Professor Deborah Denenholz Morse, College of William & Mary (Williamsburg, Virginia)

'Burning Art and Political Resistance: Anne Brontë’s Radical Imaginary of Wives, Enslaved People, and Animals in The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848)'

Anne Brontë’s art exposes the legal and cultural privilege that connects male acts of violence against women and animals. Brontë also evokes the history of chattel slavery through language and plot, as well as by setting The Tenant of Wildfell Hall during the 1820s, the decade of most fervent parliamentary debate upon British West Indian slavery before its abolition in 1833. Brontë connects violence toward women’s bodies and the enslaved bodies unrepresented in Tenant, Sutherland’s ‘unnarrated hinterland’ of the Victorian novel — erased bodies repeatedly called forth by the shared, echoing language of feminist and abolitionist discourses.

Deborah Denenholz Morse is the inaugural Sara E. Nance Eminent Professor of English at The College of William & Mary. Deborah has written two monographs on Anthony Trollope, Women in Trollope’s Palliser Novels (1987) and Reforming Trollope (2013), and is the lead editor of the Routledge Research Companion to Anthony Trollope (2016, with Margaret Markwick and Mark Turner) as well as co-editor of The Politics of Gender in the Novels of Anthony Trollope (2009, with Margaret Markwick and Regenia Gagnier).

Deborah has co-edited four Brontë volumes: The Blackwell Companion to the Brontës (2016) and Time, Space, and Place in Charlotte Brontë (2016) with the late Diane Long Hoeveler, and bicentenary double issues on Charlotte and Emily Brontë for Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature with Amber Pouliot. Deborah has published nine essays and articles on the Brontës and is a part of the Cambridge University Press Complete Works editorial team, with General Editor Christine Alexander. Deborah is now completing the monograph Brontë Violations and has a chapter forthcoming in a Cambridge University Press collection, The Brontës and the Idea of the Human, edited by Alexandra Lewis (2019).

Deborah also continues to publish in Animal Studies since her co-editorship of Victorian Animal Dreams (2007) with Martin Danahay, most recently in the Cambridge volume Animals, Animality, and Literature (2018). Deborah has also published several articles on Elizabeth Gaskell, as well as articles on Catherine Cookson, Maxine Hong Kingston, Mona Simpson, Kay Boyle, A.S. Byatt, and other women writers.

For further information please contact Dr Alexandra Lewis (alexandra.lewis@abdn.ac.uk). Free event. All welcome!