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Appearing Before the Public: Charlotte Brontë and the Author Portrait in the 1830s.

Abstract

This essay reassesses Charlotte Brontë's attitude to the public visibility of the author by looking at her early art work and writings. The focus is on two pencil drawings she made of characters from the juvenilia: Alexander Soult, a poet, and one of Branwell's pseudonyms, and Zenobia Marchioness Ellrington, known as 'the Madame De Staël of Verdopolis'. The essay situates Charlotte's visual and verbal portraits of Soult and Zenobia within a broader culture of the author portrait in the literary albums and magazines of the 1830s. It identifies, for the first time, her sources for the image of Zenobia, and links her fantasy author portraits to Branwell's 'Pillar' portrait.

Key words: authorship; juvenilia; portraits; visual arts; Zenobia.

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Charlotte Brontë's desire to 'walk invisible' amongst her public has been generally accepted as fundamental to her self-conception as an author and to her legacy as a model of female authorship.¹ Her elaborate strategies for maintaining her pseudonymous identity, her reluctance to meet her publishers in person and, still more, to be lionised in London drawing rooms, are well-known.² She sat to George Richmond in 1850, but neither this portrait, nor any other visual image of her was published in her lifetime. Yet, there are grounds for thinking that her attitude to public visibility was always ambivalent and that she sympathised to a much greater degree than has been acknowledged with her audience's desire to see the face of the author. Her letters from the 1850s show that she liked, herself, to scrutinise portraits of authors and to offer acerbic phrenological readings of their features.³ By posing as the pseudonymous editor of *Jane Eyre*, an 'Autobiography' which makes constant reference to physiognomy, phrenology and portraiture, she had also, effectively, issued an invitation to her own readers to speculate, not just about who the author was, but what she looked like. To what extent this was inadvertent in *Jane Eyre* is debatable. However there is evidence in Charlotte Brontë's early art work and writing, of a deep-rooted, but hitherto unrecognised, interest in authorial visibility.

My focus in this essay is on a little-known group of portrait sketches Charlotte made as a teenager, all dated 15 October 1833. These small but highly detailed pencil drawings are of three Glass Town characters: Arthur, Marquis of Douro, a poet; Alexander Soult, another poet, and one of Branwell's pseudonyms (fig. 1); and Zenobia Marchioness Ellrington, a classical scholar known as 'the Madame De Staël of Verdopolis' (fig. 2).⁴ Douro is presented in military dress in imitation of images of the Duke of Wellington. However, Soult and Zenobia are clearly depicted in their role as authors, in ways that are traceable to their context within a broader, contemporary culture of the author portrait, familiar to the Brontë children. In what follows I want to look first at this culture and then, in more detail, at the iconography and sources of the portraits of Soult and Zenobia, in order to reassess Charlotte's thinking on authorship and public visibility. As I will suggest in my conclusion, the sketches also provide a new context within which to understand Branwell's painting of his sisters – the so-called 'Pillar' portrait.

The Author Portrait in Early Nineteenth-Century Print Culture

There was, of course, a long and rich tradition before the nineteenth century of portraits of literary men and women, visualising their genius, inspiration and fame, and, in some cases, the activity of writing itself.⁵ But the phenomenon of the author portrait that I describe is historically specific: a product of the industrialisation of publishing and the emergence of the professionalised author from the 1830s.⁶ From the later eighteenth century portraits had been increasingly available to view. This was partly a result of the growing culture of public galleries and exhibitions, but the major means of public access to portraiture was through the reproduction and circulation of engraved portrait images in print media.⁷ The expansion of publishing in the 1820s and 30s, combined with technological developments such as steel plate engraving, made these portrait images more widely available in a variety of contexts, including as frontis pieces, in literary albums, and in the periodical press. In an increasingly crowded and competitive literary marketplace, public visibility became an essential survival strategy for writers, not merely as a means to accrue status, but, to be recognised, differentiated from others, and identified as the origin and owner of their work. The battles over copyright that were so integral a part of the Victorian professionalization of authorship, were waged, in part, through author portraits, most obviously in the form of frontis pieces, claiming intellectual property.⁸ Print 'galleries' of literary portraits also flourished, including the 'Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters' which ran in *Fraser's Magazine* from 1830-38, with specially-commissioned portraits of living male and female authors by Daniel

Maclise, each accompanied with a jocular, one-page biographical commentary.⁹ It was a literary marketplace in which authors and their audiences engaged in a new fantasy of physical proximity, even as they became, in practice, more distant from each other than ever before. Andrew Elfenbein and Tom Mole have written of the public's relationship with Byron in terms of 'a simulacrum' or 'hermeneutic' of 'intimacy', and Eric Eisner, citing such phenomena as stalking of authors, literary tourism and literary lionism, has argued that '[n]ineteenth-century writers and readers...found themselves paradoxically growing closer, disturbingly present to one another physically as well as psychologically', as the reader-writer relationship became characterised by a 'poetics of presence.... an impossible intimacy'.¹⁰ Victorian authors and publishers increasingly saw portraiture as a necessary means of creating these illusions of intimacy between writers and their audiences.¹¹

For an aspiring female writer such as Charlotte Brontë, in the 1830s, the author portrait offered some obvious dangers. As Judith Fisher has shown in relation to the *Fraser's* 'Gallery', both men and women suffered from assumptions relating to the gendering of the writer's body.¹² But these collections of portraits displayed the particular disadvantages of public visibility for the female author in furthering the attitude of the literary reviews that a woman's writing originated in and was identical with her body. The underlying expectation was that beauty would accompany female genius. Thus an engraved portrait of Madame De Staël in *Finden's Illustrations of the Life and Works of Lord Byron* (1834) was followed by quotations from Byron's letters in which he praised her as a supreme 'authoress' but coupled this with a more ambiguous inventory of her physical charms:

Her figure was not bad, her legs tolerable; her arms good. Altogether, I can conceive her having been a desirable woman, allowing a little imagination for her soul, and so forth. She would have made a great man.¹³

In *Fraser's* 'Gallery', too, female writers could be reduced to their appearance. Referring to Maclise's portrait of a smiling, fashionably-dressed Letitia Landon, William Maginn's essay dropped hints about her sexual availability, praised her feminine, 'unbluestockingish' looks, and remarked that women who choose 'unfeminine' subjects such as 'politics, or political economy, or pugilism, or punch... should immediately hoist a mustache'.¹⁴ Yet, despite such comments, author portraits offered aspiring female writers fame, status and a closer connection to the public. Collections of portraits were also important in providing a variety of models of authorship to choose from, variously positioned in relation to the emerging movement towards professionalization. Engraved portraits of Byron or Madame De Staël, in

publications such as Moore's *Life and Letters of Lord Byron* (1830) or Finden's *Illustrations*, depicted seductive, patrician images of writers of the previous generation. Alternatively, as Linda Peterson has argued, *Fraser's* 'Gallery' displayed portraits in which signs of a new breed of professional men and women of letters mingled with more familiar iconographies of pre-professional and domestic authorship, representing multiple potential models, in which the relationships between gender and the authorial body were by no means homogenous or stable.¹⁵ In this respect the *Fraser's* 'Gallery' was representative of the broader culture of the author portrait in the 1830s, which presented the public - and aspiring writers amongst them - with a complex visual pattern book of authorship, suggesting the possibility of authorial self-fashioning for both male and female writers.

Charlotte Brontë's Portraits of Alexander Soult and Zenobia Marchioness Ellrington

The sketches of Soult and Zenobia, of 15 October 1833, belong to this emergent culture of the author portrait. As Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars have shown, despite the Brontë children's contacts with the art world, they had few opportunities to see exhibitions and found their primary visual influences in print sources.¹⁶ Most of Charlotte's portrait sketches, including the two under discussion, consisted of minutely detailed copies and adaptations of contemporary engravings, taken from the illustrated literary albums: publications such as Finden's *Illustrations of Lord Byron*, *The Souvenir* and *The Keepsake*.¹⁷ Although the family subscribed to *Fraser's Magazine* from 1832, Charlotte's surviving art work shows no such close copying from Maclise's portraits. However, Carol Bock has argued convincingly that the young Brontës, as aspiring authors, followed the advice offered by *Fraser's* in putting themselves forward in the literary marketplace, and it seems likely that the 'Gallery' would have interested Charlotte, given the awareness she shows in her writing from the late 1820s onwards, of shifting models of authorship, especially the move from Byronic to professionalised conceptions of the poet.¹⁸ Visually, she was clearly, at this stage, more attracted to the images of aristocratic 'beauties', including Byron and his circle than she was to the more socially diverse and mundanely-attired figures depicted by Maclise. The grounds of her attraction to the illustrated, literary albums are made clear in one of her stories: 'A Peep into a Picture Book' (1834). Here she writes as Charles Wellesley who describes poring over *Tree's Portrait Gallery of the Aristocracy of Africa* (*EEW* 2. II: 85), a publication which includes Byronic images of Northangerland and Zamorna (Douro) and a portrait of Zenobia posed to resemble Madame De Staël.¹⁹ The experience of looking at these portraits is

represented as one of enchantment and seductive intimacy between the viewer and the sitter, as Wellesley, tempted by the ‘green watered-silk quarto covers and gilt backs’ of the volumes, lifts the tissue paper and feels ‘the pleasure of hanging over forms that speak without sound, of gazing into motionless eyes that search your very heart’ (85-6). Such descriptions display Charlotte’s sympathy with the consumer’s desire for an eroticised, visual connection with aristocratic celebrities, and her appreciation of the power over the readership exerted by visualised literary celebrity. Her three drawings of Douro, Soult and Zenobia, completed a few months before this, were not bound into the tiny manuscript magazines in which her stories appeared, but they may be regarded, nevertheless, as illustrations, closely related to the Glass Town narratives and forming a gallery of portraits akin to the one described in ‘A Peep’.²⁰

Portrait of Alexander Soult

As Christine Alexander has established, Charlotte Brontë’s portrait sketch of Alexander Soult was copied from an image of Byron, in an engraving of Richard Westall’s ‘Childe Harold and Ianthe’ published in *The Literary Souvenir* (1830) (fig. 3).²¹ In adapting the image, Charlotte made some significant changes. She removed Byron from the picturesque landscape setting of the engraving and placed him at a table with his hand resting on a book, under which is a manuscript. An ink well and quill are depicted next to his elbow. Byron’s authorised portraits never included these signs of the writer’s profession, although unauthorised portraits began to do so in the early Victorian period.²² By adding them, Charlotte constructed Soult’s identity as a conflation of noble, Romantic genius and modern, professional author. This hybrid identity reflects the depiction of Soult (also known as Henry Rhymer) in the Glass Town narratives, in which he strives to define his role as a poet in a changing literary world. Captain Tree, a writer and publisher, and one of Charlotte’s narrative personae, articulates these changes. Although Tree believes in literature as a ‘noble profession’ for the chosen few, he reluctantly predicts a future democratisation of authorship when ‘these eyes will see, through the mists of age, every child that walks along the streets, bearing its manuscripts in its hand, going to the printers for publication’ (*EEW* 1: 193).²³ The humble Soult persists, anachronistically, in honing a Byronic image for himself and trying to find aristocratic patrons - efforts which are met with sympathy, but also ridicule from the narrators. While he is still struggling to establish himself, he features in Tree’s ‘Characters of the Celebrated Men

of the Present Time' (1829), where he is described as a ragged parody of Byronic genius, with a 'large and expressive' eye and a wild and haggard demeanour, his dark hair frizzy as if 'he had lately come out of a furze bush' (*EEW* 1: 127). As this suggests, Soult's status as an author is represented as closely dependent upon how he appears, both to his public and his patrons. In a manuscript from 1830, his delusion is that his personal beauty will be a passport to patronage - 'I am a good-looking young man. The fire of genius lights up my eye and my whole appearance will, I think, tend to interest them in my favour' (*EEW* 1: 182). In fact, he is despised as 'a little man, very thin and pale' by Douro's aristocratic household (*EEW* 1: 186). By the manuscripts of October - November 1833, Soult has fallen 'under the Marquis's surveillance' and has become a wealthy and 'glorious poet....From a crazy, disowned and houseless ballad singer, he is transmogrified into a handsome young chevalier' (*EEW* 2. I: 258). In being perceived by his patron as beautiful, Soult becomes so, and, by the same token, rises socially and becomes a successful author. Within this context, the sketch of Soult as Byron drawn by Charlotte in October 1833, marks his literary triumph. It is an author portrait: a public visualisation of the writer of the 1830s, hovering between a Byronic past and a professionalised future.

Soult's series of physical and social transmogrifications are typical of the constantly mutating world of Charlotte and Branwell's early writings, in which characters, names and motives as well as scenes and genres are in a perpetual state of dream-like metamorphosis, suggesting the instability and facticity of identity. But the composite nature of her portrait of Soult, and her narrative of his struggle to find a public image, are also in keeping with the wider sense of uncertainty, in the print culture of the 1830s, about the role of the author, and the diverse spectrum of authorial identities visualised in the illustrated literary albums and magazines of the period. Within this context, the visual and verbal portraits of Soult may be understood as part of the siblings' ongoing role-play with their own, individual and intertwined authorial identities – Charlotte occasionally even seems to have shared 'Soult', as a pseudonym.²⁴ Both her drawing of Soult and her narratives of his emergent literary career, express Charlotte's internalisation of the necessity for herself and Branwell, as indeed for any author, to engage in a continual process of visual self-fashioning in order to progress in the contemporary world of publishing.

Portrait of Zenobia Marchioness Ellrington

In Charlotte Brontë's portrait of 'Zenobia Marchioness of Ellrington', she adapts a different set of authorial identities, associated with the aristocratic, female public intellectual and, in conjunction with her stories, addresses some of the difficulties and opportunities of female authorship and public visibility in the 1830s. The pencil sketch shows Zenobia, unlike Sout or Douro, facing boldly forward, holding an unfurled scroll, her elbow resting on a classical column, with books in the background. The image alludes to Zenobia's reputation in Charlotte's Glass Town narratives as a woman of classical learning in the mould of Madame De Staël (*EEW* I: 293), a dashing bluestocking who proudly displays her erudition and herself in public. But Charlotte's drawing does not resemble any of the published engravings of De Staël, at least one of which she certainly saw.²⁵ Christine Alexander postulates that it is based on portraits of Lady Blessington, but no portrait of her has been identified that either pre-dates or closely resembles the Zenobia sketch.²⁶ In fact, I would argue, the portrait adapts two engravings, neither of which is of an author. The head and hat appear to be modelled on Charles Heath's line engraving of Thomas Lawrence's portrait of Lady Julia Peel, published as the frontis piece to *The Keepsake* (1829) (fig. 4).²⁷ From the neck down, the Zenobia sketch is certainly adapted from Charles Rolls's engraving of G. H. Harlowe's painting of 'Mrs Siddons in the Character of Lady Macbeth', published in *The Literary Souvenir* (1830) (fig. 5). Charlotte has closely copied Siddons's necklace, dark bodice, with a white under garment, the drapery across both shoulders and the pose with the left arm across the body holding a letter (which becomes a scroll), and the right arm by the side.

These sources give further insight into Charlotte Brontë's techniques of copying and adaptation from contemporary magazine engravings to form her portraits through a series of composite identities. The particular identities she borrowed here, from the portraits of Lady Peel and Mrs Siddons, also give a new slant to her representation of Zenobia as an author in the stories. There she is seen exclusively through the eyes of male narrators who both admire her for her dark, aristocratic beauty and her intellectual powers and continually ridicule and criticise her in terms that imitate the satirical representations of women writers in contemporary magazine culture. Her appearance is used by her male peers as a means to circumscribe her achievement - Douro, for instance, describes her eyes as 'not so darkly or beautifully blue as her stockings' (*EEW* I: 300) and Charles Wellesley, comments on her portrait 'A mere blue ought not to be so handsome' (*EEW* 2. II: 88). There is also a wariness of her underlying imaginative energy in the association of her dark beauty with racial

otherness and ‘maniacal’ tendencies that sometimes erupt in bouts of physical violence (*EEW* I: 343). Her writing is jokily disassociated from the unfeminine activity of ‘pugilism’, as Laetitia Landon’s had been, by Maginn, in the *Fraser’s* ‘Gallery’.²⁸ Charlotte’s choice of sources for her pencil sketch of Zenobia show her adapting images of female aristocratic beauty, nobility and power to create a less vulnerable public persona.

Charlotte Brontë’s early art work is dominated by portraits based on the engravings of real and imaginary aristocratic female beauties which filled the albums in the 1820s and 30s. The engraving of Lawrence’s portrait of Lady Peel was a superior, and much praised, example of this genre, from an original painting commissioned by Robert Peel, and said to be based on another picture in his collection: Reubens’s portrait of Susanna Fourment, known as the ‘Chapeau de paille’. It was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1827 where it was described as one of the ‘highest achievements of modern art’.²⁹ Charlotte’s use of this source, is therefore fully appropriate to Zenobia’s social status. The image is consistent with and may even have inspired the descriptions of her character’s statuesque, aristocratic beauty, and details of her dress, such as her velvet gown, ostrich feather plumes and large gold bracelets (replaced by a frilly cuff in the drawing). One of Charlotte’s characters in a story of 1839 comments that Lawrence is ‘a flattering villain’, but neither her portrait of Zenobia nor her other art work at this period show that she objected to flattered portraits.³⁰ The portrait of Lady Peel is an image of social power, as, in a very different way, is Charlotte’s second source, the engraving of Mrs Siddons as Lady Macbeth.³¹ The scene depicted here also displays aristocratic beauty but his time in the form of an emasculating and violent female ambition, appropriate to Zenobia’s story and to her ‘masculine soul in a feminine casket’.³² However, the evidence suggests that Charlotte’s interest in using this engraving derived at least as much from its depiction of Mrs Siddons’ performance of Lady Macbeth, as from the character herself. In the Glass Town story written on 6th October, nine days before Charlotte drew her three portraits, Zenobia attends a theatrical production of ‘Petus and Aria’, to see Mrs Siddons playing the tragic heroine, ‘a strapping virago’ (*EEW* 2. I: 236), who stabs herself and then offers the knife to her husband (*EEW* 2. I: 237-9). Zenobia’s murderous responses to her own, tragic disappointments in love underline the association between herself and Siddons’s roles, but, more significantly, so does the theatrical display she creates in her public appearances – for instance as Wellesley sees her at a party, framed by ‘a lofty arched portal’ and ‘crimson silk curtains...gathered into large festoons’ (*EEW* 2. I: 253). As Judith Pascoe has argued, Siddons, especially in her most famous role as Lady Macbeth,

offered women writers, from the 1790s, a model of performative identity that was in many ways enabling to their negotiation of public and private life. In Siddons' wake, authors such as Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, Madame De Staël and Letitia Landon, fashioned public personae from 'a dramatic version' of their private selves, becoming 'the English Sappho', 'the sorrowful Charlotte', 'Corinne' and the 'Improvisatrice'.³³ These personae were enhanced in all these cases by portraits in public circulation. Charlotte Brontë's stories expose Zenobia's disempowerment as a consequence of being subjected to the male gaze, but her portrait, with its theatrical costume, pose and its multi-layered, composite personae (Lady Peel, Siddons, Lady Macbeth, De Staël and Corinne are all present in the picture), manifests Brontë's belief in the possibility for the female author of a strategic self-dramatisation through the adaptation of available visual models.³⁴

The 'Pillar' Portrait (c.1834)

Through her portraits and descriptions of Soult and Zenobia Charlotte Brontë modelled, commented on and inhabited different kinds of publicly visible authorship. Although it has not usually been seen in this light, Branwell's now famous painting of himself and his three sisters is also a group author portrait. Before Branwell's image was obscured by a column, the portrait showed the four siblings standing around a table with books resting on it.³⁵ Charlotte's hand, the only one visible, appears to touch one of these books, indicating, perhaps, literary ambition, although this is still very much an image of collaborative authorship. Jane Sellars has recently argued that the composition was influenced by Reynolds's 'The Ladies of Waldegrove' (1780) and by the social ambitions that underlie George Romney's 'The Leigh Family' (1768). Branwell's intention was to present his own and his family's social and intellectual aspirations:

...with his choice of poses, the dramatic dark background, the matching costumes, the book on the table, the serious expressions, Branwell aims to convey the impression of a distinguished and learned family. This is the role he has chosen for the Brontë family. It signifies his ambition not only for himself but also for his siblings, creating a formal visual extension of the roles they played out in childhood.³⁶

I would agree with this analysis of the painting's functions, but would also suggest that Charlotte's interest in author portraits in the period between late 1833-1834, the time when Branwell is conjectured to have painted his group, is another context, especially in view of her close collaboration with Branwell at this phase of their lives.³⁷ As well as being a practice piece in preparation for his career as a portraitist, the 'Pillar' portrait was Branwell's

experiment in the visual representation of authorship, just as Charlotte's pictures of Soult and Zenobia were hers, although in a markedly different style. Where her small, unassuming pencil sketches were fantasy portraits, his large oil was painted from life, presenting the actual faces of four budding authors to the world. Both, however, belong to the siblings' creation, in their early manuscripts and art work, of an imaginative universe that was a semi-playful imitation of the material and commercial forms of literary and visual culture as they existed in the world beyond Haworth.³⁸ Branwell's Pillar portrait and Charlotte's sketches of Soult and Zenobia should both be understood in this context as private experiments in public self-presentation, fantasies of visible authorship, preparing the way for future literary careers.

Figure 1. Alexander Soult, by Charlotte Brontë (October 15th 1833). Unknown location, owner unknown, reproduced here courtesy of The Brontë Society. Every endeavour has been made to contact the owner for reproduction.

Figure 2. Zenobia Marchioness Ellington, by Charlotte Brontë (October 15th 1833). © The Brontë Society.

Figure 3. Childe Harold and Ianthe, by Richard Westall engraved by E. Portbury, *The Literary Souvenir* (1830)

Figure 4. Lady Julia Peel, by Thomas Lawrence, engraved by Charles Heath, frontispiece to *The Keepsake* (1829)

Figure 5. Mrs Siddons in the Character of Lady Macbeth', by G. H. Harlowe, engraved by Charles Rolls, frontispiece to *The Literary Souvenir* (1830)

¹ To W. S. Williams (4 Jan, 1848), in Margaret Smith (ed.), *The Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995-2004), vol. 2, pp. 3-4. Hereafter abbreviated to *Letters*. See e.g. Sally Shuttleworth, *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 107, for the argument that her 'female characters' fears of self-exposure, which indeed increase as Brontë's fame grows and her career progresses, express her concerns that writing, as a form of outward self-articulation, becomes hence a de-sexing public activity, a thrusting aside of the veils which should conceal the inner secrets of femininity'. In Shuttleworth's view, for Charlotte Brontë as an author, as well as for her characters, power resides in being able to scrutinise others' faces whilst acquiring 'an impervious external demeanour' (36), reading 'the inner state of

the other' (125) whilst resisting the interpretative gaze. See also Sharon Marcus, 'The Profession of the Author: Abstraction, Advertising, and *Jane Eyre*', *PMLA*, 10: 2 (March 1995), pp. 206-19, for another influential account of Charlotte Brontë's self-conception as a female author in terms of her resistance to the public gaze, this time within the context of a model of professional authorship that exploited the 'abstraction' of the early Victorian literary market: 'The name Currer Bell enabled Brontë to materialize her professional self in abstract form, to put herself forward while simultaneously receding from view, a paradoxical strategy of self-promotion through self-effacement' (215).

² See Juliet Barker, *The Brontës* (1994; London: Phoenix Press, 2001), pp. 479-80, 487-88 and 675-6.

³ See e.g. her comments on the portraits of R. H. Horne 'with his imaginative forehead and somewhat foolish looking mouth and chin – indicating mixed character' (to Williams, 9 November 1850, *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 502); or on Henry Fielding 'in the cynical prominence of the under-jaw, one read the man. It was the stamp of one who would never see his neighbours (especially his women neighbours) as they *are* – but as they *might* be under the worst circumstances' (to George Smith, 11 March 1852; *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 27); or on Thackeray: 'To me the ...broad brow seems to express intellect; certain lines about the nose and cheek betray the satirist and the cynic; the mouth indicates a childlike simplicity, perhaps a degree of irresoluteness, inconsistency – weakness – in short; but a weakness not unamiable' (to George Smith, 26 Feb. 1853; *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 128).

⁴ See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 18-19 and 216-219. The portraits are all pencil on paper. The portrait of Douro measures 99 x 80mm; of Soult, 100 x 85mm; and of Zenobia 90 x 79mm. The first two are privately owned. The portrait of Zenobia was purchased by the Brontë Parsonage Museum in 2009. Christine Alexander (ed.), *An Edition of the Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë*, vol. 2, part II (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983-), p. 89. Hereafter abbreviated to *EEW*.

⁵ See e.g. David Piper, *The Image of the Poet: British Poets and their Portraits* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982); Shearer West, *Portraiture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 87-91.

⁶ For the rise of the professional author in the 1830s, see e.g. Lee Erickson, *The Economy of Literary Form: English Literature and the Industrialization of Publishing, 1800-1850* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and Linda H. Peterson, *Becoming a Woman of Letters. Myths of Authorship and Facts of the Victorian Market* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁷ For the expansion of galleries, see Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head. Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2000).

⁸ For copyright controversies see e.g. Catherine Seville, *Literary Copyright Reform in Early Victorian England: The Framing of the 1842 Copyright Act* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Clare Pettitt, *Patent Inventions: Intellectual Property and the Victorian Novel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁹ [William Maginn, illustrations by Daniel Maclise, pseud 'Alfred Croquis'], 'Gallery of Illustrious Literary Characters', *Fraser's Magazine*, 1: 5 (June 1830) to 17:100 (April 1838). For further examples of the prolific genre of nineteenth-century print portrait galleries, see David Higgins, *Romantic Genius and the Literary Magazine: Biography, Celebrity and Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 163; and Alison Booth, *How to Make it as a Woman: Collective Biographical History from Victoria to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.53; Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity. Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2007); Eric Eisner, *Nineteenth-Century Poetry and Literary Celebrity* (London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2009), pp.3, 13.

¹¹ In the wake of Byron, Dickens is the pre-eminent example of a Victorian author who cemented his illusion of friendship with a mass audience through the dissemination of his image – see Gerard Curtis, *Visual Words. Art and the Material Book in Victorian England* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 103-202. For a sardonic, contemporary response to literary lionism, including the rage for amateur and professional portraits of the 'lions', see [Harriet Martineau], 'Heads of the People', *The London and Westminster Review*, 32:2 (April 1839), 261-81.

¹² Judith L. Fisher, "'In the Present Famine of Anything Substantial": *Fraser's* "Portraits" and the Construction of Literary Celebrity; or, "Personality, Personality Is the Appetite of the Age"', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 39:2 (2006), 97-135.

¹³ In William Brockendon, [Edward Finden and William Finden], *Finden's Illustrations of The Life and Works of Lord Byron*, vol. 3 (London: John Murray, 1834), n.p. [article on 'La Baronne De Staël Holstein']. Byron's note to Childe Harold after De Staël's death is also quoted and here he posthumously allows that De Staël suffered in her lifetime from flattery and envy, for 'the impartial portrait was hardly to be expected from a contemporary'. Now she is dead, the author can be separated from her body: 'Corinne has ceased to be a woman – she is only an author' (n.p.).

¹⁴ [William Maginn], 'Miss Landon', 'Gallery of Literary Characters', No. XLI I, *Fraser's Magazine*, 8:46 (November 1833), p. 433. Maginn also linked what he saw as Harriet Martineau's off-puttingly masculine appearance to the Malthusian doctrine of no-population promulgated in her work: [William Maginn], 'Miss Harriet Martineau', 'Gallery of Literary Characters', No. XLI, *Fraser's Magazine*, 8:47 (October 1833), p. 576.

¹⁵ Peterson, p. 14 and see pp. 14-32.

¹⁶ Christine Alexander and Jane Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*.

¹⁷ Sources identified by Alexander and Sellars come from *Friendship's Offering* (1829), *The Literary Souvenir* (1830), the *Forget-me-Not Annual* (1831), *Heath's Book of Beauty*, (1833 and 1834), and Finden's illustrations of Byron's life and works, probably from his *Illustrations of the Life and Works of Lord Byron*, 3 vols (1833-4). For a discussion of the difficulty of pinpointing the source of the Finden engravings seen by the Brontës see p. 236.

¹⁸ Carol A. Bock, 'Authorship, the Brontës, and *Fraser's Magazine*: "Coming Forward" as an Author in Early Victorian England', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 29:2 (2001), 241-66. For a discussion of Charlotte Brontë's interest in these different models of authorship, see below. See also note 28 for a possible echo of Maginn's commentary on Laetitia Landon from the *Fraser's* 'Gallery'.

¹⁹ *The Literary Souvenir* and *Heath's Book of Beauty* were probable models for this imaginary album, but Charlotte Brontë names Edward Finden as the engraver. Of Finden's many publications, the one she may have had in mind was his *Illustrations of the Life and Works of Lord Byron* (1833-4), which contained engravings of Byron and his literary and aristocratic contemporaries. Wellesley's descriptions of the portraits of Northangerland and Zamorna (Douro) in the story, allude to visual and verbal portraits of Byron, and his commentary on Zenobia's portrait describes her wearing a turban, as De Staël does in Finden's engraving. On the other hand, the turban may simply allude to Corinne. Finden's *Illustrations* vol. 3 was reviewed in *The Literary Gazette*, no. 897 (29 March, 1834), 227. 'A Peep' was written on 16 June 1834.

²⁰ She occasionally included tiny portrait illustrations, within the magazines themselves. See e.g. 'Sketches of Glass Town Characters' (9 October 1829), see Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, catalogue no. 23. This includes a small head identified as 'Young Soult'.

²¹ See Alexander and Sellars, *The Art of the Brontës*, pp. 19 and 217-19.

²² An imaginary portrait in a Lithograph produced c. 1840 by J. Baillie, shows Byron entwined with his mistress, but writing at the same time with a quill pen. His manuscript and an ink well are on the table.

²³ Soult (here called Rhymer) attempts to gain the patronage of Captain Tree, who kicks him out lamenting the dishonouring of the profession of literature by the aspirations of the lowly hoards (*EEW* 1: 192-3)

²⁴ She also sometimes simply signed work 'U. T.' [Us Two]. See Victor A. Newfeldt (ed.), *The Works of Patrick Branwell Brontë. An Edition*, 3 vols (New York: Garland, 1997-), vol. 1, pp. 33 and 36.

²⁵ The engraving of De Staël in *Finden's Illustrations of... Lord Byron* (1834), n.p. Here De Staël wears a turban. Zenobia is also described as wearing a turban (with a plume in it) in the stories at a point when she is being compared to De Staël (*EEW* 2.II: 88). Ostrich plumes are her usual head dress.

²⁶ Alexander and Sellars, pp. 18 and 216-17.

²⁷ There was also a mezzotint engraving done by Samuel Cousins dated 1832 (published by Moons, Boys and Graves) and much praised in the press – see *The Athenaeum*, (August 18, 1832), 541; and *The New Monthly Magazine*, 36: 142 (November 1832), 491.

²⁸ Wellesley comments on Zenobia's portrait that 'Her employment, however, as here represented, is of a higher order than pugilistic achievement' (*EEW* 2.II: 89). Compare [Maginn], 'Miss Landon', 433: 'Is she to write of politics, or political economy, or pugilism, or punch? Certainly not'.

²⁹ See Kenneth Garlick, *Sir Thomas Lawrence. A Complete Catalogue of the Oil Paintings* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1989), p. 26; and Michael Levey, *Sir Thomas Lawrence* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 1979), p. 21. The portrait was widely praised in the press – see e.g. *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 21: 79 (July 1827), 293; *The Athenaeum* (January 16, 1830), 25. See Mary Taylor's comment that, as a schoolgirl, Charlotte Brontë 'knew much about celebrated pictures and painters', quoted in Elizabeth Gaskell, *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, ed., Alan Shelston (1975; London: Penguin Classics, 1985), pp. 130-31.

³⁰ Heather Glen (ed.), *Charlotte Brontë, Tales of Angria* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), p. 255.

³¹ Whether or not that power is enhanced by Lady Peel's marriage to Sir Robert Peel is a moot point. The Brontës regarded Robert Peel as an opportunistic turncoat on the Irish question, and one of their fictional characters, Lord Pellham, based on Peel, is also shown to be deceitful and hollow. Zenobia is unhappily married, but we cannot draw any conclusions from this. Charlotte Brontë never writes in a simplistic *roman à clef* manner.

³² Quoted in Christine Alexander, *The Early Writings of Charlotte Brontë* [monograph] (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), p. 23. See also Christine Alexander's discussion of the gothic influences of the literary

Albums on Brontë's work: "'That Kingdom of Gloom': Charlotte Brontë, the Annuals, and the Gothic", *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 47: 4 (March 1993), 409-36.

³³ Judith Pascoe, *Romantic Theatricality: Gender, Poetry and Spectatorship* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 15, 2. Pascoe's final chapter rightly points to the less enabling aspects of Landon's self-dramatizing role.

³⁴ De Staël's character, Corinne, like Zenobia, is a statuesque beauty with jet black ringlets.

³⁵ Christopher Heywood, 'The Column in Branwell's "Pillar" Portrait Group', *Brontë Studies*, 34.1 (March, 2009), 1-19, argues that Charlotte was responsible for effacing her disgraced brother's image by painting the column over it in the summer of 1853 in anticipation of Elizabeth Gaskell's visit.

³⁶ Jane Sellars, 'Branwell Brontë's Family Portraits: Motives, Influences, and Legacy', *Brontë Studies*, 36:1 (January, 2011), 44-56 (p. 53).

³⁷ The dating of the 'Pillar' portrait is based partly on Gaskell, who was shown it by Charlotte Brontë on 19 September 1853 and described it as representing the 18 year-old Charlotte. See J. A. V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (eds), *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell* (Manchester: Mandolin, 1997), letter no. 167, p. 247.

³⁸ As is well-known, the miniscule magazines produced by Charlotte and Branwell were closely modelled on contemporary periodical publications, especially on *Blackwood's Magazine* and the literary Albums, down to title-and contents pages, indexes, parody advertisements, and prefaces addressing readers who were, in practice, limited to the Brontë siblings, but who also constituted an imaginary British 'public'.