AUTOBIOGRAPHY, WISH-FULFILMENT, AND JUVENILIA: THE "FRACTURED SELF" IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S PARACOSMIC COUNTERWORLD

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IN THE introduction to their ground-breaking collection of essays on juvenilia, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf*, Christine Alexander and Juliet McMaster write that "there should be a place for what children have to tell us of themselves" (2). Most immediately, Alexander and McMaster refer here to juvenilia's lack of "a place" within the literary canon, the result of a historical prejudice towards writing by children that has led to critical neglect. However, their emphasis on "what children have to tell us of themselves" also reflects a scholarly tradition of reading juvenilia for what we may learn about the child writer—whether as autobiography or as wish-fulfilment.

Although both of these approaches to literary juvenilia have been productive, they are somewhat contradictory and therefore have not always been practised in tandem. Juvenilia that are traditionally interpreted as autobiographical include the *Hyde Park Gate News* periodicals, a series of family newspapers produced by a young Virginia Woolf and her siblings in the 1890s that document the day-to-day life of the Stephen family. Despite the writings' featuring a mix of fact and fiction, recording everyday life alongside stories and parodies, most scholarship of *Hyde Park Gate News* to date focuses on what the siblings have to tell the reader about their own life experiences and the middle-class nineteenth-century society they were a product of. Examples from the texts include reports of illness in the family, such as "that horrible epidemic influenza" (6), and the arrival of visitors to the siblings' family home, including "Mr Russel Duckworth and his wife who conversed affably with Mrs Leslie Stephen for a few minutes when they declared they must depart which they accordingly did" (9). Gill Lowe comments that "the journal form provides us with a vivid impression of daily family life" (xiii), despite the fact that there are some fictional elements to *Hyde Park Gate News*.

By contrast, the element of wish-fulfilment has often been a focus of scholarship on the Brontë siblings' juvenilia, produced in the 1820s and 1830s. As Alexander

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points out, "the empowering act of writing [sometimes] defines the child's self in relation to the adult world and thereby overcomes the position of 'social nullity' and inferiority that the culturally specific concept of 'child' implies" ("Autobiography" 155). Pointing specifically to the Brontës, who "assumed a power and authority over their creation that no one could achieve in real life" as examples ("Nineteenth" 16), Alexander highlights that when juvenilia depict both socially and supernaturally powerful characters, they allow "the neglected child some ability to control the world" (22). To this important observation I would add that the neglect that prompts such writing does not necessarily stem from the immediate family circle; children can also experience and react to societal neglect of their rights, status, visibility, and collective voice. Consequently, children who are excluded from the adult world, and from the power associated with it, often create powerful characters that allow them imaginative entry into the spheres of adult society that they associate with authority and acceptance. These may be the literary world, for children with aspirations to write professionally; the aristocratic world, for those from lowly socioeconomic backgrounds; or even, as in the case of Branwell Brontë, the adventurous world of pirates in tales such as *The Pirate* (1833).

In the case of Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia, several scholars (as detailed more fully below) have argued that the appearance of dominant male characters in her work is evidence that the powerful world she joined through wish-fulfilment was a world of men; that her juvenilia allow her to assume a power denied to her in reality by her gender. Charlotte's influential and politically powerful male characters include the Duke of Wellington and the Marquis of Douro/Duke of Zamorna (the King of Angria), who appear alongside celebrated male authors such as Charles Wellesley/Townshend and Captain Tree. Zamorna and Charles originate as the wealthy and aristocratic sons of Charlotte's chief man in the earliest Brontë juvenilia, her fictional Duke of Wellington; as Charlotte's writing progresses and moves from Glass Town to Angria, Charles and Zamorna continue to dominate the narratives (through narration, political conquests, and romantic adventures), which is why they have often been read as a form of wish-fulfilment that allows the female child writer to trespass on the male public sphere. As Sally Shuttleworth explains, "Puzzled by this persistent choice of a male voice, critics have tended to treat it as an aberration, an attempt to enter a male realm of power and privilege" (106).

Charlotte's depiction of supernaturally powerful Genii is often similarly read as evidence of power assumption and wish-fulfilment. Genius Tallii is widely understood as an alter-ego who rules over Charlotte's imaginary world of Glass Town alongside the alter-egos of her siblings (Branii, Emmii, and Annii),[1] and as Alexander points out, through the figure of Tallii, Charlotte "could 'play' with power and direct social and political events" ("Experimentation" 12). As the four Genii are named after their creators, we may interpret their creation as wish-fulfilment. By the time she had reached the age of nine, Charlotte's mother and elder two siblings had died, and in their earliest stories, the Genii rule over the Brontës' imaginary world like gods; they have the power to control and alter events, even resurrecting deceased characters in narratives such as Charlotte's *The Foundling* (1833). Discussing Glass Town, Melodie Monahan argues that, in "a fantasy world designed partly to compensate for the

limitations of real life, the permanence of characters is essential" (496); this suggests a desire by the Brontës to gain an element of control over life and death following the loss of their mother and sisters. As Heather Glen observes, the siblings' "assertion of absolute power, the power to determine existence itself, is made in the face of an apprehension of absolute powerlessness, potential non-existence" (*Charlotte* 18). However, despite the fact that historically, literary juvenilia such as Charlotte's have been interpreted as platforms through which children can make sense of and articulate their experience of the world around them, the suggestion that a literary text reflects either the reality of an author's life or her desires, whilst plausible, remains a matter of interpretation.

The powerful nature of the Genii should not be taken as evidence that either they or the male figures in Charlotte's juvenilia serve only as vehicles for power assumption. As Alexander notes, Charlotte "participated in and developed a complex world of interrelated characters and events that both mirror and imaginatively reorder knowledge of the 'real world'" ("Experimentation" 12). Some critics have stressed the limitations to Charlotte's male characters' powers. Helen Moglen, for instance, argues that whenever Charlotte uses the voice of Charles, "although cast as a male, she is—as the *younger* brother—completely vulnerable" (49, original emphasis). Karen Chase similarly reads Charles as "a peripheral figure" (10). Whereas the first approach emphasises juvenilia as wish-fulfilment, reading Charles and the Genii as expressions of Charlotte's desire for power; the second approach emphasizes juvenilia as autobiography, reading Charles, at least, as an expression of Charlotte's powerlessness in reality. But there is no need, I would argue, to choose one reading over the other. To use Alexander's terms, Tallii is *both* a "mirror" *and* an "imaginative" reordering of Charlotte's known world, and so is Charles.

This appreciation of complexity is evident in Joyce Carol Oates's discussion of the Brontë children's paracosms, which she refers to as "ingeniously labyrinthine counterworlds" (255). Like Alexander, furthermore, Oates invokes the image of a mirror in her description of the paracosm as a "counterworld [that] both mirrors the 'real' world and distorts it; in it, you both are, and are not yourself" (254). Such descriptions invite us to consider Charlotte's paracosm of Glass Town and Angria as neither strictly autobiographical nor complete escapism. Moreover, such an approach is consistent with the concept of "the fractured self" that Alexander invokes in her description of Charlotte's juvenilia as an exploration of multiple voices and levels of consciousness ("Autobiography" 154). Although Tallii may be viewed as a distorted representation of a powerless child author, she also represents her creator's knowledge (of the type of literature that inspired the young Brontës to create and maintain their paracosmic world) and her creator's dreams and desires.

The Genii signify the ties (shared experiences, shared books) that bind the siblings together in reality; at the same time, they can also be interpreted as signifying what the siblings desire to be. Similarly, the figures of the Little Queens and the Little King also signify ties binding the siblings in reality as well as in their fantasies. However, the gender divide between the characters complicates simple ideas of wish-fulfilment and autobiography that can be interpreted from a close reading of the texts in which they appear. Charles Wellesley/Townshend, an alter-ego of his creator

and—ostensibly—initially a wealthy and successful child author turned wandering outcast and struggling writer, is also a character who invites us to consider how elements of autobiography and wish-fulfilment can intertwine in Charlotte's work.

While much might be learned about the imaginative play of children from studying juvenilia, other approaches to studying children's play can helpfully illuminate Charlotte's youthful writings. In particular, scholars of children's paracosms,[2] or imaginary worlds, who also study other forms of documentation such as observation and oral interviews, offer valuable insight into the paracosmic worlds of the Brontë children. Before the Brontës began to write about their imaginary worlds, they invented those worlds in physical play with toy soldiers given to Branwell by their father, Patrick. Few children have written as they did;[3] as David Cohen and Stephen A. MacKeith point out in their full-length study of paracosms, such creations are normally a feature of physical childhood play that are lost to history once their creators reach adulthood. Nevertheless, many children do create paracosms, and Cohen and MacKeith make a compelling argument that literary paracosms like the Brontës' share many of the same characteristics as those centred around physical play.

One particularly valuable aspect of Cohen and MacKeith's study is their recognition that adults "are only too ready to presume that children will use it [the paracosm] to create fantasies of control" (19) and their assertion that "children have many *different* motives for setting up their dream worlds" (19, original emphasis). These scholars "try to avoid [an] over-simple analysis … of the sort that suggests that because children had an unhappy childhood, they devised a cuddlesome imaginary world where they were loved and in total control" (14). Accordingly, they identify several different categories of paracosms, each of which, they argue, has distinct origins and purposes. Their list of categories is worth quoting at length:

> First, there is a group of worlds centred on animals and on toys. A second group centres round countries …. A third category involves fantasies of schools. Fourth … some worlds are 'technological', mainly railway systems of various sorts. Fifth, there are some worlds grouped round a theatre, and finally, a few miscellaneous ones. (22)

The testimony of other paracosmists whose worlds focused on "countries," as collected by Cohen and MacKeith, strongly supports scholars such as Shuttleworth and Glen who, when analysing Charlotte's juvenilia, focus on aspects of wish-fulfilment and control arising from a sense of marginalization in real life. For instance, Cohen and MacKeith cite a "countries" paracosmist named Jane who says that she "used it [the paracosm] to withdraw from a slightly oppressive real world" (55), and another named David who reports having detested school life, an experience that gave him "'a hatred of wasting my time under other people's control'" (65).

Yet Cohen and MacKeith also argue that paracosmic worlds centred on toys (such as that of the Brontës') are the products of largely happy, fulfilled, and creative children: for the creators of such worlds, "They [the toys] were the scaffolding, and spark, for a new world" (24). In toy-centred worlds, the paracosm typically functions as an extension of the happiness initially provided by the physical objects that inspire

them. Here the child's intention may simply be to prolong a positive experience by moulding the paracosmic world to mirror her experience in the real one—quite a different thing from the wish-fulfilment of a child who feels isolated and oppressed. Unfortunately, focused as they are on their goal of defining and distinguishing their several categories, Cohen and MacKeith do not consider the possibility that a paracosm might have multiple origins, and, for example, be centred on both "toys" and on "countries," or that it might function both as wish-fulfilment and as an extension of lived reality—or even that the reality prolonged through play may not be an entirely happy one. Nevertheless, we may recognize from their analysis that Charlotte's paracosms of Glass Town and Angria fit into (at least) two of their categories. This is a recognition that challenges us, ultimately, to reject fixed boundaries between Cohen and MacKeith's categories and, instead, to understand the paracosm as, at least in Charlotte's case, a melting pot of ideas, influences, and experiences demanding an approach that looks for fractures, contradictions, and multiplicities rather than singularities.

This, then, is the approach I take in critically reconsidering some of Charlotte's figures who are often interpreted as vehicles of wish-fulfilment and power assumption. Perhaps the most obvious candidate for such a study is Tallii, the Genii who, along with Annii, Emmii, and the Little Queens, is a supernaturally powerful female figure in a fantasy world otherwise full of mortal women who are restricted by their gender. Mary Percy is a pawn in the political battles between her husband Zamorna and her father Alexander Percy, with the former declaring that "'I had decided to let her die if her father cut loose and deceived [me] with agony'" (*Passing* 70); Zamorna's mistress Mina Laury lives to serve her lover, stating, "'I've nothing else to exist for, no other interest in life'" (*Passing* 44); and the teenage Caroline Vernon longs to break free from the expectations placed upon her by a patriarchal society in order to have adventures and to "'be tryed to see what I had in me'" (*Caroline* 266). By contrast, Tallii, Annii, and Emmii are powerful Genii and "tyrants of the air" (Brontë, "Song" 80); Alexander quite rightly refers to them as "pseudo-gods" ("Autobiography" 156). Moreover, Tallii is a more prominent figure in Charlotte's narratives than Annii and Emmii are; the only Genii to really rival Tallii in terms of power is Brannii, the sole male Genii in Glass Town and the alter-ego of Branwell, the only male Brontë sibling in reality. Carol Bock stresses Charlotte's dominance in this rivalry, pointing out that "The introduction of the 'Chief Genii,' for example, was originally Charlotte's idea and was less than enthusiastically received by her brother" (35–36). However, Brannii's reappearances throughout the Brontë juvenilia in incarnations such as the dastardly and scheming S'death who creates havoc and chaos may suggest that, despite his initial reluctance, Branwell enjoyed seizing power and inspiring fear through his alter-ego.

More compelling support for reading Tallii as representing Charlotte's desire for power may be found in the written texts themselves. For example, in an early Glass Town fragment dated 1829, Charlotte (and possibly Branwell) describe the power and ferocity of the Genii: "'by their magic might they can reduce the world to a desert, the rivers to streams of livid poison and the clearest lakes to stagnant waters'" ("Sir" 39).[4] The Genii may represent a desire on the siblings' part to destroy the world as

well as create, but both creation and destruction are expressions of power and forms of control. In the passage I have just quoted, Tallii is Brannii's equal; no distinction is made between them. In the figure of Tallii, in this fragment at least, Charlotte achieves an equality to Branwell that she could only achieve on the page, due to the different expectations placed upon male and female children and adults in nineteenth-century Britain. Nevertheless, the fact remains that Charlotte chose a female supernatural being to represent herself within her work when she could have selected a male persona as rival to her brother's. In making this choice, Charlotte perhaps places limits to her wish-fulfilment, a choice that may be interpreted as reflecting the reality of the gender difference that contributed to her relative powerlessness.

This combination of fantasy and autobiography is also evident in the characters of the Little Queens, powerful female characters who appear in several of Charlotte's narratives, including *Tales of the Islanders*. Like the Genii, these alter egos are "supernaturally gifted" (Bock 37); they are strong women who can assume a power on the page that has been denied to Charlotte in reality. The Little Queens inhabit Vision Island and associate with members of the aristocracy such as Lord Charles Wellesley and the Duke of Wellington, the latter informing them in the first volume of the tales (June 1829) that "'I remain your obedient subject'" (*Tales I* 25). Their power is further evident when, during a period of rebellion in the second volume (November 1829), Charles begs for their help, writing that, "if you don't make haste and come to our help, we must surrender" (*Tales II* 101). Nevertheless, in granting Charles's request, the Little Queens are allowing themselves to be commanded by him, even though—despite Charles's social power and position in Glass Town society—he is just a mortal child.

Similarly, although the Little Queens clearly have authority over Wellington, even commanding him to become the governor of the school that is erected on Vision Island, he refuses the post, and the role is passed to Charles and his brother, the Marquis of Douro. Once again, we see that Charlotte's powerful Little Queens can be resisted and commanded by her male characters, a pattern suggesting that the power balance is far from straightforward, and that these characters could plausibly be interpreted as mirroring the reality of the position of women as subordinate to men in nineteenth-century Britain. Moreover, in the fourth volume of *Tales of the Islanders* (July 1830) in particular, the character of the Little King is Charlotte's central focus. In the first chapter, Wellington meets the Little King accompanied by three old washerwomen; the Little King proceeds to offer the women to Wellington as servants, stating, "if you would consent to take them into your service it would be conferring a great obligation on me as well as them" (197). Wellington refuses this offer but invites them to speak with his housekeeper regarding positions in his household. The washerwomen eventually depart with the Little King leading the way, and they walk behind him, almost subservient. Charles eventually discovers that the three washerwomen were actually the result of spells cast by the Little King and Queens; Charlotte writes, "One of them gave him a hearty slap on the shoulder saying, 'Charles, don't be frightened, they were only our enchantments'" (203). However, at the end of this chapter, no distinction is made between the supernatural power of the Little King and that of the Little Queens, exactly as in the passage quoted

above in which no distinction was made between the power of Brannii and that of Tallii, Emmii, and Annii, suggesting once again that the power balance is far from straightforward in Charlotte's early fiction.

Of course, as Robert Keefe has observed, Charles himself is a distortion of his creator on the page, a "masculine projection of herself" (51), so his dominance of the Little Queens in stories such as the first volume of *Tales of the Islanders* can still be read as wish-fulfilment. Charles shares part of Charlotte's name, and he is endowed with the kind of success, wealth, and power—including authorial power—that the young Charlotte could only dream of. Even in his earlier incarnation he is, as Alexander describes him, "an accomplished reporter of Glass Town gossip" (*Early* 61). In an early Glass Town narrative, Charles is the author of a short play, *The Poetaster*, which Victor Neufeldt reads as "mercilessly satirizing" the character of Young Soult (176), a creation of Branwell and rival author to Charles in the two siblings' shared paracosmic world. Here Charles joins fellow authors Douro and Captain Tree in mocking the work of aspiring poet Henry Rhymer, whom Charles labels "a poetaster" (485). Wellington's instructions to let Rhymer into the palace only as far as the antechamber further demonstrate the gulf between the status of the poetaster and Charlotte's powerful personae. Charles's authority is further evident when he saves Rhymer from execution for the murder of Tree with his announcement that "Tree has at length been brought to life again, and Rhymer's pardoned" (496). In this tale, then, Charles has power over life and death that recalls the power the Genii have in other tales, which can plausibly be read as strong evidence of a young author's seizing of power through fantasy.

Given such evidence, it is unsurprising that Shuttleworth, as we have seen, reads Charlotte's use of male voices as an attempt to enter a male-dominated sphere in order to achieve a power denied to her in reality. Similarly, Alexander argues that the creation of the Brontës' earliest miniature magazines, such as *Branwell's Blackwood's Magazine* and *The Young Men's Magazine*, enabled the siblings to play at being authors, editors, and publishers, "with all the freedom and authority this implies" (Alexander, "Play" 32). Nevertheless, this play did not mirror reality as they understood it; to the Brontës, as Alexander points out, the literary world was "very much a male domain" (*Early* 227). Accordingly, Charlotte depicts a number of powerful male authors in her juvenilia, including Captain Tree, Douro/Zamorna, and Charles. Nevertheless, a close examination of the character of Charles, considering the full range of Charlotte's Glass Town and Angrian writings, demonstrates that he is not the all-powerful figure that Shuttleworth and others perceive him to be. In fact, Charlotte depicts the celebrated "gossip" Charles in his earliest incarnation as a powerless, snooping child who is prone to bouts of wandering; in the fourth volume of *Tales of the Islanders* he spies on the Little King and washerwomen, with Charlotte writing, "he determined to walk close behind and remain a concealed listener to their conversation, promising himself much amusement from the scheme" (199).

The Poetaster is a complex text that does both more and less than celebrate the male figures' power.[5] Rather, the play exemplifies the co-existence of wish-fulfilment and autobiography in Charlotte's juvenilia and, as such, may convincingly be read as evidence of a "fractured self." Despite Charles' privileged position, it is evident he is,

as Moglen states, "the *younger* brother" (49), who lacks the same kind of authority as Douro or Wellington and here he must entreat them both to relent and allow Rhymer into the palace. Furthermore, despite Charles's place of honour in what Monahan terms the "hierarchy of poets" (476), and despite being the author of the tale within Charlotte's paracosmic world, he is never depicted in the act of writing in the play and is actually absent during a large part of its performance. Even when he saves Rhymer's life at the play's conclusion, Charles is merely a messenger; unlike the Genii, he does not have the power to actually revive the dead.

The character of Rhymer similarly contains elements of both autobiographical realism and wish-fulfilment, and insofar as he can also be read as an alter ego of Charlotte, emphasizes the writer's fractured self. Ostensibly, Rhymer represents autobiography whilst Charlotte "aligns herself with the respected Glass Town writers whose names provide her with a pseudonym here and elsewhere in the juvenilia (Monahan 476). Rhymer is an ambitious writer from a lowly socioeconomic background, as is his creator. By setting foot in Waterloo Palace and invading Tree's study, Rhymer penetrates social barriers and physically enters the world of the aristocratic and elite writers he desires to join. His murder of Tree is, clearly, a seizing of power; this, combined with the absence of Charles, Wellington, and Douro for most of the play, strongly suggests wish-fulfilment.

However, none of these four writers' stories ultimately end in triumph; these male characters, who may have begun as vehicles of power assumption through whom Charlotte could gain imaginative entry into a sphere she was barred from in reality due to her age, gender and social status, fall from grace. In *The Poetaster*, the final redistribution of power sees Rhymer pardoned through Charles, Tree restored to life, and Rhymer banned from writing but employed as Charles' undersecretary, kissing his feet. Here Rhymer once again represents autobiography, and perhaps that which must be rejected (ambition, social mobility, and female authors if he is interpreted as an alter-ego of his creator), whereas Charles and Tree, exulting in their power, provide wish-fulfilment. But, by the time Charlotte ceased writing narratives set in her paracosmic world in 1839, the character of Tree had long since been abandoned, Douro/Zamorna had evolved into more of a despot and libertine than a writer, and Lord Charles Wellesley had become Charles Townshend, wandering dandy and "penniless hack writer" (Glen, "Background" lv). Clearly, there is more to be found in Charlotte's early fiction than simple fantasies of power and control.

Even before he devolves from Lord Charles Wellesley to Charles Townshend, we may find elements of autobiography and wish-fulfilment intertwined in Charles' character in another early Glass Town tale, *Strange Events* (August 1830). Once again, however, Charles' weakness leaves room for another character to enact the wish-fulfilment. Sitting alone in the library, Lord Charles muses, "It seemed as if I were a non-existent shadow, that I neither spoke, eat, imagined, or lived of myself, but I was the mere idea of some other creature's brain" (257). He hears noises and voices, "one like my own but larger and dimmer" (258); he witnesses books moving "apparently of their own accord" (258). He then encounters a god-like presence who picks him up like an inanimate object: "I felt myself raised suddenly to the ceiling, and ere I was aware, behold two immense, sparkling, bright blue globes … I was in [a] hand wide

enough almost to grasp the Tower of All Nations…" (258). Despite his privileged position in Glass Town society, Charles is powerless to act when he meets the god-like being whose supernatural power supersedes his wealth and social status. If this being is Genius Tallii, then, instead of functioning here as a vehicle for power assumption through his position as a celebrated and wealthy male author, Charles becomes powerless and small—like a child—under the control of a higher, quite possibly female, authority. When Colonel Crumps enters the room the apparition disappears, leaving Charles to wonder if it was all a dream, and the tale ends with control restored to Charlotte's male persona. However, the overall effect of the narrative is to dramatize just how complex the division of power is between Charlotte's characters, each of them representing aspects of her fractured self, and few of them consistently representing the same aspect in every moment.

The co-existence of fantasy and realism within one character is exemplified in Charlotte's later stories featuring Charles. Charles's eventual abandonment of his title and name change from the aristocratic Wellesley to Townshend in *Passing Events* (1836) follows his bouts of "voluntary exile from those higher circles of society" (Brontë, *Something* 31) in 1833.[6] This is a turning point, as with the name change Charles also transforms from privileged and celebrated author to wandering and struggling narrator with no place in the narrative action. Charles may have been born into society's upper echelons, but from this point on Charlotte depicts him as an outcast and a self-proclaimed "unsettled wanderer from one low haunt to another" (*Something* 31). He becomes, as Philip Momberger terms him, a "'placeless person'" (350) who wanders in search of occupation and purpose. However, Glass Town texts such as Charlotte's *A Day at Parry's Palace* depict Lord Charles as a wanderer in search of occupation and amusement as early as August 1830; this suggests that, despite the explicit shift in his role and status following his name change, the fusion of fantasy and realism within an individual character is also exemplified in Charlotte's earliest tales featuring Charles.

Charles's restless and wandering nature is most explicitly presented in Charlotte's later Angrian writings, such as her experimental flâneur novelette *Stancliffe's Hotel* (1838), which also exemplifies the fusion of wish-fulfilment and autobiography within this single character. Ostensibly, Charles remains a wealthy aristocratic writer in this text, declaring, "I've cash sufficient … I've just rounded off my nineteenth year and entered on my twentieth; I'm a neat figure, a competent scholar, a popular author, a gentleman and a man of the world" (77). So far this sounds like the wish-fulfilment such critics as Shuttleworth and Glen have noted. However, in this tale Charles is also a flâneur who is estranged from aristocratic family ties following his name change. Furthermore, although he is well known, a "popular author" as he says, he no longer knows how to be a writer, now that he has ceased to be the celebrated child prodigy he once was. In one episode of *Stancliffe's Hotel* he recounts how, while watching the tumult in the streets from the window of his hotel room, "My chamber door burst open, and twenty persons were at my back, pressing one behind another to get a glimpse from the window" (111). These riots have been caused by Zamorna's political troubles, but Zamorna still clings to power, while Charles clearly has no greater place in his brother's social circle than the other guests in the hotel. Charles is again, as

Moglen and Chase suggest, the powerless and "peripheral" younger brother rather than a means of seizing power—whether for Zamorna or for Charlotte.

Charles continues to narrate Charlotte's later Angrian tales, but his standing in society is steadily waning. In *Henry Hastings* (1839) for instance, despite his aristocratic background, he is forced to advertise for a wealthy wife because "my pockets are empty" (202). In this tale Charlotte even relegates him to the role of co-narrator, sharing the job with his former friend, Sir William Percy. This change is part of a general shift in style and focus; the Genii and Little Queens, along with the supernatural elements, also disappear from Charlotte's later juvenilia, which suggests that she moved away from fantasy and towards a greater sense of realism as she left Glass Town behind in favour of Angria; Glen asserts that Charlotte was engaging with "the common cultural currency of her time" (Introduction xi) in her Angrian novelettes. However, there is no fixed boundary separating the stories in which Charles functions as wish-fulfilment from those in which he serves as a reflection of Charlotte's autobiographical reality; even in *Henry Hastings* he retains his aristocratic stance and habits. From the earliest Glass Town narratives to the Angrian novelettes, then, Charles's changing character and varied roles within the narratives demonstrate that wish-fulfilment and autobiography can co-exist within a single paracosmic counterworld, and underscore the multiple levels of consciousness, reality, and story-telling that characterize the writing produced by Charlotte's "fractured self," calling for a complex and nuanced analysis of that which "children have to tell us of themselves."

NOTES

[1] Named after Branwell, Emily, and Anne Brontë.

[2] *Paracosm* is a term coined by Ben Vincent to describe the imaginary worlds of children and is defined by Robert Silvey and Stephen A. MacKeith as "a spontaneously created, but maintained and elaborated, imaginary private world" (24). Alexander defines paracosms as "sophisticated alternative realities with their own history, culture, geography, politics, publications, and language" (*JJS* 5).

[3] Other well-known instances of documented paracosms include Hartley Coleridge's Ejuxria and C. S. Lewis's Boxen.

[4] The fragment is known as "Sir – it is well known that the Genii," and Alexander suggests that this piece may be a collaboration between Charlotte and Branwell due to the signature UT (Us Two) being used (see under Brontë, "Sir" 39n1).

[5] See also Monahan, who plays down the importance of power in *The Poetaster*, arguing instead that, despite the presence of four of Charlotte's most powerful and wealthy figures (Charles, Douro, Wellington, and Tree), Charlotte's "emphasis is not on their affairs so much as it is on aesthetics, on defining great literature and determining how it is produced" (475).

[6] The name Townshend is actually first used by Charlotte in a recently discovered fragment dating from 1833 where it is used as an alias for a character named Charles Wellesley during his trip to the village of Haworth, where the Brontës resided. This fragment was published in *Charlotte Brontë: The Lost Manuscripts* (The Brontë Society, 2018).

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