



A COMPANION TO

THE
B RONTËS

EDITED BY
DIANE LONG HOEVELER
AND DEBORAH DENENHOLZ MORSE

WILEY Blackwell

A Companion to the Brontës

Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture

This series offers comprehensive, newly written surveys of key periods and movements and certain major authors, in English literary culture and history. Extensive volumes provide new perspectives and positions on contexts and on canonical and post-canonical texts, orientating the beginning student in new fields of study and providing the experienced undergraduate and new graduate with current and new directions, as pioneered and developed by leading scholars in the field.

Published Recently

- | | |
|--|---|
| 76. <i>A Companion to Comparative Literature</i> | Edited by Ali Behdad and
Dominic Thomas |
| 77. <i>A Companion to Poetic Genre</i> | Edited by Erik Martiny |
| 78. <i>A Companion to American Literary Studies</i> | Edited by Caroline F. Levander and
Robert S. Levine |
| 79. <i>A New Companion to the Gothic</i> | Edited by David Punter |
| 80. <i>A Companion to the American Novel</i> | Edited by Alfred Bendixen |
| 81. <i>A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation</i> | Edited by Deborah Cartmell |
| 82. <i>A Companion to George Eliot</i> | Edited by Amanda Anderson and
Harry E. Shaw |
| 83. <i>A Companion to Creative Writing</i> | Edited by Graeme Harper |
| 84. <i>A Companion to British Literature, 4 volumes</i> | Edited by Robert DeMaria, Jr.,
Heesok Chang, and Samantha Zacher |
| 85. <i>A Companion to American Gothic</i> | Edited by Charles L. Crow |
| 86. <i>A Companion to Translation Studies</i> | Edited by Sandra Bermann and
Catherine Porter |
| 87. <i>A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture</i> | Edited by Herbert F. Tucker |
| 88. <i>A Companion to Modernist Poetry</i> | Edited by David E. Chinitz and
Gail McDonald |
| 89. <i>A Companion to J. R. R. Tolkien</i> | Edited by Stuart D. Lee |
| 90. <i>A Companion to the English Novel</i> | Edited by Stephen Arata, Madigan Haley,
J. Paul Hunter, and Jennifer Wicke |
| 91. <i>A Companion to the Harlem Renaissance</i> | Edited by Cherene Sherrard-Johnson |
| 92. <i>A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature</i> | Edited by Yingjin Zhang |
| 93. <i>A New Companion to Digital Humanities</i> | Edited by Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens,
and John Unsworth |
| 94. <i>A Companion to Virginia Woolf</i> | Edited by Jessica Berman |
| 95. <i>A New Companion to Milton</i> | Edited by Thomas Corns |
| 96. <i>A Companion to the Brontës</i> | Edited by Diane Long Hoeveler
and Deborah Denenholz Morse |

A COMPANION TO
THE *BRONTËS*

EDITED BY
DIANE LONG HOEVELER
AND DEBORAH DENENHOLZ MORSE

WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2016
© 2016 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Diane Long Hoeveler and Deborah Denenholz Morse to be identified as the authors of the editorial material in this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and authors have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Hoeveler, Diane Long, editor. | Morse, Deborah Denenholz, 1949– editor.

Title: A companion to the Brontës / edited by Diane Long Hoeveler and Deborah Denenholz Morse.

Description: 1 | Hoboken : Wiley-Blackwell, 2016. | Series: Blackwell companions to literature and culture | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015046805 (print) | LCCN 2016006356 (ebook) | ISBN 9781118404942 (hardback) | ISBN 9781118405475 (ePub) | ISBN 9781118405499 (Adobe PDF)

Subjects: LCSH: Brontë family. | Brontë, Charlotte, 1816–1855—Criticism and interpretation. | Brontë, Emily, 1818–1848—Criticism and interpretation. | Brontë, Anne, 1820–1849—Criticism and interpretation. | Women novelists, English—19th century—Biography. | BISAC: LITERARY CRITICISM / European / English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh.

Classification: LCC PR4169 .C66 2016 (print) | LCC PR4169 (ebook) | DDC 823/.809—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015046805>

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Cover image: Courtesy of the Author

Set in 10.5/12.5pt Garamond by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India

Contents

<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	ix
Introduction <i>Deborah Denenholz Morse and Diane Long Hoeveler</i>	1
Part I Imaginative Forms and Literary/Critical Contexts	9
1 Experimentation and the Early Writings <i>Christine Alexander</i>	11
2 The Brontës and the Gothic Tradition <i>Diane Long Hoeveler</i>	31
3 The Critical Recuperation of and Theoretical Approaches to the Brontës <i>Lisa Jadwin</i>	49
4 Journeying Home: <i>Jane Eyre</i> and Catherine Earnshaw's Coming-of-Age Stories <i>Amy J. Robinson</i>	65
Part II Texts	79
5 <i>Wuthering Heights</i> <i>Louise Lee</i>	81
6 <i>Jane Eyre</i> <i>Margaret Markwick</i>	101
7 <i>The Tenant of Wildfell Hall</i> <i>Kari Lokke</i>	115
8 <i>Agnes Grey</i> <i>Judith E. Pike</i>	135

9	Charlotte Brontë's <i>The Professor</i> <i>Tabitha Sparks</i>	151
10	Charlotte Brontë's <i>Shirley</i> <i>Herbert Rosengarten</i>	167
11	<i>Villette</i> <i>Penny Boumelha</i>	183
12	Poetry, Campaigning Articles, and Letters by Patrick Brontë <i>Dudley Green</i>	197
13	The Poetry and Verse Drama of Branwell Brontë <i>Julie Donovan</i>	213
14	Poetry of Anne, Charlotte, and Emily <i>John Maynard</i>	229
15	The Artwork of the Brontës <i>Nancy V. Workman</i>	249
16	The Letters and Brussels Essays <i>Karen E. Laird</i>	265
Part III Reception Studies		283
17	The Brontës and the Periodicals of the 1820s and 1830s <i>Lucasta Miller</i>	285
18	The Brontës and the Victorian Reading Public, 1846–1860 <i>Alexis Easley</i>	303
Part IV Historical, Intellectual, and Cultural Contexts		319
19	The Temptations of a Daughterless Mother: <i>Jane Eyre</i> and the Feminist/Postcolonial Dilemma <i>Ken Hiltner</i>	321
20	Race, Slavery, and the Slave Trade <i>Beverly Taylor</i>	339
21	Marriage and Divorce in the Novels <i>Beth Lau</i>	355
22	Physical and Mental Health in the Brontës' Lives and Works <i>Carol A. Senf</i>	369
23	The Brontës and the Death Question <i>Carol Margaret Davison</i>	385
24	The Irish Heritage of the Brontës <i>Edward Chitham</i>	403

25	The Intellectual and Philosophical Contexts <i>Elisha Cohn</i>	417
26	The Religion(s) of the Brontës <i>Miriam Elizabeth Burstein</i>	433
27	Reading the Arts in the Brontë Fiction <i>Judith Wilt</i>	453
28	Politics, Legal Concerns, and Reforms <i>Simon Avery</i>	471
29	Class and Gender in the Brontë Novels <i>Tara MacDonald</i>	485
Part V Afterlives of the Brontës		501
30	<i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wuthering Heights</i> and Their Filmic Adaptations <i>Tom Winnifrieth</i>	503
31	Mixed Signals: Narrative Fidelity, Female Speech, and Masculine Spectacle in Adapting the Brontë Novels as Films <i>Brandon Chitwood</i>	513
32	Brontë Hauntings: Literary Works from Modernism to the Present <i>Deborah Denenholz Morse</i>	529
33	The Brontë Family in Popular Culture <i>Abigail Burnham Bloom</i>	547
34	The Brontë Parsonage Museum, the Brontë Society, and the Preservation of Brontëana <i>Ann Dinsdale</i>	565
35	Biographical Myths and Legends of the Brontës <i>Sarah E. Maier</i>	579
	<i>Index</i>	593

Notes on Contributors

Christine Alexander is Emeritus Scientia Professor of English at the University of New South Wales, Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and general editor of the Juvenilia Press. She has published extensively on the Brontës, including *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, *The Art of the Brontës* (CUP), *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës* (OUP), a number of critical editions; and recently *The Brontës: Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal: Selected Writings* (OUP). She has also coedited the first book on literary juvenilia, *The Child Writer from Austen to Woolf* (CUP), and published on Gothic literature, Jane Austen, critical editing, and literature and landscape gardening.

Simon Avery is Reader in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture at the University of Westminster, London. His publications include *Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (2011), *Mary Coleridge: Selected Poems* (2010), *Thomas Hardy: A Reader's Guide* (2009), *Lives of Victorian Literary Figures: The Brownings* (2004), and the Broadview edition of Hardy's *The Return of the Native* (2013). He is currently co-editing a collection of essays on histories of queer London, c.1850 to the present (Bloomsbury, 2016).

Abigail Burnham Bloom teaches Victorian literature at Hunter College, CUNY, and is Managing Editor of the journal *Victorian Literature and Culture*. Her recent publications include *The Literature Monster on Film: Five Nineteenth-Century Novels and Their Cinematic Adaptations*, coediting *Victorian Literature and Film Adaptation* and editing *Personal Moments in the Lives of Victorian Women: Selections from Their Autobiographies*.

Penny Boumelha is Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, and a Fellow of the Academy of the Humanities in Australia. She was born in London and holds an MA and a DPhil in English from the University of Oxford. She has published widely on nineteenth-century fiction (especially Thomas Hardy and Charlotte Brontë), on discourses of gender, class and race, and on literary genres, as well as on issues in tertiary education and university management.

Miriam Elizabeth Burstein is Professor of English at SUNY-Brockport. Her two books are *Narrating Women's History in Britain, 1770–1902* (2004); and *Victorian Reformations: Historical Fiction and Religious Controversy, 1820–1900* (2013). She is also Editor of Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere* (2013).

Edward Chitham was Senior Lecturer at The Polytechnic, Wolverhampton, and Assistant Lecturer at The Open University. He has published extensively on the Brontës, including biographies of Emily and Anne, an edition of Anne's poetry and *The Brontës' Irish Background* for which a new edition is planned.

Brandon Chitwood holds the PhD in English from Marquette University. He has published on Charles Dickens and the Brontës, and is currently working on a book exploring the development of speculative fiction in Victorian literature and culture.

Elisha Cohn is Assistant Professor of English at Cornell University. Her research focuses on Victorian literature with an emphasis on the novel and theories of the aesthetic. Her book, *Still Life: Suspended Development in the Victorian Novel* (2016), considers how reverie and trance suspend the ethical imperatives of Victorian aesthetics. She has also published in *Victorian Studies*, *Journal of Victorian Culture*, and *Contemporary Literature*.

Carol Margaret Davison is Professor and Head of the Department of English Language, Literature, and Creative Writing at the University of Windsor. She has published widely on the Gothic, cultural teratology, African-American, and Scottish literature. Her published books include *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1764–1824* (2009) and *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (2004). She is currently editing *The Gothic and Death* for Manchester University Press (2016) and co-editing *The Edinburgh Companion to the Scottish Gothic* with Monica Germanà (2016).

Ann Dinsdale is Collections Manager at the Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, where she is involved with organizing exhibitions and caring for the collections. She lectures and writes on aspects of the Brontës' lives and social conditions in mid-nineteenth-century Haworth. She is the author of *The Brontës at Haworth* (Frances Lincoln, 2006) and a contributor to *The Brontës in Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Julie Donovan is Associate Professor of Literature and Writing at George Washington University. Author of *Sydney Owenson, Lady Morgan and the Politics of Style*, she has also published essays on Walter Scott and Catherine Rebecca Gray (Lady Manners) and Charlotte Nooth. Her interests are the recovery of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century women authors, Irish literature of the same period, and the less canonical works of the Brontës.

Alexis Easley is Professor of English at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and the author of two books: *First-Person Anonymity: Women Writers and Victorian Print Media* and *Literary Celebrity, Gender, and Victorian Authorship*. Her articles have appeared in *Victorian Poetry*, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, *Victorian Periodicals Review*, and other journals.

Dudley Green is an independent scholar and specialist on Patrick Brontë. His biography *Patrick Brontë, Father of Genius* was published in 2010 by Nonsuch Publishing/The History Press.

Ken Hiltner is Professor in the English and Environmental Studies Departments at the University of California–Santa Barbara. He received his PhD from Harvard University, where he garnered a number of distinctions as a researcher and Teaching Fellow, including the Bowdoin Prize. He has written a range of articles, such as “Shirley and the Luddites” (*Brontë Studies*, July 2008) and five books, including *Milton and Ecology*, *What Else is Pastoral?*, *Renaissance Ecology*, and *Ecocriticism: The Essential Reader*. Prior to becoming a professor, he made his living as a furniture maker.

Diane Long Hoeveler is Emerita Professor of English at Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She is author of *The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1770–1870* (University of Wales Press, 2014), as well as *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780–1820* (2010), which shared the Allan Lloyd Smith memorial award from the International Gothic Association. In addition, she is author of *Gothic Feminism* (1998); and *Romantic Androgyny* (1990), and some 65 articles on a variety of literary topics. She coauthored a critical study of *Charlotte Brontë*, and edited the Houghton Mifflin volume of *Wuthering Heights*. Her coedited volumes of essays include *The Encyclopedia of Romantic Literature* (Wiley Blackwell, 2012, 3 vols); *Approaches to Teaching Jane Eyre*; *Approaches to Teaching the Gothic* (both for the MLA); *Interrogating Orientalism*; *Comparative Romanticisms*; *Romanticism and its other discourses*; *Romantic Drama*; *Romanticism and the Law*; *Women of Color*; *Women's Literary Creativity and the Female Body*; and the *Historical Dictionary of Feminism*.

Lisa Jadwin is Professor of English at St. John Fisher University. She is coauthor, with Diane Hoeveler, of a critical study of Charlotte Brontë. Jadwin has published work on other mid-Victorian novelists including Dickens and Thackeray as well as articles on postmodern pedagogy. Her work in progress, *Over Her Dead Body*, is a structuralist analysis of the psychodynamics of detective fictions including films.

Karen E. Laird (PhD, University of Missouri) is the author of *The Art of Adapting Victorian Literature, 1848–1920: Dramatizing Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, and The Woman in White* (Ashgate, 2015).

Beth Lau is Emerita Professor of English at California State University, Long Beach, where she regularly taught a class on the Brontës. She has published books and articles on John Keats, Jane Austen, and other Romantic writers and coedited (with Diane Hoeveler) the MLA *Approaches to Teaching Brontë's Jane Eyre* (1993). Her most recent book is the edited collection *Fellow Romantics: Male and Female British Writers, 1790–1835* (Ashgate 2009).

Louise Lee is a lecturer in Victorian Literature at Roehampton University, London. She is completing a monograph, *Laughter, Evolution and the Victorian Literary Imagination 1830–1910*, and with Jane Darcy, co-editing *Victorian Comedy & Laughter: Rethinking the Page &*

the Stage, forthcoming with Palgrave, 2016. She has published articles on George Eliot, Charles Kingsley, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and with Mark Knight, co-edited *Religion, Literature and the Imagination* (Continuum, 2010).

Kari Lokke is Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Davis. She is the author of *Gérard de Nerval: The Poet as Social Visionary, Tracing Women's Romanticism: Gender, History and Transcendence*, and coeditor of *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution*. Professor Lokke has also written articles on the aesthetics of the sublime and the grotesque, Romantic fairy tales, and women poets of the Romantic era. She is currently working on a book about depictions of political and religious fanaticism/enthusiasm in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European literature.

Tara MacDonald is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Idaho. She is the author of *The New Man, Masculinity and Marriage in the Victorian Novel* (Routledge, 2015) and has published articles and book chapters on Victorian masculinity, sensation fiction, and neo-Victorian fiction.

Sarah E. Maier, Associate Professor of English & Comparative Literature, University of New Brunswick, has published scholarly editions of Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and Bram Stoker's *The Lady of the Shroud* as well as on the work of J. M. Barrie, the Brontës, E. D'Arcy, G. Eliot, J. K. Rowling, and M. Wollstonecraft etc.

Margaret Markwick, who holds an honorary fellowship in the School of English at the University of Exeter, is a Victorianist with special interest in gender studies, narratology, and the Victorian church. Her first full-length study of Trollope was *Trollope and Women* (1997). Her second monograph, *New Men in Trollope: Rewriting the Victorian Male*, was published by Ashgate in November 2007, and *The Politics of Gender in the Novels of Anthony Trollope: Readings for the Twenty-first Century*, coedited with Deborah Denenholz Morse and Regenia Gagnier, 2009. *The Ashgate Researcher's Guide to Anthony Trollope*, coedited with Deborah Denenholz Morse and Mark W. Turner is forthcoming, as is *Trollope Underground*, a collection of essays coauthored with Deborah Denenholz Morse.

John Maynard is Professor, Department of English, New York University. He has published two books on Robert Browning, one on *Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality*, one on *Victorian Discourses on Sexuality and Religion*, and, most recently, a book with Broadview, *Literary Intention, Literary Interpretation, and Readers*.

Lucasta Miller is Visiting Scholar at Wolfson College, Oxford. She is author of *The Brontë Myth* and currently editorial director of Notting Hill Editions.

Deborah Denenholz Morse is the Vera W. Barkley Term Professor of English, inaugural Fellow of the Center for the Liberal Arts, and Plumeri Faculty Excellence Scholar at The College of William and Mary. She is the author of *Women in Trollope's Palliser Novels and Reforming Trollope: Race, Gender, and Englishness in the Novels of Anthony Trollope* (2013) as well as the coeditor of three collections on Trollope and one in Animal Studies. She has

published essays on all three Brontë sisters, including *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* entries on Charlotte and Emily Brontë (Wiley Blackwell, 2015), as well as essays on Gaskell, Trollope, Maxine Hong Kingston, A. S. Byatt, Mona Simpson, Kay Boyle, Elizabeth Coles Taylor, Hesba Stretton, Catherine Cookson, and within Animal Studies. Her current book projects are on the Brontës and on representations of rural England from Austen to D. H. Lawrence.

Judith E. Pike is Associate Professor of English, Salisbury University, Salisbury, Maryland. Judith is currently coediting a collection of essays (with Lucy Morrison), entitled *Charlotte Brontë from the Beginnings: New Essays from Juvenilia to the Major Works*, on the relationship of the Brontë's juvenilia to their mature work.

Amy J. Robinson is Visiting Assistant Professor of Literature at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, where she teaches classes in nineteenth-century British literature. She has written articles on Jane Austen, Margaret Oliphant, and Mary Elizabeth Braddon. She is currently working on a manuscript on comedic portraits of country-town life in the mid-Victorian novel.

Herbert Rosengarten is Professor Emeritus and former Head of the English Department at the University of British Columbia, Canada. He was a member of the editorial team assembled by Ian Jack to produce the Clarendon Edition of the Novels of the Brontës, a contributor to *The Oxford Companion to the Brontës*, and (with Christine Alexander) compiler of the entry on the Brontës in *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, 3rd ed.

Carol A. Senf is Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology. She has been thinking and writing about the Brontës since she was in high school. Best known for her work on Bram Stoker, she returns to the sisters whenever she can and has written on *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. She has made one pilgrimage to Haworth and hopes to return one day. In the meantime, she frequently asks students to consider the influence of the Brontës on contemporary literature and film.

Tabitha Sparks is Associate Professor of English at McGill University in Montreal, Canada, where she specializes in the nineteenth-century British novel, Victorian popular fiction, and theories of genre. She is the author of *The Doctor in the Victorian Novel: Family Practices*, a collection of Brontë criticism, and numerous essays in journals and book collections.

Beverly Taylor, Chair of the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, coauthored *The Return of King Arthur: British and American Arthurian Literature since 1800*. She coedited a selected edition of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poetry as well as three volumes of the complete scholarly edition of Barrett Browning's works from Pickering and Chatto.

Judith Wilt is Newton College Alumnae Professor Emerita at Boston College. She has published books on Walter Scott, George Meredith, and the Gothic.

Tom Winnifrith was formerly Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Warwick and Director of the Centre for Research in the European Humanities. His many previous books include *The Brontës and Their Background*, *Brontë Facts and Brontë Problems* (with Edward Chitham), and *A New Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

Nancy V. Workman is Professor of English at Lewis University, Illinois, and has published articles on Charlotte Brontë and Gertrude Bell.

Introduction

*Deborah Denenholz Morse
and Diane Long Hoeveler*

The art and lives of the Brontës have fascinated readers and scholars alike since Elizabeth Gaskell published *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* in 1857. The story of the three sisters writing in isolation on the Yorkshire moors took deep root in literary history, and has been irresistible to generations of Brontëans. Charlotte's own public and private writings on her sisters after their deaths, particularly her characterization of Emily as "a native and nursling of the moors," encouraged the Brontë mythos. Despite the occasional foray into myth debunking—most recently and cogently represented by Lucasta Miller's 2004 *The Brontë Myth*—Brontë readers still feel an intense need to visit Haworth. They must see not only the wild moors and the churchyard, with its huge gravestones at oblique angles, but also Charlotte's impossibly small wedding dress and Emily's mastiff Keeper's brass collar, the locks of Brontë hair, including that of the mother who died so tragically, leaving the six small Brontë children bereft. Charlotte's dress conjures up the smallness of the fictional Jane Eyre, of Lucy Snowe—and also the tiny woman Charlotte Brontë herself, who donned this dress to marry her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls, and whose happy marriage ended in her death from phthisis and severe nausea of pregnancy less than nine months after that wedding day. The brass collar reminds readers of Gaskell's biography, of her stories about Emily's intense relation to her fierce dog, a possible canine prototype for Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. The locks of hair remind readers of *Wuthering Heights* of the light and dark tresses that Nelly twists before enclosing them in the locket on Catherine Earnshaw's dead body, and of the chiaroscuro of the second Cathy's hair with Hareton's as they lean together over their reading. Readers and scholars equally besotted with George Eliot (and particularly with *Middlemarch*) do not feel the same urgent need to go to Nuneaton—although they might write books like Rebecca Mead's *My Life in Middlemarch* or Barbara Hardy's *Dorothea's Daughter*. Brontë Studies have always been rooted in biography and located in a particular place, the Yorkshire moors.

The problems with Brontë biography began with Gaskell's brilliant hagiographic portrait of Charlotte in *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. Since that germinal work was published, with its suppression of the intense emotion Charlotte felt for Constantin Heger, its misguided representation of Patrick as wildly eccentric, its wholly negative portrayal of Branwell, and its near elision of Charlotte's two genius sisters, there have been several biographies, which culminate in Juliet Barker's definitive *The Brontës: Wild Genius on the Moors* (1994/2010). Indeed, much as this book has contributed to the debunking of Brontë myth, its new title, altered from the simple *The Brontës* of the original 1994 edition, plays upon that very myth. As Simon Avery comments ruefully in this volume, "... the notion of the Brontës as untutored geniuses, isolated in the parsonage at the top of the steep Haworth main street and escaping to the moors from which those astonishing texts *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* seemed to emerge unbidden, has been particularly hard to dislodge." In Lisa Jadwin's essay, "The Critical Recuperation of and Theoretical Approaches to the Brontës," she remarks that "early questions about the writers' identities, exacerbated by the siblings' use of pseudonyms, gave rise to a tradition of biographical criticism that persisted well into the twentieth century." However, in "The Biographical Myths and Legends of the Brontës," Sarah Maier reminds us that "more recent biographies have made clear attempts to redefine the Brontës, not as stranded, isolated geniuses of the moors but in such a manner as to present them as nineteenth-century intellectuals engaged with writing since young adulthood" Carol Davison, in "The Brontës and the Death Question," explores another aspect of this mythos when she challenges the conventional view of the Brontës as "fragile victims of a scourge" rather than "as uncommon survivors who heroically held death at bay ... the devastating loss of their mother and two eldest sisters also granted them personal and unique insights into the Death Question, crucial life events that consolidated their association with death in the cultural consciousness."

Nevertheless, given the historic focus upon the imbrication of the Brontës' life and art, successive waves of Brontë scholarship have tried to veer away from this intimate relation between biography and text. The feminist scholarship that emerged after the 1979 publication of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979) largely focused upon commonalities between the Brontës' work and that of other Victorian women writers. Margaret Homans in *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (1980), for instance, explores Emily's identity as a Victorian woman writer of Romantic poetry, while Rachel Brownstein in *Becoming a Heroine* (1982) turns her attention to the feminist aspects of Charlotte's *Villette* in comparison to other nineteenth-century texts. Feminist biographies included Stevie Davies's 1983 *Emily Brontë: The Artist as a Free Woman* and Lyndall Gordon's 1994 *Charlotte Brontë: A Passionate Life*. Feminist scholarship beginning with Elizabeth Langland's biography *Anne Brontë: The Other One* (1991) and most concentrated in the only scholarly collection on Anne's work, *The Literary Art of Anne Brontë* (2001), discovered the intricacies of Anne's fierce calls for women's rights.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 1985 *Critical Inquiry* essay "Jane Eyre and Three Texts of Imperialism" is the touchstone for the next wave of Brontë scholarship: postcolonial readings. Jean Rhys's 1967 novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, which imagines the Jamaican history of *Jane Eyre*'s Bertha Mason and gives her a voice to tell her own story, was an impetus to

postcolonial critiques beginning with Spivak's, despite her contention that Rhys merely tells the English colonial story over again in the voice of the white Creole woman of the planter class. In the 2004 book *Charlotte Brontë*, Carl Plasa traced Charlotte's engagement with race and slavery issues from her juvenilia through *Villette*. (In this volume, Ken Hiltner traces the feminist/postcolonial critical history in relation to *Jane Eyre*.) Emily's writing was next in line for postcolonial critics, with Maja-Lisa Von Schneidern in her 1995 *ELH* article "Wuthering Heights and the Liverpool Slave Trade" and Christopher Heywood in the Introduction to the 2002 Broadview edition of *Wuthering Heights* viewing Heathcliff as a slave, an identity depicted in Adam Low's screen adaptation "A Regular Black" and Andrea Arnold's 2010 film *Wuthering Heights*.

Successive waves of theory-based cultural studies scholarship into the second decade of the twenty-first century have focused upon trauma, mental and physical illness, and the body—and these studies brought scholars back to the intimate connection between the Brontës' lives and their work. Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996) provides insights into Charlotte's knowledge of mental disorders, while the work of Stevie Davies and Philip Wion on Emily and trauma in relation to her mother's early death has been particularly enlightening. Beth Torgerson in her 2005 book *Reading the Brontë Body* has written the only full-length study on all three Brontës' works in relation to both their own lives and to their knowledge of Victorian diseases and contagion. It is a short step from these critiques to the 2015 material culture study of the Brontës, Deborah Lutz's *The Brontë Cabinet: Three Lives in Nine Objects*, that brings us round full circle to Brontë biography. Lutz's book dramatizes the history of the Brontës' lives (with a focus upon the writing sisters, the "three lives" of her title) through an examination of significant material objects in the Brontë Parsonage Museum, including Emily's mastiff Keeper's brass collar, Charlotte's ink-stained portable desk, Anne's sampler, Branwell's walking stick, and Charlotte's bracelet made of the intertwined hair of Emily and Anne.

We too return in this volume to an inclusive interpretation of the Brontës that often focuses upon biography and place as well as on historical circumstance. Not only are the lives and art of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne under consideration, but the lives and work of the entire Brontë family, all of whom were writers. Dudley Green reflects upon Patrick's poetry, campaigning articles, and letters, while Karen Laird discusses the Brontë father's letters among those of his wife, his son, and his famous daughters—including Charlotte's missives of unrequited love to Constantin Heger, her former teacher in Brussels, letters not published until 1913. Laird, who examines Branwell's letters, is one of several scholars who consider Branwell's life and work, first given comprehensive attention in Juliet Barker's 1994 biography. Julie Donovan discusses Branwell's poetry and verse drama, seeking "to avoid engulfing Branwell in the story of his sisters and his own personal tragedy." Nancy Workman analyses Branwell's paintings and drawings among those of his sisters; as she argues, "visual culture engaged the young Brontës ... drawing or painting accompanied their first literary undertakings and in Branwell's case, largely continued through his short life."

In her discussion of the Brontës' physical and mental health as it impinged upon the sisters' "transformative and creative process," Carol Senf insists upon "a larger context that includes their father and brother." Beverly Taylor in her discussions of race, slavery, and the slave trade in the Brontës' work contemplates Branwell's influence in the Angrian

juvenilia, and Christine Alexander, in her capacious study of the Brontës' juvenilia, as a matter of course examines Branwell's contributions to that Brontëan genre. Other essays that focus upon the Brontë sisters but discuss the lives and work of Patrick and Branwell include Carol Davison's "The Brontës and the Death Question," Abigail Burnham Bloom's "The Brontës and Popular Culture," and Sarah Maier's "Biographical Myths and Legends of the Brontës." Deborah Denenholz Morse's "Imagining Emily Brontë" considers Denise Giardina's 2009 historical novel *Emily's Ghost*, in which "Patrick is Juliet Barker's reconstructed father (rather than Gaskell's eccentric, irascible Patrick), a loving and erudite man who was very proud of his brilliant daughters." Simon Avery, in "Politics, Legal Concerns, and Reform," explores the Brontës' "political awareness In this reading, the often-overlooked writings of Patrick and Branwell are seen to be more significant than they are often acknowledged to be." Avery's work also includes equal consideration of Anne, the at times still ignored youngest Brontë sister: "Emily and Anne's ... establishment of the alternative realm of Gondal marked a very different line of political thinking which would be crucial for their mature work, especially in terms of its interrogation of gender relations and patterns of socialization."

Historically, Anne is the next Brontë to be left out of scholarly studies until fairly recently. It is not so very long ago that Elizabeth Langland wrote her feminist biography *Anne Brontë: The Other One* (1991). There is still only one collection of essays devoted to Anne's work, the 2001 volume *The Literary Art of Anne Brontë*, already mentioned in this essay—although there are intimations of new collections on Anne for her 2020 bicentenary. Our volume includes not only two essays focused entirely on Anne's novels, Judith Pike's essay on *Agnes Grey* and Kari Lokke's on *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, but also many essays in which Anne's work is considered equally alongside Charlotte's and Emily's. John Maynard explicates the poetry of all three Brontë sisters, giving serious attention to Anne's work: "Taken as a poetic oeuvre ... Anne's output shows the same combination of quiet, serious, and moral intent and striking emotional strength that we find in her two fine future novels." Maynard finds that Anne's use of the Romantic ballad form is political: "In poems in and out of Gondal, Anne used the form with an implication that, though no revolutionary, she spoke as a poet for the deep feeling and concerns of the people as a whole."

Indeed, of some essays in our volume, such as Judith Wilt's "Reading the Arts in the Brontë Fiction," it could be argued that Anne's work is given even more attention than Emily's or Charlotte's. Wilt analyzes reading—including the sensory experience of reading—in relation to aesthetics and instruction in all of the sisters' novels, but her argument culminates in a study of Anne's second novel, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and a comparison back to Emily's *Wuthering Heights*: "The complex 'framing' of *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* 'contains' readers looking at paintings and paintings looking at readers, while enforcing on the reader of these nested narratives the leaning-in of both mind and body that has fascinated painters of reading over the centuries"

As Lisa Jadwin points out in her essay "The Critical Recuperation of and Theoretical Approaches to the Brontës," the turn to Anne's writings was a part of feminist scholarly endeavor. Jadwin points out that Anne's "works received increasing critical attention as the twentieth century progressed and the Brontës' works attracted the attention of feminist critics, who read them as narratives of female empowerment." Tara MacDonald's "Class and Gender in the Brontë Novels," [which] examines "the Brontës' representations of characters

who ... don't fit neatly into their prescribed class and gendered identities," concludes with an exploration of the wealthy Helen Graham's erotic relationship to the farmer Gilbert Markham in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Lucasta Miller examines the Brontës' reading of *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's* magazines, and argues that "it was their continued, if conflicted, immersion in the literary culture of the 1820s and 1830s which led to their books being labeled 'coarse' by Victorian critics."

Although one of our projects is to consider the Brontës together and within their many contexts, it is also our aim in this volume to study each Brontë sister as a great writer in her own right. To this end, a good deal of attention is given to each novel written by Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, as well as to the poetry of each sister, discussed most fully in Maynard's essay. In her analysis of *The Professor*, Tabitha Sparks views *The Professor* as an early Victorian precursor to George and Weedon Grossmith's 1892 *Diary of a Nobody*: "Pooter's assimilation of the values of the rising lower bourgeois aligns with Crimsworth's wholesale adoption of early Victorian, utilitarian 'Progress', and both fictional autobiographers provide their readers with an ironic index of a moment in Victorian masculine and professional life." Margaret Markwick, using reader-response theory, writes an essay focused upon our first and second readings of *Jane Eyre*. Markwick explains how the significance of these readings coalesces around Jane's and Charlotte's emphasis on forgiveness: "Here we find the melding of the two themes, the satisfying love story of a mature woman acknowledging the importance of sexual arousal and finding happiness with the man she loves, and who loves her in return, and an account of a spiritual journey from unbelief to a profound and sincere faith based on forgiveness." Herbert Rosengarten writes about *Shirley* as a troubled "novel of ideas" that does not quite cohere: "What does connect the novel's private and public worlds, however, is the larger subject of the relations between capital and labour examined in the struggle over Hollow's Mill, a conflict of values that forms the recurring and unifying motif holding *Shirley* together and giving the novel a place within the subgenre of Victorian industrial fiction." Penny Boumelha argues that in *Villette*, Brontë adopts and alters a familiar biographical structure: "Its first-person narration makes complex use of the triple role of Lucy Snowe as protagonist, observer and narrator to reflect on the novel's relationship to traditions of representation of the inner lives and social plots of women."

Wuthering Heights is most fully considered in Louise Lee's essay on Emily's only extant novel. (Since the publication of Juliet Barker's biography, some Brontëans wonder if there was once another novel, and whether it might perhaps some day be unearthed.) Lee posits this response to the notorious difficulties of analyzing *Wuthering Heights*: "I want to suggest two conflicting and contradictory motions: the author deliberately disrupts her story, while her readers resolutely put it together. For reading is both the problem of the novel, and also its resolution." Other essays focus largely on *Wuthering Heights*, sometimes in relation to *Jane Eyre*, as in Amy J. Robinson's "Journeying Home: Jane Eyre's and Catherine Earnshaw's Coming-of-Age Stories." In her essay, Robinson charts the bildungsromans of these two Brontë protagonists, concluding that "during their journeys, both Jane and Catherine find a true home only as they leave behind the artificial settings associated with culture and patriarchal society and substitute them for the natural worlds of Ferndean and the moors of Wuthering Heights, respectively." Diane Long Hoeveler, in her exploration of the Gothic in Brontëan fiction, includes analysis of Emily's novel

among those of her sisters: “*Wuthering Heights* employs the Gothic through its use of pre-scient dreams, a disputed inheritance, violence against women and animals, coffins with loose hinges, haunting ghosts and perhaps vampires, and repetitious narratives of fantasy and trauma.” As Hoeveler argues, “The Gothic aesthetic and its genre conventions pervaded the writings of the Brontë sisters from their very earliest readings and writings as adolescents to their last pieces of fiction.” Tom Winnifrith critiques several film adaptations of both *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, finding them ultimately not quite satisfying as “translations” of the great novels themselves: “In my old fashioned way I prefer the original texts to modern adaptations, and am glad that looking at films and television drove me back to study the words of Charlotte and Emily Brontë.”

Anne’s two novels provoke new readings from Judith Pike and Kari Lokke. Pike does a reckoning of all of the errors that “are rampant in regard to Anne’s legacy.” These mistakes include Charlotte’s about Anne’s age at her death, an error engraved in Anne’s original tombstone and in the original memorial plaque in Haworth Parish Church. Pike goes on to explain how “just as Anne’s tombstone has been plagued by errors, neglect and oversights, so too has her literary legacy.” In her exploration of *Agnes Grey*, Pike discovers a more defiant Anne than the one portrayed since Charlotte’s friend Ellen Nussey’s remarks about “dear, gentle Anne.” Pike declares that Anne’s “defiant courage was evident not only in her literary works but in her life, and especially in her final days.” Kari Lokke, writing on *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, enters the scholarly debate about the relation of the novel’s form—Helen’s diary enclosed within Gilbert’s letter to his brother-in-law Halford—and Anne Brontë’s narrative intentions. Lokke reflects upon “the congruencies and tensions between Anne Brontë’s central aims ... [of] promoting reform in gender relations and models of masculinity while at the same time encouraging personal, spiritual transformation” and ultimately concludes that *Tenant’s* “dialogic, open form encourages the reader to imagine social and spiritual transformation as possible both within and outside the frame of the novel.”

Kari Lokke’s emphasis upon formal aspects of the Brontës’ work is taken up by a number of scholars in our volume. Amy Robinson is interested in Charlotte’s and Emily’s experimentation with fairytale and Gothic/Byronic patterns imbricated with realism “to chart the coming of age of their heroines.” While Diane Long Hoeveler studies the formal Gothic inheritance of the Brontë novels, Lucasta Miller includes the influence upon Brontëan form in her analysis of the Brontës’ reading of 1820s and 1830s periodicals. Christine Alexander explores the literary innovations in the Brontës’ juvenilia, and John Maynard thinks about both conventional and unconventional poetic forms in the Brontës’ poetry. Beth Lau, in “Marriage and Divorce in the Novels,” considers the failed marriage plot in the Brontë sisters’ works. She argues that “all the Brontë novels challenge or undermine the courtship plot and expose problems in marriage as it was legally defined and culturally practiced in their lifetimes, including the impossibility of dissolving unhappy unions.”

Lau’s engagement with the political agitation for women’s rights—and in particular for married women’s rights—also places her analysis in a group of essays that are focused upon cultural studies of the Brontës. Besides the work already mentioned in this Introduction, these essays include Miriam Burstein’s on the Brontës and religion; Brandon Chitwood on the Brontës and film adaptations; Elisha Cohn on the intellectual and philosophical

contexts of the Brontës; Alexis Easley's examination of the Brontës' engagement with the literary marketplace from 1846 to 1860; and Carol Senf's essay, "Physical and Mental Health in the Brontës' Lives and Works." Edward Chitham provides the Irish backgrounds to the Brontës' lives and work, beginning with Patrick's Irish origins. Thus, we find ourselves back with Brontë biography once again, and back with place, with Ireland and then with Yorkshire. Ann Dinsdale's authoritative piece, "The Brontë Parsonage, the Society, and the Preservation of Brontëana," traces the emergence and continuity of the institutions devoted to the Brontës. Dinsdale records the passion of Brontë readers and scholars, the generosity of donors with Brontë possessions, and the occasional perfidy of those who acquired Brontëana. Her essay perhaps documents most fully the intricate relation of the Brontës to biography and especially to place, to the parsonage, to the churchyard—and to the Yorkshire moors.

Part I

Imaginative Forms and
Literary/Critical Contexts

Experimentation and the Early Writings

Christine Alexander

Juvenilia, or youthful writings, are by their nature experimental. They represent a creative intervention whereby a novice explores habits of thought and behavior, ideas about society and personal space, and modes of literary expression. It is a truism to say that youth is a time of exploration and testing. Any child psychologist will tell you that the teenage years in particular are a time of trial and error, a time when limits are tested in order to push boundaries and gain new adult freedoms. Juvenilia embody this same journey toward so-called maturity, involving the imitation and examination of the adult world. And because early writing is generally a private occupation, practiced without fear of parental interference or the constraints of literary censorship, the young writer is free to interrogate current political, social, and personal discourses. As writing that embraces this creative and intellectual freedom, Charlotte Brontë's juvenilia are a valuable source for investigating the literary experimentation of an emerging author seeking to establish a writing self.

This chapter will examine the ways that Charlotte Brontë used her authorial role to engage with the world around her and to test her agency in life and literature. The first focus will be on the importance of a self-contained, paracosmic, or imaginary world for facilitating experiment and engagement with political, social, and historical events. The second will be on the way Brontë experimented with print culture and narrative to construct a self-reflexive, dialectic method that allowed her to interrogate both the "real" world and her paracosmic world. Her intense initial collaboration with her brother Branwell—"rivalry" is perhaps more appropriate to describe the competitive tone of their writing—laid the foundations for Charlotte's conversational method; but she soon experimented in early adolescence with multiple dialogues among her own characters and authorial personas that led to a habit of discourse that is both self-reflexive and inter-textual. Finally, the chapter will explore dialogic experimentation in Brontë's later novelettes, where she is testing not only her heroines' moral identities but also her own emotional,

intellectual, and social parameters. Her writing interrogates the self and enacts elements of the bildungsroman in an effort to gain greater psychological realism.

Paracosmic Experimentation and Colonial Expansion

Crucial to Brontë's experimentation as a young author is her creation of an autonomous imaginary world or paracosm¹ as a distinctive representation of adult or Other experience. Paracosms constitute alternative universes in miniature of the real literary, social, and political world: "spaces for construing and 'playing out' selective real and fantastic events and ideas circulating in the contemporary British consciousness" (Cohen and MacKeith 22). They are a particular feature of play in literary culture, usually practiced in youth. Brontë herself called the process "making out" (Stevens 160), and together with her siblings² she created the imaginary world of Glass Town, a federation of kingdoms that later included the new kingdom of Angria. Over a period of some twenty years, Brontë participated in and developed a complex world of interrelated characters and events that both mirror and imaginatively reorder knowledge of the "real" world she had gleaned from books, magazines, newspapers, and her limited experience of life. This imaginary world was readily committed to paper, and the resulting manuscripts document Charlotte Brontë's intense intellectual engagement with life beyond her parsonage home. The paracosm allowed her to participate in events not normally encountered in childhood. As a self-contained world, it also afforded her the space to experiment with initiative and power she was otherwise denied as an adolescent girl. In a private world shared only with siblings, she could become author and creator: she called herself "Chief Genius Tallii," one of four Brontë Chief Genii (modeled on the *Arabian Nights* and the Greek gods), who presided over a virtual world by protecting heroes, directing mortal affairs, and intervening in the plot of their imaginary world for fun. As author, she could "play" with power and direct social and political events.³

The 1830s, when the bulk of her early manuscripts were written, were years of enormous social and intellectual ferment in Britain. Brontë's paracosmic world expresses the tremendous energy of this post-revolutionary period of empire building and expansion by land and sea. It also allowed her to enact in her writing the excitement of the growing periodical press, especially *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and the personality cults it fueled. As an all-powerful narrative "Genius," she could appropriate current events and create with immunity conversations that can be seen to function "as an index to historical culture" (Chandler 282). The genesis of this engagement with political, social, and literary culture of the period was the "Young Men's Play" and several other plays that the Brontë children acted out physically, before committing the results to paper several years later. Eventually these plays coalesced into the paracosmic worlds of Glass Town and Angria.

Together with her siblings, and chiefly in partnership with Branwell, Brontë experimented with exploration and territorial expansion, testing her own version of military and mercantile enterprise. The catalyst for the Young Men's Play was the purchase of twelve toy soldiers for Branwell's twelfth birthday in June 1826 (Charlotte was thirteen). Inspired by their father's interest in the Peninsular Wars (1807–1814) and guided by newspaper reports and journal articles on exploration and colonialism, the Brontë children sent the

"Twelves" (as they called the soldiers) to discover new territory and establish a British colony in an imaginary Africa. On the basis of an article in *Blackwoods*, with an accompanying map (Brontë 1991, 2[1]: frontispiece), they settled their soldiers around the delta of the Niger in West Africa. Their well-used *Grammar of General Geography* by Revd. J. Goldsmith reinforced European attitudes to territorial expansion and the need to civilize the "many blank spaces on the earth," as Joseph Conrad's Marlow puts it in *Heart of Darkness*.⁴ Thus, the four leaders of the Twelves, sponsored by each of the four Brontë creators, become rulers of a federation of lands centered on the city of Great Glass Town (later called Verdopolis). As colonizers, they encounter the indigenous Ashanti and war ensues, inspired by reports of the Ashantee Wars of the 1820s. Complex private lives are invented for the "chief men": the Duke of Wellington (Charlotte); Napoleon, later Sneaky (Branwell); Parry (Emily), and Ross (Anne), characters modeled on the two greatest antagonists of recent history in Europe and two famous Arctic explorers. As soon as their heroes had been given identities, it was fitting that they should be provided with books, both to entertain them and to record their progress. A written culture replaced the children's physical play. Miniature booklets to match the size of the wooden toy soldiers were produced, beginning the richest record we have of youthful literary activity.

What can be seen at first as a paracosmic exercise in colonial aggression and European expansion gradually becomes a critique of Europe itself and in particular of France and the various "kingdoms" of the British Isles. In landscape, social custom, and culture, Wellingtonsland is Charlotte's Tory stronghold in the south of England; Parrysland represents the north with its Yorkshire puddings, stone walls, and dull landscapes;⁵ Sneakysland is the equivalent of Scotland; and Rossesland is Wales. There is also Frenchyland with its capital Paris, an island to the south and the political base of the Glass Town Republican Party. Paris with its "dark Revolutionary Coteries" is Branwell's domain, constantly satirized by Charlotte for its "wickedness, rioting, idleness and grandeur," opinions she has gleaned from the Tory *Blackwoods* (Alexander and Smith 2003, 316). The sadistic French character "Pigtail" is typical of the "low villains" who terrorize Paris and prey on orphan children; and the foppish narrator of Charlotte's "Journal of a Frenchman"⁶ is ridiculed for his vanity: "I first washed myself in rose-water with transparent soap, then got myself shaved till my chin was smoother than satin: next my cheeks received a fresh bloom by the addition of a little rouge." Etiquette at the Tuileries Palace is critiqued with considerable aplomb, and Charlotte amusingly adopts a pro-republican stance, mocking Branwell's republican enthusiasm following his reading of Sir Walter Scott's sympathetic *Life of Napoleon*:

I found that the greater part of the company were of the ancien regime & that Bonaparte was almost universally detested. this a little disconcerted me for I had almost adored him but nevertheless I heard all with complaisance & said nothing. Wine however soon heated my head & loosened my tongue. it waged glibly about the glory of the French arms, old wom-eish Boubons—&c. &c &c with many other things that I should now be glad to recall. Some old Prigs laughed at me as a young enthusiast & anger having gained ascendancy over Reason.

The fourteen-year-old creator of this "young enthusiast," as Brontë calls her Frenchman, was later to address the conflict between passion and reason in *Jane Eyre*.

As Carol Bock (2002, 34) argues, a “striking feature of the Brontës’ early writing is its stunning representation of the culture of their times.” Action is centered in Verdopolis, the great capital city of the Glass Town Federation, an imaginary London based on the theatrical architectural paintings of John Martin, whose engravings hung on the walls of the Brontës’ home. Its name suggests a city of glass, insubstantial, and translucent (originally derived from “Verreopolis ... being compounded of A Greek & French word to that effect”: Brontë 1987, 1: 298). However, we are assured it is not simply a dream world but “the commercial metropolis of the world,” a working city where “lofty mills and warehouses piled up storey above storey to the very clouds, surmounted by high tower-like chimneys vomiting forth the huge columns of thick black smoke” (Brontë 1987, 1: 139). Visions of glittering aristocrats and their entourages amidst public buildings “resplendent with grace, symmetry, majesty and proportion” are juxtaposed beside vignettes of strike action by disgruntled workers, protesting against one of “those vile rumbling mills,” its master, and “the incessant crash of its internal machinery” (Brontë 1987, 2[1]: 26–27). Such scenes are depicted in terms reminiscent of the attack on Rawfolds Mill in Liversedge (11 April 1812) during the Luddite Riots; they foreshadow the raid on Robert Moore’s mill in *Shirley*. The central incident of another story reenacts the “Peterloo” massacre of 1819 (Alexander and Smith 2003, 366–367). Characters and incidents from the Peninsula Wars, assassination attempts, Chartist and other insurrections, the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, concerns over the price of cotton on either side of the Atlantic, and debates between the Americans John Quincy Adams and General Andrew Jackson, questions of slavery and suttee, and myriad other topical political events inform the action of the saga.

In a paracosmic world, however, contemporary events are enhanced, remade, and complicated by imagination. The Glass Town Federation and the new kingdom of Angria, that Charlotte eventually awards her conquering hero Zamorna and adopts as her center of interest, bear little resemblance to Africa itself. The constant threat of the Ashantee tribes reminds us of contemporary imperialism, but the occasional “African” place names and exotic scenery owe as much to fairy tale, *Tales of the Genii*, and the *Arabian Nights* as they do to geographical descriptions of Africa. It is the names, places, and events associated with Wellington and Napoleon that are mapped on to the African colony. Even Quashia, the only indigenous African to be fully characterized in the saga, is associated with Wellington. Just as the historic Duke adopted the son of a chief in the Indian wars, so Charlotte’s Wellington adopts Quashia Quamina, who later rebels, aligns his warriors with the republican rebellion of Northangerland, and lusts after the Queen of Angria, reflecting a nineteenth-century British conception of African racial degeneracy.⁷ This single example demonstrates the intricate association within the ever-expanding paracosmic saga between fictional and historical characters, constitutional and republican rivalries, Victorian anthropological anxieties, and the young author’s own particular response to such issues.

Throughout her saga, Brontë continues her experiment to fictionalize history. The central plot of the imaginary world is the struggle for power by rival aristocratic characters whose tangled love affairs and political intrigues reflect those of contemporary politicians and heroic figures of the period, not least Lord Byron, who replaced Scott as the main single influence on the juvenilia. The four kings of the Glass Town Federation form pacts like those that were brokered in Europe by the Quadruple Alliance after the defeat of Napoleon; but the situation is complicated by Branwell’s introduction of a new hero,