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THE IMPORTANCE, INFLUENCE, AND CONTINUITY
OF BRONTÉ JUVENILIA IN REFERENCE
TO THE MATURE WORKS

by

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FOREWORD

It is the purpose of this thesis to discuss the Brontë juvenilia only in reference to the mature works and to make clear what influences and likenesses there are between the two, and what currents of continuity exist from the childhood writing through the adult accomplishment. In such an inquiry Charlotte Brontë, of course, provides the richest reward. For only hers and Branwell's juvenile writings remain to us, and of these two only she wrote significantly with a mature purpose. But the search is barren in none of the four: in all--Charlotte and Branwell, Emily and Anne--the investigation becomes the means of a deeper understanding of the whole picture of their literary lives.

I have been much helped in the matter of the accessibility of the juvenile compositions of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë by the work of Thomas Wise and John Symington, editors of "The Shakespeare Head Brontë"--particularly The Miscellaneous and Unpublished Writings of Charlotte and Patrick Branwell Brontë; by the Ratchford-DeVane Legends of Angria; by George Edwin MacLean's edition of The Spell by Charlotte Brontë; and by a volume of Charlotte's early compositions edited by Clement Shorter, assisted by C. W. Hatfield, entitled The Twelve Adventurers and Other Stories.
CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ

The influence of the great quantities of writing which Charlotte Brontë did as a child and as a young girl was very marked upon her serious novels of adulthood. Actually she wrote more in this manner—to be discarded and seldom read—than she published. Jane Eyre and Villette loom in the imposing foreground of her work, while Shirley and The Professor rise less commandingly behind them; but behind all these lies a vast territory of childhood literature, barely known for so many years, safe in its disguise of the microscopic hand and the tiny page, and hardly comprehended even now.

The story is now well known of how the Brontë children, when Charlotte, the oldest, was no more than ten years old, established their "plays" and were so captivated by the thing they had created that it held their interest well into adulthood. It has often been told how Branwell's wooden soldiers which his father brought from Leeds inspired the Young Men's play begun in June, 1826; and how a half quarrelsome conversation with Tabby around the kitchen fire started off the Islanders of December, 1827. In March, 1829, Charlotte started out to write the history of the year, and in that history she speaks of the establishing of their plays—the Young Men, the Islanders, Our Fellows (July, 1827, which owed its inspiration to Aesop's
Fables), besides the secret, or "bed plays." The "bed plays" Charlotte describes as "very nice," and all their plays as "very strange." For one example of the very lucid and well balanced prose Charlotte could write, even as a child, it is worthwhile repeating her account of how the Islanders was begun:

One night, about the time when the cold and sleet and stormy fogs of November are succeeded by the snowstorms and high, piercing night winds of confirmed winter, we were all sitting round the warm blazing kitchen fire, having just concluded a quarrel with Tabby concerning the propriety of lighting a candle, from which she came off victorious, no candle having been produced. A long pause succeeded, which was at last broken by Branwell saying, in a lazy manner, "I don't know what to do." This was echoed by Emily and Anne.

Tabby. "Wh, ya may go t'bed."
Branwell. "I'd rather do anything than that."
Charlotte. "Why are you so glum tonight, Tabby? Oh! suppose we had each an island of our own." ¹

And so on Charlotte's suggestion they went on to choose, each for himself, an island, and to people their islands with great men, just as on one other occasion, more than a year before, Charlotte had snatched up the best looking of Branwell's wooden soldiers and called it the Duke of Wellington, and had so begun the Young Men's play. The Young Men's play, probably by virtue of the compelling characters created by it, seems to have eclipsed all others—or at least to have been the prime agent in some sort of fusion which may have unconsciously been allowed to occur among all the diverse imaginative creations those remarkable children were capable of. It

Charlotte Brontë, The History of the Year (1829).
was a written literature as early as January, 1829, when Charlotte was thirteen, and it grew and grew into the tremendous Charlotte-Branwell Angrian cycle that was only laid aside by Charlotte with regret ten years later--yet was not laid aside, but submerged in her new life--to be of it and in it, and now and again to rise to the surface in a word or phrase or incident or attitude of the new creation.

The following organization will show the nature of Charlotte's extant juvenile writings in so far as it is possible to reconstruct their history from the rather ragged data that are available.

1829

The History of the Year
A Romantic Tale (or The Twelve Adventurers)
An Adventure in Ireland
The Search After Happiness
The Young Men's Magazine, first series; 6 numbers. (In collaboration with Branwell.)
Characters of Celebrated Men
Characters of the Celebrated Men of the Present Time
Tales of the Islanders

1830

Adventures of Ernest Alember
The Young Men's Magazine, second series; 6 numbers.
Albion and Marina
Visits in Verreopolis (Includes The Rivals and The Fairy Gift.)

[At this time Charlotte's catalogue of her books listed twenty-two volumes. Also a productive year for verse.]

1831

[None. Student at Roe Head during years 1831-32]

1Tentative title.  2Not of the Angrian cycle.
1832
The Bridal (Prose portion also known as Love and Jealousy)¹
The African Queen's Lament (c.1832)

1833
The Green Dwarf
The Foundling
Arthuriana (includes The Tragedy and the Essay.)
The Secret

[By her own lists ten novels belong to this year.]

1834
A Leaf from an Unopened Volume
High Life in Verdopolis
The Spell
Address to the Angrians²
Speech of his Grace the Duke of Zamorna at the opening of the
first Angrian Parliament²
My Angria and the Angrians
A Brace of Characters²
Letter to the Right Honourable Arthur, Marquis of Ardrah²
Corner Dishes (includes a Peep into a Picture Book.)

1835
A Late Occurrence (c. 1834-35)²
Duke of Zamorna and Edward Percy²

1836
Angrian fragments written at Roe Head
History of Angria III: Passing Events
Zamorna's Exile¹ (And when you left me. . . .)
Zamorna's Exile, Canto III¹ (Well, the days toils are over.)

1837
The Return of Zamorna (c. 1836-7)
A Prose Story (Julia¹—the Wrenn Library Catalogue)
A Prose Story (Lord Douro¹ or Thornton¹)

¹Tentative title.
²Contained, together with other untitled fragments, in The Scrap Book, 1834-35.
Review at Gazemba
The Duke of Zamorna
Mina Laury

1839

Caroline Vernon (c. 1839)
Farewell to Angria

Such a description of Charlotte's writings of course can be only of the most partial sort. During these years she turned out, in addition to the "books" which can be listed, a remarkable number of verses, and there are besides many writings lost to us and known only by name. For instance the title page of The Foundling indicates that the author, Captain Tree, is also author of The Incorporeal Watcher, The Green Dwarf, The Wizard's Cave, Alphonso Howard, A Year of Horrors, The Forgotten Ring, and The Pledge. Of these, only The Green Dwarf is known. So however prolific we know Charlotte's writing to have been during the years 1829-1839, we must add the conviction that it was much more so—probably in a degree beyond what we would permit ourselves to imagine.

It is necessary for our purpose only to sketch the outlines of the Angrian cycle in order to have in mind its scope and general content. The story begins with the marvelous adventures of "the Twelves," or the Young Men," as the wooden soldiers were collectively known, who suffered shipwreck on the Guinea coast. Under the guardianship of the Genii (Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne) they escaped

1Tentative title.
harm at the hands of the hostile blacks (the Ashantees) and built at the mouth of the river Niger the magnificent Glass Town, later to be known as Verdopolis.

The next major events of the story concern the rise to fame of Arthur Wellesley, one of the Twelves who was at first only a "common trumpeter." Through the machinations of the Genii he was sent to deliver Europe from its bondage to Napoleon. His return twenty years later with fifteen thousand veteran soldiers naturally caused a great expansion of the Glass Town and created the need for a king, and to this office Arthur Wellesley, now Duke of Wellington, was elected.

The Angrian literature, which suffered a check at this point while Charlotte was at Roe Head during the years of 1831 and 1832, flourished anew on her return, especially in 1833 and 1834. In this second phase the Duke of Wellington was replaced in importance by his elder son, known chiefly as the Marquis of Douro, later as the Duke of Zamorna. Another figure of an importance equal to Douro's in this phase was Alexander Percy (Rogue of the wooden soldier days)—Branwell's favorite character. A curious contradiction is involved in the relations which existed between Douro, or Zamorna, and Percy. Enemies, yet friends; political allies who speedily became deadly foes; drawn together by Zamorna's marriage with Percy's daughter, Mary, but swiftly estranged by Mary's banishment to Alnwick; hating each other fiercely, but as fiercely
in need of each other's friendship—this strange pair bore a grave fascination for Charlotte. In their quarrels and sin-nings and lusts and passions— in their violent and angry existences—she found an endless supply of themes for her "books.") In Zamorna's personality there were incorporated in an ever increasing degree the vices and furies which belonged to Percy, until Zamorna the hero became a villain of the deepest dye.

The founding of the new kingdom of Angria to the east, whose chief city Adrianopolis was to rival Verdopolis in fame and grandeur, was a central activity of Zamorna's career. And close upon its successful establishment hurried the Branwell inspired evils of civil war and foreign invasion, a horrible devastation of the land, the death of the Duchess from Zamorna's purposed neglect, and finally Zamorna's pseudo-Napoleonic exile. But out of the chaos Charlotte rebuilt her dream world and for four years more (1836-1839) continued to write creatively of her favorite scenes and characters. Zamorna was allowed to return to Angria and rebuild his kingdom. The old themes of love and passion and profligacy were renewed and brought to a higher and more artistic integration in her last novel of the Angrian cycle, Caroline Vernon.

Before 1840, for some reason, Charlotte stopped writing her Angrian romances—taking unwilling farewell with the comment that "the eye [of the reader] is tired of the picture so oft recurring and now so familiar. Yet do not urge me too
fast, reader. . . ." Apparently she had exhausted her material, or what she supposed to be the patience of her imaginary readers—-not her own interest. Too, she had somehow sensed the artificiality and unimportance of the thing she was doing, and with her characteristic severity she laid it aside.

II

With this background in mind we can now proceed to an examination of the factors of influence, similarity, and divergence which exist in a comparative view of Charlotte's immature compositions on the one hand, and her mature novels on the other. The points to be observed in such a study are so numerous and diversified that it is difficult to speak of them in any logical order. However, a most interesting and significant point of departure, because of the intensely autobiographical character of her mature novels, is the persistency with which Charlotte appears autobiographically in the juvenilia. Her family figures in a slight degree in this regard, and her own character, personality, and convictions are everywhere discernible in these early compositions. Even the physical fact of her short-sightedness is bestowed upon young Lord Charles Wellesley who is the ostensible author of her romances.¹

¹He is also like Charlotte, according to George Edwin MacLean in his introduction to his edition of The Spell (Oxford University Press, London: Humphrey Milford, 1931,) in that he is precocious, "intensely curious, observant, analytic . . . highly sensitive and suspicious of slights, with a tendency to jealousy. . . . combative, vital, and persevering."
Charlotte's constant and but slightly modified appropriation of her family, friends, and acquaintances as characters in her mature novels is notorious. In the same way we find her "using" Branwell in My Angria and the Angrians for the character of Patrick Benjamin Wiggins in whom she plants his qualities of boastfulness and vanity to a degree not far short of cruelty. The physical description which she gives of him is thought to be an accurate picture of Branwell at that time (1834) -- a fact which is in keeping with her life-long tendency not to alter in its essential features a model once seized upon. The passage is also a satisfactory illustration of a gift for keen observation of details and faithful portraiture of them:

There advanced a low, slightly-built man, attired in a black vest and raven-grey trousers, his hat placed nearly at the back of his head, revealing a bush of carotty hair so arranged that at the sides it projected almost like two spread hands, a pair of spectacles placed across a prominent Roman nose, black neckerchief adjusted with no great attention or precision, and, to complete the picture, a little black rattan flourished in the hand. His bearing as he walked was tolerably upright, and marked with that indescribable swing always assumed by those who pride themselves on being good pedestrians.

The already mentioned cruelty of Charlotte's sarcasm and judgment-giving pen which is so noticeable in her later years is foreshadowed in the following portion of a conversation which takes place between Wiggins and Lord Charles Wellesley in which his sisters are described. Here, as hardly, indeed, for Branwell's sake, Charlotte does not trouble even to alter names.
"What are your sisters' names?"
"Charlotte Wiggins, Jane Wiggins, and Anne Wiggins."
"Are they as queer as you?"
"Oh they are miserable silly creatures not worth talking about. Charlotte's eighteen years old, a broad dumpy thing, whose head does not come higher than my elbow. Emily's sixteen, lean and scant with a face about the size of a penny, and Anne is nothing, absolutely nothing."
"What! Is she an idiot?"
"Next door to it."

Another instance of the cruel tongue and the sharp word is the following passage from the same source, which is in reference to the great exodus taking place from Verdopolis in favor of the new kingdom of Angria.

To see the throngs of high-born scoundrels, the hordes of low-born rascallions, jostling about from house to house and from street to street, talking loudly and incessantly of their preparations for the 'Great Move,' which preparations in the majority of cases must have been limited to the packing up of the second shirt, neckcloth and pair of stockings together with the careful securing of the sow's ear containing the only half-sovereign in shillings and pence, which treasure must of necessity be placed in the adventurers fob, unencumbered by watch, lest some of his travelling companions, in the ardour of their enterprising dispositions might have proved their dexterity on his person. . . .

To hear these fellows I say alluding with such a puppyish air of scorn to the old city where they dwelt so long. . . . is most hateful. . . .

If we continue this theme endless evidences are to be found in the juvenilia of Charlotte's censorious nature. Everywhere it crops out. Benson\(^1\) points out that this trait of hers sprang partly from an abnormal shyness, but also from a "constitutional pessimism which, always expecting to find blemishes in others, was seldom disappointed. She was alert to detect

faults, she was extreme to mark what was done amiss. . . . ."

That this pessimism was constitutional is borne out by the fact that it appears in her girlhood no less than in her womanhood.

In The Duke of Zamorna this passage occurs.

All people have their faults it is said reader, and sometimes when I look over the wicked world, I am tempted to think that all people have nearly the same number of faults—that the shades of difference in individual vice are not so many or so various as people in general suppose. Look now at Angria--look at the higher orders there. Carry your mind's eye along the country--pause a moment at the gates of every park-surrounded mansion as you pass it. Who now of the whole set is free from the stains of ambition--tyranny--licentiousness--insolence--avarice--blood-thirstiness--bad faith?

When Charlotte was not criticising she was offering advice or setting someone straight on a point of opinion or conviction on which they had erred. In Caroline Vernon she performs her monitor's office in the person of Zamorna speaking to Percy on the subject of Caroline Vernon's education.

I have studied her character; it is one that ought not to be exposed to dazzling temptation. She is at once careless and imaginative, her feelings are mixed with her passion. Both are warm, and she never reflects. Guidance like yours is not what such a girl ought to have. She could ask you for nothing you would not grant. Indulgence would foster all her defects. When she found that winning smiles and gentle words passed current for reason and judgment, she would speedily purchase her whole will with that cheap coin.

Charlotte preaches again on a different theme in The Spell when Mina Laury speaks thus to Mary Percy:

"Delicate, soft-bred, brittle creature," returned she, with kindling eyes, "that is an empty boast. The spirit might carry you far but the body would break down at last. My Lady Duchess. . . . it is not for an indulged daughter of aristocracy, for one who from her birth has hardly ever
breathed out of the perfumed atmosphere of palace halls, or trod elsewhere than on velvet soft carpets, to talk of serving Zamorna. She may please and entertain him and blossom brightly in his smiles, but when adversity saddens him, when there are hard duties to perform, when his brow grows dark and his voice becomes stern and sounds only in command, I warn you, he will call for another handmaid; one whose foot is as familiar to wild and common as to gilded saloon, who knows the feel of a hard bed and the taste of a dry crust, who has been rudely nurtured and not shielded like a hot-house flower from every blast of chilling wind.

The noble and high-born cannot endure grief. They fly with cowardly terror from the coming of mortality, and when it grasps them or theirs, what wild, impious wailings fill dome and turret, bower and hall. It is not so in cottages. Poverty and the necessity of labour strengthen men's souls wonderfully."

If we look in still another direction, we find that Charlotte was never averse to making literary judgments, either. She worked her critical faculty overtime to hand down a rather smug decision upon *Wuthering Heights*, a book which she never fully comprehended. Her correspondence after she herself attained literary success shows that she did not scruple to formulate a rather final-sounding judgment upon any literary work that came to her hand. And here it is in her child's manuscript, *Characters of the Celebrated Men of the Present Time*, written when she was only thirteen years of age: her solemn verdict passed upon Branwell's verse:

His poems exhibit a fine imagination but his versification is not good. The ideas and language are beautiful but they are not arranged so as to run along smoothly, and for this reason I think he should succeed best in blank verse.

We have implied that this all-pervading critical faculty of Charlotte's persists through adulthood. It is true that in all her works the didactic and hortatory passages are num-


erous, and Shirley in particular suffers in this regard because, as Benson points out, its faults are not burned away, as are those of [Jane Eyre] "in the white-hot furnace of its sincerity and passion." In Shirley Charlotte preached her gospel, and endeavored to inculcate a philosophy, from beginning to end. The following passage from Shirley, also quoted by Benson in this connection, may be compared—in its tone, its content, and its purpose—with the passage from The Spell quoted on pages 11 and 12 above. Caroline Helstone is addressing Shirley:

"Obtrusiveness is a crime; forwardness is a crime, and both disgust: but love!—no purest angel need blush to love! And when I hear or see either man or woman couple shame with love I know their minds are coarse, their associations debased. Many who think themselves refined ladies and gentlemen, and on whose lips the word 'vulgarity' is for ever hovering, cannot mention 'love' without betraying their own innate and imbecile degradation. . . . ."

The Professor also suffers seriously from exhortation and moralizing. Culled at random are the three illustrative passages which follow.

I am no Oriental; white necks, carmine lips and cheeks, clusters of bright curls, do not suffice for me without that Promethean spark which will live after the roses and lilies are faded, the burnished hair grown grey. In sunshine, in prosperity, the flowers are very well; but how many wet days are there in life—November seasons of disaster, when a man's hearth and home would be cold indeed without the clear, cheering gleam of intellect.

. . .

Yes, at that epoch I felt like a morning traveller who doubts not that from the hill he is ascending he shall behold a glorious sunrise; what if the track be straight,

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1 Ibid., pp. 240 ff.
steep and stony? he sees it not: his eyes are fixed on that summit, flushed already, flushed and gilded, and having gained it he is certain of the scene beyond. . . . Difficulty and toil were to be my lot, but sustained by energy, drawn on by hopes as bright as vague, I deemed such a lot no hardship. I mounted now the hill in shade; there were pebbles, inequalities, briers in my path, but my eyes were fixed on the crimson peak above; my imagination was with the refulgent firmament beyond, and I thought nothing of the stones turning under my feet, or the thorns scratching my face and hands.

Hardly had I tasted the delight of being without a master when duty issued her stern mandate: "Go forth and seek another service." I never linger over a painful and necessary task; I never take pleasure before business, it is not my nature to do so; impossible to enjoy a leisurely walk over the city, though I perceived the morning was very fine, until I had first presented Mr. Hundsen's letter of introduction. . . . Wrenching my mind from liberty and delight, I seized my hat, and forced my reluctant body out of the Hotel de into the foreign street.

The more severe side of Charlotte's tendency to judgment and criticism is also illustrated in Shirley by her vituperative attacks on the curates, whose portraits become mere "caricatures" and are as so much "rubbish," according to one trenchant critic.¹

After we have dismissed this character of censoriousness which we have investigated, there still remain numerous other ways in which Charlotte's own self is revealed to us in her childhood compositions. For instance, in the following passage from The Bridal we see Lord Charles Wellesley² acting with Charlotte's own precision and dispatch.

¹Benson, ibid.
²See also pp. 8–9 and note, above.
Accordingly, the day after this resolution was formed, I rose with the sun, collected a few essential articles of dress, etc., packed them neatly in a light-knapsack; arranged my apartment, partook of a wholesome repast, and then, after locking the door and delivering the key to my landlady, I set out with a light heart and joyous step.

A second instance is provided by parts of Charlotte's correspondence with Ellen Nussey which directly echo the following passage from a letter written by Julia, Lady Sydney, to Lady Maria Percy in *Angria and the Angrians*. The juvenile passage is quoted first, and after it the words written to Ellen Nussey.

Maria! I'm very near heart-broken—you can't imagine how low-spirited and nervous I feel. Write to me soon or I shall become a confirmed hypochondriac. Your letters are the only consolation now left me. If that fails I really see nothing for it but felo-de-se.

Don't desert me, don't be horified at me, you know what I am. I wish I could see you, my darling; I have lavished the very warmest affection of a very hot tenacious heart upon you—if you grow cold, it is over.

[In another letter]: If you love me, do, do come on Friday. I shall watch and wait for you, and if you disappoint me, I shall weep...

What was Charlotte's ideal heroine like? Like herself, of course. And what did Charlotte imagine herself to be or to be becoming? She speaks out, under the anonymity of her pseudonym, in *The Duke of Zamorna*.

"I tell you Townshend that I will never marry till I can find a woman who has endured sufferings as poignant as I have done—who has felt them as intensely—who has denied her feelings as absolutely and in the end, has triumphed over her woes as successfully.

"A woman so gifted with youth and refined education, would attract my love far more irresistibly than the beauty
of Helen or the majesty of Cleopatra. Beauty is given to
dolls--majesty to haughty vixens--but mind, feeling, pas-
sion, and the crowning grace of fortitude are the attributes
of an angel."

It is interesting to place beside this passage Charlotte's
backward glance, not quite fifteen years later, when in Shirley
she wistfully described the innocent day of youth, just as in
youth she had perceived her maturity.

Caroline Helstone was just eighteen years old and at
eighteen the true narrative of life is yet to be commenced.
Before that time, we sit listening to a tale, a marvelous
fiction, . . . . our world is heroic! its inhabitants half-
divine or semi-demon! its scenes are dream scenes, darker
woods and stranger hills; brighter skies, more dangerous
waters. . . . . dreamier deserts, sunnier fields than are
found in nature. . . . . At that time--at eighteen. . . . .
Elfland lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in
front. These shores are yet distant; they look so blue,
soft, gentle, we long to reach them.

This is a significant commentary on Charlotte's mature view of
her childhood's dream.

The story is well known of Charlotte's irrational de-
votion to M. Héger of Brussels, and it is worth noting that in
the Spell she describes Mina Laury's infatuation with Zamorna
as if that were an emotion she could understand. Perhaps she
knew what unquenchable fires her breast was able to harbor and
which would one day be kindled there. When she calls Mina Laury
a "silly girl," she does not mean "silly," though it would be
difficult to say what she does mean.

The deep suppressed joy of Miss Laury at this intell-
gence was such as I have seldom seen. She came and hung
over him, and gazed into his eyes as if all the universe
she cared for was contained in their dark shining spheres.
It seemed as if she thought she had acquired a right to
look at him undaunted, and if, for the moment, she felt
he was hers by redemption. The feeling, however, scarcely appeared in her countenance before it vanished, and then again she was the doomed slave of infatuation, devoted, stricken, absorbed in one idea, finding a kind of strange pleasure in bearing the burden and carrying the yoke of him whose fascinations fettered her so strongly. The end of her being, the pride of her life seemed to consist in labouring, drudging for Zemorna. He grasped her hand and smiled upon her most sweetly, and said something in a tone of the gentlest condescension, that I dare say repaid the silly girl a hundred-fold.

Charlotte was not Charlotte when she was not dreaming daydreams. And typical of her promiscuous sprinkling of her various characters with her own qualities is the fact that Caroline Vernon, heroine of the romance of the same name, is endowed with a propensity for this daydreaming—and that of a peculiarly Brontë sort:

While Elise Toquet dressed her hair, she sat pondering over a reverie of romance, something so delicious, yet so undefined. I will not say it was love, yet neither will I affirm that love was entirely excluded therefrom. Something there was of a hero, yet a nameless and formless, a mystic being, a dread shadow that crowded upon Miss Vernon's soul, haunted her day and night when she had nothing else useful to occupy her head or her hands. I almost think she gave him the name of Ferdinand Alonzo Fitz Adolphus, but I don't know. The fact was, he frequently changed, his designation being sometimes no more than simple Charles Seymour or Edward Clifford, and at other times soaring to the titles Harold Aurelius Rinaldo, Duke of Montmorency di Caldacella, a very fine name, no doubt, though whether he was to have golden or raven hair or straight or aquiline proboscis, she had not quite decided. However, he was to delve before him in the way of fighting to conquer the world and build himself a city like Babylon, only it was to be a place called the Alhambra, where Mr. Harold Aurelius was to live, taking upon himself the title of Caliph and she, Miss Vernon, the professor of republican principles, was to be his chief lady and to be called the Sultana Zara Esmeralda, with at least a hundred slaves to do her bidding. As for the garden of roses and the halls of marble, and the diamonds and the pearls and the rubies, it would be vanity to attempt a description of such heavenly sights...
Before turning to a new topic we should observe that this egoism which so led Charlotte to intrude her own personality upon the personalities of her characters led her likewise to intrude herself as author upon her reader and to indulge in certain self-deprecatory sentiments which reveal great self-consciousness in the rôle of authorship. The following extracts are typical of her attitude and practice.

The Preface of *Visits in Verreopolis*:

I have nothing to say except, that Verreopolis means the Glass Town being compounded of a Greek and French word to that effect, and that I fear the reader will find this the dullest and dryest book I have ever written, with this fair warning I bid him good-bye.

The conclusion of "The Fairy Gift," a tale included in the second volume of *Visits in Verreopolis*:

When Captain Bud had finished I thanked him for his tale and then as it was near eleven o'clock bade him good-bye. Before twelve I reached Waterloo Palace, and being very sleepy retired to bed. As I have no doubt my reader is by this time in much the same state, I shall bid him good-bye also.

The conclusion of *Mina Laury*:

Goodbye, reader! I have done my best to please you; and though I know that through feebleness, dulness, and iteration my work terminates rather in failure than in triumph, yet you are sure to forgive, for I have done my best!

This same self-conscious tendency appears in a less bald form at times, perhaps as a mark of maturity, when the deliberate buttonholing of the reader becomes instead a rather exaggerated knowledge on the part of the author that she is being read and judged. The following passage from the preface of *The Foundling* shows definite self-defense.
I am sensible that my tale is totally devoid of interest but it may not perhaps be considered egotistical in me to say that it contains none of those vile and loathsome falsehoods—those malignant and disgusting insinuations with which some late writers have thought proper to adorn their contaminating pages. I have however scotched one small reptile as it were en passant. . . .

That this habit of Charlotte's persisted in her adult work is shown by her not infrequent attention to her "Reader" in her novels and by the fact that she was influenced rather considerably by contemporary criticism. Clement Shorter has pointed out that Shirley was probably spoiled as a novel because Charlotte was frightened into conventionality by the storm which Jane Eyre brought about her ears. Charlotte railed at her critics, answered them in didactic passages sprinkled into Shirley, but remembered their verdicts nevertheless. She knew nothing of the proud and silent independence of her sister Emily.

III

Our investigation now turns to the matter of style. For such a discussion it will be found helpful to have at hand critical judgments that have already been passed upon the childhood compositions. Benson comments favorably on Charlotte's juvenile style and uses for an example the excerpt from her History of the Year quoted on page 2 above, of which he says:

There is something there, a management of words, an econo-

2See quotation from Shirley on p. 13 above.
3Benson, op. cit., especially pp. 30 ff. and pp. 60 ff.
my in their use, so that they convey as simply as possible, yet very vividly, the complete scene, which can hardly fail to strike the connoisseur of style.

He also quotes the following passage as a foreshadowing of the "delirious imagery" of Jane Eyre and Shirley.

In their impudence [the Genii] assert that by their magic they can reduce the world to a desert, the purest water to streams of livid poison, and the clearest lakes to stagnant waters, the pestilential vapours of which will slay all living creatures except the bloodthirsty beasts of the forests, and the ravenous bird of the rock.

In another place he says that "both of them [Charlotte and Branwell], when they were not being literary, wrote fine and apt English, rhythmical and dignified, with that indefinable verbal inevitability which is the hallmark of the writer." In this connection he quotes Charlotte's letter to Southey:

At the first perusal of your letter I felt only shame and regret that I had ever ventured to trouble you with my crude rhapsody: I felt a painful heat rise to my face when I thought of the quires of paper I had covered with what once gave my so much delight, but which now was only a source of confusion; but after I had thought a little and read it again and again the prospect seemed to clear.

George Edwin MacLean\(^1\) likewise has only praise for Charlotte's immature style, with especial reference to The Spell. In explanation of her style he says:

\[
\ldots \ldots \text{Her near-sightedness made her curiously observant and minutely analytic in descriptions.} \ldots \ldots \text{Her retentive memory, not dulled by reading many books, held what she read in a choice and limited library.} \\
\text{The mystery of her style is explained. Absence of artificial school and social restrictions gave her freedom for full self-expression which almost from infancy she found in constant writing.} \ldots \ldots \text{Her grammar and diction were} \\
\]

\(^1\)MacLean, op. cit.
learned in the best way by reading good authors and constant writing.

MacLean also writes that in The Spell "the rise of the critical spirit appears," and continues:

The beginning of her maturer views of the romanticism in literature at the beginning of the nineteenth century is perhaps indicated in the sub-title to The Spell--An Extravaganza. The motto of the title page "I give you the raw material, Words, to your ingenuity I leave the eliciting of the manufactured article, Sense," suggests she was recovering from the extreme of romanticism and possessed a desire for something interpretative of real life. . . .

The vocabulary.... is well chosen. The simple sentences scattered among the compound and often complex and long sentences give variety to the style. The figures of speech abounding in metaphors, similes, and comparisons, with a series of exclamations and interrogations, uplift the style. Redundant in adjectives and drawn out with iterations the diction remains clear, simple, and strong. Alliterations contribute to the melody.

One detects the prophecy of a style in her later published novels, which has been commended by many critics. Alice Meynell writes: "A re-reading of her works is always a new amazing of her reader who turns back to review the harvest of her English. It must have been with rapture that she claimed her own simplicity. . . ."

Verbose, literary, strained, artificial--these are adjectives which always can with justice be applied to Charlotte's style both as a child and as a woman. She seems to have been much influenced by classical and French modes of composition and was led into inverted orders and elaborate and excessive ornamentation. But such a description of her style is soon found to be of the most partial sort. A description which takes the whole scene into account is likely to leave such epithets out altogether. Similarly a discussion of the stylistic qualities of Charlotte's childhood compositions is more like-
ly to dwell upon its excellences and potentialities than to point out its blunders. Probably few would leave the camp of Mrs. Gaskell whose comment was: "The quality strikes me as of singular merit for a girl of thirteen or fourteen."

I am sure that in the reading of Charlotte's juvenile manuscripts and mature novels the first characteristic of her style which compels our attention is a quality which attaches to it in quite a general way and which is in some sense prior to any specific impressions which issue from a critical and close examination of it. It is a quality of penetrating and enveloping force and of irresistible driving power that crowds out and disperses before it—for the moment—all subordinate considerations. This is the essence of the Brontë gift for self-expression. For it is true that after all the adverse criticisms of Brontë writings have been laid down, there always remains untouched their virtue of great readability—and in a certain restricted sense that is a key virtue. Charlotte excelled highly in this. No single piece of her writing, juvenile or mature, however it may be criticized in other respects, lacks that innate force which renders it readable and interesting. This is partly a matter of vocabulary, partly of phrasing, partly of vivid imagery, partly of other things. But to break her unique faculty of expression down into its component parts signifies little. Her gift was sheer strength and a great compelling energy in her sentences which had the effect of blotting out nearly any other stylistic deficiency.
Many illustrations of the point are to be found in the juvenilia. My Angria and the Angrians, which is almost Charlotte's finished style, shows her in a versatile mood, passing easily from humor and playfulness to high passion.

Of the latter the following passage is a vivid instance.

He paused. Mary looked at him. There he stood with the red firelight flashing over him, one foot advanced, his head proudly raised, his kindled eyes fixed on the opposite wall and filled with a most inspired glory—that tinge of insanity which certainly mingles with his blood, was looking through their fierce dilated zones, as if it glaring out at visions which itself had poured through the air.

"We walk together," he exclaimed aloud, "Our hands shall be twined, our purposes must be one. He has no heart and I'll rend mine from my bosom before its quick hot pulsations shall interfere with what I see, with what I feel, with what I anticipate by day and night. Why else were we born in one century? His sun should have set before mine rose, if their blended shining was not destined to set Earth on fire. By the Great Genii! it spreads! what! farther, farther, a deeper, longer gorier vista. I'll follow—you dare not beckon where I dare not go. Hah! it is stopped, filled up—blackness, blackness, where am I? The day went down suddenly! All is utterly dark, Spirit! Percy! I have seen the end of my battles. How time hastens—twenty years did you say—gathered in the span as at this distance it seems of one hour. Life slides from under me and there is the gulph of Eternity. Eternity! Deep, bodiless, formless, what sails there? why is there no sound? Such a stony silence, such a desolate vacancy. There should have been stars in that space. Who said I might remember? A vain hope—thought slips already. Earth, existence, I have been great in both, but I remember no more my greatness."

From The Spell comes another instance:

Good God, at times I have had glimpses of the anguish she endured so patiently. I have had sudden pangs of jealousy and moments of unutterable darkness, and while they lasted my spirit boiled in lava. I had feelings of suffocation and terrific goading sensations that almost drove me mad. And then when the creature whom I suspected to be my rival was present, I turned sheet-white with abhorrence.
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rival was present, I turned sheet-white with abhorrence.
And when I could find Zamorna alone, I begged him to kill me at once, and kneeled before him, and bathed his hand in tears that he himself said were scalding. He always heard me, he always pitied me, but he said I was foolish and mistaken, and tried to cheer me with his wild musical laugh, in vain, for that laugh, when not fierce or scornful, is a cordial itself to my ears.

And again, in *Mina Laury*, we find:

That name, though spoken low, caught Zamorna’s ear, and he at once comprehended the nature of the conversation. It is not often that he has occasion to be jealous, and as it is rare so also it is a remarkably curious and pretty sight to see him under the influence of that passion. It smoked in every fibre of his frame and boiled in every vein. Blush after blush deepened the hue of his cheek; as one faded, another of darker crimson followed. . . . . His whiskers twined and writhed, and even the very curls seemed to stir on his brow.

However many faults due to immaturity one notices, however contemptuously the words “purple patches” come from the critic’s pen, nevertheless the fitful fury and steady power of such a style will keep the most sophisticated reader in train. To show this quality in its mature effectiveness and charm it is a temptation to quote too extensively from the closing pages of *Villette*. The following will perhaps serve as a satisfying instance.

The sun passes the equinox; the days shorten, the leaves grow sere; but--he is coming.
Frosts appear at night; November has sent his fogs in advance; the wind takes its autumn moan; but--he is coming.
The skies hang full and dark--a rack sails from the west; the clouds cast themselves into strange forms--arches and broad radiations; there rise resplendent mornings--glorious, royal, purple as monarch in his state; the heavens are one flame; so wild are they, they rival battle at its thickest--so bloody, they shame Victory in her pride. I know some signs of the sky; I have noted them ever since childhood. God, watch that sail! Oh, guard it!
The wind shifts to the west. Peace, peace, Banshee,
"keening" at every window! It will rise, it will swell, it shrieks out long; wander as I may through the house this night, I cannot lull the blast. The advancing hours make it strong; by midnight all sleepless watchers hear and fear a wild south-west storm.

That storm roared frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks; it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full of sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder, the tremor of whose plumes was storm.

Peace; be still! Oh! a thousand weepers, praying in agony on waiting shores, listened for that voice; but it was not uttered—not uttered till, when the hush came, some could not feel it—till, when the sun returned, his light was night to some!

As we leave these important generalities behind and seek to examine Charlotte's style for specific content, and as we search for a thread of continuity between the juvenile and mature product, a chain of significant discoveries is begun. It is praiseworthy in Charlotte's childhood style of composition that, so far as clarity and simplicity are concerned, her earliest manuscripts are quite equal to any that follow. Here, for example, is how she begins her Romantic Tale:

There is a tradition that some thousands of years ago twelve men from Britain, of a most gigantic size, and twelve men from Gaul, came over to the country of the genii, and while there were continually at war with each other; and, after remaining many years, returned again to Britain and Gaul. And in the inhabited [parts] of the genii country there are now no vestiges of them, though it is said there have been found some colossal skeletons in that wild, barren land, the evil desert.

This passage also, from the same source, reveals the same easy flow of language.

As the music went off the palace slowly disappeared, and we found ourselves alone in the midst of the desert. The sun had just begun to enlighten the world, and the moon
might be dimly seen; but all below there was sand as far as our eyes could reach. We knew not which way to go, and we were ready to faint with hunger; but on once more looking round we saw lying on the sands some dates and palm-wine. Of this we made our breakfast, and then began again to think of our journey, when suddenly there appeared a beaten track in the desert, which we followed.

A different quality of style is represented by still another passage from A Romantic Tale. Added to the simple mastery of language and straightforward expression which we observed in the other passages is a character of biblical eloquence which results in a literary effect of high order in a child thirteen years of age.

"A prince will arise who shall be as a thorn in the side of England, and the desolator of Europe. Terrible shall be the struggle between that chieftain and you! It will last many years, and the conqueror shall gain eternal honour and glory. So likewise shall the vanquished; and though he shall die in exile his name shall never be remembered by his countrymen but with feelings of enthusiasm. The renown of the victor shall reach to the ends of the earth; Kings and Emperors shall honour him; and Europe shall rejoice in its deliverer; though in his lifetime fools will envy him, he shall overcome. At his death renown shall cover him, and his name shall be everlasting!"

Descriptive passages as elements of Charlotte's style are interesting to study because of their brilliance, their rather obvious handling, and their formal character. On the point of formalism, we find that often there is a deliberate setting of the stage, as in the following passage from An Adventure in Ireland.

During my travels in the south of Ireland the following adventure happened to me. One evening in the month of August, after a long walk, I was ascending the mountain which overlooks the village of Cahin, when I suddenly came in sight of a fine old castle. It was built upon a rock,
and behind it was a large wood, and before it was a river. Over the river there was a bridge, which formed the approach to the castle.

When I arrived at the bridge I stood still awhile to enjoy the prospect around me: far below was the wide sheet of still water in which the reflection of the pale moon was not disturbed by the smallest wave; in the valley was the cluster of cabins which is known by the appellation of Cahin; and beyond these were the mountains of Killala. Over all, the grey robe of twilight was now stealing with silent and scarcely perceptible advances. No sound except the hum of the distant village and the sweet song of the nightingales in the wood behind me broke upon the stillness of the scene.

While I was contemplating this beautiful prospect a gentleman, whom I had not before observed, accosted me with "Good evening, sir; are you a stranger in these parts?"

The stranger was obliged to wait until the speaker had observed the view before he could make his entrance.

A similar formalism is present in this passage from The Professor. It is as if on entering a room a person is required to look around him and take immediate note of his surroundings.

Thence we traversed a passage, and entered his parlor; the door being shut, he pointed me to an arm-chair by the hearth; I sat down, and glanced round me.

It was a comfortable room, at once snug and handsome; the bright grate was filled with a genuine shire fire, red, clear, and generous, no penurious South-of-England embers heaped in the corner of a grate. On the table a shaded lamp diffused around a soft, pleasant, and equal light; the furniture was almost luxurious for a young bachelor, comprising a couch and two very easy chairs; bookshelves filled the recesses on each side of the mantelpiece; they were well furnished, and arranged with perfect order.

Characteristic of all of Charlotte’s description is minute detail. The following paragraphs from The Bridal are typical.

On the broad steps of the portico two figures were re-
clining, at sight of whom I instantly stepped behind a low, wide-spreading fig-tree, where I could hear and see all that passed. . . . One was a youth of lofty stature and remarkably graceful demeanour, attired in a rich purple vest and mantle, with closely fitting white pantaloons of white woven silk, displaying to advantage the magnificent proportions of his form. A richly adorned belt was girt tightly round his waist from which depended a scimitar whose golden hilt, and scabbard of the finest Damascus steel, glittered with gems of inestimable value. His steel-barred cap, crested with tall, snowy plumes, lay beside him, its absence revealing more clearly the rich curls of dark, glossy hair clustering round a countenance distinguished by the noble beauty of its features, but still more by the radiant fire of genius and intellect visible in the intense brightness of his large, dark, and lustrous eyes.

The other form was that of a very young and slender girl, whose complexion was delicately, almost transparently, fair. Her cheeks were tinted with a rich, soft crimson, her features moulded in the utmost perfection of loveliness; while the clear light of her brilliant hazel eyes, and the soft waving of her auburn ringlets, gave additional charms to what seemed already infinitely too beautiful for this earth. Her dress was a white robe of the finest texture the Indian loom can produce. The only ornaments she wore were a long chain composed of alternate beads of the finest emeralds and gold; and a slight gold ring on the third finger of her left hand, which, together with a small crescent of pearls glistening on her forehead. . . . betokened that she had entered the path of wedded life. With a sweet vivacity in her look and manner the young bride was addressing her lord thus when I first came in sight of the peerless pair.

In A Peep into a Picture Book Charlotte achieves a very artistic framework for a series of portraits. The author, Lord Charles Wellesley, sits examining a picture book while General Thornton naps, and the knowledge of these circumstances measurably increases the reader's interest in the chain of descriptions which is presented. The following passage is a presentation of Percy, Earl of Northangerland.

The second volume is nearest to my hand, and I will raise first from the shadow of gossamer paper, waving as I turn it like a web of woven air, the spirit whossoever it be,
male or female, crowned or coroneted, that animates its frontispiece.

A mighty phantom has answered my spell: an awful shape clouds the magic mirror! Reader, before me I behold the earthly tabernacle of Northangerland's unsounded soul! There he stands: what a vessel to be moulded from the coarse clay of mortality! What a plant to spring from the rank soil of human existence! And the vessel is without flaw: polished, fresh, and bright from the last process of the maker. The flower has sprung up to mature beauty, but not a leaf is curled, not a blossom faded. . . . . At this moment a gleam of sunlight, real deep gold in hue, comes through the kindled window-panes, and falls richly and serenely on the picture. It is a softened glory, for the sun is far west and its amber rays shed inexpressible tranquility wherever they descend. How sweetly they sleep on that brow and on those Ionic features! Percy! Percy! never was humanity fashioned in a fairer mould. . . . .

At times Charlotte's enthusiasm for detail led her into error, as in this excerpt from *Passing Events*.

A model of beautiful vigour and glowing health, a kind of military erectness in her form, so elegantly built, and in the manner in which her neck sprung from her exquisite bust and was placed with graceful uprightness on her falling shoulders. Her waist too falling in behind, and her fine slender foot supporting her in a regulated position, plainly indicated familiarity from her childhood with the sergeant's drill. . . . .

The following description of the gigantic figure of Lord Douro has a power and maturity not present in all similar passages, probably because naturalness is substituted for formalism and action for a mere pose rendered by adjective.

Everywhere the tall figure of the slender youth, in his close black dress and unornamental cap thickly circumscribed with curls, might be seen passing along with commanding tread and bearing, controlling all around him like the sovereign spirit of the storm. Sometimes that shape appeared lofty against the sky, standing on a thread-like scaffolding, a blue abyss of air on each side, before and behind the skeleton erection of an unfinished palace, honeycombed with arches, and vast beams flung across as the divisions of state chambers; voids between that might turn the head of a cabin-boy giddy. Here the monarch walked as carelessly
as an eagle hangs, poised above his aerie. The eyes of
his stern and swarthy subjects were often turned admiring-
ly on him, as he sprung, like a young elk from one narrow
projection to another, and strode over the shaking beams as
erectly and haughtily as if he were crossing a hall of
Wellesley House. . . .

As a summary view of the art of description as Charlotte
practiced it, it will be significant to place side by side a
rather mature instance of her childhood work from *Mina Laury*,
and a selection from *Shirley*. We will see that after Charlotte
learned her art, and she learned it early, the description of
the juvenilia and that of the novels are scarcely distinguish-
able.

From *Mina Laury*:
Late one fine still evening in January the moon arose
over a blue summit of the Sydenham Hills and looked down on
a quiet road winding from the hamlet of Rivaulx. The earth
was bound in frost—hard, mute, and glittering. The forest
of Hawkscliffe was as still as a tomb, and its black leaf-
less wilds stretched away in the distance and cut off with
a harsh serrated line the sky from the country. That sky
was all silver blue, pierced here and there with a star like
a diamond. Only the moon softened it, large, full, and gold-
en. The by-road I have spoken of received her ascending
beam on a path of perfect solitude. Spectral pines and
vast old beech trees guarded the way like sentinels from
Hawkscliffe. Farther on the rude track wound deep into the
shades of the forest, but here it was open and the worn
causeway, bleached with frost, ran under an old wall grown
over with moss and wild ivy.

From *Shirley*:
If Fieldhead had few other merits as a building, it
might at least be termed picturesque: its irregular archi-
tecture, the grey and mossy colouring communicated by
time, gave it a just claim to this epithet. The old lat-
ticed window, the stone porch, the walls, the roof, the
chimney stacks, were rich in crayon touches and sepia
lights and shades. The trees behind were fine, bold, and
spreading; the cedar on the lawn in front was grand, and
the granite urns on the garden wall, the fretted arch of
the gateway were, for an artist, as the very desire of the
eye.

.... It was a still night--calm, dewy, cloudless: the gables, turned to the west, reflected the clear amber of the horizon they faced; the oaks behind were black; the cedar was blacker; under its dense, raven boughs a glimpse of sky opened gravely blue: it was full of the moon, which looked solemnly and mildly down on Caroline from beneath that sombre canopy.

Charlotte's fondness for intense imagery is partly responsible for that racy and vivid quality of style to which we have already had occasion to refer. The following is a rather faltering instance of her power in this direction, but there is also that about it which suggests at least an approach to a depth of feeling and significant insight which is so essential an ingredient of a writer's success.

A bad set were the western Aristocracy--terribly bad, and their's was no giddy flutter of vanity such as in sunny France keeps the gay Parisians in one ceaseless whirl of glittering dissipation. They rushed with more of uncontrolled impulse into those vortices which the passions open in society, and excited a moment by the reel of the waters, were presently engulfed at the centre and dragged down to darkness--hurled by boiling eddies upon flinty rocks where at last the shark death found and devoured them.

Women as well as men met a fate like this. So perished the Segovia in the very prime of her life and the flower of her gorgeous beauty. She among her own groves died a violent death. Like a Queen of antiquity--encompassed by more than ancient splendour--she shrieked out life in the agonies of poison, just as one before her--amid his own hills--had moaned and gasped and looked in vain for help, while in his fearful death he howled out her name as a murderess.

Sometimes Charlotte's use of imagery is more deliberate and self-conscious. In Albion and Marina the following passage occurs.

No wild rose blooming in solitude or bluebell peering from an old wall, ever equalled in loveliness this flower of the forest. The hue of her cheek would excel the most delicate
tint of the former, even when its bud is just opening to
the breath of summer, and the clear azure of her eyes would
cause the latter to appear dull as a dusky hyacinth. Also,
the silken tresses of her hazel hair straying in light ring-
lets down a neck and forehead of snow seemed more elegant
than the young tendrils of a vine.

And in Shirley we find this passage, comparable in its naiveté
and deliberateness.

Curious, clever, learned perhaps; haply even tinged with
the fascinating hues of fancy, but, God knows, as differ-
ent from real poetry as the gorgeous and massy vase of
mosaic is from the little cup of pure metal; or, to give
the reader a choice of similes, as the milliner's artifi-
cial wreath is from the fresh-gathered lily of the field.

For sheer ease of composition it is pleasant to turn to
Charlotte's Farewell to Angria, with its graceful phrasing and
measured intervals. This is, indeed, Charlotte's mature style
at its best--free from the faults of literary effect and unnat-
uralness which too often crept in.

When I strive to conjure up new inmates I feel as if I had
got into a distant country where every face was unknown
and the character of all the population an enigma which it
would take much study to comprehend and much talent to ex-
plain. . . . Still, . . . the mind would cease from ex-
citement and turn now to a cooler region where the dawn
breaks grey and sober, and the coming day for a time at
least is subdued by clouds.

We have spoken of Charlotte's vice of trying to be
"literary." Here is one example from The Foundling, which suf-
fered a little in this respect at the beginning because Charlotte
was proceeding cautiously in a new and more serious attempt at
authorship.

When the door was carefully closed and bolted, she and
her husband proceeded to examine their prize which turned
out to be neither more nor less than a pretty delicate-
looking child of about twelve months. The sweet confiding
smile which beamed in its large eyes and dimpled its rosy cheeks completely won the hearts of the worthy couple. Margaret kissed and embraced it with maternal fondness, and John promised that while they lived it should never more want a roof to shelter its head.

In Emma, her last fragment of a novel broken off by her death, she is still at it.

She found a gentleman seated on the sofa, who, as he rose up, appeared a tall, fine-looking personage; at least she thought him so, as he stood with his back to the light. He introduced himself as Mr. Fitzgibbon, inquired if Miss Wilcox had a vacancy and intimated that he wished to intrust to her care a new pupil in the shape of his daughter.

Charlotte had a theory about style which we probably ought to recognize before we leave the topic. It explains the rigid formality of many of her descriptions and the tendency to exaggerated literary style. In Passing Events she writes as follows:

Let Richton take his seat at the council board of war or peace, let him paint to the life, the members gathering round that table of heavy and dark Honduras whose large circle groans under the piled documents of state, let him describe the mood of ire or thought or pride or scorn, that contracts the brow of each haughty councillor—let him detail with graphic skill the imperious bearing contrasted with the civil garb of one, and the martial dress and grave deliberative aspect of another, let him with magic power show the whole room haphazardly adorned with mirrors where are seen the reflected figures bending over the table, now in deep consultation, now in fierce dispute; let him scribe so well that each separate voice shall speak out of the page in changeful tone, the word passing from mouth to mouth, the flexible lip and the rapid tongue of Edward Percy answering in raised bass, the energetic silver diction of Howard Warner. Let him show us even those details that give truest life to the picture, the pocket-handkerchief drawn out with a flourish as altercation kindles, the snuff-box hurriedly produced and replaced.

In The Spell, and not only there but from time to time, we find her professing a theory of indirectness and subtlety
that she seldom practiced.

All this is declared in my present work rather by implication than assertion. The reader will find here no lengthened passage which elaborately sets forth his outrageous peculiarities. He must gather it from the hints interwoven with the whole surface and progress of the story.

She did, however, in *The Professor*, accomplish a kind of check in the direction of formalism, almost in a spirit of rebellion against it.

I turned; at my elbow stood a tall man, young, though probably five or six years older than I—in other respects of an appearance the opposite to commonplace; though just now, as I am not disposed to paint his portrait in detail, the reader must be content with the silhouette I have just thrown off; it was all I myself saw of him for the moment: I did not investigate the colour of his eyebrows, nor of his eyes either; I saw his stature, and the outline of his shape; I saw, too, his fastidious-looking retroussé nose; these observations, few in number, and general in character (the last excepted), sufficed, for they enabled me to recognize him.

IV

The remarkable and immediate popular success of *Jane Eyre*, as Benson points out,\(^1\) is not surprising in view of its "highly exciting," though "wholly incredible" plot. This capacity of Charlotte's for concocting improbable and bizarre—yet convincing—plots is a constant force through all her writings, juvenile and mature; and it, together with a style capable of great interest and strength, is chiefly responsible for the great readability of her novels.

There can be no question of Charlotte's genuine gift for plotting. She was not, as has been alleged, limited to

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\(^1\)Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
lifting plots wholesale from life as she lifted her characters. Incidents, happenings, circumstances she borrowed, of course, but those are not a novel; they are the merest fragments of material.

Hesitantly at first, and then with greater confidence, Charlotte began to evolve simple plots in such tales as The Adventures of Ernest Alember, and The Search After Happiness, and An Adventure in Ireland; and the tales of Angria, with the enormous complexity which they acquired, were created out of the whole cloth of her experience and reading.

Not all of the early plots are successful in respect to structure or unity, although all manage to be interesting. In Albion and Marina, for instance, Charlotte is obliged to conclude her story by a kind of postscript:

After a few days Albion quitted Strathelleraye, where he was never again heard of.

The reason of Marina's death I shall briefly relate. Four years after Albion's departure tidings came to the village that he was dead. The news broke Marina's faithful heart. The day after, she was no more.

The Spell, one of Charlotte's more complex plots ("circuitous" is her own description of it) has a similar weakness in that in order to get the story told it resorts to a long letter written by the Duchess of Zamorna to her Grandmamma Lady Helen Percy, to the diary of Zamorna's physician, and to a postscript. (We remember that Shirley resorts to the diary method also.) In reading The Spell one gets the impression that Charlotte started out with her best foot forward, so to speak, but created a maze in which she lost herself. More than in the
superficial evidence of the letter, the diary, and the postscript, one discerns in the very fabric of the tale a lack of unity. The mystery, the fear, the love, the spying, illness, torment, and solution are easy to think separately, but they do not accomplish any impression of wholeness.

Counterbalancing the blunders we may find, however, there are early pieces of Charlotte's work which show a highly finished unity, a structure well rounded, and definite "point." The Tragedy and the Essay and A Leaf from an Unopened Volume are instances of very capable handling.

There is one fairly persistent quirk in Charlotte's plotting which suggests a degree of artificiality, or at least of calculation, in her methods. It is the fact that she found it such hard work to get started. The openings to her childhood tales and her mature novels are either studiedly formal, or obviously reluctant, or set in motion by some artificial device. This is the slow and stately opening of Albion and Marina:

There is a certain sweet little pastoral village in the south of England with which I am better acquainted than most men. The scenery around it possesses no distinguished characteristic of romantic grandeur or wildness that might figure to advantage in a novel, to which high title this brief narrative sets up no pretensions.

Neither rugged lofty rocks, nor mountains dimly huge, mark with frowns the undisturbed face of nature; but little peaceful valleys, low hills crowned with wood. . . .

Somehow one is reminded of the irrelevant, though not unattractive, opening of Shirley.

Of late years, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England; they lie very thick on the hills;
every parish has one or more of them; they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good. But not of late years are we about to speak; we are going back to the beginning of this century: late years—present years are dusty, sun-burnt, hot, arid; we will evade the noon, forget it in siesta, pass the mid-day in slumber, and dream of dawn.

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting, perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal, but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic—ay, even an Anglo-Catholic—might eat on Good Friday in Passion Week: it shall be cold lentils and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs, and no roast lamb.

Reluctance to begin the narrative is shown in the opening portion of The Return of Zamorna which, in deferment of the actual narrative, relates that the author, being in debt for his lodging, has been set to work by his creditor to write a book which shall bring him some income. He therefore sits down naked to the waist, having given part of his clothing as security, and begins his tale. Another instance of such a dodge is found in the prose manuscript entitled Julia in the Wrenn Library Catalogue, which Charlotte begins by saying: "There is, reader, a sort of pleasure in sitting down to write wholly unprovided with a subject."

In a prose tale tentatively named Lord Douro or Thornton a deliberate device is used to set the story in motion. And it is a device used again in The Professor. The juvenile manuscript begins: "A day or two ago, in clearing out an old rub-
bish drawer, I chanced to light upon a pile of newspapers bearing
dates of some four or five years back." The Professor begins with the quotation of a letter which her main character,
William Crimsworth, discovers in his desk. Its contents present
the opening situation of the story and give the narrative a
push to send it on its way.

Charlotte's self-consciousness and deliberate planning
has been a key consideration in the discussion of both style and
plot in the preceding pages. It should be interesting to sub-
join the following scheme for a magazine tale, from an exercise
book of 1843 which she used while studying composition under
M. Héger in Brussels.

Time from 30 to 50 years ago; Country, England; scene
rural; rank of persons, middle class; subject, certain re-
markable occurrences; sex of writer, at discretion; number
of characters, limited; plot, domestic, the romantic not
excluded; opening, cheerful or gloomy; occurrences, first
reverse of fortune, second new arrival, third loss of rela-
tions, fourth crosses in affection, fifth going abroad and
returning; characters, hero, heroine, their families, rival
or rivalless, villains. N.B. Moderation to be used here;
avoid Richardsonian multiplication. P. S. As much compres-
sion, as little explanation as may be. Men. To be set
about with proper spirit, to be carried out with the same
to be concluded idem. Observe no grumbling allowed.

A discussion of plot suggests a discussion of themes.
Charlotte's themes, even in the seemingly diverse Angrian tales,
are not varied. The only one which has any significance for us,
if not the only one of importance, is the love theme. The early
age at which she became interested in it, the understanding she
seemed to have of it, and its persistency through all her work—
particularly its startling originality in *Jane Eyre*—is amazing
in one of her limited experience. It was not through M. Héger, or any other man, that Charlotte learned the emotions and the authentic language of love. At the age of fourteen, in The Rivals, she presented a convincing picture of jealousy and the pain of rivalry, with an interesting triumph of the quiet maiden over her more flashy rival. The Spell is another instance of power to portray the intricacies of love. MacLean\(^1\) states it well: "Love and jealousy, intrigue upon intrigue, woman wooing man, and man loving more than one woman despite marriage bonds, end in the flame of true love purifying passion. The devotion of woman, whether wife or betrayed maid, dissolves the spell over a double man."

The Spell also contains that which is comparable to the Héger incident and to the married Rochester circumstance. Zamorna has been suggesting to Mary Percy that she may soon be performing the offices of his wife. "These words," Mary writes, "made my heart throb almost audibly. I little thought then how near they were to fulfillment. The block of existing marriage shut out any ideas of the kind, indeed that very evening the Marchioness was present."

Caroline Vernon makes the final contribution to the cumulative irregularity of Zamorna's relations with women. It adds to his faithfulness (not mere faithlessness to his wife) but faithfulness to many women, the incident of the seduction

\(^1\)MacLean, op. cit.
of untutored Caroline Vernon. It rounds out with convincing finality our conception of that furious giant of a man and fiend.

Neither in the white heat of *Jane Eyre* nor in the more steady passion of *Villette* did Charlotte write more convincingly of love, particularly in illegitimate relations, than she pursued it in the long and remarkable career of Zamorna. Thus we see that this power was not acquired through any emotional birth at Brussels; it was a continuous thread, begun in childhood, developed and refined in womanhood until it was said of her that "until she came, passion between men and women had meant animal passion. . . . She lifted it up. . . . she showed it for divine. . . . she made this spirit of fire and air incarnate in the body of a woman."¹

An investigation of Charlotte's methods of character portrayal will reveal the fact that, as in the case of her other talents, the mature specimen is merely a larger and stronger version of the earlier one. Whenever she abandoned mere physical description and began to round out her characters, we find them drawn for the most part firm and true, and not the less satisfactory because at times in her juvenile writings she saw fit to make radical transformations in their personalities.

Charlotte's early character portrayal, as we have sug-

¹May Sinclair, as quoted by MacLean, *op. cit.*
gested, is on a smaller scale than that of her mature novels, but it is vivid and meticulous. The following illustrations are (1) from Albion and Marina, and (2 and 3) from Characters of the Celebrated Men of the Present Time.

The eldest son, Albion, Marquis of Tagus, is the hero of my present tale. He had entered his nineteenth year; his stature was lofty; his form equal in the magnificence of its proportions to that of Apollo Belvedere. The bright wealth and curls of his rich brown hair waved over a forehead of the purest marble in the placidity of its unvenied whiteness. His nose and mouth were cast in the most perfect mould. But saw I never anything to equal his eye! Oh! I could have stood riveted with the chains of admiration gazing for hours upon it! What clearness, depth, and lucid transparency in those large orbs of radiant brown! And the fascination of his smile was irresistible, though seldom did that sunshine of the mind break through the thoughtful and almost melancholy expression of his noble features. He was a soldier, captain in the Royal Regiment of Horse Guards, and all his attitudes and actions were full of martial grace. His mental faculties were in exact keeping with such an exterior, being of the highest order; and though not like his younger brother, wholly given up to study, yet he was well versed in the ancient languages, and deeply read in the Greek and Roman classics, in addition to the best works in the British, German and Italian tongues.

Such was my hero. The only blot I was ever able to discover in his character was that of a slight fierceness or impetuosity of temper which sometimes carried him beyond bounds, though at the slightest look or word of command from his father he instantly bridled his passion and became perfectly calm.

No wonder the duke should be, as he was, proud of such a son.

He [Captain Bud] is tall, bony, and muscular. His countenance is harsh and repulsive. His eye is deep set, glittering and piercing. All his movements are rather slow and lagging. His gait is awkward. . . . His disposition is nervous, crabbed, and irritable, but nevertheless, his integrity is upright and flexible. . . .

He [Sergeant Bud] is a clever lawyer and a great liar, a brow-beating counsel and an impudent barrister, a lengthy writer and an able arguer, a crabbed miser and a vile scoun-
drel, an unsociable fellow and a proud wretch, a real rascal and a dusty book-worm.

There is, of course, in these the fault of that stiff formalism which we likewise noted to be present in her pure description and in her plotting. But as this trait is present uniformly in her early and mature works, it is not a juvenile character.

Character portrayal on a grander scale but comparable in its detailed method is illustrated in this passage from *Shirley*. It is further extended, by paragraphs not quoted, which give the character's ancestry, the story of the debt of his ancestors which he inherited, his way of life in Yorkshire, his ambitions and the conduct of his business, and the feeling of the community towards him.

He is what you would probably call, at first view, rather a strange-looking man; for he is thin, dark, sallow; very foreign of aspect, with shadowy hair carelessly streaking his forehead: it appears that he spends but little time at his toilette, or he would arrange it with more taste. He seems unconscious that his features are fine, that they have a southern symmetry, clearness, regularity in their chiseling; nor does a spectator become aware of this advantage till he has examined him well, for an anxious countenance, and a hollow, somewhat haggard, outline of face disturb the idea of beauty with one of care. His eyes are large, and grave, and grey; their expression is intent and meditative, rather searching than soft, rather thoughtful than genial. When he parts his lips in a smile his physiognomy is agreeable—not that it is frank or cheerful even then, but you feel the influence of a certain sedate charm, suggestive, whether truly or delusively, of a considerate, perhaps a kind nature; of feelings that may wear well at home, patient, forebearing, possibly faithful feelings. He is still young—not more than thirty; his stature is tall, his figure slender. His manner of speaking displeases: he has an outlandish accent, which, notwithstanding a studied carelessness of pronunciation and diction, grates on a British, and especially on a Yorkshire ear.
Interesting for its picturing of womanly determination—so like the stanch character of Shirley whom Charlotte often pitted against her brutal uncle and to whom she invariably gave the victory—is the following conversation between Lord Ellrington (A. Percy) and his wife in The Foundling.

Rogue then addressed Lady Ellrington "Madam," said he, "prepare instantly to quit this place and to proceed home-wards."

"Three hours hence," said she with a determined air, "I will do so, but not till then."

"What! Am I to be bearded in this way by by own wife? Obey my commands this instant or I shall find some method of compelling you to your duty."

"Ellrington," she replied calmly, "I know your motives for acting thus, but be assured I will never succumb to such unjust, such tyrannical treatment. You are sensible that when my determination is once fixed it seldom alters, therefore give yourself no further trouble, for I will not go home—yet."

This other passage also, from Passing Events, in its depiction of legitimate male pride is echoed many times in other characters of Charlotte's mature novels—-one scarcely knows in which ones, or if in any particular one. It is the spirit of Rochester, of William Crimsworth in a paler sort of way, of Robert Moore, of the Reverend Holstone, of M. Paul Emmanuel.

... yet a man of honour and of his word, feudal in his ideas of birth and caste, firm and soldierly in his allegiance to the King, generous when obeyed, oppressive when opposed, kind to submitting inferiors, jealous of equals, acknowledging no superior except in the single article of rank when he yields with good grace and ungrudgingly. . . .

Worthy of special commendation is the following passage from The Return of Zamorna in which Charlotte accomplished by
indirection a fine bit of satiric character portrayal.

"Oh!" shrieked Vernon, "What shall I do if I am captured? Think of Enara, of the bloody Hartford, of the savage grinding Warner. I shall be broken on the wheel, or burnt alive, and I cannot endure pain. I never could. When I pricked my finger I would scream."

However, the secret of the clear emergence of the natures of Charlotte's characters is due less to the direct furnishing of details which we have seen in quoted passages (Charlotte seems not to have known that this is a second-rate method at best) than to her brilliant handling of scenes--encounters between characters, which involve long and animated conversations. These scenes are always intensely dramatic and sometimes overdrawn, but they are never artificial or inept. The gestures, expressions, actions, and tones of the speakers are revealed so expertly and are so blended with the dialogue that the whole stands out for the reader like a moving picture.

Charlotte had long practice in her technique. The Young Men's Magazine, which she edited in collaboration with Branwell in 1829 and alone in 1830, contained "conversations" as some of the contributions. Conversation is not the easiest learned of the phases of writing technique, and it is significant that Charlotte found it interesting to write it at the age of thirteen.

Evidence of a development and growth in this direction is contained in the following awkward and childish dialogue from The Search After Happiness.

"I am going far from this city, and shall, most likely, never see you again," said O'Donell.
"Where are you going?"
"I cannot tell."
"Then why do you go away from us? Why do you go from your own house and lands, from this great and splendid city, to you know not where?"
"Because I am not happy here."
"And if you are not happy here, where you have everything for which you can wish, do you expect to be happy when you are dying of hunger or thirst in a desert, or longing for the society of men when you are thousands of miles from any human being?"
"How do you know that will be my case?"
"It is very likely that it will."
"And if it is I am determined to go."
"Take this then, that you may sometimes remember us when you dwell with only the wild beasts of the desert, or the great eagle of the mountain," said they, as they each gave him a curling lock of their hair.
"Yes, I will take it, my princes, and I shall remember you, and the mighty warrior King, your father, even when the Angel of Death has stretched forth his bony arm against me, and I am within the confines of his dreary kingdom, the cold damp grave," replied O'Donell, as the tears rushed to his eyes; and he once more embraced the little princes, and then quitted them, it might be, for ever.

In contrast, the following passages of genuine power from Caroline Vernon amply illustrate Charlotte's power to create character out of speech and action.

Zamorna and his closest military adviser, General Henri Fernando di Enara, are conversing:

"Well, Henri, . . . you see matters are drawing to a crisis; our jewel must be removed. Don't you think her whim is satisfied by this time?"
"Certainly not, my Lord Duke; her sole motive for insisting upon being brought to Evesham was to obtain an interview with your Grace; you have not complied with her request yet, I believe?"
"Why no, but then she is such a little viper, and I can't be put out of the way by humoring her caprice."
"Well, I am not going to press the matter further than your Grace likes, but she'll starve herself to death if she's balked."
"Has she fallen desperately in love with me, Henri?"
"I fear I cannot flatter your Grace's vanity by answering in the affirmative."
"There's the puzzle," continued his Grace, the light of such a smile rising in his eyes as I never saw or imagined before in my life, "if she were dying for love of me, now I should know how to manage her, but really one is not prepared to meet such an unnatural crisis as the present."

General Fernando di Enara blew his nose. "Your Grace is an infernal fool," said he plainly.

The man with the conspicuous proboscis threw back his head. . . . and laughed. "I like a love-tryste, Henri, you know," said he, "but as for a hate-tryste, Lord! I don't understand it."

Zamorna could not help smiling. The little Siren had dressed herself in what she knew suited her best, robes of pure white that looked spiritual in that cold and silent beam. . . . Zamorna looked, and though acquainted with all the depth of her craft, he could not steel his heart from an impulse of pity. "Lady Vernon," said he, "come here and tell me what you want."

"Nothing," said she, approaching, however, almost close to his side. "What should Louisa want when all she cares for now is divided from her by seas of a thousand miles."

"Humph," said the Duke, . . . "so you came here merely to assure me that you were quite satisfied, stood in need of nothing."

"I didn't," said she, piqued exceedingly by his indifferent tone, "I didn't; I've been cruelly used, and I'll tell the world so."

"In what respect, Madam?"

"In every respect. That brute, that Enara in whose hands you placed me on purpose that I might be maltreated, he has made my life not worth preserving."

"Indeed?" was the concise reply.

"Yes indeed, I've had to scream out, so as to alarm the whole house, and his savage ferocity has thrown me into fits more than once. . . . It is true, I tell you," cried the lady, clenching her little hands, "Do you doubt me? Yes, you are on his side, you instigated him. I have no protector now my Alexander is taken away. O Percy, why did you leave me behind? What have I suffered since we parted!"

"You may follow him, Madam; you are at liberty this very evening. . . . Yes, positively, you shall go. I'll ring for your maid and order her to prepare." He stretched his hand to the bell.

With a start of unfeigned alarm, Lady Louisa snatched it away.

"Surely, my Lord, surely you are not serious. I'm-- I can't bear so long a voyage, and the climate would not
agree with me. It's scorching hot, they say." . . . . She
looked up at him with a wild, imploring gaze of terror. . . . .
"This prison's no such bad place then after all, Louisa,
nor the jailor so very brutal?" said his Grace, playing with
her arts.
"No, no. Just be kind to me, and you don't know how
faithful and attached I can show myself."
"Aye, but you hate me," continued the Duke.
"Indeed I don't. I only said so. The fact is I think
you are very, very handsome." Lady Vernon spoke for the
moment with fervor of truth. She felt that his Grace, as he
proudly smiled at her, the moonlight half revealing his
splendid features and his curls half shading them, was in-
deed marvelously handsome. . . . .

Caroline Vernon is indeed the point where Charlotte's
literary adolescence and maturity blend, and is for this reason
appropriately quoted at the close of our investigation. Dia-
logues of which the foregoing passages are instances grow and
multiply and become high points of interest which mightily in-
crease the stature of her novels. The animated intercourse of
two individuals, as it appears and reappears as a recurring
characteristic of her mature writing, is an object of artistic
proportions which is of compelling force before the attention of
the reader. We feel alone in the universe with the protagonists
of the scene before us, and all our mind and feeling is contain-
ed in them. The following rather long passage from Villette,
though not a complete representation of this creative power, is
at least an indication of its rather grand possibilities.

There I stood, then, and there he sat. His humour was
visibly bad--almost at its worst. He had been giving a
lesson in arithmetic--for he gave lessons on any and every
subject that struck his fancy; and arithmetic, being a dry
subject, invariably disagreed with him. Not a pupil but
trembled when he spoke of figures. He sat bent above his
desk. To look up at the sound of an entrance, at the occur-
rence of a direct breach of his will and law, was an effort
he could not for the moment bring himself to make. It was
quite as well. I thus gained time to walk up the long classe; and it suited my idiosyncrasy far better to encounter the near burst of anger like his than to bear its menace at a distance.

At his estrade I paused, just in front. Of course, I was not worthy of immediate attention. He proceeded with his his lesson. Disdain would not do. He must hear and he must answer my message.

Not being quite tall enough to lift my head over his desk, elevated upon the estrade, and thus suffering eclipse in my present position, I ventured to peep round with the design, at first, of merely getting a better view of his face, which had struck me when I entered as bearing a close and picturesque resemblance to that of a black and sallow tiger. Twice did I enjoy this side view with impunity, advancing and receding unseen; the third time my eye had scarce dawned beyond the obscuration of the desk, when it was caught and transfixed through its very pupil—transfixed by the lunettes. Rosine was right; these utensils had in them a blank and immutable terror beyond the mobile wrath of the wearer's own unglazed eyes.

I now found the advantage of proximity. These shortsighted lunettes were useless for the inspection of a criminal under monsieur's nose; accordingly, he doffed them, and he and I stood on more equal terms.

I am glad I was not really much afraid of him—that, indeed, close in his presence, I felt no terror at all; for upon his demanding cord and gibbet to execute the sentence recently pronounced, I was able to furnish him with a needleful of embroidering thread with such accommodating civility as could not but allay some portion at least of his surplus irritation. Of course I did not parade this courtesy before public view. I merely handed the thread round the angle of the desk, and attached it, ready noosed, to the barred back of the professor's chair.

"Que me voulez-vous?" said he, in a growl of which the music was wholly confined to his chest and throat, for he kept his teeth clenched, and seemed registering to himself an inward vow that nothing earthly should wring from him a smile. My answer commenced uncompromisingly.

"Monsieur," I said, "je veux l'impossible, des choses inouies;" and thinking it best not to mince matters, but to administer the douche with decision, in a low but quick voice, I delivered the Athenian message, floridly exaggerating its urgency.

Of course he would not hear a word of it. "He would not go; he would not leave his present class, let all the officials of Villette send for him. He would not put himself an inch out of his way at the bidding of king, cabinet, and chambers together."

I knew, however, that he must go—that, talk as he would,
both his duty and interest commanded an immediate and literal compliance with the summons. I stood, therefore, waiting in silence, as if he had not yet spoken. He asked what more I wanted.

"Only monsieur's answer to deliver to the commissionaire."

He waved an impatient negative.

I ventured to stretch my hand to the bonnet-grec which lay in grim repose on the window-sill. He followed this daring movement with his eye, no doubt in mixed pity and amazement at its presumption.

"Ah!" he muttered, "if it came to that—if Miss Lucy meddled with his bonnet-grec—she might just put it on herself, turn garçon for the occasion, and benevolently go to the Athénée in his stead."

With great respect I laid the bonnet on the desk, where its tassel seemed to give me an awful nod.

"I'll write a note of apology; that will do!" said he, still bent on evasion.

Knowing well it would not do, I gently pushed the bonnet towards his hand. Thus impelled, it slid down the polished slope of the varnished and unbailed desk, carried before it the light steel-framed lunettes, and, fearful to relate, they fell to the estrade. A score of times ere now had I seen them fall and receive no damage; this time, as Lucy Snowe's hapless luck would have it, they so fell that each clear pebble became a shivered and shapeless star.

Now, indeed, dismay seized me—dismay and regret. I knew the value of these lunettes. M. Paul's sight was peculiar, not easily fitted, and these glasses suited him. I had heard him call them his treasures. As I picked them up, cracked and worthless, my hand trembled. Frightened through all my nerves I was to see the mischief I had done, but I think I was even more sorry than afraid. For some seconds I dared not look the bereaved professor in the face. He was the first to speak.

"Là!" said he. "Me voila veuf de mes lunettes! I think Mademoiselle Lucy will now confess that the cord and gallows are amply earned. She trembles in anticipation of her doom. Ah, traitress! traitress! You are resolved to have me quite blind and helpless in your hands!"

I lifted my eyes. His face, instead of being irate, lowering, and furrowed, was overflowing with the smile, coloured with the bloom I had seen brightening it that evening at the Hôtel Crécy. He was not angry, not even grieved. For the real injury he showed himself full of clemency; under the real provocation, patient as a saint...
For many years it was Branwell Brontë in whom his family's hopes for distinction centered. His sisters believed him more brilliant and heir to greater talents and capabilities than any of themselves, but he disappointed them. Ironically, the one marked for favor was the only one whose talent came to no fruition. Branwell's personal tragedy was very real and one must be more sympathetic with him than Charlotte was; but after the critics have lined themselves up for and against; after he has been condemned, and then defended against his enemies, there remain the undeniable and rather final judgments of his career; he was brilliant but unstable; he was talented but without moral stamina.

It really was no common material that went to waste in Branwell. He knew history, and the classics, and literature uncommonly well, one may suppose, for a boy in his circumstances. He remembered what he read and conversed brilliantly, and he convinced everyone who knew him of his genius. As a boy he wrote copiously, almost as much so as Charlotte, and a letter to Wordsworth is quoted by Benson with this remark: "Any boy who at the age of nineteen could write that, had already a good command of his material." The letter is as follows:

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1Benson, op. cit., p. 60.
Do pardon me, sir, that I have ventured to come before one whose work I have most loved in our literature, and who most has been with me a divinity of the mind, laying before him one of my writings, and asking of him a judgment of its contents. I must come before someone from whose sentence there is no appeal, and such a one is he who has developed the theory of poetry as well as its practice, and both in such a way as to claim a place in the memory of a thousand years to come.

Yet somewhere Branwell failed. He failed first at painting, because, as he said, he had no "message." Then his somewhat earnest attempt at writing failed also, revealing, like his work in painting, mediocrity where he thought there was genius. Branwell's rather unequal writing, with its good times and its times of folly, finally went down, not only in the wreck of his life, but under the burden of the incredible egoism, pompousness, and loose braggadocio of his style.

Some of the earlier pieces show charm and promise—for instance his lines "On Seeing An Ancient Dirk in the Armory of the Tower of All Nations Bloodstained with Three Distinct Spots Which Marks None Have Yet Been Able to Erase" (1830), which in a boy aged thirteen show considerable power over language, and literary feeling.

His Letters from an Englishman (1830-1832) are also pleasant to read. Being written in the first person they are more personal, more simple, and at the same time more expository than narrative. But the seeds of his failure are there. As in his History of the Young Men the slaughters of battle are so vast as to go beyond horror and become merely ludicrous. We cannot forget that we are fighting a "play" war. Charlotte's
stories never suggested play; they were the real thing. On the other hand, there is a childlike charm in the fact that Branwell did not immediately forget his wooden soldiers. For with confidence he arrayed his twelve against thousands. Those who were killed were "soon made alive by the usual means, though after the most diligent search the remains of Stumps could nowhere be found," he says on one occasion. He explains that the Ashantees were "small nine pins which were brought from Leeds at the same time with the twelves." The following examples of this characteristic in his writing are from his History of the Young Men (1831).

When the Ashantees, for such they were, heard the noise and saw so many amongst them fall dead without any assignable cause, they stood motionless with astonishment. Another volley was made which killed 4 more, for the young men are admirable marksmen, and now the savages knelt and lay on the ground crying and praying to their gods. 

They also wore light pantaloons of the same colour, but their shoes were the most curious part of their apparel. This shoe, for each man wore only one! was like a round flat cake with holes in the middle into which his feet were inserted as in a stocks. But this dress and shoe was only used for particular occasions such as a Council or solemn ceremony. The common dress was regimental, something like what we now have.

Branwell's note on the latter passage states that "the state dress here spoken of was what my first soldiers were really carved and painted in; the curious shoe was the little stand which each soldier had to keep him from falling."

The good spots in Branwell's juvenile productions also

1Patrick Branwell Brontë, History of the Young Men.
include Caractacus, a dramatic poem which he wrote at the age of thirteen and finished in two days. It is a very worthwhile, well-formed, and interesting piece of writing for a boy of that age.

The more undesirable elements of Branwell's compositions, which seem finally to have become predominant, may be numerously illustrated. The two examples which follow are from his *History of the Young Men*.

Guinea or Ashantee is a large country, or rather a number of countries extending 1700 miles from East to West and 500 from North to South; it is bounded eastward by the immense deserts extending far into the interior of Africa; to the Westward lies the north Atlantic sea; on the South it is bounded by the Gulf of Guinea, and on the North by the far extended range of the Jibble Kumri or Mountains of the Moon. When and by whom this part of Africa was first peopled cannot at this distant period of time be fully ascertained, but the most likely conjecture seems to be that its first Inhabitants were the Ancient British and Gauls who sometime about A. M. 2000 came over to the country and peopled the south Eastern parts of it.

The passage illustrates Branwell's interest in mere physical detail as he was at other times interested in mere political organization, and it is a fair sampling of the pompous and awkward style which Branwell affected. It is enlightening to notice in the paragraph, in spite of apparent care in composition, the use of the word "extend" three times.

The unfavorable characteristic of Branwell's composition which is observable in the following passage is that superfluous statement of the obvious, or it may be a vicariously expressed tone of boasting, that grates unpleasantly on the reader chiefly because he deplores the character of the person who
would write it.

And now before I conclude this chapter I will make an observation on the bold and daring courage of these mighty Heroes. Where I ask could we now find 12 men who would of their own accord go forth from their native country to a savage and unknown land, and, when arrived there, though surrounded by demons, deserts, and a fierce and mighty nation of barbarians hating them and determined to destroy them, where could we find any who in such circumstances would think of building towns, exploring countries and setting their foes at defiance: There never has been nor will be such another instance of human courage, skill, daring and success.

It is curious that at least by the time he was nineteen Branwell's compositions show a realism which is gross and too severe, and the workings of a rather depraved imagination. It is also interesting to observe, in the History of Angria, VIII, the moral weakness with which he invests Mary Percy; she is reluctant to die to the point of cowardice. In a fragmentary prose manuscript of 1837,\(^1\) the narrator of the events of a deadly battle between Percy's and Zamorna's armies is too often drunk to relate coherently; and in spite of intended realism in the presentation of horrors, we see nothing clearly—only a bloody scene of unspeakable confusion. In another fragment of 1837\(^2\) a rather sprawling narrative reveals the author, Henry Hastings, as chiefly under the influence of the bottle. The style is clumsy, full of brag, and the whole narrative is cluttered with the subjective maunderies of the author. In

\(^1\)Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, part of No. 246.

\(^2\)Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, No. 254.
another fragment of 1837\(^1\) the narrator is again, for no discernible purpose, debauched and drunken and a deserter from the army of the Revolutionists.

Branwell's clinging to the Angrian legend when he was too old for it without adding any touch of maturity to the childish game, and the patent disintegration of the moral fibre of the Angrians which he allowed are the visible signals of the collapse of his own manhood. Even in the juvenilia Branwell wrote himself into oblivion.

There are no true mature writings of Branwell which we can compare with the juvenilia in order to find a link between. But certain considerations are presented by a claim to collaboration in the writing of *Wuthering Heights*, which has been made for him, and in the high praise which has been awarded his translations of the first book of the *Odes* of Horace.

Benson\(^2\) presents convincing evidence that Branwell may have contributed the first two chapters of *Wuthering Heights*, a proposition borne out by "the stubborn external evidence" of the friends to whom Branwell bragged of a "book," and especially by "internal evidence, both as regards composition, verbal expression, and general texture, that *Wuthering Heights* is the work of two authors." Benson attributes the awkward plan of the book to Branwell's inauspicious beginning and his introduction of

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\(^1\)Brontë Parsonage Museum, Haworth, No. 244.

\(^2\)Benson, *op. cit.*, pp. 172 ff.
Lockwood. And he matches the pompous, heavy style of these chapters—a style found nowhere else in the book—with the style of Branwell’s Angrian compositions and his correspondence. Benson quotes such examples as the following—sentences culled from those first two chapters.

I had no desire to aggravate his impatience previous to inspecting the penetratium.

I detected a chatter of tongues and a clatter of culinary utensils.

Imagining they (the dogs) would scarcely understand tacit insults, I unfortunately indulged in winking and making faces at the trio, and some turn of my physiognomy so irritated madam . . . .

Swayed by prudential considerations of the folly of offending a good tenant, he (Heathcliff) relaxed a little in the laconic style of chipping off his pronouns and auxiliary verbs.

"Wretched inmates," I ejaculated mentally, "you deserve perpetual isolation from your species for your churlish inhospitality."

You are the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy.

A mingled guffaw from Heathcliff and Hareton put the cope-stone on my rage and humiliation.

I ordered the miscreants to let me out, with several incoherent threats of retaliation that in their indefinite depth of virulency smacked of King Lear.

Also probably Branwell's contribution to the book, says Benson, was the material for Zillah and Joseph—the "surly indigenae," as he called them—types whom he knew but Emily did not.

The evidence as presented is convincing and the point carries, although justice can hardly be done to the arguments here. The interesting conclusion which follows from the sug-
gestion, however, is the fact that—supposing Branwell to have been a collaborator on the book—the parts which can be assigned to him are the ones which are bungled, and the contributions which he made are a handicap imposed upon the excellence of the entire book. Again Branwell failed to score.

Branwell's translation of the first book of Horace's *Odes* has received the almost unqualified praise of John Drinkwater¹ who says of them that they "need at their best fear comparison with none." He points out that putting on one side the odes which fall short of the mark, there remain more than half "of which it may be said that they are excellent in themselves, and as good as any English versions that I know, including Conington's. In a few instances they are the best of all." The following is Branwell's translation of the twenty-first Ode.

**ODE XXI**

**TO APOLLO AND DIANA**

Virgins, sing the Virgin Huntress;
Youths, the youthful Phoebus, sing;
Sing Latona, she who bore them
Dearest to the eternal King:
Sing the heavenly maid who roves
Joyous, through the mountain groves;
She who winding waters loves;
Let her haunts her praises ring!

Sing the vale of Peneus' river;
    Sing the Delian deity;
The shoulder glorious with its quiver;
    And the Lyre of Mercury.
From our country, at our prayer--
Famine, plague, and tearful war
These, benign, shall drive afar
    To Persia's plains or Britain's sea.

These translations which Branwell did at the age of twenty-three are the only index we have to his potential stature, and in so far as that is true there is in their great promise more that is tragic than otherwise. They are the all but inarticulate expression of his boyhood verse brought to a conclusion somehow not quite adequate.
Comparable to the Angrian cycle on which Charlotte and Branwell collaborated is the Gondal legend whose play Emily and Anne shared. But the Gondal legend seems not to have become a written literature at once. It is not known that either Emily or Anne wrote anything before 1836, and the missing Gondal chronicles belong to the years 1841-1845. Thus what we have of Gondal literature is much later in date than Angrian literature and it is by comparison exceedingly fragmentary.

If Charlotte destroyed Emily's manuscripts, or if Emily destroyed them herself, we may naturally suppose ourselves poorer for the loss, for it is possible that through them we might have more insight into the meaning of Emily's mature genius. But as it is, our ignorance of the Gondal legend is enormous, and Wilson¹ points out that "without the Gondal literature which has been destroyed, it is a waste of time to attempt to reconstruct the Gondal dream-drama, a ten years' dream of two people..." Other considerations make it equally meaningless even to desire such a reconstruction. For, as Wilson states,² there was not only the Gondal game as played with Anne, but

²Ibid.
there were also Emily's private Gondal dreams, which were undoubtedly a totally different thing. "We should... probably find," he says, "that King Julius conquered and lost Elbe on the same occasion, ... that he attained his happiness and did not attain it in love, and a thousand other contradictions. Episodes like Douglas's Ride and Glendenin's Dream would probably remain in mid-air." Besides, Emily's Gondal dream was somehow more authentic than Angria ever was. Emily was not writing mere tales in the spirit of semi-practicality and self-aggrandizement in which Charlotte and Branwell wrote. She wrote because there was truth in her heart that would not be hid; in her private dream she transcended actuality and falsehood and wrote the supreme truth of her soul and the universe.

Therefore, since there was this ambiguity, and complexity, and elemental authenticity in Emily's Gondal legend, we cannot—we never could—have any clue to the meaning of it except in so far as we understand Emily's great spirit. Like Wuthering Heights, it is Emily and Emily is it.

There is another consideration which vitiates any attempt to discuss the Gondal dream as an instance of Bronte juvenilia, and that is that—so far as we know it—it is scarcely juvenile at all, and the chances are very good that it never was. Whatever Emily wrote she set down in utmost seriousness; and however far earlier pieces—supposing them to have existed—fell short of maturity, they would nevertheless have the full dignity and sincerity of maturity in Emily's eyes. This state-
ment would not be true of Charlotte or Branwell; in them the child's play is perfectly apparent when they are past twenty. Moreover, the Gondal legend, unlike the Angrian, does not start and then stop. It is continuous and progressive—literally without a beginning and without an end. All her life it was by turns Emily's soul and a veil for it. It is the back-drop of her poetry, and—matured and sublimated—it is darkly present in Wuthering Heights.

This is the point which Virginia Moorel makes when she says:

Both [i.e. the Gondal cycle and Wuthering Heights] had passion, betrayal, exile and revenge for themes—even as Emily's life. In that sense the Gondal cycle was the mighty and indispensable precursor. No doubt if we possessed it in its entirety, instead of a few poetic fragments, we would find in it all the movements and spiritual implications of Wuthering Heights, though none of that novel's particularities. Gondaland was a dark country, Heathcliff's Yorkshire still darker; for Emily habitually drew breath in a tragic region.

Wilson presents the same point of view. He says:

Passion, betrayal, subjection, revenge and usurpation are the main themes in Wuthering Heights. I assert that they were the main themes of Emily's lost Gondal writings, wild inhuman passion, revenge and usurpation, revenge against more or less innocent persons.

In another part of the same passage he is still clearer:

Between the facts of Emily's real life and the story of Wuthering Heights the [Gondal] dream lies. Since it is a real dream, unhindered by possibilities and probabilities,

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2Wilson, op. cit., pp. 155 ff.
all the facts are magnified to the utmost limits of the imagination. The prince figures in the dream as a real prince, armies instead of machinations of one mind support him in his war of usurpation. . . . In a cold, wild northern place a prince suffers the utmost agony that a soul can undergo. On the whole his name appears to be King Julius. Very probably he is also Douglas, perhaps he had other names. Sometimes he appears as a "mournful boy" who becomes in time a "mournful man," and "iron man." . . . . He finally appears as Heathcliff. . . . bearing all the marks of a character that has long been in the world.

In a continuation of the passage Wilson gives a specific instance of this point:

The passions in Wuthering Heights had growled for years. One fine outburst there was as early as 1838, a fine Gondal thunderbolt of passion almost as bright and flaming as Heathcliff's and Catherine's rage of passion just before she died.

This poem, Light up thy halls, contains not only Heathcliff's fury against Catherine for betraying him and herself, but also the curses which he and she shouted at one another in their agony.

"Oh! could I know thy soul with equal grief was torn, This fate might be endured, this anguish might be borne."
It contains the haunting of Heathcliff by Catherine after her death.

"Thine eyes are turned away--those eyes I would not see: Their dark, their deadly ray, would more than madden me."
The last lines of this poem foreshadow the last words uttered by Heathcliff in this world, when he had prepared his vengeance and was ready to demolish the world he had won.

"Unconquered in my soul the Tyrant rules me still; Life bows to my control, but Love I cannot kill!"

I quote these paragraphs from Emily's biographers because they have said so well and with such finality what needs to be said here in order to give completion to our view of Bronte juvenilia. So far as Emily is concerned, then, this is the importance of the Gondal legend: that it began in childhood as childhood's lavish dream; that it soon deepened and matured and
became a literary world of stability and permanence which coincided completely with the emotional experience of her own existence; and that--so far as it exists at all--it exists inseparably and indistinguishably from her poems and from her novel. Its influence upon them is that it flowed into them and made them what they were.
Regarding Anne Brontë, within the compass of this thesis there is little to say. Her part in the Gondal cycle is as incomprehensible as Emily's because of the little we have of it; and the importance of her Gondal writings with reference to her other poetry and novels is very small indeed. For Anne made no link between her Gondal poetry and her other poetry, or between it and her novels. Gondaland was for playtime, or—in adulthood—it was something she and Emily had in common, or it was a non-committal allegory into which it was fun to escape sometimes.

The only poetry of Anne's which is of any significance at all, or has any power, is her religious poetry, which is without a shred of contact with the Gondal poems. In such a fine poem as the following Anne forgot the Gondals, and Branwell, and governesses, and wrote the full truth and knowledge of her own heart.

A PRAYER
(Included in the Baptist 'Hymnal')

My God (oh, let me call Thee mine, 
Weak, wretched sinner though I be),
My trembling soul would fain be Thine;
My feeble faith still clings to Thee.

Not only for the past I grieve,
The future fills me with dismay;
Unless Thou hasten to relieve,
Thy suppliant is a castaway.

I cannot say my faith is strong,
I dare not hope my love is great;
But strength and love to Thee belong:
Oh, do not leave me desolate!
I know I owe my all to Thee;
Oh, take the heart I cannot give;
Do Thou my Strength, my Saviour be,
And make me to Thy glory live!

The detachment of the Gondal legend from Anne's other writings is natural to expect when we reflect that Anne wrote—for the most part—in a very perfunctory sort of way. Charlotte says that Anne stuck doggedly to her task of writing The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, although the book held no interest for her. Her manner leaves little doubt but that she wrote because her sisters and brother wrote and because it was not too difficult a thing to do. For although she seems to have hated writing, she nevertheless wrote with some facility, and the literary bug is catching. As a matter of fact, Anne's first novel Agnes Grey is in very many respects parallel to Charlotte's first novel The Professor. Grayer than The Professor in tone, it nevertheless takes a parallel course; Anne should have called it The Governess.

In view of her somewhat perfunctory attitude, then, it is not surprising that for Anne the Gondal world should have remained a world to itself and not have assumed the fluid, all-pervading quality of Emily's dream world. It was not authentic and was therefore static and confined and sterile. It is a little odd that she maintained her interest in it so long, it being what it was; we remember that Charlotte cut herself off from her Angria when she saw that she had exhausted its possibilities—for it too was lacking in any fundamental recreative
truth. Anne, except for her inspired religious poetry, continued to move among only static areas of thought: there was the Gondal dream, and there was biography and autobiography disguised as fiction, and there was photography. Such a statement is not intended as merely negative criticism, for *Agnes Grey* is interesting photography, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is entertaining. But we easily perceive in such a statement the rather sharply defined limits of not only her talent but her intention; and understanding that, we comprehend the separate and niche-like nature of the position the Gondal writings occupy in her literary career.
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1Although Miss Ratchford's book was not published until after this thesis was finished and I did not have the advantage of her very excellent research, I have read it with a great deal of interest.
Name of candidate: 

Thelma Lucille Cooley

Oral examination:

Date: May 15, 1942

Committee:

Professor Jordan, Chairman

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Thesis title:

The Importance, Influence, and Contiguity of Prunus Jurisdiction in Reference to the Mature Vines

Thesis approved in final form:

Date: March 1, 1942

Major Professor: John S. Narviss

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