹

In his 1905 study *Aspects of the Novel*, E. M. Forster states that love in narratives is used to evoke stability because ‘Any strong emotion brings with it the illusion of permanence’:

Love, like death, is congenial to a novelist because it ends a book conveniently. He can make it a permanency, and his readers easily acquiesce, because one of the illusions attached to love is that it will be permanent. Not has been – will be.⁷²

As fictional or non-fictional descriptions or moral prescriptions for how to properly feel emotions, literary portrayals of unlove show how the language of emotions navigates historicity and the passage of time.⁷³ Unlove signals development, change, or a shift in the literary character’s emotional state and thus mirrors a narrative structure on a micro-level. It communicates the historicity of emotions, not by describing a passage of time, but by framing it linguistically.

It is no coincidence that the nineteenth-century novels treated in this article display a particular focus on unlove. They were composed in an era when Enlightenment’s optimistic belief in individuality and romantic love had given way to the deeper insight that feelings were not exempt from market forces and that the newly found freedom of the individual, liberated from social and religious determinism, brought with it contingency and uncertainty. What the modern individual had to learn was not so much to feel; they had to learn to manage disconnection, detachment, and a certain insensitivity to the fact that people, despite protestation to the contrary, really didn’t care about one another. As Anne Elliott of Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* put it, one had to learn ‘the art of knowing our own nothingness.’⁷⁴

Notes

1. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*, 3 vols. (London: Smith Elder, 1847), p. 3:68.
2. Eliza Ware Farrar, *The Young Lady’s Friend* (Boston: American Stationers’ Company, 1836), p. 311.
3. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Minister’s Wooing* (London: Sampson, Low, Son & Co., 1859), p. 242.
4. Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: A History of the Making and Breaking of Marriage in England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), see esp. 139–230; Lawrence Stone, *Broken Lives: Separation and Divorce in England, 1660–1857* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
5. Sally Holloway, *The Game of Love in Georgian England: Courtship, Emotions, and Material Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 168. On the ‘breakdown of courtships’ see p. 118–42. See also Nina Baym, ‘Women’s Novels and Women’s Minds: An Unsentimental View of Nineteenth-Century American Women’s Fiction,’ *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 31, no. 3 (1998), p. 335–50, on literary anti-sentimentality ‘as implicitly or explicitly criticizing sentimentalism because it finds the ethos of subjection, victimization, and relationality destructive to a woman’s individuality and agency’ (p. 336). See also G. W. Stephen Brodsky, ‘Joseph Conrad and the Art of Unlove: Art, Love, and the Deadly Paradox of Service,’ *Conradiana*, 31, no. 2 (1999), p. 131–41.
6. Eva Illouz, *Warum Liebe endet: Eine Soziologie negativer Beziehungen* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2018), p. 19–22.

7. Niklas Luhmann, *Liebe als Passion. Zur Codierung von Intimität* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), p. 49–56 (chapter 4 on the ‘evolution of the semantics of love’). I am indebted to Helga Schwalm for her insightful comments on my article and this aspect in particular.
8. On the (supposedly reactionary) politics of Austen see Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987 [1975]), esp. 7–28. On Austen and the shift in the social order see Pam Morris, *Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 29–54, esp. 29–33. Robert Ruddy argues that Hazlitt’s *Liber Amoris* fits its time because of its concern with ‘sympathy in a negative way’ and ‘the inability to allow a person to be other than what we want her (or him) to be.’ Robert Ruddy, ‘The Logic of Passion in Hazlitt’s ‘Liber Amoris’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 14, no. 1 (Winter 1975), pp. 41–57, 42–44.
9. See for instance Stephanie Trigg, ‘Faces That Speak: A Little Emotion Machine in the Novels Jane Austen’, in Susan Broomhall (ed), *Spaces for Feeling. Emotions and Sociabilities in Britain, 1650–1850* (London: Routledge, 2015), pp. 185–201, 185: ‘While literary language often avoids the direct naming of emotions, it deploys a range of metaphorical expressions and structures to build rich and layered emotional landscapes. [...] literary texts constitute a rich archive, not just for the expression of emotions, but also for our comprehension of the social exchange of emotions on several levels [...].’
10. Cf. Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, ‘Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards’, *The American Historical Review*, 90, no. 4 (1985), pp. 813–36, 813.
11. William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 102; Monique Scheer, ‘Are Emotions a Kind of Practice (and Is That What Makes Them Have a History)? A Bourdieuan Approach to Understanding Emotion’, *History and Theory*, 51 (2012), pp. 193–220, 212–215; Susan Broomhall, ‘Introduction’, in Broomhall, (ed), *Spaces for Feeling*, pp. 1–3.
12. Ute Frevert, ‘Emotional Bodies, Historically Situated: An Institutional View’, University of Sussex Symposium Subjectivity, Self-Narratives, and the History of Emotions, 18 January 2019: <https://historyofemotions2019.com/symposium/>.
13. Ute Frevert, ‘Defining Emotions: Concepts and Debates over Three Centuries’, in Ute Frevert et al. (eds), *Emotional Lexicons: Continuity and Change in the Vocabulary of Feeling 1700–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), esp. 8–16.
14. See Adela Pinch, ‘Lost in a Book: Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 32, no. 1 (Spring 1993), pp. 97–117.
15. Cf. Broomhall, ‘Introduction’, 3. See also Emily Hodgson Anderson, ‘Staged Insensibility in Burney’s Cecilia, Camilla, and The Wanderer: How a Playwright Writes Novels’, *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 17, no. 4 (July 2005), pp. 629–48, on ‘the dilemma of dramatizing genuine feeling by staging a representation of emotional repression’ (p. 632).
16. Raphaël Baroni, ‘Tellability’, paragraph 3, in *the living handbook of narratology*, ed. Peter Hühn et al. (Hamburg: Hamburg University), <http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/article/tellability>, accessed 16 October 2019. Dietrich Schwanitz argues that since in Austen’s novels, women are not allowed to admit their love, it remains un-narratable until the hero has disclosed his. Dietrich Schwanitz, *Englische Kulturgeschichte. Band 2: Die Moderne 1760–1914* (Tübingen and Basel: Francke, 1995), pp. 112–16. See also Trigg, ‘Faces that Speak’, p. 185.
17. See Holloway, *Game of Love*, pp. 118–42, esp. 122–28, on the ‘cultural understandings of heartbreak’ (p. 122).
18. On non-emotions or emotional reversals see Katja Battenfeld, Cornelia Bogen, Ingo Uhlig, and Patrick Wulf, eds., *Gefühllose Aufklärung. Anaesthesia oder die Unempfindlichkeit im Zeitalter der Aufklärung* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2012); Wendy Anne Lee’s *Failures of Feeling: Insensibility and the Novel* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019). See Cornelia Zumbusch, *Immunität der Klassik* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2012), pp. 7–85 and 147–62, on how proponents of German neo-classicism (*Klassik*), such as Goethe and Schiller, strove

to fight against Romanticism by way of immunisation, a metaphor borrowed from medicine. See Martin von Koppenfels, *Immune Erzähler. Flaubert und die Affektpolitik des modernen Romans* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 2007) on Gustave Flaubert's 'immune narrators,' unaffected by both their characters and their readers.

19. 'unlove, n.,' *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, last modified June 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/215237?rskey=m9udcF&result=1>, accessed 5 June 2019.
20. *The Cambridge History of the English Language. Volume III: 1476–1776*, ed. Roger Lass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 382.
21. Geoffrey Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 148.
22. Morton Donner, 'Derived Words in Chaucer's Language', *The Chaucer Review*, 13, no. 1 (1978), pp. 1–15, 8. See also 13n5 for a statistic on derivative words that first appeared in the English language thanks to Chaucer's use of them.
23. Morton Donner, 'Derived Words', p. 8.
24. Eric P. Levy, 'The Psychology of Loneliness in "Wuthering Heights,"' *Studies in the Novel*, 28, no. 2 (1996), pp. 158–77, 159. Levy refers to Edward Morgan Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1927), p. 99: 'the emotions of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw function differently to other emotions in fiction. Instead of inhabiting the characters, they surround them like thunder clouds, and generate the explosions that fill the novel [...].'
25. Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility: A Novel*, 3 vols. (London: T. Egerton, 1811), p. 3:226–27. See Erika Wright, *Reading for Health: Medical Narratives and the Nineteenth-Century Novel* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2016), pp. 30–38, 5–11: illness and health are a crucial plotting devices because they help to slow the coming of the story's end.
26. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 3:262.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 3:264.
28. See in particular Ready, 'Logic of Passion', pp. 41–57; Mark McCutcheon, 'Liber Amoris and the Lineaments of Hazlitt's Desire', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 46, no. 4 (2004), pp. 432–51; James Treadwell, *Autobiographical Writing and British Literature 1783–1834* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 178–80; Richard Read, 'Individuality and Continuity. Individuality and Community in the Maidstone Self-Portrait and "Fonthill Abbey"', in Broomhall (ed), *Spaces for Feeling*, pp. 159–84.
29. On the private-public nature of *Liber Amoris* see Marilyn Butler, 'Satire and the Images of Self in the Romantic Period: The Long Tradition of Hazlitt's "Liber Amoris"', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 14 (1984), pp. 209–25. See esp. 216: 'the book is always an inextricable blend of the lover's compulsive self-dramatization and the writer's professional calculation.'
30. William Hazlitt, *Liber Amoris: Or The New Pygmalion* (London: John Hunt, 1823), 105.
31. Hazlitt, *Liber Amoris*, p. 113.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 191–2.
34. Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey: and Persuasion. With a Biographical Notice of the Author*, 4 vols. (London: John Murray, 1818), p. 3:139.
35. '[latente Liebesbereitschaft].' Schwanitz, *Kulturgeschichte*, 113. See *Ibid.*, 113–15, on how Austen suspends love's narratability (the heroine cannot talk about it), which allows for the plot to unfold. On unconsciousness and hidden desires see Christiane Zschirnt, 'Fainting and Latency in the Eighteenth-Century's Romantic Novel of Courtship', *The Germanic Review*, 74, no. 1 (1999), pp. 48–66.
36. Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 3:62–63.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 3:68.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 3:139.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 3:9, 67. See also Kay Young, 'Feeling Embodied: Consciousness, Persuasion, and Jane Austen', *Narrative*, 11, no. 1 (Jan. 2003): pp. 78–92, 82–84.
40. Austen, *Persuasion*, 3:62.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 3:137.

42. Ibid., p. 3:140–41.
43. Ibid., p. 3:167–68.
44. Ibid., p. 3:248, 4:25. On the exterior as communication devices for emotions see Trigg, 'Emotion Machine', pp. 194–95.
45. Austen, *Persuasion*, pp. 67–68.
46. Illouz, *Warum Liebe endet*, pp. 19–20.
47. See Illouz, *Warum Liebe endet*, pp. 20–22.
48. Émile Durkheim, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. John A. Spaulding and George Simpson (London and New York: Routledge, 1951), pp. 201–39. See also Sarah Horowitz, *Friendship and Politics in Post-Revolutionary France* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2013), pp. 41–42 on the 'politics of anomie.'
49. Farrar, *Young Lady's Friend*, p. 311. On lovesickness see Holloway, *Game of Love*, pp. 118–37, esp. 128–37.
50. Farrar, *Young Lady's Friend*, pp. 314–16.
51. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London: J. Johnson, 1792), 57.
52. Wollstonecraft, *Vindication*, pp. 58–59.
53. Ibid., 50–51.
54. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (London: A. Millar, 1759), pp. 69–70.
55. Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London: J. Darby, 1726), p. 188.
56. See Lorri G. Nandrea, 'Desiring Difference: Sympathy and Sensibility in *Jane Eyre*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 37, nos. 1/2 (2003–2004), pp. 112–34, esp. 113; Lara Freeburg Kees, "'Sympathy" in *Jane Eyre*', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900*, 45, no. 4: *The Nineteenth Century* (2005), pp. 873–97; Kelsey L. Bennett, *Principle and Propensity: Experience and Religion in the Nineteenth-Century British and American Bildungsroman* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2014), p. 68.
57. Bennett, *Principle*, pp. 71–72; Elizabeth Imlay, *Charlotte Brontë and the Mysteries of Love: Myth and Allegory in Jane Eyre* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989), pp. 55–68.
58. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 3: 152, 169, 293.
59. Ibid., p. 3: 151–52. See Rebecca N. Mitchell, 'The Rosamond Plots: Alterity and the Unknown in *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 66, no. 3 (2011), pp. 307–27, 313: 'He does not completely repress his desire for her, but rather subjects that desire to a brutal test against the other qualities that define his character – duty and piety foremost among them.' Mitchell notes that Rosamond Oliver has not garnered much scholarly attention although she, too, must unlove someone, namely St. John. See p. 316.
60. See Bennett, *Principle*, p. 71: 'St. John insists on forcing the "germ" of natural affection to grow via religion into the abstract category of philanthropy, whereas Jane seeks to cultivate it on the intimate terms of living with another human being as an equal in mind and affections.'
61. Imlay, *Brontë*, p. 66: 'he pours a cold shower upon the reader's desire for a successful climax to the story. The paradox is that, in weakening the book's impetus, Rivers assists Charlotte's argument that it is to love that we owe ultimate allegiance.'
62. See Carolyn Williams, 'Closing the Book: The Intertextual End of *Jane Eyre*', in Jerome J. McGann (ed), *Victorian Connections* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1989), pp. 60–87, esp. 60–63.
63. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, p. 3:310–11. On St. John's coldness see Bernard J. Paris, *Imagined Human Beings: A Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), pp. 160–63; Carol-Ann Farkas, "'Beyond What Language Can Express": Transcending the Limits of the Self in *Jane Eyre*', *Victorian Review*, 20, no. 1 (1994), pp. 49–69, 58–59.
64. Christopher Lane, *Hatred and Civility: The Antisocial Life in Victorian England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), esp. 85–106: '[...] few novelists of the time state so

eloquently or stubbornly that our obligations to others are a burden we long – but generally fail – to relinquish’ (p. 85). Bennett, *Principle*, p. 68: ‘Heart-renewal leads Jane not to “self-annihilation” [...] but rather culminates in the freedom, as Jane describes it herself, “to enjoy my own faculties as well as to cultivate those of other people.”’.

65. Lane, *Hatred and Civility*, esp. 2–4, pp. 34–36.
66. Hazlitt, *Liber Amoris*, pp. 164–65.
67. On insensibility as powerful unconsciousness due to a surplus of feeling see Anderson, ‘Staged Insensibility,’ Zschrnt, ‘Fainting and Latency’, 48–66; Naomi Booth, ‘Feeling Too Much: The Swoon and the (In)Sensible Woman’, *Women’s Writing*, 21, no. 4 (2014), pp. 575–91.
68. See Randall Craig, ‘Logophobia in “Jane Eyre”’, *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 23, no. 2 (1993), pp. 92–113, 95, who has argued that Jane Eyre’s ‘dialogues with Rochester are perforated by silences [...]’. This inarticulateness is more expressive than language ever could be. The “sad” failure in words bespeaks a praiseworthy capacity to feel. Speech on these occasions would signify only the superficiality of the spoken. If Jane could speak love, she could not be in love.’
69. See in particular Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1971 [1916]), esp. 125; Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001 [1957]), esp. 22–23; and Gérard Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), pp. 33–112.
70. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer, 3 vols. (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 1:3.
71. See Jeffrey Pence, ‘Narrative Emotion: Feeling, Form and Function’, *Journal of Narrative Theory*, 34, no. 3 (Fall, 2004), pp. 273–76.
72. Forster, *Novel*, p. 40.
73. On emotions and time see Christine Mattley, ‘The Temporality of Emotion: Constructing Past Emotions’, *Symbolic Interaction*, 25, no. 3 (2002), pp. 363–78.
74. Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 3:94.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor

Kerstin Maria Pahl is an art historian and literary scholar. She currently works as a post-doctoral research fellow at the Centre for the History of Emotions at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, where she investigates the poetics and politics of insensibility in nineteenth-century Britain and the British Empire. She studied art history, classical archaeology, and German literature in Frankfurt, Berlin, and Cambridge and worked for the Cultural Foundation of the German Länder (*Kulturstiftung der Länder*). Her PhD thesis (collaborative PhD at Humboldt University Berlin and King’s College London) explored portraiture and life-writing in England between c. 1660–1790 and was funded by the German Academic Merit Foundation (*Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes*).

Her area of expertise and main research interests are British art, literature, and culture, portraiture and life-writing, history of emotions and non-emotions, and social history of art and literature.