DEADLY TOYS: MINI WORLDS AND WARS, 1815-1914

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation, “Deadly Toys: Mini Worlds and Wars, 1815-1914,” explores British literary representations of toy wars to argue that toy violence helps to illustrate adult-child power structures during the long nineteenth century. My first body chapter examines how the Brontë siblings play at war in their juvenile poetry, showing a precocious understanding of trauma. While the Brontë children fantasize about being all-powerful authors and characters in their paracosm, my next chapter argues that children’s literature authors Edith Nesbit and Lewis Carroll compulsively reestablish dominance over both children and their enviable playthings by creating toy worlds featuring children stymied by illogical rules and potential (if not actual) violence. My third body chapter distinguishes between war play and war games in works by H. G. Wells and Robert Louis Stevenson who criticize, and then promptly take over, children’s play. In my final chapter I look at how popular press maps of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—complete with cutout toy soldiers and flags—gamify real war, effectively abstracting and distancing the trauma of military conflict that the Brontë children were so aware of a century earlier and, in doing so, infantilizing adults.

DEDICATION

To my mother, father, and husband for their unwavering support and to my two cats for their persistent distractions.

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aware. It was there I first realized the focus of chapter one, and I fondly remember time spent at the Parsonage. I also want to thank Andrea Immel, the curator of the Cotsen Children's Library, for her help in finding fascinating texts about toy worlds, many of which were outside the scope of this project, but which I hope to return to.

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Contributors

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INTRODUCTION

For certain soldiers lately dead
Our reverent dirge shall here be said.
Them, when their martial leader called,
No dread preparative appalled;
But leaden-hearted, leaden-heeled,
I marked them steadfast in the field.
Death grimly sided with the foe,
And smote each leaden hero low.
Proudly they perished one by one:
The dread Pea-cannon's work was done!
O not for them the tears we shed,
Consigned to their congenial lead;
But while unmoved their sleep they take,
We mourn for their dear Captain's sake,
For their dear Captain, who shall smart
Both in his pocket and his heart,
Who saw his heroes shed their gore,
And lacked a shilling to buy more!

In Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Martial Elegy for Some Lead Soldiers," the adult narrator playfully laments the price the child must pay for toy deaths, both literally (in terms of money) and figuratively (in terms of "his heart"). Tongue-in-cheek, the poem is illustrative of this dissertation's larger theme: child-adult power structures play out in toy wars. Published alongside a longer narrative, "Stevenson at Play" (1898), which details a war game between Stevenson and his stepson Lloyd Osbourne, this poem takes on new meaning: the "foe" that "smote each leaden hero low" is Stevenson himself. This is a poem about adult prowess on the battlefield, to the detriment of the child who is forced to replace the broken soldiers with his own money—money that he can only gain through engaging with the adult world. The poem

positions the adult in a position of power that in turn reflects his ability to control both the game and the child.

Although Stevenson's poem is titled "A Martial Elegy for Some Lead Soldiers," this is really a poem about an adult observer/co-player and a child—or rather, an adolescent. Osbourne was twelve at the time, making him a more fitting opponent for toy wars, as I discuss more in Chapter 4. As an adolescent, Osbourne has become engaged in the commercial aspects of toy war; he must purchase more soldiers, or play with them no more. And as the game is a bonding ritual between Stevenson and his stepson, it is perhaps unrealistic to imagine that to stop playing is an option—especially because these games gave life to literary endeavors for both Stevenson and Osbourne.[1]

Not only does Stevenson maintain authorial control in this poem, he also shows that his vision of the stakes of the game differs from Osbourne's. While the adolescent is pictured as bemoaning the loss of his toy soldiers, not only in pecuniary terms, but also because they have "shed their gore," the adult imagines the toy soldiers as objects of lead. But toy soldiers are more than lead objects; they are "scriptive things." A "scriptive thing," to Robin Bernstein, is

> an item of material culture that prompts meaningful bodily behaviors. The set of prompts that a thing issues in not the same as a performance because individuals commonly resist, revise, or ignore instructions. In other words, the set of prompts does not reveal a performance, but it does reveal a *script* for a performance. That script is itself a historical artifact. Examination of that artifact can produce new knowledge about the past. (71-72)

Toy soldiers are scripted for war, although they may be played with in different ways. Bernstein argues that "literature and material culture . . . co-scripted nineteenth-century practices of play" (211). That is, play is never truly made in a void. Although Bernstein focuses specifically on dolls, toy soldiers and the literature about them (even literature more broadly having to do with

[1] Victoria Ford Smith has discussed this intergenerational collaboration during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, using Stevenson and Osbourne as a test case, although her work largely leaves out the toy wars.

war) have a similar "scripted" practice. By exploring the "script" behind toy soldiers, then—this interest in war—I make the argument that toy wars were an important part of the long nineteenth century, a century filled with armed conflict, and that they speak to hierarchies of power between adults and children.

Moreover, toy soldiers and other toys used in war play are certainly objects, but once they become a part of play they become a thing—something that comes alive, both literally in fantastic fiction and figuratively in imaginative play. As "thing theory" has defined, in Bernstein's words, "an object [is] a chunk of matter that one looks through or beyond to understand something human. A thing, in contrast, asserts itself within a field of matter" (72). Bernstein goes on to contend that "the difference between objects and things, then, is not essential but situational and subjective." Sometimes, after play, these things return to the status of objects—typically once they are "dead," as Stevenson's poem above illustrates. They become pieces of lead, at least to adults—to Osbourne they may have remained as things. As I discuss later in this dissertation, children often have a precocious understanding of war, even when it comes to toy deaths.

This continued "thingness" of toy soldiers for children, specifically, may have something to do with ownership, or at least the belief that those toys belong to them. Certainly, commercial toys are inherently related to capitalism and consumerism, but they also grant children ownership, as Bernard Mergan and Teresa Michals have pointed out.[2] I would add to this observation that ownership provides a source of power. However, this power is complicated because, like children's literature, toys are often bought by adults and can easily be taken away

[2] Michals echoes Mergan, who notes that "these toys and games—educational and otherwise—also helped children develop a sense of private property. . . . Toys—objects given by parents or adults to children to play with—were for a child's exclusive use. He or she *owned* toys, whereas they had formerly *shared* playthings" (qtd. in Michals 32).

again (or destroyed, as in Stevenson's "Martial Elegy"). Ownership is tenuous, and yet the very claim that something is "mine" implies control over the object (or thing), regardless of whether the toys themselves more accurately reflect the desires of adults or of children.[3] Moreover, while we often talk about toys as allegories for the child, it's important to note that toy soldiers are adult figures—and implicitly violent figures at that. I argue that this power over (adult) toys sparks a sort of toy envy in adults—an envy that plays out in narratives where toys rebel against children and in games in which adults again establish their dominance. After all, what is taking away toys except for a counter-expression of power? My dissertation thinks about the ways in which children playing at war are encouraged, challenged, and co-opted by adults in these literary narratives.

Victorian and Edwardian representations of this power struggle through the use of imagined violence have been little discussed. Several scholars, including Dan Fleming and Victoria Ford Smith, have made a connection between toys and adult-child struggles for power, in terms of both imaginative power and larger insecurities about "real world" power. In *When Toys Come Alive* (1994), Lois Kuznets identifies this struggle over power as one of the main traits of stories with animate toys, as they "embody all the temptations and responsibilities of power" (2). The ongoing discussion about toys as the nexus of power provides me with a wealth of material, but war and war games take up fewer than three pages in *When Toys Come Alive*—and yet toy soldiers feature heavily in stories with animate toys. On the other end of the spectrum, books about war games, such as *Zones of Control: Perspectives on Wargaming* (2016), edited by Pat Harrigan and Matthew G. Kirshenbaum, and C. G. Lewin's *War Games and Their History* (2012), largely ignore fictional subjects. My dissertation, then, fills a gap and

[3] Rachel Duffet and Kenneth Brown, among others, comment on how toys more accurately reflect adult desires. Rosie Kennedy argues that, despite this, children are a part of the demand for certain types of toys.

addresses the question of how violence changes the ways power is distributed, given, and taken away.

Framed by the Napoleonic Wars and World War I, this dissertation explores violence in fictional toy worlds. The nineteenth century saw the proliferation of what we call "toys," although that term is as ambiguous as the play children and adults use them for. Near the end of the century, toy soldiers were particularly in vogue, undoubtedly because of William Britain's invention of hollow lead soldiers in 1893, which made miniatures more affordable. Kenneth Brown notes a toy soldier craze in the two decades before the Great War, remarking on how the toy industry grew along with the reading public's awareness and engagement with real and current wars. Brown associates this public interest in war with "not only . . . the succession of Victoria's little wars but also . . . the greater public access to information about them provided by the spread of the electric telegraph, the establishment of news agencies, the rapid growth of the daily press, and the development of photography" ("Models" 551). Alongside novels, my dissertation draws on these media and their representations of war, but departing from Brown's focus on physical toys, I explore literary representations of toy soldiers and their wars. Looking at a variety of genres—juvenilia, children's literature, and popular press maps—enables a deeper engagement with the cultural moment that allowed war to be used as a metaphor for adult-child power constructs.

My first chapter explores the Brontë juvenilia, which was inspired by twelve wooden soldiers; my second and third chapters cover publications about toy wars by authors such as Edith Nesbit, Lewis Carroll, H. G. Wells, and Robert Louis Stevenson; and my fourth chapter looks at how newspapers made real wars into games for adult readers. In its essence, this is a dissertation about child-adult power relations and the dynamics of violent play during the long

nineteenth century in England. Because of this, I find it important to explore "unfiltered" child's play through to adults' use of "toys" to simulate real war. By comparing and contrasting how children and adults create and engage with violence (sometimes together), I argue that we can better examine the ways toy war serves as a metaphor for anxieties over adult-child displays of power.

Throughout this dissertation, I am talking about middle-class childhood and the power structures at play there. As Jacqueline Rose points out, "There is no children's book market which does not, on closer scrutiny, crumble under . . . a set of divisions – of class, culture and literacy – divisions which undermine any generalized concept of the child" (7). Toys were expensive, even after W. Britain's invention of the hollow metal soldier, making toy wars something that very few poor children could actively participate in, except of course in their imaginations or in staged play as discussed briefly in Chapter 5. Despite the fact that many wars would see the working class bearing the brunt of armed conflict, then, the imagination and fetishization of toy wars in fiction is a middle- and upper-class fascination. Power structures in working-class families were understandably different than those in the middle-class households I will be discussing. Moreover, I am more interested in how children are fictionalized through play (both by themselves and by adults) than in any "real-world" analysis of them. I do not, then, spend time on biographies in a general sense, instead thinking about how children and adults present themselves and others as players of toy wars. Play necessarily fictionalizes, and both adults and children become characters.

These fictional toy worlds become a place of contention, of both literal and metaphorical battles over status for both children and adults. In her foundational study of *Peter Pan* and children's literature more broadly, Rose comments on the "impossible relation between adult and

child" (1). She goes on to note: "Children's fiction sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver)" (1-2). When adults and children play at war together, there is indeed an "impossible relation" between them. However, I hope to avoid imagining children as "innocent naïfs" with no real agency of their own (Gubar 31), although I do argue that adults tend to temper this agency in works about children. Toy wars become a site of contention between adults and children, a fictionalized place in which we can better understand how adults and children imagine power structures being played out during the long nineteenth century. Because of this focus, I am responding to the debate between Perry Nodelman and Marah Gubar (among others) about child agency in texts for children. Although not all of my chapters deal with children's literature, they all deal with child-adult power structures in some ways, so this scholarship is central to my own.

Rather than taking a reductive view of the Cult of the Child, Gubar argues that Golden Age children's literature authors, "like the culture around them, which only gradually committed itself to erecting a firm barrier between innocence and experience . . . remained fascinated by an older paradigm that held that children were capable of working and playing alongside adults" (35). Gubar uses as an example, in her rebuttal of Rose's work, James Barrie and his own lost boys who helped to craft the story of *Peter Pan* through their games, but as Nodelman argues, this imaginative play was "very much under Barrie's guidance" ("Hidden Child" 269). Given this point, I tend to agree with Nodelman that many collaborative texts between children and adults are "guided" by the adult, if not completely taken over. Instead, I see adolescence as a turning point for when adults and children can more fully collaborate, as discussed more in Chapter 4. The Brontë children that I discuss in Chapter 2 show that child agency is alive and well—just perhaps not under the adult's gaze.

Gubar goes on to say that children's literature authors "resist the Child of Nature paradigm, which holds that contact with civilized society is necessarily stifling, in favor of the idea that young people have the capacity to exploit and capitalize on the resources of adult culture (rather than simply being subjugated and oppressed)" (5). In some ways, this is certainly the case with Nesbit's and Carroll's toy worlds—children do "exploit and capitalize on the resources of adult culture" by playing with commercial objects that are both made for them, at least ostensibly (toys), and also those that are not (household detritus). But what is perhaps so interesting about these texts is that, while they "celebrat[e] the canny resourcefulness of child characters without claiming that they enjoy unlimited power and autonomy" (Gubar 5), they also strip power away from children. Nesbit and Carroll created dangerous toy worlds, worlds in which the children soon find they have no real power, despite this being a *toy* world, something they usually do have some semblance of control over in the "real world" (although this, too, is tenuous).

Thus the investigation of child and adult relationships to literary representations of toys will give us a better understanding of the ways children, as liminal figures, challenge adulthood, and the ways games, as liminoid spaces, threaten the distinction between child and adult, play and strategy, imagination and reality. While discussions of child-adult power structures have long been a feature of children's literature criticism, violent toy worlds disrupt the conversation because the adults are no longer a "benevolent colonial official," in the words of Nodelman (212-13), but rather perhaps just a "colonial official," sans the benevolence. This is not to say that adults are evil, but toy wars allow for the "evil passions" of adults, like Nesbit's villain, to come out towards children. Without toy wars, we are missing an important part of our understanding of how adults and children interact, both together and separately, in play and in fiction.

Chapter II - The Brontës at War

As previously noted, twelve wooden soldiers inspired the Brontë juvenilia. Despite their simplicity, these soldiers were the impetus for a collaborative paracosm that the Brontë siblings would return to for years. Initially naming their two characters after Napoleon and Wellington, Branwell and Charlotte's contributions to the juvenilia were heavily based on publications about the Napoleonic Wars and influenced by contemporary understandings of war trauma, as Emma Butcher has shown.[4] Little remains of Anne and Emily's works, which were based on their own spin-off, Gondal, but there, too, political intrigue and battles overwhelm the narrative. The initial stories were even self-published in miniature, as if made for the twelve-inch soldiers.[5]

The Brontë juvenilia is an important starting point for my dissertation, not only chronologically, but also in terms of the "maturation" of play. This chapter, then, shows an expansive literary paracosm by children, where worlds literally grew out of worlds rather than the fleeting constructions adults build on nursery floors and military tables. The juvenilia allows us to see children and young adults actively involved in world building—and world destroying. The fact that these worlds are overwhelmingly militaristic and full of political intrigue is of note. By building their imaginary world around two powerful male military figures and their lineage, Charlotte and Branwell exert a mastery over them by actively re-imagining and rewriting history. Moreover, these were important literary enterprises for the children: Emily would return to her Gondal poems only six months before her death, and Branwell would sign nearly all of his published poems "Northangerland" after his primary character's name.

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[4] See, for instance, her article "War Trauma and Alcoholism in the Early Writings of Charlotte and Branwell Brontë."

[5] Of course, during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, publishers also marketed miniature children's books, potentially complicating the reason the Brontë children created miniature books of their own.

I focus on the poetry of Branwell, written throughout his youth and then "transcribed" in a notebook in 1837, followed by a discussion of a poem by Emily and another by Anne. These poems, I argue, show a precociously sensitive understanding of war—even from Branwell, who has often been thought of as the warmonger of the family. As I note throughout the chapter, however, all of the siblings were interested in war, and their interwoven poetry and prose is often a war game in and of itself: they battle over power and prowess in narrative and they battle over ownership of the toys.

The juvenilia also offer insights into children-adult power structures. To begin with, the Genii represent the four siblings as giants who take the twelve soldiers under their protection. The children literally become gods in their world—and also little kings and queens. The children and young adults had power over their narrative, as they wielded adult stand-ins (toy soldiers) for their own authorial purposes, claiming a power over the adult world even though they themselves were powerless in the "real" world as children and, in the case of Charlotte, Anne, and Emily, girls. As the next chapter shows, adults don't make children gods—although they might become kings or queens, any power these titles confer is shown to be an illusion. This shift in power is an important one.

Chapter III - Dangerous Toy Worlds

Chapter two of my dissertation looks at adult authors imagining dangerous toy worlds. I pair Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871), where Alice is in a game of chess, with Nesbit's *The Magic City* (1910), where the main characters, Philip and Lucy, enter a magical toy world of Philip's creation only to be followed there by the nurse, or Pretenderette, who lets free her "evil passions" towards the children. Both texts are full of war. Alice is literally in a war

game, and fighting—between Tweedledee and Tweedledum, between the Lion and the Unicorn—is a constant. For Philip, the world he has created is full of toy soldiers, chess pieces, and Halma men, all pieces of war games. Moreover, the ending scenes feature a war between Caesar and Gallic tribes (and the Pretenderette). These two texts are examples of war playing out in toy worlds—worlds that children initially have power over as they are toy worlds, but that adults manipulate to reestablish power over enviable toys and the children who play with them.

Adult power is on full display in both texts. As Zoe Jaques points out, "Alice manifests a pragmatic and engaged attitude towards leaving and mastering the rules in order to know how to play the game," yet the rules of Wonderland are "unintelligible, contradicted by other rules in the same system; command the impossible; and change every minute" (155). While Carroll has garnered extensive scholarly criticism, my dissertation focuses on *Through the Looking-Glass* as a book about a war game designed by an adult to confuse and disorient Alice. While playful, this text also features an adult author asserting his narrative power over a toy world and the child he places within it. Nesbit, who is often read as an author who encourages child agency, also subverts any power Philip may gain by stripping him of his kingly title and using the adventure to teach him how to adjust to real-world power structures: he must come to terms with his half-sister's new marriage, something which he initially detests and has no say in.

This second chapter, then, shows the ways in which adult authors use war toys to enact violence on children in order to remind them of their powerlessness—even over their own playthings. The fictional titles of Queen and King are stripped of any meaning in these toy worlds, and while Nesbit's text is not nearly as confusing as Carroll's nonsensical work, both

Nesbit and Carroll show a desire to regain control over toys and the fictional children they have created.[6]

Chapter IV - Playing at (Toy) War

Right around the time Nesbit was writing and publicizing *The Magic City*, Wells published *Floor Games* (1911) and *Little Wars* (1913). In addition to discussing Wells's works, I look at Stevenson and Osbourne's "Stevenson at Play" (1898). In each of these texts, adults monitor and, in effect, police child's play—if not dominate it. While Wells narrates his sons' play in *Floor Games*, in *Little Wars* he takes over. This chapter uses Wells's works to illustrate the differences between war play and war games, the former of which cements adult-child power structures, while the latter has the ability to disrupt those same hierarchies. Wells effectively removes his sons from the audience for *Little Wars* through the use of his subtitle, "a game for Boys from twelve years of age to one hundred and fifty and for that more intelligent sort of girl who likes boys' games and books"—a subtitle that notably excludes both of Wells's children, who were not yet twelve at the time *Little Wars* was published. In doing so, he emphasizes that this is a game for adults too. Like Nesbit, Wells also seems fascinated by toys and toy war; he returns to the theme again and again, even in his works for adults. In fact, it was the toy cities Wells describes in his novel *The New Machiavelli* that led to Frank Palmer asking Wells to write *Floor Games* in the first place.

Stevenson does not publish rules like Wells, but he and his stepson Osbourne do publish an account of their play as told through "war correspondence" from the front lines. Stevenson is

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[6] Alice is, of course, also a real figure. But by the time *Through the Looking-Glass* was published, the real Alice was an adult, and yet Carroll continues her adventures as if she had just aged six months from when she went to Wonderland. Alice has become a reverie, a fictional representation of a now adult child.

remarkably critical of Osbourne in this correspondence, something the stepson even notes in his introduction to "Stevenson at Play": "The reader will see what little cause I had to love the *Yallobally Record*,[7] a scurrilous sheet that often made my heart ache, for all I pretended to laugh and see the humor of its attacks. It was indeed a relief when I learned I might exert my authority and suppress its publication—and even hang the editor—which I did, I fear, with an unseemly haste" (711). Describing himself as better at aiming the toy gun they would use to fight but as less strategic than Stevenson (who, Smith notes, studied military documents including Edward Bruce Hamley's *The Operations of War* to prepare for his war games), Osbourne reveals the competitive nature of these games. In doing so, he also highlights the tenuous power dynamics and the mutability of the rules Stevenson alone seems to know.

The enviable toys that Nesbit and Carroll control in toy worlds created for children are, with Wells and Stevenson, taken control of even further. Rather than fictional toys, Wells and Stevenson take physical control of real-world children's playthings. Adults play in the toy worlds they create, with children and without them. As many theorists have explained, such as Kuznets, toys and power go hand in hand. Wells and Stevenson show the ways in which war games become a contentious space in which adults and adolescents vie for power over not only toys, but also a more abstract form of status. I use Clifford Geertz's term "deep play" to help illustrate this point, arguing that war games are a liminoid state that allows for a battle over both playthings and the power those toys (and what they come to represent) confer.

[7] The name of Stevenson's imagined newspaper is also telling.

Chapter V - Conclusions: Playing at (Real) War

My final chapter focuses on newspapers making a game out of and capitalizing on current military conflicts. The Crimean War saw the advent of modern war communication with the use of the telegraph, but war maps really began to appear during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). In contrast with the Brontë siblings' precocious understanding of the traumas of war, I argue that the war game maps published in newspapers and periodicals abstract and distance the realities of armed conflict even as they also show some ambivalence about this practice.

But more than that, this is a new style of "play," structured by real news from the front. Meant for the "Paterfamilias," or man of the house, these "games" were increasingly "adult." Children surely did continue to play at war, but these publications were meant to keep adults feeling informed and involved. However, this popular pastime situates adults as passive consumers of war culture rather than active participants in war play; they follow the news for instructions for how to move the pins, flags, or soldiers across the map they have been provided. While this may be *active* reading, it is not entirely *active*. Rather, adult readers of the popular press, through creating their own separate play culture, become child-like; as Rose puts it, they become "reader, product, receiver" rather than "author, maker, giver" (1-2), as opposed to children like the Brontës who take a more active role in imagining war. By taking over children's play in a move of power, adults actually lose their own agency, becoming dependent on the next day's news for their own enjoyment.

This dissertation, then, is about adult-child power structures within toy worlds filled with war. From the Brontë juvenilia to adults reenacting real war in the comfort of their drawing rooms, this study shows how prevalent playing at war was during the long nineteenth century. It

is a subject ripe for enquiry, though little has yet been done. And as Victoria Ford Smith notes, "the adult . . . is both the master of the child's imagination, able to direct its development, and baffled by it, unable to share in its vivid and dramatic transformations" ("Toy Presses" 27). In many ways, my dissertation is about this paradox. As Brian Sutton-Smith explains, "Children always seek to have their own separate play culture" (125). But what is it about a child's play that needs to be hidden, except that it is threatened by adults? Likewise, as my final chapter shows, adults also wanted to have their own separate play culture, upping the stakes but in doing so, taking away their own agency. There is a game going on between adults and children—a game of secrecy and control. By looking at the playthings that inspired countless imaginary wars and by delving into the real wars that always served as a backdrop to this play, I show the ways in which adults and children battle over status, ultimately resulting in precocious children and infantilized adults.

CHAPTER II

THE BRONTËS AT WAR

The Brontë juvenilia is expansive. I prefer the word "paracosm"[8] to explain the juvenilia because of its extent, both in terms of creative output and the number of years over which the Brontë siblings were producing manuscripts in their invented world. A paracosm is an extensive imaginary universe, which typically originates in childhood or adolescence and often incorporates details drawn from real life. All four siblings (Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne) participated in the development of the world of Angria and Glasstown, although Emily and Anne would later split off to create their own world of Gondal, of which little survives. However, we have evidence that Emily at least was deeply invested in her paracosm, and the amount of writing we have from Charlotte and Branwell demonstrates the all-consuming nature of their invented world. In their manuscripts, the Brontë children play with the possibilities of their own power while figuring out their identity in a world still teeming with militaristic pride after the Napoleonic Wars and invested in imperial pursuits. War games function in these texts as both a locus of power and a place of identity formation; after all, the Brontës were becoming authors.

While Kate E. Brown states that "the language of the juvenilia does not yield to close reading, for in Angria, meaning is always on the surface" (403), I think this belittles the sophistication of the Brontë paracosm. The poetry (and prose) are rife with material for discussion. In what follows, I argue three points: 1) that the children used toys and war to

[8] The Brontë paracosm is, of course, unique in many ways, primarily because of its extent, but other children were writing and continue to write within their paracosms, as Mark Wolf demonstrates in his work *Building Imaginary Worlds*.

establish their power in a world that would seemingly make them powerless as children and, in the case of the sisters, girls; 2) that the girls, particularly Charlotte and Emily, were also interested in warfare; and 3) that while the children (and young adults) sometimes glorified war, the overwhelming narrative shows a precocious understanding of the trauma of armed conflict. For this last point, I use Branwell's poetry as a case study of this precociousness since he has been the least understood by scholars. I end with a discussion of Emily's poem, "Why ask to know the date—the clime?," and Anne's "Z——'s Dream" to show that the girls, too, were aware of the traumas of war.

Toys and Power

War was always going to be a large part of the juvenilia, since it all began with twelve wooden soldiers, given as a gift from Patrick Brontë to his only son, Branwell. But the toy wars weren't the only physical play in which the children engaged; since the books themselves were made small enough for the toy soldiers to "read" and "write," these miniature books were also toys in and of themselves.[9] As Laura Forsberg points out, "The scale of miniature books . . . was not the scale of the child at all but rather the scale of the toy. The unusual size of the miniature book required the child to physically manipulate the book as object in a manner that resembled child's play" (418). In the making of these books, then, the siblings were creating their own toys—toys that allowed for "a fantasy of comprehensive knowledge" (410). The miniature book became "an almost magical gateway to literary knowledge and power" (410), and speaking of

[9] I echo Leslie Robertson here in thinking that calling juvenilia play is not a way of minimizing their importance or their literary value: "To propose a play model for juvenilia is in no way to deny their seriousness, nor to undermine the seriousness with which they deserve to be treated by readers and scholars. 'Play,' writes developmental psychologist Colette Daiute, 'is a tool children use to make sense of and learn more about their world rather than a capricious activity that is outside the business of real life'" (294).

Charlotte and Branwell's own micrographia, Forsberg states that "the miniature scale of the book implicitly giganticized the child, who dwarfed the volumes and thereby encompassed the knowledge they presented" (418). The children essentially became the Genii they imagined themselves as—outsized and omnipotent beings who could hold the entire universe in the palms of their hands.

Branwell and Charlotte labored over making their juvenilia look and feel like a real, albeit miniature, book or periodical, complete with colophons, advertisements, and minute drawings. The juvenilia was a secretive and professional exercise, both forms of power. The books were too small for adult eyes, a point of contention in the household,[10] and are written in miniscule script, replete with errors that make reading even more difficult. These toys were private enterprises for the Brontës, at least at first, and the small, secretive script was inherently powerful. In these imaginary worlds, this vast paracosm, the children explored "adult" themes that their religious father would likely not have approved of.

What started out as a game shared by the siblings became an elaborate world-building exercise that allowed the children to play editor as well as God. In talking about juvenilia more broadly, Alexander explains,

> A precocious knowledge of the publishing world is most clearly demonstrated in youthful manuscript magazines. In most cases the organization and writing of such juvenilia seems to have been collaborative, produced and 'published' among family and friends. In this sense such productions can be seen as children's 'public' texts, considered as performances to entertain and impress their readers. ("Playing" 89)

[10] Juliet Barker explains, "Wisely, Patrick made no attempt to put a stop to the writing but he did encourage them to channel their energies into less secretive projects. At Christmas 1833, he presented Charlotte with a manuscript notebook in which he had written on the top of the first page, '1833. All that is written in this book, must be in a good, plain and legible hand. PB.' Charlotte made an effort to please her father by copying into it a series of long poems on heroic subjects which were unconnected with the imaginary worlds and therefore fit for public consumption" (234-35).

As the creators of "public" texts, even when the public space was situated within the family, the children were showcasing their own skills as much as practicing them. Later, Charlotte and Branwell would reach out to other writers about their juvenilia, and Branwell wrote several letters to *Blackwood's Magazine.* According to Victor Neufeldt, Branwell managed to publish 26 poems in local newspapers, all but one under his nom de plume "Northangerland."[11] Similarly, all of Emily's poems published in the sisters' collaborative poetry collection were altered poems from her and Anne's own miniature world of Gondal.[12] These validations of their youthful writings indicate that despite the secrecy that they initially embraced, the siblings were confident in their writing. While Christine Alexander argues that as a child-writer Charlotte "was not aware of the limits of her identity as author" ("Juvenilia" 104), child writers did have *some* sort of power, as Leigh Hunt had proven with the juvenilia that made him famous. That Branwell includes Hunt as a character in his writings suggests that Branwell at least understood juvenilia as a productive professional exercise.

The power of the Brontë children with regard to their war games is threefold: the children enact their fantasies through actual play, in which they physically command power over their toys; they then write their versions of the play showing their power over the narrative; and they are able to share their narratives with their siblings as a display of their authorial powers in stories that minimize their siblings' roles in the play. While I discuss the physical play later in this chapter, the second and third points are perhaps most evident in Charlotte's narrative

[11] Northangerland was a character in Branwell's works, and one whom he would increasingly come to identify with.
[12] As Fannie Ratchford explains, "Charlotte's Angrian verse, the best she had done, was rejected, but Emily's twenty-one contributions were all of Gondal, and included the keystones of the Gondal epic, though carefully edited to hide their origin. Three of Anne's poems belonging to the Gondal cycle were included without change except the omission of their fantastic signatures" (168-69).

regarding the acquisition of the The Twelve, as the toy soldiers are called, in *The History of the Year*:

> Papa bought Branwell some soldiers at Leeds. When Papa came home it was night and we were in bed, so next morning Branwell came to our door with a box of soldiers. Emily and I jumped out of bed and I snatched up one and exclaimed, 'This is the Duke of Wellington! It shall be mine!' When I said this, Emily likewise took one and said it should be hers. When Anne came down she took one also. Mine was the prettiest of the whole and perfect in every part. Emily's was a grave-looking fellow. We called him Gravey. Anne's was a queer little thing, very much like herself. He was called Waiting Boy. Branwell chose Bonaparte. (Qtd Alexander *The Brontës* 3-4)

Although Papa might have bought Branwell the soldiers, as Alexander notes, "you will notice the controlling position of the 'I,' the narrator who orchestrates the events" ("Charlotte" 8). Alexander goes on: "The soldiers are Branwell's, but it is Charlotte who constructs the narrative and her siblings follow her lead; Branwell's choice is tacked on to the end of the story. Charlotte's hero compared with the others is clearly superior, as she herself intends to be" (8). Branwell's choice is an afterthought. Charlotte's choice is made the most important, and that she and Emily both claim the toys as their own, despite the set being Branwell's gift, shows a sense of ownership that implies power.

It is worth noting that the favorite characters of Emily and Anne shifted from "Gravey" and "Waiting Boy" (presumably a collaborative naming effort led by the two eldest siblings, Charlotte and Branwell) to two famous explorers, Parry and Ross; the younger sisters, far from affirming their powerlessness as female children, assume the role not only of men, but of powerful and important men. Gravey and Waiting Boy get discarded for famous conquerors of space, a fitting change for the stories of imperialistic conquest that were to come, but also a moment of female children taking ownership over their brother's toys and the men they came to represent. In doing so, the children simultaneously took ownership of that same imperial agenda, making the setting of Angria in an as of yet unexplored portion of Africa—a blank space on a

map that the children then drew—all the more powerful. The children depict themselves as the future of England even while they take control of heroic figures of the recent past.

However, the memory of these toys wasn't always collective. Branwell's 1830-31 narrative, *The History of the Young Men,*[13] drastically changes Charlotte's origin story of the Twelve, and once again shows the power play *between* the siblings inherent in these literary narratives. While Charlotte imagines one of the toy soldiers as her own, Branwell strips this power from her. As Alexander explains, "Not to be outdone by his sister, and in an effort to reassert control over the destinies of *his* toy soldiers, Branwell writes what he calls a 'real' history, correcting his sister's version and laying down the physical and historical context from his point of view" ("In Search" 10). More detailed in his descriptions of how the toys were played with, Branwell's narrative also reasserts his own control over his toys *and* his sisters:

> 'Have they come?' 'Yes' he answered at the same time <placing> them down before them instantly the taller of the 3 new monsters seized Arthur Wellesly the next seized E W Parry and the last seized J Ross For a long time they continued looking at them in silence which however was broken by the monster who brought them there he saying 'Know you then that I give into your protection but not for your own these mortals whom you hold in your hands' at hearing this, Wellesly, Parry and Ross each set up a doleful cry thinking that they were forever to be separated from their king and companions but the 3 monsters after expressing their thanks to their benefactor, assured them that they would let them go immediately but that they would watch over their lives and as their guardian demons wheresoever they might go the Monster first seen then seized hold of Sneaky saying 'Thou art under my protection and I will watch over thy life' for I tell you all that ye shall one day be Kings' when he had uttered these words he he waved his hand thrice in the air crying DEPART. (Qtd Neufeldt 150)

Removing the "I" that Charlotte uses, Branwell imagines the four siblings as the Genii they had become in the siblings' narratives. However, he still maintains an authority similar to that

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[13] It's worth noting that scholars dealing with Branwell often belittle his contributions here; for example, Ratchford writes: "Within a few months of his return from London, he began to rewrite the old 'History of the Young Men,' again treating the nonsensical escapades of the wooden soldiers with all the pretentious seriousness of authentic history" (116). However, Branwell's narrative is important to understanding the different toys the Brontës received and played with. Branwell's negative reputation, stemming initially from Charlotte and Elizabeth Gaskell, has remained in much of the scholarship about him.

Charlotte herself professes. Taking the only speaking role besides the collective "Have they come?" Branwell essentially becomes the all-knowing owner, placing the soldiers down initially and allowing the others to "protect" but not "own" the men he has brought to them. The three "monsters"[14] give thanks to Branwell before he himself takes hold of Sneaky (the character who replaces his initial name choice of "Napoleon"). No longer last because he lacks power, but rather presented as holding ultimate authority over the toys and their future, Branwell is able to narratively end the scene with a wave of his all-powerful hand. Rather than losing power through the removal of the first person narrative, Branwell gains it by playing a role similar to that of a god.

As Charlotte's and Branwell's origin stories show, they were playing a game of sorts, battling over ownership and power through narrative. These stories were also an interchange of ideas. The "plays," as the children called them, were often acted out. Branwell explains that "this History is a statement of what Myself Charlotte Emily and Ann realy pretended did happen among the 'Young men' (that being the name we gave them) during the period of nearly 6 years though in some places slightly altered according to the form and taste of the aforsaid young men" (qtd Neufeldt 139). The physicality of these games is important to remember. This play was an attempt at controlling at once the toys themselves and the narratives they inspired. That Branwell is telling the origin story after six years points to the blurred memories of the specifics of the games, but he also illustrates the importance of the toys themselves by frequently interrupting the narrative to provide information about the actuality of play. He details the acquisition of multiple

[14] As Susan Carlson explains, "Goldsmith's *Grammar* presents the continent of Africa in the following way: 'Africa is the country of monsters; every species of noxious and predatory animals reigning undisturbed in the vast deserts of that continent, and being multiplied by the sultry heat of the climate. Even man, in this quarter of the world, exists in a state of the lowest barbarism" (106-7). That Branwell thinks of himself and his siblings as these monsters is interesting.

sets of toy soldiers (including the famous Twelve); Charlotte's ninepins, which became the Ashantees; and the play itself.

By blurring the lines between reality and fiction, Branwell once again asserts power over the narrative. Even while allowing for a fictional narrator who ostensibly writes the story, Branwell signs his name repeatedly to the introduction and to the notes about the realities of the play. Although later, as Alexander points out, "Branwell . . . became lost in the labyrinth of Glass Town and Angria; he increasingly identified with the dissolute but powerful Northangerland, refusing or unable to confront reality" (104), in *The History of the Young Men* he assumes ultimate control of the narrator as editor. Alexander explains this as "Branwell ma[king] a point of stamping his new authoritative image on the title page of many of his early manuscripts, illustrating his authority as 'Mentor,' a figure of justice, in a colophon" ("In Search" 8). He would later use the same authority with the poetry he "transcribed" in 1837, the notebook I explore in more detail later on in this chapter. Charlotte would also sign her manuscripts, but Branwell's repetitive use of his name throughout these works reasserts his power over the toys and the collaborative world they had come to inhabit.

The Brontë children saw themselves as "protectors" of these animate toys and pictured themselves as Genii or little queens and a king throughout their early juvenilia. That is, they functioned as powerful creators and actors in their imagined world. The amount of power inherent in "protecting" a powerful man implies status typically denied to children. As Brown explains,

> Writing themselves into the stories as Genii, the children grant themselves godlike powers to reverse effects, including death. They thereby create an imaginative space in which conflicting versions of the same events coexist without possibility or necessity of adjudication—but in which all events assert, though often comically, the absolute power of the children as creators. ("Beloved" 396)

Not only did characters die and then reappear again, but also Branwell is explicit that they were "made alive," narratively memorializing the power of the Genii and the Brontë siblings themselves. Robert St John Conover writes: "Having the ability to resurrect characters from the dead granted the Brontë children license to annihilate one another's heroes in battle, but more significantly, the act seemingly restores to them some means of empowerment in a world in which they no doubt felt powerless" (22-23). To bring people back from death—a wish that no doubt the Brontë children felt particularly dearly, having lost their mother and two sisters at a young age—is a power that goes beyond age; in their play, the Brontë children wield a power that not even adults have, namely to "ma[k]e alive" those who have been lost. And as "protectors," wielding that power is, after all, their duty.

The children's roles as Genii, then, are particularly important to our understanding of power in these narratives. Conover notes that Branwell distinguishes the Genii from the Greek gods "as if to distinguish himself and his sisters from anything of an exalted, mythical nature" (22). I would amend this remark to say that Branwell is trying to separate himself from the mythical, but not the exalted. The narratives that follow Branwell's statement that "These [are] not the Golden Deities of Greece / These are the powers that rule our Land" consistently feature characters referencing the Genii as all-knowing, all-giving, and all-taking-away. Moreover, Branwell replaces what could be references to God with references to the Genii. However, he certainly doesn't want to appear as mythical, despite his poem "Dirge of the Genii," in which he rids the world of the all-powerful beings, only to bring them back—to make them alive again. Scholars have contended that Branwell (in contrast to Charlotte) initially didn't like the presence of the Genii because it blurred reality with fiction in a world he wanted to present as real, but like his other work, "Dirge of the Genii" is written from the perspective of the fallible characters he

has created. That same month (June 1829) he wrote a different poem illustrating the Genii's power: "If you live by the sunny Fountain / if you live in the streets of a town / if you live on the top of a mountain / or if you wear a crown — The Genii meddle with you" (qtd Neufeldt 18). Even in their graves, the Angrians are not safe—as we know since the children can literally "dig you up" as Genii (18). This poem, however, ends with a call to arms against the Genii, emphasizing just how real the characters imagine the Genii to be—they are not mythical, but physical beings who can (ostensibly) be overthrown. Of course, Branwell is having fun here. The Genii cannot die, or the world would die with them. The Genii were never dead, as "The Dirge" insists. After all, the Genii are all knowing; the animate toy creations narrating the dirge are not.

Charlotte uses a similar method to Branwell by describing a Genesis moment in her second account of the young men, *A Romantic Tale, or The Twelve Adventurers:* "On the thrones sat the Princes of the Genii . . . . As soon as their chiefs saw us they sprang up from their thrones, and one of them seizing Arthur Wellesley and exclaimed 'This is the Duke of Wellington!" (qtd Alexander, *The Early* 14). This pronouncement is followed by a prediction of the Napoleonic Wars, giving Charlotte ownership over the Duke of Wellington's origin story, but also limiting the narrative to her own choice of toy soldier. No other sibling, or Genius as they have become, gets a speaking role here. Charlotte herself takes ownership of the narrative and of the most renowned hero of the age. Speaking from a position of knowledge of the Napoleonic Wars, Charlotte also commands a history that the animate toy soldiers have no idea about. As with Branwell's pronouncement that "ye shall one day be Kings," Charlotte shows an omniscience typically reserved for a deity.

Charlotte's siblings are not removed entirely from the narrative, but they are used as ways to remind the reader of her ultimate power. At one point Branwell's alter ego, the Genius

of the Storm, comes in prepared to strike the Twelve, but Charlotte steps in, yelling, "Genius, I command thee to forbear!" When the Twelve look around, they see "a figure so tall that the Genius seemed to it but a diminutive dwarf" (qtd Alexander, *The Early* 12). Charlotte calls on her size and age to render Branwell "diminutive," taking narrative power away from a story that involves them both.

Moreover, this powerful force is female. While Conover writes, "The parity in the writing relationship between brother and sister was facilitated, in part, by this appropriation of the patriarchal voice of Charlotte" (25), as a Genius, Charlotte was female. Some scholars have called the Genii "genderless," but I think this ignores the fact that the Genii *were* the siblings. While Charlotte may take on male voices to tell her narratives, the ultimate power figure, especially in her own view of the power dynamics regarding the Genii, is a woman—no, a girl. As a female figure, she adopts the voices of men to castigate her brother, as in the *Poetaster*, but she is a little queen and a female Genius. In fact, female Genii and queens outnumber the sole male Genius.

That said, Charlotte went on to craft a variety of male narrators throughout her paracosm. While Alexander argues that "in the case of Charlotte Brontë, the child author undergoes a kind of mythical transformation before she can create, and the narrative 'I' is splintered into multiple male voices, affirming the powerlessness not only of youth but also of femaleness" (Alexander "Autobiography" 154), I would argue that Charlotte assumed a role of power by taking control of an adult male figure, even while men (and boys) narrate her stories. Although her choice of a male narrator and point of identification was at least partially dictated by the toy available and her understanding of real-world power structures, it was also a choice to play at being a female

child in complete control of a (sometimes) adult male—a role reversal not possible except in her world of animated toys.

Moreover, in a town populated almost completely by toy soldiers,[15] the male personas the children initially adopt to catalogue the Twelves' lives come as no surprise. They were also used to male-dominated media outlets such as *Blackwood's Magazine*. That three young girls and one young boy positioned themselves as being in charge of not only adult men but also real-life heroes suggests an assertion of control that was typically denied to both children and women. Speaking of Charlotte's choice of Wellington, in particular, Alexander writes: "Charlotte is implicitly questioning here the extent to which the hero and, indeed, all public figures are fictional constructs. She is also discovering that the author, no matter how young, might have a role to play in that construction" ("Charlotte" 12). If heroes are cultural constructs made real by the narratives about them, then Charlotte, who originally imagines Wellington as a child in her narrative, takes authorial control not only of the man, but also his life and reputation.

Charlotte's later use of Charles, a young boy, as narrator shows her continued interest in children as powerful figures. Like Charlotte herself, Charles has narrative authority over the lives of his family members. The double layer of child narrative is particularly interesting, because it places emphasis on age as a locus of power. Despite real-world power structures that minimize children and, as Brian Sutton-Smith points out, position them as "captive population[s]" (123), they become the captors, literally capturing the world of adults in the microcosmic paracosm that Charlotte (and through her, Charles) creates. Children become important parts of the world.

Thus war toys become a locus of power for the Brontës from childhood through to adulthood. Through literary play they battle over status and ownership, and engage in making toy

[15] Some other toys were used as well, including dolls and ninepins.

books that catalogue the adventures the children play out in toy worlds. Although Patrick gave Branwell the soldiers, Charlotte establishes her own power over the toys—and even over her brother—through narrative games. The siblings battle it out in miniature script, but they are always thinking about themselves as all-powerful beings; they make themselves a part of the world as gods, royalty, and Genii, firmly establishing children as agents in a world populated by primarily male adults. Both Charlotte and Branwell wield power over their toys and the world they have come to represent—an agency that, as I will show in the next chapter, is denied in violent toy worlds created by adults. In this paracosm, however, children have all the power—a power that Charlotte had trouble giving up, as shown by her "A Farewell to Angria" (1839),[16] and a power that Branwell never did relinquish, even as his own life began to crumble.

The Girls at War and the Beginnings of Precociousness

Charlotte and Branwell certainly had differing perspectives about war and ownership of the toys (or rather who owned what), but together they built a collaborative paracosm that heavily featured violence. Excepting work by Emma Butcher, including her recent book *The Brontës and War*[17], Charlotte's interest in armed conflict has often been ignored. Interestingly, Charlotte ignores her own gift of ninepins in her narrative of events in focusing on the toy soldiers, a toy that Alexander notes Charlotte can identify with ("Charlotte" 8). But as the soldiers are adult male figures, what is it that the female child can identify with? And yet identify she does, choosing the soldiers even in preference to Emily's gift of dolls. Indeed, Charlotte

[16] Charlotte found it "no easy thing to dismiss from my imagination the images which have filled it so long" (Alexander, *The Brontës* 314).

[17] My work differs from Butcher's in that she provides a detailed study of the texts and conflicts that heavily influenced the Brontë paracosm. I am more interested in how the Brontë siblings used war toys to gain agency and show an understanding of military trauma. Nevertheless, my work builds on Butcher's in that the influence of texts and recent conflicts certainly helped the Brontës gain precociousness. Butcher also focuses on the prose of Branwell and Charlotte while I center on the poetry.

makes fun of Emily's world, populated with dolls, in "A Day at Parry's Palace": "Instead of tall strong muscular men going about seeking whom they may devour, with \guns/ on their shoulders or in their hands — I saw none but little shiftless milk-and-water-beings, in clean blue linene jackets & white <?> aprons <?> all the houses were ranged in formal rows, they contained four rooms each with a little garden in front. No proud Castle or splendid palace toweres insultingly over the cottages around" (qtd in Barker 189). The world of dolls was unexciting compared to Glasstown, Charlotte's military world. As Valerie Sanders and Butcher have pointed out, "Indeed, Charlotte Brontë appears to recognize that, in a kingdom founded on a history of invasion and warfare, the very essence of militaristic masculinity is embedded intrinsically within her protagonists to a point where, if need be, domestic livelihood will be sacrificed" (69). In fact, Charlotte's own toys were sacrificed; the ninepins become the enemy Ashantees. As Susan Meyer illustrates, the African stand-ins were designed to be knocked over (29), suggesting a violence in Charlotte's understanding of the foundation of her paracosm.

Contrary to Fannie Ratchford's claims, Charlotte was far from bored or tired by her brother's wars. Ratchford quotes a portion of Charlotte's diary:

> It seemed to me that the war was over, that the trumpet had ceased but a short time since, and that its last tones had been pitched in a triumphant key. It seemed as if exciting events, tidings of battles, of victories, of treaties, of meetings of mighty powers, had diffused an enthusiasm over the land that made its pulses beat with feverish quickness. After months of bloody toil a time of festal rest was now bestowed on Angria. (qtd in Ratchford 128)

However, while Ratchford reads this passage as "Charlotte, war-weary, eagerly adjust[ing] her inner world to peace-time conditions" (128), Charlotte also talks about battles as "exciting," and the peace that sparked "enthusiasm" was only made possible through war. Charlotte was just as interested in the war stories, although her own writing was less involved than Branwell's in detailing battles. War still played an important part in her understanding of the world, and

because Charlotte saw herself as wielding power over the toys, it is a mistake to take away her own agency when it comes to the war-torn Angria.[18]

Toy worlds, too, demanded war. In speaking of Emily and Anne's Gondal, Conover claims that

> Although it is usually presumed that, in late 1831, the sisters broke up the collaboration over objections to Branwell's domination . . . the reconstructed work shows that he generated too little that year to raise such a radical protest. Given what we know, it is as likely that Emily and Anne, eager to achieve their own sovereignty, left to establish a more peaceable kingdom. (20)

However, Gondal was not so peaceable. Not long before her death, as I will show, Emily was writing a civil-war poem, and her diary entries show that she wrote a prose work about the First Wars, indicating that war was important in both worlds. After all, strife is a central part of world-building and features heavily in paracosms to this day.

In fact, the juvenilia apparently began with a war game: "Goodman was A Rascal and did want to Raise A, Rebellion" (Neufeldt 3). So begins Branwell Brontë's *History of the Rebellion in My Fellows*, the hand-sewn book he made in 1828 when he was eleven years old detailing the war game he played with his sister Charlotte. Although Branwell's dates are confused throughout the manuscript, the actual play appears to have taken place in 1827, the year before he began writing down the story, indicating the importance of these games in the lives of the children—games that were not only played using toy soldiers, but then relived and replayed through the act of writing. Writing itself became an act of play, a literary play that was itself a war game in which Branwell reaffirms his prowess not only on the literal battlefield (*History* details an actual

[18] Emma Butcher points out that Charlotte's poem, "Charge on the Enemy" (1837), while "not situated within her other Angrian writings, act[s] as a stand-alone example of her interest in war. Throughout, the verse's exhilarating, progressive form captures the essence of war, demonstrating multidimensional knowledge of militarism ranging from battlefield terminology to feelings of near-death experience" (*The Brontës* 1-2). Throughout this section, I echo Butcher's point that Charlotte, too, was interested in armed conflict.

toy war game in which Branwell ultimately won), but also in his ability to catalogue it.

History of the Rebellion also shows that Charlotte was interested in the war play; in fact, she becomes an aggressor. That Goodman, the pseudonym for Charlotte, wants to raise a rebellion speaks to the competitive nature of these games—it also troubles Branwell's reputation as the warmonger of the family. It is Goodman who begins the war with "a furious onset" that Branwell "furiously withstood" (4), again pointing to Charlotte's agency in the war. That she, too, writes a note declaring war on page three of the booklet indicates her own interest in continuing the miniature battles and her central role in Branwell's play. The note reads: "I will go to war with you littele Branewell. Sept[e]mber 1827. to littile Branewell—Signed good man" (4). Charlotte's use of "littele Branewell" twice is interesting here because it comes from a position of power as the elder sibling. In contrast to Branwell (and the toy soldiers they are playing with), Charlotte is not-so-little, and she is accordingly assertive of her power over her brother despite her awareness at this point that she is outnumbered and outflanked by his narrative.

That the number of imagined men was so staggering—16,000 rebelling to begin, with later armies numbering 300,000—hints at just how literary Charlotte and Branwell's physical war play was to begin with; it was always exaggerated, made large, imagined as much as acted out. Reality was never quite adhered to, as we see in Branwell's earlier "Battell Book," which tells the story of the Battle of Washington complete with drawings of the toy soldiers. Major General Robert Ross was replaced by Sneaky and Wellington, two of the Twelve, and the date was changed from August 1814 to an unspecified September, perhaps to the date the battle was recreated with a pretend "2.21000" British and "3.04000" American soldiers. This suggests that

while reality influenced the Brontë juvenilia, it did not dictate it. The children ultimately had narrative control over history, both real and imagined, and the people who populated it. Even later when the physical toys were lost or destroyed, the literary games still maintain a sense of control available to the siblings exactly because the worlds of Angria, and later Gondal, are toy worlds. I argue that this is never entirely forgotten despite the expansion of the (toy) universe. After all, as I've argued above, the toys themselves were always exaggerated, made large both physically and in number. The toy world allowed the Brontës to continue to have power over their creations, even as the siblings battled over authorial control.

While Branwell is nearly always pictured as a war-crazed boy by scholars, *History of the Rebellion* shows that he was interested in the other side of war as well—peace—even at an early age. He remarks that "the Battle of Parimont ended the war which was a very good thing < > the war was. ended. very Dearly. Bought by the losses of so many Brave felows" (Neufeldt 6). Juvenilia is inherently imitative of adult culture (see, e.g., Alexander, "Defining" 77), and to some degree Branwell's words could be related to the interest in peace after the devastating Napoleonic Wars, which, as Butcher and others have pointed out,[19] heavily influenced the Brontë juvenilia. As much as Branwell loved playing at war, he also understood the importance of peace, however little time he spends on it compared to the more exciting narratives of violence and political intrigue. In fact, Branwell gives credence to the lives lost, even though these are "just" toy lives. As subsequent chapters of this dissertation illustrate, adults do not show this same compassion when playing war with their own toy soldiers, an act that I argue distances and abstracts the traumatic realities of warfare. In contrast, the Brontë juvenilia reflects a precocious

[19] In addition to her monograph, see Butcher's ""Napoleonic Periodicals and the Childhood Imagination: The Influence of War Commentary on Charlotte and Branwell Brontë's Glass Town and Angria."

understanding of war even as it glorifies it. After all, this is still an age of imperialism, an enterprise to which the Brontë children were certainly attracted.

Branwell's (Precocious) Poetry

Branwell, in particular, uses poetry at important moments in his narratives, and he experiments, or "plays," with poetic form to evoke moods and tensions that are easy to overlook because they are occurring in juvenilia. However, Branwell evidently took particular pride in his poetry. Not only did he publish his poetry, as mentioned above, but in 1837 he "transcribed" a manuscript book of poems from the juvenilia, many of which deal with war. Branwell was twenty when he began revising the poems, "divorcing them from their original Angrian context and noting that they are 'transcribed' by 'P.B. Brontë' (*OCB* 76). Most of his later poems are 'public pieces meant for publication (*OCB* 76), although he continued to explore Angrian themes in an English setting" (Alexander "In Search" 17). Despite Alexander's claim, many of the 1837 poems continue to reference Angria and the Angrians. In this section, I am looking specifically at Branwell's Angrian poems from this collection. I use his original drafts as my base texts, but I compare them with the revised 1837 versions to better understand both what he determined were more polished versions of his poems and how his understanding of war and poetry shifted.

Looking at these revised poems next to the originals offers important insight into Branwell's understandings of war—understandings that I argue deal with the traumas of war as much as they glorify it. As Butcher explains, "Charlotte and Branwell were able to emulate adult perceptions of difficult and alarming states of war trauma and alcoholism and transpose these states of being onto their saga's characters" ("War Trauma" 466). The poetry in particular can help us better understand Branwell's position when it comes to war. Little has been done on this portion of Branwell's oeuvre, despite the fact that Branwell published his poems, not his prose.

As Collins says, “By the age of fourteen or fifteen he had acquired a certain measure of that mastery of words which assures that a thing will be well-said even if not wisely said. He was, in short, a poet” (204). Although Branwell has often not been taken seriously as a writer because he did not reach the success of his sisters, his poetry shows a level of mastery that bears close reading. He breaks structures regularly, pointing to how poetry became as much of a game as the “plays” he and his sisters created with the toy soldiers. The level of control that Branwell developed as a poet illustrates another way in which toy wars might be said to have enhanced the power of the child operating in a space free from adult control.

The Angrian Welcome

Of course, Branwell certainly did glorify war. His “The Angrian Welcome” (1834) speaks to the militarism inherent in the Brontë paracosm. Branwell begins with “Welcome, Heroes, to the War / Welcome to your glory / Will you seize your swords and dare / To be renowned in story” (Neufeldt 52). That Branwell adds “to be renowned in story” reminds us of his ultimate power as narrator, even as the question format (“will you”) ostensibly allows for the soldiers themselves to disagree. Branwell is playing with power here. The question is rhetorical. Not only are they already “heroes,” but toy soldiers and Angrians cannot but agree to seize their swords *and* be catalogued in his story.

As the first lines indicate, the poem is addressed to the people of Angria personally, but “The Angrian Welcome” is ultimately a paean. Set right after Zamorna is reinstated on the throne after being deposed by Alexander Percy’s army and sent into exile for a year, this poem celebrates the Angrian culture of war and Zamorna’s ultimate victory over both Percy and Ardrah. We can see this in the poem itself: “And down from heaven. ZAMORNA came / To

guide you to the sky / He shook his sword of quenchless flame / And shouted VICTORY!" (253). The rhyme scheme here (abab), necessitates that one read "Victory" as "Victor, I"! This scheme hints at Zamorna's own ultimate success in the wars against him. The focus on his victory is emphasized by the change from "He knew that Angrias very name / Should force those foes to fly" (252) to "He knew that Adrians very name / Would force those foes to fly" (52) in 1837. "Angria" gets replaced with "Adrian," Zamorna's kingly title. Not only is Zamorna associated with "heaven" as kings are thought to be, but it is *his* name, not the world he inhabits, that causes fear in his enemies. Moreover, the enemies "should" fly from Angria's name, but they "would" fly from Adrian's. This, then, is a call to arms that supports the newly reappointed king. Moreover, Branwell consistently places stress on both the first and last syllable, using catalexis (the absence of a final syllable) to maintain a masculine energy by dropping the feminine unstressed portion of the foot. Written in 16 lines, 12 lines, and then a series of six quatrains (five in the revised version), the three sections emblematize the three warring factions of the civil war.

"The Angrian Welcome" is also about Branwell's own power—and the power of the world he has created. In the revisions, Branwell changes "Angrians if you wield your sword / Every stroke shall be / Fixed as one undying word / In your History" (253) to "in Afric's History" (53). This alteration places Angria firmly on the real-world map. Moreover, it is a white man's history of Africa, speaking to Branwell's imperialistic presence. It is the history Branwell is writing in *Angria and the Angrians*, where toy lives do matter in their death: "Angrians if in you fight and die / The clouds which oer you rise / Shall waft your spirits to the sky / Of everlasting joys" (253). "Joys" has no rhyme despite the strict rhyme scheme of the poem, making the word an emphatic reminder to the fictional Angrians that they have a place in

Heaven—a violent Heaven whence Zamorna has come to "rid[e] foremost in the fight" (253). And this history of Africa is "fixed in one undying word," meaning that Branwell's own prose is "undying," reasserting the importance of the narrative.

The shift to an exclamation point after "Angrians!" indicates a call to attention—and to battle—but also one of unity after a civil war. In the original *Angria and the Angrians,* we learn that 5000 voices join the music of five "rejiments" in singing this welcome, illustrating both the excitement and the importance of this song in the recreation of an Angrian community. And yet this community is militaristic. "Angrians" is elided to sound like "Angr-ans," an elision reminiscent of "angry ones."

However, Branwell plays with the structure of the poem to emphasize the difficulties of war:

> What though Fame be distant far
> Flashing from her upper air
> Though the path which leads you there
> Be long and rough and gory

In scanning the poem, the emphasis is on the first syllable of "gory," indicating the bloody nature of "Fame" in the Angrian world. The poet also places emphases on "long" and "rough," not only indicating that the path will be strenuous, but also reflecting Branwell's awareness of this fact—war is difficult, and Fame hard to come by.

The last five lines here are a multiple envelope rhyme (ABBBA) that reminds the reader of the heavily male world in which this particular paracosm inhabits:

> Still that path is straight and wide
> Opened to receive the tide
> Youths first flush and manhoods pride
> Age all old and hoary
> Sire and son may enter in
> Son and sire alike may win
> Rouse ye then, and all begin

To seek the glory oer ye

Although "hoary" sticks to Branwell's convention of leaving "y" sounds unstressed, the final "ye" is stressed, emphatically ending the stanza on a call to action by singling out the listeners as warriors themselves. And everyone is a warrior here, from the very young ("Youths first flush") to the elderly ("Age all old and hoary"). Moreover, this militarism is hereditary. Just as the toy soldiers have given birth to a world of men who don't directly correspond to a specific toy, father and son alike are destined to fight—and both can win. And yet, in his alterations, Branwell changes "All your foes shoud die" to "All your foes should fly," despite "fly" repeating two lines later. With an already-rhyming verse, this shift is important. That men should "fly" rather than "die" speaks not only to Branwell's understanding of war, as Butcher has pointed out, but also to his interest in preserving (toy) lives.

The Vision of Velino

"The Vision of Velino" is the first poem Branwell transcribed in his 1837 notebook, and it is perhaps the most haunting. The original version of "The Vision of Velino" was written in 1833 as part of John Flower's "An Historical Narrative of The 'War of Enroachment.'" The French, and Napoleon in particular, had declared war on Angria, and battles had already been waged, with heavy losses on the Angrian side. Speaking right after the retreat from Angria, which left 3000 dead, 5000 wounded, and 2000 prisoners, equipment lost, and soldiers exhausted, Flower overhears W.H. Warner imagining the traumatic deaths of the soldiers sleeping around him. At this point in the narrative, the noble and rich Warner will not take sides but will help the wounded. The setting is somber and reminiscent of Branwell's own home; surrounded by moorlands in wet and wild climes, "all the earth behind before / seems one wide

waste of graves," in Warner's vision (394). In 1837, Branwell alters this description slightly to read: "All the Moors around me here / Seem one wide waste of graves" (39). Here, Branwell emphasizes the dreary setting, which contrasts with church graveyards the soldiers have no hope of obtaining: "These are not the common graves of men / With Yew Trees waving by, / Where when their life's short hour is gone / They slumber peacefully." Yew trees, commonly planted in church graveyards, symbolize resurrection, and the bodies here lie "peacefully,"[20] whereas bog bodies, (some) bodies buried in the moors, don't decompose. Although not all bodies become bog bodies, the Brontës were well aware of the fact that bogs can preserve human flesh for centuries, as Shawna Ross has argued.[21] In Warner's original vision, the men sleeping have already become bog bodies, as the moors become "yawning toombs" (395). It is an army of the dead.

In both iterations of the poem, Branwell writes a version of the line "Oh God avert the avenging sword" (395), referencing Ezekiel 21, "A Vision of the Avenging Sword of Yahweh." The title of "The Vision of Velino," of course, also replicates this passage. In Ezekiel 21 God says, "A sword, a sword is sharpened and is also polished. It is sharpened to slaughter a slaughter, polished to flash like lightning!" This idea of a sword polished to flash like lightning is repeated, calling to mind Branwell's own understanding of himself as the Genius of the storm. Although Branwell has long since abandoned the Genii as a literary device, his god-like powers have remained. And if Branwell is the Genius of the storm, it only follows that he has crafted the dire weather conditions that help to make this war so dangerous. Perhaps this is in part to make

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[20] Again, the rhyme scheme makes this read "Peaceful, I," pointing to Warner's own role as a man of peace, rather than war.

[21] For instance, James Hogg published "A Scots Mummy" in *Blackwood's* (a favorite magazine of the Brontës) in August 1825. As Ross notes, "other famous bog bodies excavated closer to the Brontës' lifetime include well-publicized discoveries in 1700, 1773, 1797, 1818, and 1835" (126).

the narrative more exciting and suspenseful, but I would argue that it also functions as a way to demonstrate how even "God's" chosen land is not immune to the atrocities of armed conflict and the conditions that make war so incomprehensibly dangerous.

The danger inherent in the poem is heightened in the context of the *Historical Narrative.* Warner admits, "I know it and as the scene of a great Battle shall I say a great Victory. I hope so I hope so. you are almost in despair and despair gives surety of hope But 13000 to. 26000 is odds indeed—how solemn the night is. it is fit to usher in a battle" (395). The repetition of "I hope so" belies a worry here that is not indicative of a war-crazed boy, but rather reveals a precocious understanding of the horrors of war and of the death that is to come. And that a "solemn" night is "fit to usher in a battle" reminds the reader that, as glorious as Branwell makes battles appear in other areas of his paracosm, war is in reality a grave affair—a necessity, in some cases, but a serious undertaking that costs (toy) lives.

An Angrian Battle Song

First written as part of the *Angria and Angrians* saga (specifically II[a]) by H. Hastings, "An Angrian Battle Song" is exactly that: a battle song. However, the surrounding story helps to highlight the fear of battle. Despite never having been in battle himself, Branwell imagines the frightening sights and sounds of armed conflict. As Hastings muses on his way to war:

> I have seen War before as my readers know . . . But my very initiation only opened to me more fully and freshly the unparalleled scenes of WAR. Now I Do here Declare that I am a courageous young man. I mean one of sound healthy and vigourous nerves moreover my mind is easily and strongly roused into enthusiasm by any thing great and terrible But that very keen sense of every thing most certainly makes me feel keenly dreadful things And those awful volleys of thunder whose Iron hail I had beheld transform powerful heavey men into <sent>ient and tormented masses of flesh the sweeping charges of Iron hoofed Horses over helpless wretches without hope crushed into Death and the frightful sights that I had seen after Bayonet charges gasping and howling and sick with incurable

> torture—indeed the whole unutterable sight of battle could not now recalled fail to make a mans nerves quiver within him. (qtd Neufeldt 455)

Branwell qualifies this fear with the statement that "the quivering only excited a flushed and restless excitement that went to form the grand edifice of a stirring and glorious futurity so that it was with feelings which for the world I would not lose." However, Branwell is showing an interesting side of war that many scholars, again with the exception of Butcher, ignore: he is highlighting the "quivering" that soldiers feel after having experienced the horrors of battle, even if they also feel "excited" for the battle to begin. Moreover, this "quivering" is not simply for the weak-hearted. Even "powerful heavey men" are "transformed" into "masses of flesh," speaking to the gore that pervades war.

Nevertheless, the poem as a whole is a song of victory over the French. It is a song that turns the dark, stormy setting of the battle morning[22] into a sign of hope rather than despair: "Storms are waking to inspire us" (461). Made up of trochees with catalexis every other line, Branwell's song moves along rapidly, and it doesn't follow the traditional dactylic marching rhythm. Instead, this song speaks to the disorder of war—the mad rush to battle—rather than disciplined marching orders. This is further supported by Hasting's own experience in the battle: he wakes up to this song after having been wounded by French guns on the first charge, "rushing through some feilds toward the Bridge" (463).

"The Angrian Battle Song" also shows the uncertainty of battle. It isn't until the fifth of six stanzas that it becomes clear that the storm, and the God behind it, is meant to punish the enemy, not the Angrians:

> No O God Our Sun its brightness
> Draws from thine Eternal Throne

[22] Once again, to call back to "The Vision of Velino," "An Angrian Battle Song" depicts a "solemn" setting "fit to usher in a battle."

And come what will
Through good or ill
We know that thou wilt guard thine own
Tis not gainst us that Thunders tone
But, risen from Hell
With radiance fell
Tis the Wanderer of the West whose power shall be oerthrown. (462)

Before this point, the outcome is not clear: "Whats their Omen Whence the doom" (461). The storms, too, result in fear ("Trembles every child of clay") and the question: "Must the Sun of ANGRIA pale / Upon the Calabar" (462). Despite this being a song of victory, this poem also shows the ambivalence concerning the outcome in the heat of battle, no matter the patriotic belief in the "prophecy" of Victory mentioned in the third stanza. In fact, "Some must quiver some must quail," harkens back to Hasting's own "quivering" earlier on in *Angria and the Angrians.* While the song ends on the lines "OH ANGRIA ARISE," this is not a battle song of undoubted victory, but a celebration of conquered "quivering" in a battle that could have gone badly, as it did for Hastings himself. While power is central here, so is the possibility of its loss.

The Battle Eve

The original version of "The Battle Eve" was first composed in 1836, but this manuscript has not been found. The "transcribed" version in the 1837 notebook is, however, worthy of note because it deals with a man, Lord Richton, left behind among the fields of the dead. Composed when Branwell was writing *Angria and the Angrians,* it is likely this poem is part of this collection of stories and poems. "The Battle Eve*,"* in particular, appears to detail Zamorna's ultimate defeat in the civil war.

The first two stanzas begin with the word "alone," emphasizing the individual experience of war, as opposed to the collective victory or loss—and this is a poem about a victory *and* a

defeat. As a civil war, both sides have lost. Indeed, we see the destruction brought by war: "Alone with thousands round me laid / In dizzy torments dying / All, stretched upon their bloody bed / In sleep eternal lying" (Neufeldt 80). The scansion emphasizes the first syllable of "*thous*ands," "*dy*ing," and "*bloody*," bringing attention to the horrors of war and the number of people that victory (and loss) costs. In fact, the word "victory" isn't even mentioned until the sixth stanza;[23] instead the focus is on the misery of those left behind to die.

Even the setting anticipates the solemn mood: "It is not night—it is not day / So she can hardly shine / And dull and dead and cold and grey / Behold the eve decline" (80). That it is not night nor day, but something different—a "Battle Eve"—emphasizes the uncertainty of the current moment and of the poem's narrator. Moreover, "dull," "dead," "cold," and "grey" are all stressed, setting the poem's mood. The evening, then, evokes the "dead" as the war comes to an end, while the night "casts its shadows oer the things / Which latly seemed to shine" (81). In other words, darkness (and death) obfuscates the victory.

Although the poem begins by cataloging Richton's own experiences as one of the last men left alive or conscious on the battlefield ("So not alone yet all alone / For those sad wrecks of slaughter / Are senseless thrown as forms of stone / Or dead to all but torture"), by the seventh stanza this has become a poem about Zamorna and his defeat, while as the line "A Monarch's and a Nation's fall" explains, this is also a hit to a divided nation.

The last lines, then, appear to be about Zamorna, not necessarily Richton, since Zamorna is captured and banished in *Angria and the Angrians*:

> Come. listen to the distant gun
> That thunders on the wind
> The awful voice of Victory won

[23] "A Battle Eve, a victory / A day of deathless fame / For which the Muse of history / Must seek a noble name" (qtd Neufeldt 80).

That seems to say Thy race is run
And vanished out of mind
Better for thee that thou hadst died
Than thus to see thy newborn pride
In this wild warfare scattered wide
And thou a wretched Captive left behind!

However, that the "thou" is underlined gives the poem a personal element. The reader is almost transported to the battlefield, made to participate in the fate of Zamorna and his (surviving) men who have been left behind dying and about to be tortured.

Branwell's Poetry

Branwell certainly glorified war, but it is not without an understanding of trauma and death, as my close readings demonstrate. He turns to war again and again in his prose and his poetry, but there is nuance here that has been disregarded by scholars. These are not the only poems that Branwell wrote about war, but I've selected these poems as illustrations of a broader theme: Branwell knows that war has costs, both personal and national. Butcher argues that "although the concept of war trauma was still abstract, the juvenilias' repeated, compulsive discourse of trauma exemplifies the anxious mood of post-Napoleonic Britain" (*The Brontës* 111). And although my study does not deal with the Brontës' war literature in as concerted a way as Butcher's does, a careful close reading of Branwell's poetry shows just how that trauma pervades his work. Yes, there is war in the Angrian world, a theme both Branwell and Charlotte engage with, but it is not pure violence. As Dan Fleming argues,

> Instead of aggressive toys being used to satisfy some instinctively aggressive urge in the child, there would appear to be a much more complex situation in which the child is invited to find within the represented aggression a narrativised object relation the substitution for bad object relations in the real world; object relations which in fact themselves stimulate the aggressive interests in the first place. (129)

Branwell's engagement with toy soldiers and the "real" Angrian soldiers they come to represent as Branwell ages is indeed more complex than scholars have noted. Rather than satisfying an instinctual urge for war, Branwell is engaging with a culture pervaded by it in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars and in the continued war-torn world in which he lives. Playing out these toy/fictional wars grants Branwell power that he does not have in the real world.

In fact, Branwell wrote and published another poem, "The Affgan War," in the *Leeds Intelligencer* in 1842, a poem about the British retreat from Kabul, which turned disastrous. Although this is a call for revenge or at least rebuttal ("England rise!" [qtd Neufeldt 368]), it is also a poem about those who have died in an "inglorious war" (368) and the coming together of those left to weep for the dead from the safety of home. Branwell was not immune to the real world effects of war, and he was certainly aware of the toll battle takes on those at home, those dying for their country, and the nation itself. War was essential to his work, but it is not without nuance. Branwell was very aware of trauma, and he had pity for even toy deaths—something H. G. Wells and Robert Louis Stevenson ignore in their own writings about toy wars, as shown in Chapter 4.

The toys that became the soldiers in poems like "The Vision of Velino," then, at once gave Branwell power as the narrator of events, and gave him a deeper understanding of loss. Branwell knew death well because of his own family trauma, and he read widely about the military and the toll armed conflict takes on men. Branwell uses these fictional lives to experiment with form in poetry—he plays with the texts—but the narratives show just how enmeshed he was in the trauma of war. Branwell, like nearly everyone I discuss in this dissertation, had no real, first-hand experience of war, but his poems are haunting nonetheless. He may use war as a unifying force, but so did England in the long nineteenth century.

Branwell's poetry is indicative of a more precocious understanding of war trauma, and while he was an adult when he revised these poems, his achievement still qualifies as precociousness exactly because even the broader world had not yet completely recognized war trauma. Branwell might have built a world full of war, but he also invented a world full of pain exactly because of that violence.

Emily and Anne

Emily's "Why ask to know the date—the clime?"

Emily's poem, set in her own paracosm of Gondal, is about another civil war. Written in 1846, nine years after Branwell's transcribed poems and seven years after Charlotte had given up the world of Angria and Glasstown in "Farewell to Angria," Emily was still entrenched in Gondal, despite having finished *Wuthering Heights* earlier in 1846. In fact, in 1848, Emily would begin revising "Why ask to know the date—the clime" as poem 32, "Why ask to know what date what clime," in her Gondal Poems notebook. As Jonathan Wordsworth notes, "so far from growing out of Gondal during the composition of *Wuthering Heights,* she returned to write some of her most impressive verse" (88). "Why ask to know the date—the clime" is certainly an impressive exploration of the horrors of civil war, most likely built upon Sir Walter Scott's depictions of the Scottish civil wars in the sixteenth century from *Tales of a Grandfather* and Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* (Alexander, *The Brontës* 590 n431).

As Alexander notes, the unwillingness of the poem's narrator to give a date or place in the first line, "Why ask to know the date—the clime?," indicates that this poem "is a tale for all times" (590 n430). More than a tale, this poem serves as a warning of the atrocities of armed conflict and the potential barbarity of man. The speaker is haunted by the sins he has committed:

"Not for the blood, but for the sin / Of stifling mercy's voice within" (434). As these lines indicate, it is not necessarily war itself that is evil, but the horrible acts committed in the aftermath. One of the people in an uprising against the nobility, the narrator explains, "Go with me where my thoughts would go; / Now all today, all last night / I've had one scene before my sight" (432) before giving an example of his lack of mercy: a severely wounded nobleman is captured, and rather than put him out of his misery, the speaker's captain remarks,

> 'Now heaven forbid!' which scorn he said
> 'That noble gore our hands should shed
> Like common blood—retain thy breath
> Or scheme, if thou canst purchase death—
> When men are poor we sometimes hear
> And pitying grant that dastard prayer;
> When men are rich, we make them buy
> The pleasant privilege, to die—

While guarding the prisoner, the poem's narrator steals from the nobleman and harasses him. However, when the narrator finds out that his own son has been captured, as the nobleman's last act he writes a letter ordering all the child prisoners spared, saving the life of the narrator's son. The narrator attempts to take care of the nobleman's daughter, "But she was full of anguish wild / And hated me like we hate hell / And weary with her savage woe / One moonless night I let her go" (437).

This lack of compassion haunts the narrator. He is constantly reminding the reader that he cannot forget the horrors of war. As he explains, "Cold insults o'er a dying bed / Which as they darken memory now / Disturb my pulse and flush my brow" (434). And later: " And still methinks in gloomy mood / I see it fresh as yesterday" (437). Although writing before a common understanding of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Emily shows an understanding of what results from warfare, even when the speaker feels the cause is just. Again, he repeats: "The blood spilt gives no pang at all; / It is my conscience haunting me, / Telling how oft my lips shed gall / On

many a thing too weak to be, / Even in thought, at enmity" (434). And here, the narrator realizes that although perhaps the war itself was just and that an uprising was necessary, the men had lost all sense of their Republican views. The war was wrought by men who were weak and poor, holding up an "alien sword" (431), but battle changed them, making them abandon their principles.

Although the poem is almost perfectly iambic tetrameter, the line "Enthusiast—in a name delighting" (431) stands out with an extra unstressed syllable. Right before it, we have a line that doesn't rhyme: "And I confess that hate of rest, / And thirst for things abandoned now, / Had weaned me from my country's breast / And brought me to that land of woe." Playing with the scansion and rhyme, Emily highlights this desertion of the values of the cause. And civil war, according to Emily, necessitates this brutality:

> When kindred strive, God help the weak
> A brother's ruth 'tis vain to seek:
> At first it hurt my chivalry
> To join them in their cruelty;
> But I grew hard—I learnt to wear
> An iron front to terror's prayer;
> I learnt to turn my ears away
> From torture's groans, as well as they.
> By force I learnt—what powers had I
> To say the conquered should not die?
> What heart, one trembling foe to save
> When hundreds daily filled the grave?

Despite "chivalry," war brings out groupthink, causing men to cast aside their values and learn to not only bear but also perform cruelty. And yet, Emily is also conscious that this behavior haunts soldiers, as shown above and in the lines: "Yet there *were* faces that could move / A moment's flash of human love; / And there were fates that made me feel / I was not to the centre, steel—." Again, Emily breaks convention by placing a stress on "were," bringing special attention to this line that points to the individual conflict of war, rather than the victorious battle this poem

ostensibly relates. And despite the convention of using a stress to highlight "God" in the rest of the poem, in the block quote above, "God" is unstressed; instead, "help" and "weak" are stressed, perhaps implying that God is not concerned in the battle: it is man-made and man-destroyed. God's role is, however, made clear: he will judge the narrator for his actions: "'God will repay—God will repay!'" (435).

The poem's structure is also interesting, despite it apparently being a draft. There is no standard stanza length, and by the end, the poem is one large chunk of text, unbroken as if the narrator was in a rush to confess his wrongdoings. When the poem does break into stanzas, they are not always separate thoughts, showing the confusion in the narrator's story. He often interrupts himself, pointing to the amount of trauma he has sustained, even as one moment in particular stands out to him—a common trope of PTSD (Kessler et al. 1076).

Emily is also conscious of the war's effects on the landscape. The war takes place during harvesting season, but "never hand a sickle held" (430). Instead, "The crops were garnered in the field— / Trod out, and ground by horses' feet / While every ear was milky sweet; / and kneaded on the threshing-floor / With mire of tears and human gore." This part of the poem was evidently important to Emily as she revised the poem in 32: "Our corn was garnered months before / Threshed out and kneaded up with gore / Ground when the ears were milky sweet / With furious toil of hoofs and feat" (438). And yet, despite the blood that mires the field, the world moves on as before. Unlike Branwell's stormy battles, Emily's are balmy fair, highlighting how man himself has ruined the world, not God or the Genii:

> Some said they thought that heaven's pure rain
> Would hardly bless those fields again.
> Not so—the all-benignant skies
> Rebuked that fear of famished eyes—
> July passed on with showers and dew,
> And August glowed in showerless blue;

No harvest time could be more fair
Had harvest fruits but ripened there. (431)

And man certainly had tarnished the world, even as the weather stayed beautiful. Even the drinking water and food are stained with blood: "The water in its basin shed / A stranger tinge of fiery red. / I drank and scarcely marked the hue / My food was dyed with crimson too" (435). Nearly cannibalistic (perhaps a fitting comparison for a civil war), the blood-soaked food and water have become commonplace, not only showing the extent and length of this bloody war, but also the effects on the world around the men. The fields lie barren, and what's left has been soiled by bloodshed. Emily shows not only an understanding of the traumas of warfare on the psyche of man himself, but also the repercussions of war on the world. And unlike Branwell's poetry, where the Angrians view God as directly involved, Emily sees God as simply someone who will dole out justice for the atrocities committed—rather, it is man who makes the world uninhabitable and war so incompressible and unutterable in its trauma.

Anne's "Z——'s Dream"

Written on the same day as Emily's "Why ask to know the date—the clime?," Anne's "Z——'s Dream is also about civil war and the horrific acts committed in its cause. Centering on a soldier's dream of a childhood friend he loves, the narrator soon reveals that this bosom friend has turned enemy and the narrator has murdered him to further the speaker's cause in the civil war. The comparison between joyful, untainted youth and the bloodstained deeds of war is striking. Alexander explains, "The fate of both boys seems to have been determined by the political situation in their country: the speaker, one of Gondal's Republican heroes of the civil war, sees his former friend's death as furthering his cause but makes it clear that victory is still

far off" (599 n479). Like Emily, Anne focuses on a singular event that haunts the speaker, despite the war's seeming endlessness.

Once again, we also see how war has hardened a warrior, but the dream of childhood reawakens the compassion of the speaker:

> At first, remembrance slowly woke.
> Surprise—regret, successive rose,
> That Love's strong cords should thus be broke,
> And dearest friends turned deadliest foes.
> Then, like a cold, o'erwhelming flood
> Upon my soul it burst—
> This heart had thirsted for his blood;
> This hand allayed that thirst!
> These eyes, unmoved, had heard his prayer;
> This tongue had cursed him suff'ring there,
> And mocked him bitterly! (481)

As in Emily's poem, the narrator shows no mercy to the dying, and now feels the loss when the harsh comparison between friendly play and unfriendly war becomes obvious: "Unwonted weakness o'er me crept; / I sighed—nay, weaker still—I wept! / Wept, like a woman o'er the dead / I had been proud to do:— / As I had made his bosom bleed; / My own was bleeding too."

But that pity is weakness, and womanly weakness at that, shows that the speaker is not quite so repentant as Emily's narrator. The dream shows that he has always been hard-hearted: "I could have kissed his forehead fair; / I could have clasped him to my heart; / But tenderness with me was rare, / And I must take a rougher part" (480). And instead of showing affection to his friend, even in childhood, he wrestles his younger friend to the ground, conscious of his "superior strength" (481). The dream, then, hints that aggressive childhood power games be a precursor to more deadly violence—a show of force, as much as a friendly tussle.

And despite the narrator's momentary weeping, the poem ends with the speaker steeling himself for further bloodshed. "But foolish tears!" (482), he exclaims, before rationalizing the

violence: “Repentance, now, were worse than vain: / Time’s current cannot backward run; / And, be the action wrong or right, / It is for ever done.” Regardless of a friend’s murder, the fight must go on without much worry over right and wrong: “I’ve said his death / Should be my Country’s gain:— / If not—then, I have spent my breath, / And spilt his blood in vain.” The moral question the dream brings up is set aside; whether for good or ill, he has murdered his friend, and despite this seeming necessity, little good has come from his friend’s death: “And I have labored hard and long, / But little good obtained.” Despite this, the narrator is not swayed to reconsider his role in the war and is committed to continue murdering those who stand in his way: “My foes are many, yet, and strong, / Not half the battle’s gained” (482). He continues, “And, much I doubt, this work of strife, / In blood and death begun, / Will call for many a victim more / Before the cause is won.—” In fact, the poem ends on the narrator’s re-commitment to the war: “Advanced thus far, I’ll not recede;— / Whether to vanquish or to bleed, / Onward, unchecked, I must proceed. / By Death, or Victory mine!” This last word “mine!” has no rhyme, despite the strict rhyme scheme of the poem, calling attention to the selfish cause behind this war, no matter the Republican virtues the narrator seemingly defends.

Conclusion

Both Emily’s and Anne’s poems are primarily written in iambic tetrameter, which sounds more like speech. This, of course, makes sense because their narrators tell their stories in these poems. This focus on the individual is in contrast to Branwell, whose poems often muse on the communal atrocities and gains of war, whether sung by a regiment of 5,000 or by a singular speaker. Emily certainly also seems concerned about the toll that war takes on the land, and her and Anne’s civil war is an uprising about the poor and powerless rising up against those with

money and status, whereas Branwell focuses on soldiers bred through and through. These contrasts are interesting, especially since Emily and Anne were writing at a later date—perhaps they had gained even more perspective on the world as adults.

However, Branwell still showed an understanding of the traumas of warfare, from an early age and into a disillusioned adulthood. Branwell nearly always uses trochaic tetrameter in his war poems, which is interesting because it doesn't follow traditional marching rhythms or the sounds of speech. Instead, Branwell creates "masculine" poems that sound unnatural to the ear. As he plays with poetry, I argue that Branwell *wants* these poems to sound unnatural. Even in his highly militaristic world, war is bloody and, especially with the constant civil wars, unnatural. All four siblings show an understanding of the traumas of war—even Branwell. The siblings' poetry consistently places stress on words such as "blood" and "gore," highlighting the visceral realities of armed conflict, even though it all began with toys who cannot feel. Over the course of developing their paracosm, in fact from the very beginning, the Brontës thought of their toys as representative of humanity. Twelve wooden soldiers became thousands of men in their war play, and dozens of characters in their stories. The paracosms of Angria and Gondal were war-torn, but the characters are damaged by their militaristic reality, just as England was after the Napoleonic Wars. The very realistic and bloody scenes of the juvenilia highlight the repercussions of war on the individual, the society, and the landscape. War might be exciting for the children (as Charlotte and Branwell both admit to above), but there is also a "quivering," a regret, a torment that results from armed conflict. As I show later on in this dissertation, adults don't always replicate this trauma in their own imaginings of war, but the Brontë children certainly did.

The children grew to be young adults as the paracosm continued, but I argue that their writing is still precocious—very little was understood about war trauma during the period, and yet the siblings incorporated it into their writings. And although Branwell certainly became more attuned to this trauma as he aged, even as a child he never wanted his toys to die; he wanted to make them alive again. That may be the beauty of toys: they can be made alive again, and even if the toy itself is destroyed, they can live on in narrative, or, as Susan Stewart calls it, "the world of the daydream" (57). Stewart goes on to explain that toys are linked to "the world of the dead." Perhaps toy soldiers are most prominently linked to death. They are, after all, designed to be knocked over, just like the ninepins the siblings used for the Ashantees in their war play.

The Brontë siblings became attached to these toys—so attached that they developed an elaborate paracosm inspired by them. Talking about the Brontës, Lois Kuznets argues that "toys may inspire narrative dramatization and then become unnecessary to it" (83), but I believe the toys never really disappeared although they may have resulted in a universe much larger. That Charlotte and Branwell spent so much time in early childhood writing and rewriting the acquirement of the toys speaks to the importance they played in the micrographia that ensued. While the toys may have been lost, they lived on as toy lives—toys that became animated into an extravagant war game that the Brontës played together, from their first physical "plays" to the more literary endeavors of their later years. The Twelve were not forgotten. They were entirely necessary for the production of these particular paracosms, as the constant wars illustrate. Most significant to my larger argument these toys conferred power on the children, even when they grew up—power they did not have without the miniature men they could lift up, place down, and write about in a secretive script that their father could not read. Although Branwell would "transcribe" his poems into a more legible hand, most of the productions continued to be

toy soldier size. The toys granted a power the Brontës were loath to give up. And that these works were collaborative speaks to how the children worked both together and *against* each other, building a universe filled with war, but also playing at a literary war for power over the narrative itself.

Despite what most scholars contend, Emily and Anne did not leave to create a more peaceable kingdom and Charlotte was certainly interested in war from an early age, although her own writings often deal with more romance than carnage. Emily and Anne still wrote about war in Gondal, as the poems above illustrate. Conflict is an important part of world building, particularly in an imperialistic age that saw plenty of wars and the imagined conquering of yet "unexplored" spaces on the map. The children and young adults, the girls as well as the boy saw themselves as a part of this adventure, using toys and drawn maps to imagine England's prowess on the battlefield.

Finally, theirs was a precocious interest. Whether writing as children or young adults, the Brontë siblings were attuned to the horrors of armed conflict. This in itself is a power move. Although they may have been imitating war narratives they had read, the Brontës carved out their own space on the map, so to speak. They created a fictional world that was based in reality, and they created characters scarred physically and mentally by the wars they had witnessed or taken a part in. I argue in the rest of this dissertation that adults who play at war take away this agency from children or take over completely, making war a game to be won rather than something to be thought about, mulled over, experienced. In the end, when adults play at real war, the actual violence gets abstracted in preference of an aesthetic exercise. The Brontës, although extraordinary children and young adults, speak to the fact that children, too, can

imagine trauma in a way that adults often attempt to avoid or ignore as they take over enviable toy worlds.

CHAPTER III

DANGEROUS TOY WORLDS

The Brontës imagined themselves as geniis and little queens and a king, but worlds created by adults for children subvert these powerful imaginations, leaving children powerless and scared within toy worlds filled with war. Valerie Sanders argues that "In Victorian and Edwardian children's imaginations, things come alive and are used to create a regressive world where adventure happens, but via a loss of control which has to be regained" (157). In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871) and Edith Nesbit's *The Magic City* (1910), however, there is no return of control because children are pictured as not having any. Both texts show their protagonists gaining nominal authority but no real power, and in the end they must return to the real world and the real world power structures within it.

Of course, children typically have some sort of power over toys, but as Lois Kuznets explains, "animated toys as characters in literature transcend these 'real-world' uses in significant ways, representing not only human hopes, needs, and desires but human anxieties and terrors as well" (1). One of these terrors is what it means to be "real" (2). As fictional children, neither Carroll's nor Nesbit's protagonists are "real," and their toy worlds may indeed be utopian for adults (Nesbit, for instance, imagines a world without motors, "nor yet phonographs, nor railways, nor factory chimneys, nor none of them loud, ugly things. Nor yet advertisements, nor newspapers, nor barbed wire" [496]), but they are certainly not for the children, who are subject to the manipulations of the adult narrator and author. If children always desire to have their own separate play culture, as Brian Sutton-Smith argues (125), then adults writing this play culture for the "amusement" of children necessarily entails violating this freedom. There is a power play

going on in the mere writing of these novels, as adults (yes, even Carroll) attempt to instruct children on the powerlessness of their situation—or, as Nesbit makes it clear, on their duty to adjust to adult-child power dynamics and be both brave and kind in the face of (adult) adversity.

Carroll and Nesbit both create confusing toy worlds in which children have no power, although they search for it all the same. The childhood desire to be Kings and Queens is subverted as these titles, just as in real-life play, are conferred upon the protagonists but rendered meaningless in fictional worlds created by adults. This is not to say that these texts aren't playful—they certainly are—but as I will illustrate, they are also examples of toy wars, making them a critical part of the conversations surrounding adult-child power structures. Toy wars become places in which adults and children battle over status and over the enviable toys that children (and adults) play with. In many ways, children become toys as they are manipulated in the narrative or even become "things" themselves, as in *Through the Looking-Glass*. I tend to agree with Perry Nodelman that in writing the child, children's literature authors necessarily take control over their fictional children. As Nodelman argues, "The texts assume the right of adults to wield power and influence over children" (*Hidden Adult* 78). Even Marah Gubar, although often thought of as arguing the opposite side of the spectrum, admits that Nesbit "never fails to acknowledge the tremendous power adults have over children" (143). Far from picturing children as god-like giants, adults' toy worlds often feature children stymied by illogical rules and potential (if not actual) violence.

However, toy worlds involving war complicate both sides of the child agency debate. Nodelman has argued that children's literature "represent[s] colonialist thinking[24] by making safety a central concern: a key question is whether children are capable of keeping themselves

[24] As I mention briefly in Chapter 4, I am uncomfortable with using the language of colonialism to talk about the white children my study deals with, but although I disagree with the term, I understand the sentiment behind it.

from danger. The usual answer is that they are not and that adults must therefore create safe havens for them, places where they can be safely childlike" (78). Nonetheless, Nesbit creates a dangerous toy world, one so frustrating that Philip does not wish to adventure any longer,[25] and in Carroll's even more dangerous toy world, Alice physically shakes the Red Queen until she is back in her drawing room. Adults are not making "safe havens" when they create worlds riven by toy wars, although perhaps that is Nodelman's point: adults bring the children back to the "real" world—back home—to a place of safety because children need protection. But what they need protection from is the point of this chapter. It is adults who create the dangerous situations in these toy worlds. Despite a child having (tenuous) ownership over toys, adults take back the toys, making them a part of a dangerous, violent adventure in which children must try to survive amidst confusing, topsy-turvy rules that are, once again, created by the adult author.

Toy wars are central to better understanding how power functions in works written by adults for children. Nesbit and Carroll do show nuance in their engagement with children, as Gubar has argued, but I also agree with Nodelman that children's literature is "inherently didactic" ("Hidden Child" 272). However, I don't believe every author preaches on purpose, or that adult didacticism strips from actual children the potential to *not* learn from texts, or at least not learn the (intended or not) meaning(s) behind them. Both Nesbit and Carroll use dangerous toy worlds to remind children (perhaps unconsciously) that they don't have power—even over their toys. That is not to say that Alice and Philip aren't pictured as having agency; Alice *chooses* to go into Looking-Glass Land, and Philip *decides* to return to the magic toy world he himself built. But this agency does not translate into any sustainable power. Rather, toy worlds filled with war reaffirm a child's powerless position, a harsh contrast to the paracosm of the Brontës.

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[25] As the narrator in *The Magic City* notes, "he was so tired of adventures" (371).

Lewis Carroll

Through the Looking-Glass, the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)*,* follows Alice into Looking-Glass Land, where she becomes a part of a giant chess game. In 1896, Carroll wrote a Preface to *Through the Looking-Glass,* which begins*:*

> As the chess-problem, given on the previous page, has puzzled some of my readers, it may be well to explain that it is correctly worked out, so far as the moves are concerned. The alternation of Red and White is perhaps not so strictly observed as it might be, and the "castling" of the three Queens is merely a way of saying that they entered the palace; but the "check" of the White King at move 6, the capture of the Red Knight at move 7, and the final "checkmate" of the Red King, will be found, by any one who will take the trouble to set the pieces and play the moves as directed, to be strictly in accordance with the laws of the game. (*Annotated* 133)

The alternation of Red and White is certainly not observed: at one point, White moves seven times before Red moves again. And Alice's journey, despite Carroll's protestations, is *not* "strictly in accordance with the laws of the game," since in proper games of chess, only kings can castle. However, it's clear with this preface that Carroll took the setting of Looking-Glass Land—the chess game—seriously. Accompanied by a chess diagram and the note "White Pawn (Alice) to play and win in eleven moves," *Looking-Glass* is a game as much as a fairy-tale. And chess is, after all, a war game.

War games, as this dissertation shows, are battles over status and power. Chess has also long served as a metaphor for life and the power battles within it. Although Alice is firmly upper middle class, her initial status as a pawn is telling as a metaphor for the seemingly powerless. She is a child, after all, as Looking-Glass Land inhabitants continually remind us—a "fabulous monster" (*LG* 233), the Unicorn dubs her. While scholars have long agreed that *Looking-Glass* follows Alice's quest to grow up, her power as Queen, or a grown-up, is constantly subverted until she ends up right back where she started: a seven-and-a-half-year-old girl playing with kittens in the drawing room, pretending to be an adult with some semblance of power. However,

even if Alice has in fact grown up, Carroll reminds us in the introduction that "We are but older children, dear, / Who fret to find our bedtime near" (*LG* 183).

I argue that as "older children," adults who create dangerous toy worlds often experience a kind of toy envy.[26] Jennifer Geer points out that "In *Wonderland* and *Looking-Glass*, Carroll ultimately suggests that both adults and children want power as well as comfort, and that the domestic world of little girls and fairy tales is the unlikely site of power struggles over the comforts of home and childhood" (2). Still more importantly for my purposes, however, is that it is also a battle over enviable toys. Chess is both ludic pleasure and political training; it is a game played by children and adults. So to whom then does it belong? Carroll wants to possess both the game and Alice herself. But Alice clearly knows how to play chess as well, as she asks Kitty:

> Can you play chess? Now, don't smile, my dear, I'm asking it seriously. Because, when we were playing just now, you watched just as if you understood it: and when I said 'Check!' you purred! Well, it *was* a nice check, Kitty, and really, I might have won, if it hadn't been for that nasty Knight, that came wriggling down among my pieces. (*LG* 156)

It's very important that Alice has just lost a game of chess (presumably to an adult, but perhaps to herself) before entering a giant chess game in Looking-Glass Land because it helps to foreground her impending, large-scale game in which Carroll takes control.[27] Looking-Glass Land is yet another chess match—a game she might be allowed to win, but without any real gain

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[26] Dan Fleming explains that a "plaything is actually quite a complex object. Recognizing it as that is precisely that—an act of recognition" (9). I refer to chess pieces as "toys" throughout because they are used for play. For instance, when Philip in *The Magic City* uses chess pieces to build his magic world, chess pieces become toys—just as ashtrays do. Likewise, Alice and Carroll play with the chess pieces in ways that make them toys. John Newson and Elizabeth Newson quote an English toy maker who explains, "anything is a toy if I choose to describe what I am doing with it as play."

[27] U. C. Knoepflmacher notes that Alice's lost game of chess shows that Carroll "hardly intends to abdicate his control of the chess board on which his dream-child moves with such determination," although he also argues that "Alice is certainly less of a pawn than her much-tormented *Wonderland* and *Under Ground* counterparts" (196). While I agree that Carroll maintains control over the game (and Alice), I have trouble seeing Alice as any less tormented in Looking-Glass Land. This is, after all, a *war* game.

of power or status, as I will show. And chess is, at least in part, a battle of intellect, something Carroll excels in and Alice does not.

Moreover, that it is the knight who foils her "Check!" in the "real world" game of chess is telling, as many scholars have thought of the Knight in Looking-Glass Land as Carroll himself. Despite Alice's own understanding of chess, this game is ultimately under Carroll's control. Alice is simply a pawn, even when she becomes a Queen, able to be moved about according to his whims as a battle of wits takes place between a grown man of thirty-nine and a fictionalized seven-and-a-half-year-old girl.[28] Carroll effectively takes back control of the game, distorting the rules in Looking-Glass Land so that Alice has no chance of gaining any power, even if she does win the game.

Chess is, after all, a two-player game, and the fictionalized Alice is playing against Carroll. He *lets* her win, of course, as adults often do, but through doing so he retains control over the game. The game, then, is not about competition so much as it is about control. Gubar notes that "Carroll frets over the possibility that even nonsense literature can function as a form of coercion" (127). While I think "coercion" is perhaps strongly worded for what Carroll's own nonsense works enact upon the child, *Through the Looking-Glass* certainly still engages with adult-child power structures. Carroll is not villainous, but he is controlling, so perhaps he was right to "fret." R. L. Platzner argues that "the anarchic dimensions of play becomes most apparent when we consider how many of the games Alice is invited to participate in are simply pointless. Whether the game be croquet, or chess, or war, or just the matching of wits, there are clearly no stakes, no points to be won or scored, no skills to be mastered, and finally no

[28] The real Alice Liddell, on whom Alice is based, was nineteen by the time *Through the Looking-Glass* was published (and thirteen when she appeared as a seven year old in *Alice in Wonderland*).

opponents to be defeated" (79-80). However, I would argue that there *are* opponents: Carroll is reasserting his narrative power over Alice and over playthings themselves.

After all, there is no "equal" play between children and adults, as shown by Alice's attempts to play with others. Gillian Beer contends that "games rely upon hierarchies of meaning and on rules, but play is more egalitarian. Both games and play are essential to the *Alice* books" (51). However, as I argue in detail in Chapter 4, I do not consider war play *or* war games to be egalitarian. Rather, Alice can't quite participate in the games of Looking-Glass Land because she does not understand the rules, but she is also repeatedly denied a play-partner in the "real world": her sister, too logical to play at multiple queens, refuses her invitation, and her nurse is scared by Alice's attempts to play at being a hungry hyena. The latter shows the antagonistic relationship between adults and children. Not only is Alice afraid of the power of adults ("suppose each punishment was to be going without a dinner; then, when the miserable day came, I should have to go without fifty dinners at once!" [156]), but her cannibalistic wishes embody a sense of displeasure for the ways in which adults dismiss her games. And dismiss them they do. Alice is left to her own devices the day she goes to Looking-Glass Land.

That Carroll chose a war game is telling. *Wonderland* was already violent or potentially so, and Alice engages in this violence throughout that text, kicking Bill up the chimney, for instance, or accidentally threatening her companions in her own pool of tears with deadly encounters with her cat Dinah, but *Through the Looking-Glass* is *intrinsically* violent. Rather than a meditation on Alice growing up, as many critics contend, I argue that *Looking-Glass* is a battle between an adult and a child. Ultimately the (adult) narrator has control over the ways the pieces move, even Alice—so much control, in fact, that he can alter the rules of the game. Beatrice Turner explains, "Knowledge of the game's rules is a signifier of power, and Alice,

ignorant of how this logic works, is powerless" (249). Alice may become queen, but only through the help of the Red Queen, her opponent, showing the convoluted nature of this game.

Interestingly, there are no other pawns on the board. The diagram included in *Looking-Glass* shows a singular pawn on a board also containing two queens, two kings, two knights, and a rook. And it's no wonder—besides the White Queen's baby, too young to play, there are no children in Looking-Glass Land. The Unicorn is understandably confused when he sees Alice. It's worth noting that during the nineteenth century, pawns became increasingly important in chess. In the 1860s, the famous chess player Louis Paulsen was interested in a defensive chess game rather than an aggressive one. In this school of chess, termed the Modern School, a new understanding of pawn-play came about: "The Pawn is now regarded as strongest at home, and weaker the more it is advanced, because in its advance it leaves behind it 'holes' or squares which cannot be guarded by pawns" (Murray 889). Carroll's game is full of "holes," making the game more interested in aggression rather than defense. He is not worried about the latter, but as the only pawn, Alice's journey across the board to become a Queen is a dangerous one.

There is always the threat of violence in Looking-Glass Land, as in Wonderland. As Leila May points out, "there is no central family in either Wonderland or Looking-Glass Land, and the family relations we do see—e.g., between the White King and Queen, between the Duchess and her baby, and between the brothers Tweedle-Dee and Tweedle-Dum—are all, at best, vexed relations" (89). Even though Dee and Dum's battle preparations are ridiculous, they speak about violent matters such as having one's head cut off. It is clear, too, that Alice is not safe: "I generally hit everything I can see," says one, and the other responds, "And *I* hit everything within reach" (*LG* 200). The crow who frightens them all away (all before Alice can get any directions) is terrifying in its own right and "ma[de] quite a hurricane in the wood" (*LG* 201).

Physical harm is a potential, if not actual, reality of Carroll's toy world—and Alice knows it: at one point drums beat so loudly that "she started to her feet and sprang across the little brook in terror" (236). That Alice is terrified in Looking-Glass Land is very telling.

The first danger comes when Alice walks in the dark wood where things have no names. Although a fawn helps her out, Alice is stuck for a while wondering about her own name: "'And now, who am I? I *will* remember, if I can! I'm determined to do it!' But being determined didn't help her much, and all she could say, after a great deal of puzzling, was, 'L, I *know* it begins with L!'" (185). The narrator's interruption, that "being determined didn't help her much," shows just how little power Alice has in this world full of Bread-and-butter and Rocking-horse flies. This forest and the land around it, after all, are a world of things and beasts, not people, and Alice's temporary memory loss is a reminder that her identity is not stable, even as a "human child" as the fawn yells out in fear after exiting the forest. After all, Alice is not only a child but also a pawn, and so she has essentially become another thing in the world, despite her lack of understanding of it. As Tweedledee tells her: "Why, you're only a sort of *thing* in [the Red King's] dream!" (197; emphasis my own). Later, the Sheep even asks her, "Are you a child or a teetotum?" (209). When the Unicorn first meets her, he and Haigha keep referring to Alice as an "it," before finally settling on the name "Monster." Alice does not object, "getting quite used to being called 'the Monster'" (234). Alice is a thing in this topsy-turvy world—but perhaps this is the case even in the "real" world where she can be placed aside and forgotten in the drawing room while her family prepares for Guy Fawkes Day.

Alice, at first, likes being left to her own devices. Her first thought as she enters Looking-Glass Land is that she is free from adult control: "'I shall be as warm here as I was in the old room,' thought Alice; 'warmer, in fact, because there'll be no one here to scold me away from

the fire. Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and can't get at me!'" (*LG* 158). This, of course, is an escapist fantasy. Alice is excited about the opportunity to make her own decisions without fear of retribution, but the world won't let Alice get her way. Try as she might to get to the top of the hill in the garden, she keeps ending up at the house once more. When she resolutely says, "I'm *not* going in again yet. I know I should have to get through the Looking-glass again—back into the old room—and there'd be an end of all my adventures!" (167), her next attempt finds her "actually walking in at the door." It isn't until she meets the Red Queen that Alice is able to leave the Looking-Glass house behind her.

Despite this being her adventure, when Alice excitedly realizes the world is a chessboard, she exclaims: "How I *wish* I was one of them! I wouldn't mind being a Pawn, if only I might join—though of course I should *like* to be a Queen, best" (173). As she says this, "she glanced rather shyly at the real Queen" (174). Thus Alice politely asks for permission to play a game that she could play freely in the "real" world, hinting to the Queen that she "should *like* to be a Queen, best."[29] Instead, the Queen allows her to become a white Pawn, although she provides the directions for becoming a Queen, finally interrupting herself when she is not happy with Alice's lack of thanks: "'You *should* have said,' the Queen went on in a tone of grave reproof, '"It's extremely kind of you to tell me all this"'" (176).

Perhaps it is kind, but it is also a form of control. The Red Queen lays out all the steps for Alice:

> A pawn goes two squares in its first move, you know. So you'll go *very* quickly through the Third Square—by railway, I should think—and you'll find yourself to the Fourth Square in no time. Well, *that* square belongs to Tweedledum and Tweedledee—the Fifth is mostly water—the Sixth belongs to Humpty Dumpty. . . . the Seventh Square is all forest—however, one of the Knights will show you the way—and in the Eighth Square we shall be Queens together, and it's all feasting and fun! (176)

[29] This is in contrast to Knoepflmaker's claim that Alice is a "self-appointed pawn" (196).

Alice does not need to make any decisions, nor can she. Both the Red Queen and Carroll himself lay out her plot before she has even begun playing the game. The Queen's last words to Alice before moving to her spot on the board are "remember who you are!" (176). But who is that exactly? Alice, the seven-and-a-half-year-old? The pawn? A future queen? With all the problems that lie ahead, all the confusing riddles she can only half understand, it seems likely that Alice is meant to remain Alice: a little girl who lives according to the whims of the "adults" around her, even if they are her own playthings.

The Queen, a toy, plays the role of an adult. She is a sort of governess figure, providing Alice with instruction. Upon their first meeting, the Red Queen commands: "Look up, speak nicely, and don't twiddle your fingers all the time" (171). What's more, Alice promptly "attended to all these directions" (171), showing subservience to a figure that even in Looking-Glass Land she was at first able to pick up and move at will. Now the same size (or, according to John Tenniel's drawings, a little smaller than the Queen), Alice takes her own toy as knowing more despite not understanding everything the Queen is trying to say. Admittedly, when Alice does not understand the Queen, she is "surprised into contradicting her at last" (172-73). Afterwards, however, "Alice curtseyed again, as she was afraid from the Queen's tone that she was a *little* offended" (173). Alice's curtsey, and her use of "your Majesty," effectively make her subservient to her own plaything.

In doing so, Alice essentially loses control. Donald Rackin explains,

> In a sense, the Alice books are about revolution in that they present a funny but anxious vision of an entire middle-class world turned upside down: two topsy-turvy, 'backwards' places where the sensible child of the master class acts as servant, and the crazy servants act as masters; where inanimate, manufactured playing cards and chessmen have seized control, giving rude orders to a real, live, polite human representative of the ruling class that had but recently manipulated them as inert counters in a game of her own devising. (8-9)

However, Alice doesn't seem to have any substantial control to begin with, despite her middle-class world. She loses a game of chess before ever entering Looking-Glass Land, and while children have ownership of their toys, this ownership is tenuous. After all, adults are typically the ones who give children toys, and those same adults regularly punish children by taking away their playthings, a move of power. Rather than take away Alice's playthings, however, Carroll turns them against her, creating a dangerous toy world.[30]

Furthermore, in Looking-Glass Land Alice is unable to get control even of playthings. In the Sheep's store, Alice "spent a minute or so in vainly pursuing a large bright thing, that looked sometimes like a doll and sometimes like a work-box, and was always in the shelf next above the one she was looking at" (209). She attempts to climb after it, but "the 'thing' went through the ceiling" (209). Yet another "thing" in Looking-Glass Land, it is beyond Alice's power to retrieve, even though in the real world a doll or a work-box would be reachable and manipulable. As George Watson points out, "Nonsense literature is nothing like realism. But it is, at least fitfully, something like reality" (544). Alice has no control in Looking-Glass Land, nor does she have it in the "real" world.

When talking to the White Queen, Alice finally gets exasperated, calling out, "I don't understand you" and "It's dreadfully confusing!" (204). Alice goes on to tell her "It is so *very* lonely here!" (206) and begins to cry. Earlier, Alice asks the talking flowers, "Aren't you sometimes frightened at being planted here, with nobody to take care of you?" (169), showing her own anxieties about being alone, however much she gloried in that very prospect when she first entered Looking-Glass Land. This confusing, topsy-turvy world, with no one to take care of

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[30] This is not necessarily a punishment, although it might well express a certain resentment toward Alice Liddell for growing up. More than anything, it is a display of what I call "toy envy."

her, has left Alice vulnerable, especially as a lowly pawn venturing out further and further upon the board away from the safety net of home and her own drawing room. While in some ways this sortie is liberating, it is also frightening and lonely. The rules don't make sense to her in her role as a game piece, even though when she is at home she understands them—it is all "dreadfully confusing!" rather than exciting.

Alice (and the reader) certainly don't quite understand the Looking-Glass world. "Jabberwocky," perhaps, illustrates this best. First it is written in mirror writing, and even when printed the right way round it is a convoluted poem, emulating what the experience of young children being read a story where they don't understand the words. The plot may make sense in some fashion ("*somebody* killed *something*: that's clear, at any rate" [166]), but the words themselves are difficult. However, logic in general is confusing in Looking-Glass Land. As Tweedledee tells Alice, "if it was so, it might be; and if it were so, it would be, but as it isn't, it ain't. That's logic" (189). If *that's* logic in Looking-Glass Land, we can legitimately be confused by the topsy-turvy world in which Alice finds herself.

Although Ben Silverstone argues that "the alternatively comic and intimidating lights in which the monsters of the Alice books are presented mimic the dual aspect of Carroll's wordplay, a means by which an adult can both express his linguistic superiority over the child and find a way of communicating in a playful, mutually intelligible, transparent language" (335), within Looking-Glass Land itself language is rarely mutually intelligible. Humpty Dumpty illustrates another dreadfully confusing conversation, but within it is commentary on Alice's lack of power over words, not just things:

> "When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less."
>
> "The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

> "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master—that's all." (219)

Earlier, the Gnat mentions several times when Alice *should* have made a joke using wordplay (*would* and *wood*, *horse* and *hoarse*, etc.), but of course Alice does not. Alice, unlike Carroll, does not have mastery over word games, and she is constantly left "too much puzzled to say anything" (219), effectively rendering her silent in a world all about words.

Even when Alice knows the words, such as the words to the nursery rhymes that pop up frequently throughout the text, she repeats them silently to herself. Despite knowing these small things about the world she has come to, she is surprised by their coming to fruition. She isn't the one to name the black crow that interrupts the battle between Tweedledee and Tweedledum, thinking it's a storm at first before noticing it has wings; rather Tweedledum is the one who shrilly screams: "It's the crow!" (201). What Alice does know about the world is apparently useless, and sometimes suspicious as when Humpty Dumpty accuses her of being a spy. There is very little Alice can do right in Looking-Glass Land. She is an outsider, but not particularly special either—"you're so exactly like other people" (225), says Humpty Dumpty. Despite Alice's being in a world where children might be expected to excel—a toy world filled with nursery rhymes and war play—the reality is that Alice has very little power, and, perhaps, words are *her* "master" after all.

In this battle between child and adult, words become power. May paraphrases Ludwig Wittgenstein, who argues that "language-games are not playful activities but kinds of labor" (91). She goes on: "He points out that neither 'fun,' 'amusement,' nor 'enjoyment' can be part of the definition of the concept 'game' or 'play.'" *Looking-Glass* (and *Wonderland*) are certainly forms of labor for the reader, as they were for the creator. Alice is constantly unsure about her surroundings, as are we—which is perhaps some of the appeal, but Alice is not particularly

excited about the playful word games that she encounters. Geer argues: “The creatures’ poetry and conversations often have the effect of delaying Alice's progress in the chess game; like the prefatory poem’s ideal tale, they work to arrest her symbolic journey toward adulthood. This tendency may satisfy adult readers, but it exasperates Alice, who only wants to advance to the next square and become a Queen” (18). While I agree that Alice is upset by the delay, I don’t necessarily think that hers is a journey toward adulthood, but rather a journey toward power. When the Rose, for instance, tells Alice that “you’re beginning to fade, you know” (170)—that is, to grow up—the narrator comments, “Alice didn’t like this idea at all.” Alice is in no rush to grow up; rather, she is anxious for the power that adulthood confers, but in a more immediate way. And she believes becoming a Queen will give her that power, although it certainly does not. Her first thoughts on receiving the crown are: “‘And what *is* this on my head?’ she exclaimed in a tone of dismay, as she put her hands up to something very heavy, that fitted tight all around her head” (251). That dismay is her reaction is perhaps quite telling; being a Queen does not immediately grant her power, although it does immediately provide her with a crown. In fact, even Alice wonders about her position, thinking of the crown, which “she was afraid . . . might come off,” “ *if* I really am a Queen . . . I shall be able to manage it quite well in time” (252, emphasis my own). Alice does not feel the power she desires, and her experiences afterwards confirm her apprehension. She is, after all, a child-Queen, still under the control of adults—and, in Carroll’s world, her own playthings.

In any case, Alice is delayed. For instance, Alice asks Tweedledee and Tweedledum how to leave the forest three times, but they ignore her, reciting “The Walrus and the Carpenter” instead. Humpty Dumpty also repeats a poem, despite Alice’s protestations, before she finally sits down feeling as though “she really *ought* to listen to it” (222). As Elaine Ostry argues about

*Wonderland, "*The inhabitants of Wonderland are representative of the adults whom Alice most likely encountered in real life, and their conversations—often rude and aggressive—show the underside of those of the conduct book: they are bent on showing the control of adults over children" (36). That Alice feels that she "*ought*" to listen to Humpty Dumpty despite her own desires demonstrates just how little power she has. And although in *Through the Looking-Glass* conduct books are replaced with nursery rhymes, the idea that the rude and aggressive adult figures retain authority over the polite, childish Alice remains constant in both books. They take up her time, and Alice is always in a rush (see p. 166, for example), lest she will have to go back home where power structures are (in some ways) still more confining. At least in Looking-Glass Land she has the *hope* of power if she can only become Queen. Alas, however, it is just another dream.

Even on her quest to gain power, Alice regularly allows the "adult" figures around her to control her behavior. In contrast to my claim, Geer argues that "given Looking-Glass's persistent sense of the ways in which adult figures bully child figures, the mischievous or rebellious child is never far from Alice's games, either. Alice may pretend to be a benevolent mother, but she does not pretend to be a compliant child" (17). However, the text provides various examples of her tractability, as when she is with the Lion and the Unicorn and they tell her to pass the cake before she cuts it. While "this sounded nonsense . . . Alice very obediently got up, and carried the dish around" (235). As in the instance where she felt she "*ought*" to listen to Humpty Dumpty, Alice once again shows just how pliable she is to the whims of those around her, whether she understands them or not.

And that Alice becomes a Queen in a game of chess is telling. Tenniel's drawing of Alice with her crown makes her look very much like a chess piece with the large ball on top for

moving pieces around. Alice herself, whether a pawn or Queen, becomes a toy for the author to play with. She holds no real power in the real world, except perhaps over the kittens, who themselves rebel against her authority, disrupting her games and not following the rules she creates: the black kitten, for instance, refuses to (or cannot) look like the Red Queen, despite Alice's belief that "if you sat up and folded your arms, you'd look exactly like her" (*LG* 156-57). In many ways, the kittens and Dinah also model adult-child power relationships, and a war of sorts is playing out between who has ultimate control. In a discussion of Dinah's grooming of the white kitten, we can observe the uncomfortable position of being a child:

> The way Dinah washed her children's faces was this: first she held the poor thing down by its ear with one paw, and then with the other paw she rubbed its face all over, the wrong way, beginning at the nose: and just now, as I said, she was hard at work on the white kitten, which was lying quite still and trying to purr—no doubt feeling that it was all meant for its good. (153)

Of course, this cleaning ritual *is* meant for the kitten's good, but the process is uncomfortable at best and painful at worst. Alice comments on how the black kitten did not behave correctly during his own washing: "I'm going to tell you all your faults. Number one: you squeaked twice while Dinah was washing your face this morning. . . . Her paw went into your eye? Well, that's *your* fault, for keeping your eyes open—if you'd shut them tight up, it wouldn't have happened. Now don't make any more excuses, but listen!" (*LG* 154-55). In this one-sided conversation with the kitten, Alice plays at being an adult, and in doing so she comments on how children must put up with uncomfortable situations for their own good without complaint, despite physical awkwardness or even potential bodily harm.

Before she does so, Alice's daydreaming about her punishments (those fifty dinners) also reminds us of her awareness of her place in the world and her understanding that adults have the ultimate power—a power that they could even use to starve her. This points to how the world

"above" or in front of the Looking-Glass isn't any less confusing to Alice. The "real" world, too, has rules just like Carroll's chess game—but rules that are constantly subverted or altered. For example, in reenacting adult-child power structures after discovering the black kitten has made a mess, Alice "punishes" the kitten in a way that is as topsy-turvy as Looking-Glass Land: "'Oh, you wicked, wicked little thing!' cried Alice, catching up the kitten and giving it a little kiss to make it understand that it was in disgrace" (*LG* 153). That a kiss, a form of affection, is meant to punish, demonstrates just how much the real world is a place of confusing, complicated codes of behavior, very similar to Looking-Glass Land. I agree with Geer, who notes that "Alice's games retain subtle forms of Looking-glass country's conflicts between child and adult figures. Alice mothers her kittens by imitating adult authority figures' treatment of herself, never quite forgetting that she remains under their control" (17). Alice even scolds the mother, our beloved Dinah, for the kitten's behavior—"Really, Dinah ought to have taught you better manners! You *ought,* Dinah, you know you ought!" (*LG* 153)—reducing the kitten's bad deeds to a mother's inadequacy and subverting the agency of the kitten.

What's more, the black kitten gets in trouble for playing with the worsted, unraveling the entire ball (although perhaps Alice's own negligence is at fault here). But that play can be a cause for punishment is important. The white kitten, patiently bearing its cleaning, represents the "ideal" child, while the black kitten—who does not sit quietly while being cleaned, who playfully pulls its sibling by the tail, who unrolls the ball of worsted—is deemed naughty for being mischievous and curious, traits that Alice shares. And not only does Alice threaten to put the kitten out in the snow, but she also explains that all the punishments are being saved up "for Wednesday week" (*LG* 155). This leads her down the rabbit hole of imagining her own

punishments being saved, causing her to worry about being sent to prison for her misdeeds—misdeeds that likely involve playing "incorrectly," much like the black kitten.

Furthermore, when Alice "wakes," she again talks to the kitten whom she identifies as the Red Queen. But although some critics contend that Alice has grown up, we actually learn how little power she holds, even over her kittens. As Geer argues, "With Alice and the Red Queen restored to their respective roles as child and kitten, the adult narrator can re-establish control over the scene and return to a peaceful vision of Alice in her drawing-room" (16). Whereas in the beginning of *Looking-Glass,* Alice models adult-child power structures using the kittens by scolding them and threatening them with punishments, the end of the novel shows just how much of this is pretend:

> Now, Kitty, let's consider who it was that dreamed it all. This is a serious question, my dear, and you should *not* go on licking your paw like that—as if Dinah hadn't washed you this morning! You see, Kitty, it *must* have been either me or the Red King. He was part of my dream, of course—but then I was part of his dream, too! *Was* it the Red King, Kitty? You were his wife, my dear, so you ought to know—Oh, Kitty, *do* help to settle it! I'm sure your paw can wait!" But the provoking kitten only began on the other paw, and pretended it hadn't heard the question. (*LG* 271-72)

Kitty, in continuing to do just what Alice demands she not, shows just how little power Alice actually has.[31] She is, after all, a child. So much so that she might not even have been the dreamer at all. Even her reality is put into question.

Of course, age is an important part of *Looking-Glass*, as Alice's conversation with Humpty Dumpty demonstrates: "'Seven years and six months!' Humpty Dumpty repeated thoughtfully. 'An uncomfortable sort of age. Now if you'd asked *my* advice, I'd have said "Leave off at seven"—but it's too late now'" (216). However, Alice seems less interested in *actively* growing up, although she admits "that one can't help growing older" (217). Instead,

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[31] This may, in fact, show some ambivalence on Carroll's behalf; perhaps he too feels as if he has no power over real children, although he certainly has it over the fictional Alice.

while she had answered the White Queen's question about her age readily enough, here "Alice made a short calculation" (216), showing it is not foremost on her mind. In fact, she changes the subject: "They had had quite enough of the subject of age, she thought" (217). Alice is not so much concerned about growing up in *Looking-Glass* as she is about gaining some sort of power in the larger chess game against the adult world in which she is metaphorically engaged.

However, "let's pretend" that Alice does indeed grow up in *Through the Looking-Glass*. Alice Liddell, born in 1856, certainly had, and yet Carroll writes the sequel to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as if Alice had only aged six months by the time she enters Looking-Glass Land. Time has practically stopped for Alice. Childhood is an adult construction. Carroll constructs Alice as a permanent child, despite her becoming Queen. The dinner at the end of *Through the Looking-Glass* rescinds any power Alice may have received in becoming chess royalty. After all, "The Red and White Queens are determined not to let her take her place with them as an equal. Instead, they assert their own superior status by treating her like a child, dismissing as ignorance and ill-temper all her attempts to establish her position as Queen" (Geer 15). Even as a Queen, Alice has no power.

Alice cannot act like a Queen either, despite her (limited) success in becoming one. The door that leads to the banquet reads "QUEEN ALICE," but on either side of the door is a bell-pull labeled "Visitors' Bell" and "Servants' Bell"—there is no "Queen's Bell." Instead, Alice can be nothing but a visitor in Looking-Glass Land, Queen or no. "There *ought* to be one marked 'Queen,' you know—" (*LG* 259), Alice remarks. But of course there isn't. Her title is simply nominal. No power is conferred. At the door, "Alice knocked and rang in vain for a long time" (*LG* 259). When she does finally get into the castle, the pudding speaks back at her

"impertinence" (263), evidently not only for cutting a slice out of it, but also for "experiment[ing]" at giving her own orders. Alice may be a Queen, but she is not in control.

And Alice does not feel in control, either. In making this assertion, I argue against such critics as Veronica Schanoes, who claims that "whatever the critics may think, and whatever Carroll's wishes may be, Alice's own desire for and confidence in her queenship never wavers. She never repudiates her ambitions, rejects her crown, or doubts her own authority" (15). However, when Alice is given some semblance of respect, she is not sure how to handle it. When she speaks at the dinner, for instance, she was "a little frightened at finding that, the moment she opened her lips, there was a dead silence, and all eyes were fixed upon her" (263). Just two pages later, she is again "a little frightened" (265). Moreover, Alice "very obediently" does what the Red Queen demands, despite being on "equal" footing with the most powerful piece on the board as a Queen herself.

Indeed, the Red Queen questions whether Alice is really a queen at all. Rather than calling Alice "your Majesty" (as she had suggested Alice call her upon their first meeting) once Alice has received her crown, the Queen still calls her "child" (252). She goes on: "What do you mean by 'If you really are a Queen'? What right have you to call yourself so? You can't be a Queen, you know, till you've passed the proper examination" (252-53). Despite reaching the eighth square, Alice is not treated as equal—even her use is questioned: "What do you suppose is the use of a child without any meaning?" (253). Several inquiries about sums and subtractions follow, and Alice is understandably confused, then frustrated, "for she didn't like being found fault with so much" (255). But perhaps it is most telling when the Red Queen sings a lullaby:

> "Hush-a-by lady, in Alice's lap!
> Till the feast's ready, we've time for a nap:
> When the feast's over, we'll go to the ball—
> Red Queen, and White Queen, and Alice, and all!"

She is not *Queen* Alice, but simply Alice. Despite the door, which reads "QUEEN ALICE" even while it offers no way for her to get in, Alice is denied the queenly title until the dinner. And there, U. C. Knoepflmacher notes that "Queen Alice has been dethroned. As far as Carroll is concerned, she should have left off at square seven" (226). Her crown is meaningless.

It is no wonder, then, that Alice yells, "I can't stand this any longer!" (266) before destroying the toy world Carroll has set up for her. But, again, this isn't a display of power, but rather of frustration from the lack of it. Knoepflmacher argues that this action actually gives Alice power, stating that "by shaking a shrunken Red Queen back into the shape of a small kitten, she now displays the same powers of enlargement and reduction that Carroll had exerted over Alice herself in Wonderland" (196). However, although I agree that Alice shakes the Queen "only when her queening [or lack thereof] still leaves her discontented" (196), I see this moment as Alice losing all control even of her politeness as she grabs the tablecloth and destroys the feast that had been so disappointing. After all, it is not Alice who reduces the size of the Red Queen; rather, it is Carroll who explains that the Queen "had suddenly dwindled down to the size of a little doll" (*LG* 267). Alice, for the first time since entering Looking-Glass Land, is allowed to pick up her toy and shake it violently. In the contest between child and adult, then, Carroll-as-storyteller has set up a situation from which the child can only emerge via a kind of tantrum associated with being still younger than she is. Carroll allows Alice to win the game, but not without showing her that he has ultimate power—over her, the narrative, and the toys themselves.

Carroll plays an aggressive chess game with Alice, or perhaps more readily *for* Alice. In the chess match, there is no strategy on Alice's part; she is told exactly what to do by the Red Queen, her opponent. And a lowly pawn has little choice in the matter anyway, as it can do

nothing but move forward. But the game itself becomes confusing. Despite chess's reputation as a logical game, Alice is wrapped up in a world full of illogical monsters and animated toys. Her power over her playthings is distorted, made impossible in a dangerous toy world. Alice has little control in the game itself, nor in the "real" world despite mimicking adult-child power structures with the kittens. In this metaphorical battle between an adult and a child (or more aptly, in a metaphorical battle where an adult plays both sides), Alice loses control even over her own toys. Unlike the Brontës, who wield power over narrative and the wooden soldiers that inspired their paracosm, Alice is left defenseless and wordless in a world all about the battle of wits.

Edith Nesbit

Nesbit also wrote about dangerous toy worlds filled with war (or at least the potential for violence), as in *The Magic City,* first published in *The Strand* in 1910. A reworking of her short story "The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library" (1901), both works center on worlds that children build using household detritus, books, and toys—including toy soldiers. The martial elements are even more pronounced in "The Town in the Library," where Nesbit shows that although children may build these cities, they do not belong to them. As the captain of the soldiers[32] tells the scared children, Fabian and Rosamund, "We have taken this town, and you are our prisoners. Do not attempt to escape, or I don't know what will happen to you." This vague threat and the ownership implied here ("you are *our* prisoners" [emphasis my own]) illustrate how the fear of violence pervades this work and how toys take control over the children within these stories. Although the children protest that since they built the town "they thought it was

[32] It's worth noting, that although these are toy soldiers, "they seemed to be quite full-size soldiers—indeed, *extra* large," and "the children were very frightened."

theirs," the Captain explains, "that doesn't follow at all." Merely that children may build magic cities and towns, does not grant them any ownership in Nesbit's narratives.

In fact, Nesbit critiques children's use of toys in "The Town in the Library." The clock-work mouse only agrees to help the children after his comrade the donkey explains how he would like to be treated in the real world: "You won't put coals in my panniers or unglue my feet from my green grass-plot because I look more natural without wheels?" Upon being reassured about the humane treatment to come, the mouse lets the children know the secret for escaping from the Town in the Library. As the mouse says to Rosamund, "your brother is the kind of child that overwinds clockwork mice the very first day he has them." This text, then, is also about how children treat toys—toys that, when they gain sentience, rebel against the children who may play with them incorrectly.[33]

The adult narrator is palpable in "The Town in the Library." The children rarely get the chance to speak in the narrative except to each other. Rather, it is the clockwork mouse who tells the narrator the story, even if the children had told him. The children cannot explain their experience even to their own mother, who looks at them disapprovingly for having done what was expressly forbidden: looking in the bureau. So while the children show some agency, it is not without adult disapproval. And though the narrator is careful not to judge the children for their experimental play, the narrator does attempt to teach children to play nicely with their playthings—playthings that do not play so nicely with them, as shown by the toy soldiers.

Toy soldiers exist in *The Magic City* as well, as do Halma men, which are similarly pieces from a war game. Clearly labeled "A Story for Children," *The Magic City* is another story about a toy world where a young boy, Philip, has his life change dramatically when his half-

[33] Nesbit has other stories about mistreated toys, including *The Story of the Five Rebellious Dolls.*

sister marries a widower with a daughter, Lucy. Unhappy with this turn of events, and left to his own devices, Philip builds a "magic city" on tables in his new home with bricks, toys, and household items before shrinking down and entering it. Lucy soon follows, and when Philip accidentally leaves her there, he returns to rescue her. The townspeople, composed of toys and those who manufacture them, are worried that he is the Destroyer of the world rather than the Deliverer (a prophecy has told them to expect both figures), and he must complete seven tasks before becoming King and Deliverer. Lucy is there to help him along the way, but her nurse, the Pretenderette, attempts to stop them at every turn. Philip and Lucy eventually succeed, but, as I discuss below, Philip is not granted any real power. They return to the "real" world, and since the happy ending shows that he has accepted his new life thanks to the adventure, the narrative emphasis is on him assimilating to real-world power structures despite being named "King" in his own magic city.

While children typically have (a tenuous) control over their toys, Nesbit uses an adult figure, the nurse or Pretenderette, to battle it out with the child over who *really* has control over playthings, culminating in a final battle scene between Caesar and the Gauls. Gubar notes that

> by vouching for the child's resilience and resourcefulness while simultaneously acknowledging the adult's primacy, power, and influence, Nesbit provides us with a far more nuanced picture of the adult author-child reader relationship than the draconian colonization paradigm, which inserts adult and child into the unpleasant roles of perpetrator and victim rather than entertaining the possibility that they can operate as partners in crime. (130)

I agree with this conclusion in part, but in many ways Philip *is* a victim of Nesbit's dangerous toy world because it is exactly that: dangerous. And although Philip eventually wins the war between adult and child, it is only to be placed back into the real world where he must still be under the control of (more amiable) adults and their desires, not his own.

This argument may be contested. Although Gubar acknowledges that power discrepancies exist between children and adults, she devotes an entire chapter in *Artful Dodgers* to Nesbit, describing how "far from representing children as a race apart, Nesbit . . . portray[s] young people as deeply enmeshed in a social, cultural, and literary scene that influences but does not entirely constrain them" (129). While I agree with this assessment—children in Nesbit's works are often highly literate both in works meant for children and in those meant for adults, and children are certainly not depicted as a "race apart"—*The Magic City* shows that while literacy may aid children in finding creative solutions to problems, these solutions do not actually grant power. Instead, by being "enmeshed" in society, children become aware of their own powerlessness and succumb to adult-child power structures, structures of which Nesbit is a part. Therefore, I argue they are constrained—constrained by the texts themselves and the play they come to represent.

That Nesbit wrote *Wings and the Child* (1913) to help children build their own magic cities, a request she says she received from numerous children, shows that although *The Magic City* may have inspired children's play, her readers felt they needed more instruction for how to do it—something Nesbit, her fame waning, readily agreed to. Moreover, that Nesbit wrote instructions for play in a text aimed at adults rather than children shows that she thought of play in toy worlds as a guided activity. Parents are still essential in play, although the Brontë children show that perhaps this isn't always the case; children can invent, explore, and produce their own literary creations that subvert typical power structures.

Instead, Nesbit does constrain the child's creativity in *Wings and the Child* by giving directions to adults for creating toy worlds with children. In speaking of Nesbit's works more broadly, Gubar continues,

> The colonization paradigm that has proven so popular and influential with theorists of childhood and children's literature assumes that all acts of influence are oppressive, one-way transactions in which adults exploit and manipulate the child. . . . But Nesbit offers a more nuanced vision of this problematic—but not impossible—relationship. Acknowledging the extent to which adults and their texts form power and influence children, she nevertheless insists that such power does not preclude the possibility that children can tweak, transform, and renew the scripts they are given. (148)

Although *Wings and the Child* is relatively prescriptive, of course children (and adults) can alter their creations depending on supplies and fancy. But perhaps, as Jacqueline Rose has argued, it is indeed an impossible relationship, not just problematic as Gubar contends. Philip from *The Magic City* does "steal" (or borrow) from the adult world as he builds a magical toy world, repurposing things according to his whims, a trend that Gubar sees throughout Nesbit's works, but as Erika Rothwell argues about other Nesbit texts, Philip fails to "exercise any real or lasting influence over the outcome of events in the adult world" (65). All of the pieces of Philip's magic city eventually get put away, and Philip has learned to better accept the power structures to which he belongs.

The Pretenderette's own desire to rebuild the magic city and have possession over the miniature is what results in her shrinking down into the toy world. These are *enviable* toys; the Pretenderette wants to have the same ownership children are seen as having over playthings. As the Pretenderette/nurse explains at the end of the novel when she has been reprimanded and punished for her poor treatment of the children, "You don't understand. You've never been a servant, to see other people get all the fat and you all the bones" (621). Although this comment is about life more generally, the Pretenderette also wants to possess the miniature toy world, even after she begins to destroy it. However, in her real life as a servant, the children get all of the toys, and she gets the entire cleanup.

Philip, too, likes toys. He is enamored with Lucy's playroom, and when everyone vanishes to look for Lucy who is stuck in the toy world although he has escaped, he remarks: "Suppose I'm the only person left in the world who hasn't vanished. Then everything in the world would belong to me. Then I could have everything that's in all the toy-shops" (367). Again, we see that toys are possessions to covet. This is important because, as I've stated above, children's ownership over toys is tenuous. Philip plays with Lucy's toys, and the Pretenderette plays with Philip's creation. There is no mastery over these objects of play, but perhaps adults have the upper hand. Adults can punish children by taking them away, as the Pretenderette does to Philip, making Philip wish he was alone in the world to maintain—or even gain—power over toys. But, of course, Nesbit does not allow this. Instead, the toy world is constantly subverted. As Nancy Wei-ning Chen states, "The unexpected change of size and scale of everyday objects and ordinary living creatures initiates a sense of unfamiliarity and uneasiness for readers and is definitely not quite 'the same thing' as Nesbit's Mr. Perrin declares. Such confounding of proportion not only creates comical absurdity in terms of visual effect but also distorts the order of the universe one is accustomed to" (283). But not only are readers made uneasy by the changes in size, so is Philip. Fear shows up frequently in the text, and Philip must learn to be brave even in a world of his own creation.

So size is important in *The Magic City*. Even Philip's "real" life is toy-like, at least initially. The story begins:

> Philip Haldane and his sister lived in a little red-roofed house in a little red-roofed town. They had a little garden and a little balcony, and a little stable with a little pony in it—and a little cart for the pony to draw; a little canary hung in a little cage in the little bow window, and the neat little servant kept everything as bright and clean as a little new pin. (108)

Everything is little like Philip himself. But when Philip moves to the Grange, everything is much bigger, and with this growth, Philip loses control over his life. In his original little world, Nesbit grants Philip some sort of power, but it is still illusory. While Philip is certainly possess*ive* over his half-sister, Helen, the novel soon proves that, despite his wishes, Philip has no possess*ion* of her. True, on the island that he and Helen invented long before the Magic City, he is King. However, Helen, twenty years older, is Queen, and Helen's motherly role makes Philip's claim to be "King" tenuous. And despite Pip's question, "Don't *I* want you?" (110), when discussing Helen's impending marriage to a man who's "been wanting [her] so long," a younger brother has no real say in the matter. Helen is an adult, and against Philip's wishes, she marries.

It is no wonder then that Philip attempts to regain control by creating his own miniature city in his new house while Helen is away on her honeymoon. "It looks like a factory," Philip says, tearing it back down. (A factory, in Nesbit's eyes, is no good.) After acquiring miscellaneous household objects—dominoes, chessmen, cotton-reels, and cake-tins—Philip begins again on a temple for a bronze Egyptian god:

> The bronze god waited and the temple grew, and two silver candle-sticks topped by chessmen served admirably as pillars for the portico. He made a journey to the nursery to fetch the Noak's [sic] Ark animals—the pair of elephants, each standing on a brick, flanked the entrance. It looked splendid, like an Assyrian temple in the pictures [his sister] had shown him. But the bricks, wherever he built with them alone, looked mean, and like factories, or work-houses. Bricks alone always do. (112)

And he goes on to build and build until his city covers two tables, the second city "grander than the first" (113) as Philip learns and hones his craft, "stop[ping] at nothing," and even taking apart a chandelier for his purposes.

It's important that Philip repurposes household objects, not just toys, to create his magic city. As Steven Millhauser explains, "the gigantic produces in the beholder a sensation of discomfort, of danger" (129). In contrast, "The miniature, then, is an attempt to reproduce the

universe in a graspable form. It represents a desire to possess the world more completely, to banish the unknown and the unseen. We are teased out of the world of terror and death, and under the enchantment of the miniature we are invited to become God" (135). The domestic spaces and objects that initially trap Philip in a love triangle with Helen and her new husband are set to work to create something "graspable"—something Philip can "possess," although he cannot possess his sister.

But any God-like power is stripped from Philip when the nurse punishes him. The servants, while in awe about how his miniature world "is as good as a peep-show" (112), worry about the nurse coming back. The parlourmaid warns Philip, "You'll catch it, taking all them things" (112). And catch it he does. It's no wonder: Philip borrows from the adult world, even taking a silver and glass ashtray, making these objects a part of his childhood play. This is unacceptable to the prim and proper nurse, perhaps the most "adult" figure in the text.[34] The nurse shakes him, raps his knuckles, and calls him a "naughty, wicked boy!" (114). Any sort of power Philip might feel over the miniature world is soon tempered by adult-child power structures, which reveal to him his powerlessness even over household objects and his own (or, to be more correct, Lucy's) toys. As Gubar notes, "it is invariably adults who possess, disburse, and control assets of all kinds" (146). Although Philip attempts to possess the household objects, his ownership over both the detritus and toys is only temporary—adults can always take things away.

Moreover, the God-like power Philip might feel is doubly subverted as the miniature soon becomes gigantic. Even to get into his own city, Philip needs to journey first through an

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[34] This is similar to Nesbit's *Wet Magic*, where the children use household items to make a mock aquarium—the sand used to scrub tables, a shell necklace, a tin goldfish from a thread, with four doll candles on the outside to light it. However, Aunt Enid seems to thwart them at every turn. After all, "she was what is called 'firm' with children" (5).

"illimitable prairie of which he had read in books of adventure" (114), then up a two hundred and seventy-two step ladder (or ruler). Unlike Alice, Philip does not at first understand where he is. Although it feels like an adventure of which he has read, Philip has lost all control over the world. He is now thrown into it, without even climbing through a Looking-Glass, left to his own devices and, at least at first, unaware that this is *his* world. Even when he returns, well knowing this is his world, "the doorway was so enormous, that which lay beyond was so dark, and he himself so very, very small" (493). His world, once "graspable," has become gigantic, and so dangerous.

To help prove this point, an illustration of a toy soldier holding Philip by the scruff of his neck opens up chapter 2. "Look what I've caught, sir!" the soldier says (237). And when Philip asks where he is, the room of soldiers erupts into laughter. Philip retorts, "It isn't manners to laugh at strangers," to which the soldier replies, "Mind your own manners . . . . In this country little boys speak when they're spoken to" (237). Immediately, Philip is put in an inferior position as a "little boy," and though he has built "this country," he has no control. In fact, his toys, which he could have once held by the scruff of the neck, now have power over him. They are, after all, adults.

Philip doesn't seem fazed by this set of events, however: "Philip, though he felt snubbed, yet felt grand too. Here he was in the middle of an adventure—with grown-up soldiers. He threw out his chest and tried to look manly" (237-38). Grown-ups are the ones in power here, so Philip tries to fit in, attempting to look "manly." Like Alice, he is excited to enter this new world, full of adventure and seemingly free of parental rule. But the very beginning of Philip's story shows how adult-child power structures still play a role in his magic city.

When Lucy appears, Philip and Lucy are held prisoner by the guards and forced to undergo a trial for trespassing despite Philip's suggestion that *he* might be the Deliverer spoken about in the prophecy. No one believes him, and they are not represented at trial: "The trial did not last long, and the captain said very little, and the judge still less, while the prisoners were not allowed to speak at all" (240). Philip here literally has no voice. He is kept quiet, as if in time-out. The punishment, too, is rather harsh: death "if the judge does not like the prisoners," or imprisonment for life. Moreover, like toys themselves, "Philip and Lucy were removed" following the trial.

It is Lucy who first figures out that they're in Philip's magic city, pointing out all of the materials he used. And yet they are trapped within a prison in "*his* city" (242, italics my own). Philip tells her, "How wonderful! How perfectly wonderful! I wish we weren't prisoners. Wouldn't it be jolly to go all over it—into all the buildings, to see what the insides of them have turned into?" (242). Despite being the "great and powerful giant" (242) who built the Magic City, or Polistarchia, Philip is in no position to explore the beautiful world he created—at least at first. Noah and the jailer eventually both ask, "Would you mind escaping?" (242, 243). Noah is a stand-in for an adult, although he himself is a toy, even hinting at the fact: "Some people are so wooden-headed. And I am not used to thinking. I don't often have to do it. It distresses me" (242). The jailer, too, plays the role of adult as he explains: "I had no idea that children's voices were so penetrating" (243). The toy world is an adult world, where Philip and Lucy don't quite belong.

And when they escape, they run. When Philip climbs down the ladder to escape a "hot pursuit" (243), the ladder "leapt wildly into the air, and he fell from it and rolled in the thick grass of that illimitable prairie. All about him the air was filled with great sounds, like the noise

of the earthquakes that disturb beautiful big palaces and factories which are big but not beautiful. It was deafening, it was endless, it was unbearable" (244). The ladder leaping is the Nurse destroying Philip's city, cleaning up all the bits and pieces of the house Philip had repurposed, although she also builds up a corner, and this momentary act of building later allows her to shrink down into the Magic City. But what's more suggestive, the growing and shrinking hurts Philip: "Yet he had to bear that, and more. For now he felt a curious swelling sensation in his hands, then in his head, then all over. It was extremely painful" (244). I pull these quotes because Nesbit is not shy about having Philip deal with the "unbearable" and the "painful"; although this is a world of his own creation, there is still danger, as the extensive martial content suggests. In fact, when Philip returns to find Lucy, he tells Mr. Noah, "I want to get back into the city," and Mr. Noah responds, "It's dangerous" (371).

But unlike Alice's Looking-Glass world where the toys are less than helpful, Philip and Lucy are aided by the inhabitants of the Magic City. Although Philip made this world, he has no understanding of it. Instead, it is Mr. Perrin, an adult and carpenter who made Philip's blocks, who explains how the Magic City works and who populates it. By the time Philip is meant to accomplish his first task, saving Lucy from a dragon, the populace is rooting for him, not for the Pretenderette, who has also been arrested on suspicion of being the Destroyer. "We wish you every success," says Mr. Noah (497). And yet, there is no help from the adults: "'But isn't anyone to help me?' said Philip, deeply uneasy. 'It is not usual,' said Mr. Noah, 'for champions to require assistance'" (497). Instead the adults are all "safely bestowed" in a tower. Even the things given to Philip, which should be helpful, prove confusing. For instance, he is given "a little red book called 'The Young Dragon-Catcher's Vade Mecum; or, a Complete Guide to the

Royal and Ancient Sport of Dragon-Slaying'" (497-98), and when "he tried to read the book[, t]he words were very long and most difficultly spelt" (498).

This is still a dangerous world, despite the toys gathering around Philip in support (albeit from afar) and Philip's gradual promotion through the ranks from knight to king. Even in this world of toys, "something in Philip's heart seemed to swell, and a choking feeling came into his throat, and he felt more frightened than he had ever felt before" (496). Lucy's safety, too, relies on Philip: "She will be perfectly safe *if* you make your plans correctly," explains Mr. Noah (497, italics my own). And Philip is scared for himself as well, even of toys: "That old thing!" (498) Philip says when he realizes it is just his clock-work dragon. But later, "It threw up its snout and uttered a devastating howl, and Philip felt with a thrill of horror that, clockwork or no clockwork, the brute was alive, and desperately dangerous" (499-500). The clockwork dragon that Philip once had control over, literally being able to pick it up, becomes gigantic and, in Millhauser's words, full of "dread" (130).

Once he defeats the dragon, Philip attends a banquet and commits a faux pas. Served with things from a doll's house, he attempts to serve himself when Mr. Noah whispers "Don't!" and continues, "Pretend, can't you? Have you never had a pretending banquet?" (622). At first astonished, then bitter, Philip finally understands, but he "grow[s] hungrier and hungrier, pretend[ing] with sinking hearts to eat and enjoy the wooden feast" (622). When red fluid is passed around that "*looked* like wine," they both "did not want wine, but they were thirsty as well as hungry." Like Alice in her own dinner scene, Philip is frustrated by the banquet supposedly held in his honor. And he has very little confidence in himself. Asked to make a speech, he stands up, "trembling and wretched" (622): "'Friends and fellow-citizens,' [Philip] said, 'thank you very much. I want to be the Deliverer, but I don't know if I can'" (622).

Although Mr. Perrin and Noah seem to think Philip will do just fine, his status as Deliverer is contingent on doing good deeds, as is Lucy's status as princess, which they have named her "till the Deliverer-King turned up" (623). So although the citizens are nice, things are not freely given to the children. They must prove themselves, and unlike Alice, they are given very little instruction in how to do so. In fact, things seem to change just as Philip makes his own plans. In the second challenge, in which Philip must unravel a rug that has seemingly not shrunk down as much as everything else, he says, "[T]hat's easy as easy," but Mr. Noah reveals another prophecy that foils Philip's plans (624). However, Lucy steps in and helps out, giving him the answers, and the two complete this and every other test.

But their successes come not without trouble. The Pretenderette, by her own account, is the adult figure in Nesbit's text. The Pretenderette explains, "Why, of course I have a right to be present at all experiments. There ought to be some responsible grown-up person to see that you really do what you're sure to say you've done" (755). Although she is not allowed her demands, she comes in and out of the narrative to cause trouble before finally capturing Philip. When the hippogriff takes the Pretenderette and Philip to the Island-where-you-mayn't-go, the Pretenderette drops Philip roughly to the ground and he runs into the bushes with seemingly no problem, but when the Pretenderette herself attempts to land, the world turns against her:

> She looked down to find a soft space to jump on. And then she saw that every blade of grass was a tiny spear of steel and every spear was pointed at her. She made the hippogriff take her to another glade—more little steel spears; to the rainbow sands, but on looking at them she saw that they were quivering quicksands. Wherever green grass had grown the spears now grew; and wherever the sand was it was a terrible trap of quicksand. She tried to dismount in a little pool, but fortunately she noticed in time that what shone in it so silvery was not water but white-hot molten metal. (365)

Of course, the island isn't threatening to Philip because it was only meant for him and his sister, Helen, its creators. What he found was "only dewy grass, and sweet flowers and trees, and

safety, and delight" (365). But, as we see above, the Pretenderette has not been so lucky, and she takes pleasure in leaving a young boy in such a wretched location: "'What a nasty place!' said the Pretenderette. 'I don't know that I could have chosen a nastier place to leave that naughty child in. He'll know who's master by the time I send to fetch him back to prison" (365).

That the Pretenderette wants to be "master" shows typical child-adult power structures playing out, and although Nesbit is dismissive of this worldview in the figure of the Pretenderette, she plays into these power structures herself. As Amelia Rutledge summarizes, "John Stephens suggests that Nesbit employs the *conventions,* but not the spirit or the subversive potential, of the carnivalesque, in ways that reinforce the subjected status of her child protagonists and reaffirm the social codes governing adult-child relationships. Thus adults' authority is never seriously (if at all) undermined" (230). Even though the Pretenderette's authority is undermined throughout the novel, the majority of adults in the text maintain power over children, even when these adults are toys such as Noah. After all, "the children were not allowed to help" (114) build the Ark that saves the "happy islanders" from a flood, and Nesbit's own authorial voice throughout the text makes it clear that she knows best: when Philip wakes up under the table after he first leaves the Magic City, he thinks it was all a dream; "Of course, he was quite wrong" (244), explains the narrator.

The Pretenderette does get punished for her behavior towards the children, however. Lucy recalls telling the Pretenderette of the book of Caesar: "She's very clever at thinking of horrid things to do, isn't she?" (618). It is Philip, however, who realizes that calling on Caesar will result in Caesar clearing away the Gauls the Pretenderette has released from the same book. Although Lucy and Philip watch, hiding, all they hear is "the sound of steel on steel, the sound of men shouting in the breathless moment between sword-stroke and sword-stroke, the cry of

victory, and the wail of defeat" (619), not actual death. Caesar explains that though this is an "unreasonable wish," it was "inevitable" that nobody could get hurt so that all the men could be put back in the book "just as he left it" (620). Afterwards, Caesar reprimands the Nurse:

> "You tried to injure the children," Caesar reminded her.
> "I don't want to say anything to make you let me off," said the Pretenderette; "but at the beginning I didn't think any of it was real. I thought it was a dream. You can let your evil passions go in a dream and it don't hurt anyone."
> "You sought to injure and confound the children at every turn," said Caesar, "even when you found that things were real." (621)

These "evil passions" are tied to her position as servant, but I would argue that they are also related to her status as an adult. After all, as a nurse, she is in charge of children—and that adults have "evil passions" towards children is particularly notable in the context of caregiving. Just as she wants to be "master" of a "naughty child," so too does she want to punish him by putting him back in prison or leaving him on a "nasty" island full of danger.

And although Philip and Lucy complete their seven quests, Philip's title as King does not confer any real power. As Noah explains, "Polistarchia is a republic, and, of course, in a republic kings and queens are not permitted to exist" (622). Philip and Lucy must leave their toy world and return to the real one, while the Pretenderette is left behind, trapped and forced to make everyone love her before she can return to the world above, or outside. Philip's status as "King" is nominal only—in a republic he has no power. He might have built the city, but it is not his—it belongs to the toys he populated it with. Nesbit effectually strips Philip of any power, even over his toys, in this simple line. He is no King, just as Alice is no Queen.

What's more, Helen does not believe Philip, although she is kind about listening to his story. Instead, Philip has learned to acclimate to his new life, Lucy, and Helen's new husband. This perhaps, above all, shows how real world power structures are reinforced by Nesbit's text. The threat of violence throughout—from the Pretenderette, from the dragon, from the

culminating battle scene—all remind the child that while, as Mr. Noah tells Philip, "The girls are expected to be brave and the boys kind" (751), these skills are meant to aid the children in adjusting to familial hierarchies. Philip has come to terms with the fact that he has no power over his sister or his toys—even over his life. He has now adjusted to living in the Grange, and has come to accept his new situation through an adventure that teases him with power but that ultimately cements his status as a powerless child.

Conclusion

Both Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* and Nesbit's *The Magic City* are ultimately about adult-child power structures playing out in toy worlds filled with violence. Alice enters a war game with no control over her route to become Queen. She is nothing but a pawn moved about by Carroll and, through him, her opponent the Red Queen. Although Philip seems to have more agency in his toy world, at least after escaping prison, he is still constantly plagued by the adult figure of the Pretenderette and given no choice but to accept the adult decisions that change his life. Alice and Philip are both given the titles of royalty, but these titles mean nothing. They are in name only, and actually further subvert the power children feel in playing at being a Queen or King. These play labels "are not permitted to exist" (*Magic* 622) in toy worlds created by adults, and the power children act out in their own private play culture is made ridiculous.

Furthermore, the violence that pervades these works is a reminder of the ever-possible violence of the real world. As these texts show, adults can take away dinners and toys and make children uncomfortable "for their own good." Like the Pretenderette who lets her "evil passions" go towards a "naughty" boy, this chapter attempts to show the ways in which adult authors construct dangerous toy worlds that better prepare (or at least attempt to better prepare) their

child readers for adult-child power structures. These texts are playful, yes, but they are also examples of adult narrators establishing their authority over fictional children. Charlotte Brontë, in contrast, used a child narrator to capture the "adult" world of her paracosm, and all of the Brontë children played at being adult men, giving them a power over the adult world that Philip and Alice simply can't achieve.

These are stories about children for children, where adults brandish authority over their child readers and their fictional protagonists. In the next chapter, I look at adults and children playing at toy wars, a place where once again adults assert their authority over children and their enviable toys. And toys are a source of envy; there is, as Kuznets explains, a "competition between adults and children for the control of toys" (2). The Brontës may have managed to have their own separate play culture, but Carroll and Nesbit reestablish adult authority in play. Perhaps this control over playthings is even more obvious when H. G. Wells and Robert Louis Stevenson begin playing with toy soldiers.

CHAPTER IV

PLAYING AT (TOY) WAR[35]

In my previous chapter, I address dangerous toy worlds in literature for children. But, of course, adults don't just write about toy worlds, they play in them too—often, but not exclusively, with children. As Jack Halberstam notes, there is a certain danger that comes along with adults and children co-experiencing play: "the question is not whether the child can play with the adult but whether the adult can experience play as play and not as another opportunity for instruction, virtuosity, superiority, and hierarchy." I say that this "danger" is increasingly difficult to avoid in competitive play where (toy) lives are at stake.[36]

Play highlights power and the lack of it, as many theorists have detailed. In her work on animate toys in literature, Lois Kuznets explains that when manipulated by children or adults, "toys embody all the temptations and responsibilities of power. As characters with whom humans identify, they also suggest the relatively powerless relationship of human beings to known or unseen forces: their dreadful vulnerability" (3). Toys that embody war are particularly "dreadful" as they remind players that they are vulnerable to the very complicated and ever-changing negotiations of power that are often enforced through violence or shows of force. In England in an age of imperialism framed by the Napoleonic Wars and World War I, this vulnerability was considerably fraught and complicated; empires fall.

Kuznets shows that this "dreadful vulnerability" occurs when children or adults play with toys, but I am particularly interested in how adults react to this vulnerability in toy wars played

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[35] A portion of this chapter, "H. G. Wells at Play: War Games and Power in *Floor Games* and *Little Wars*," has been accepted to *Papers: Explorations into Children's Literature.*

[36] Of course, children and adults sometimes play as teams as well. However, that is outside the scope of this chapter.

with children. As Brian Sutton-Smith proposes, "It is because there is an economic, social, cognitive, and affective child identity that is disjunctive with the adult identity that the inevitable struggle between generations is taking place in Western Society" (123). Ultimately, children playing at being (violent) adults—which is what toy soldiers represent—is a subversive act. In *The Hidden Adult,* Perry Nodelman asserts that "the voice of many adult narrators of texts for children is the voice of a benevolent colonial official dealing with those in need of being colonized in a friendly but firmly controlling way" (211-12). Although I'm uncomfortable calling the white children my study deals with "colonized," the comparison is helpful in thinking about the strange space that children occupy as both privileged and disprivileged individuals. As Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark explain, "the childish state is both among the most democratic of socially constructed identities (we all share it) and one of the most underprivileged (its defining characteristic is one of dependency)" (8). These two facts are frightening because they ask adults playing with children to realize that they were once dependent, might still be dependent, and are now the ones on whom someone else's dependency rests, perhaps wrongly. When a child is controlling adult armies, play also reminds adults that children will not always be dependent—will, in fact, grow up—and so have the power to disrupt and question current parent-child power dynamics. War games are a space in which adults can reestablish hierarchies and children can question them. However, I link this power struggle to war *games*, explicitly. As I will explain, war *play* is far less threatening.

By assuming control of an army in a war game, children assert a kind of authority typically denied to them. Adults temper this authority by creating rules and guidelines that emphasize "adult" themes, particularly strategic skill and realistic conditions of war. In other words, toy violence allows adults who are playing with children to reestablish their physical and

mental superiority over youngsters who have assumed a role of power: one of general, king, and even god of toyland. In creating strict intellectual parameters, and in publishing these parameters, adults reassert their authority over children and depict a "correct" kind of play—an act that once again challenges a child's control of his or her toys. Ultimately, I argue that war games have the potential to disrupt the social order, at least symbolically. This potential makes play interesting, but it also drives some adults to control and eventually co-opt play in an attempt to reinforce the social hierarchy in a space that threatens it.

In what follows, I first discuss some of the historical background of toy soldiers and war games during the long nineteenth century more broadly. After that, I give a theoretical section that discusses "deep" and "shallow" play alongside the liminoid to help differentiate between war *play* and war *games.* I then use H. G. Wells's two books about toys, *Floor Games* (1911) and *Little Wars* (1913), to help illustrate these differences, before turning to Robert Louis Stevenson's war game with his stepson Lloyd Osbourne, which shows the contentious battle over status taking place in these games.

Historical Background

In 1893 William Britain revolutionized the toy world with the invention of the hollow metal soldier.[37] Before this point, metal toy soldiers were typically reserved for the wealthy, but Britain's toy soldiers were sufficiently inexpensive that families of modest means could purchase entire armies, either in sets of eight infantry or five cavalry or in bulk with the addition of boxed sets of various types of soldiers. Moreover, W. Britain's toy soldiers were patriotic—a fact furthered by the company's name. Previously, toy soldiers were primarily made in Germany, but

[37] I discuss William Britain's invention in the introduction as well, but I go into more detail here.

W. Britain was able to undercut German companies by around 45% (Opie, *Britains* 10), and, as a British company, W. Britain's toys centered on British troops and the nation's imperial pursuits. As such, toy soldiers became an important part of the cultural consumption of war for the young and the old.

The popularity of Britains soldiers between 1893 and 1914 is intimately tied to imperialism. Kenneth Brown remarks on how the toy industry grew along with the reading public's awareness and engagement with real and current wars. Brown associates this public interest in war with "not only . . . the succession of Victoria's little wars but also . . . the greater public access to information about them provided by the spread of the electric telegraph, the establishment of news agencies, the rapid growth of the daily press, and the development of photography" ("Models" 551). The Industrial Revolution and imperialism were also closely related, and because the Industrial Revolution also saw more "literacy, leisure time, and disposable income of the middle class" (Harrigan 10)—the liminoid phenomenon I will discuss later—the toy world responded. Britains experimented constantly with improving the quality and realism of its soldiers, creating movable arms, removable weapons, and accessories as well as improving the overall aesthetic. As Dan Fleming explains, "the toys were totems of the very revolution which included in its defining characteristics the processes of their own manufacture" (9). Fleming goes on to note that "a plastic [or metal, in this case] plaything is actually quite a complex object. Recognizing it as that is precisely that—an act of recognition. Such recognitions depend on setting, prior experience, culturally derived associations and so on" (9). In many ways, toy soldiers were a war technology in and of themselves; they became, to expand on Fleming's point, "totems" of war, and were implicitly joined to the ways in which Victorian and Edwardian audiences thought about armed conflict.

To emphasize this connection to real war, Britains was particularly proud of the accurate designs of their soldiers. Britains sold sets of soldiers depicting troops from "the West Indies, Egypt, the Soudan, India and Australia, as well as British soldiers engaged in conflicts throughout the far-flung imperial territories and the enemies they had to face" (98). By the start of World War I, "at least 10 or 11 million toy soldiers were being produced annually in Britain, mainly for the domestic market" (Varney 386-87). Fascinatingly, while toy soldiers with red coats pervaded the popular imagination and toy shelves, in practice "full dress" was already reserved for ceremonial occasions (Opie *Britains* 31). "Full dress," or the use of ornamental and traditional red uniforms with finery, instead of "service dress," which by the late nineteenth century consisted primarily of khaki, helped to create a continuity to British wars, a narrative that emphasized British military prowess and consistency in an age that was both confident in its superiority and history and insecure about its future. It's notable that even now toy soldiers in "full dress" stand foremost in the popular imagination. And yet, despite this seeming incongruity, W. Britain was meticulous about realistic designs, often using military artwork by Richard Simkin and others to better replicate contemporary uniforms (11). The cultural consumption of war, then, is highly tied up in these toys as both realistic models and mythologies of the all-powerful British empire.

Certainly the Prussian invention of *Kriegsspiel* was critical to the popularity of war games in England and Europe. Chess, of course, is one of the earliest war games with its simplified grid and symbolic pieces; it was followed by several "war chess" inventions that invoked similar conventions, the most advanced of which was designed by Georg Venturini in 1797. To Baron von Reisswitz and his son, Lieutenant George Heinrich Rudolph Johann von Reisswitz, however, the more modern, realistic forms of war games are due. Napoleon had

ravaged the Prussian army in 1806, sparking a series of military reforms of which *Kriegsspiel* was part. The elder Reisswitz first used a sand table to create customizable terrain, but in 1812 when he introduced his creation to the king, he had terrain pieces made that could fit into a large table (Perla 24). In 1824, the younger Reisswitz revised the game to be more practical as a training mechanism, and the military theorist Friedrich Karl Ferdinand Freiherr von Müffling explained:

> There have already been a number of previous attempts to represent warfare in such a way as to provide both instruction and entertainment. These attempts have been given the name of "Kriegsspiel." They have usually presented many kinds of difficulties in the execution, and they have left a large gap between the serious business of warfare and the more frivolous demands of a game. (qtd. in Perla 26)

However, Muffling believed that von Reisswitz had touched on a realistic gamified version of warfare—a true *Kriegsspiel*. As game designers know, there is a delicate balance between playability and realism, and Reisswitz had gotten closest to walking that line. He militarized the game, making it more of a simulation. Reisswitz also started the convention of naming opposing armies blue and red, a choice still used today (as in Wells's *Floor Games* and *Little Wars* and even Edith Nesbit's "The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library"). However, this celebrated *Kriegsspiel* remained largely unknown outside of Prussia until a series of unexpected Prussian victories, particularly the Franco-Prussian War in 1871, brought the military training exercise to attention. It was then that *Kriegsspiel,* thought of as the key to Prussia's military success, made it to England.

The *British Official Rules for the Conduct of the Wargame* came out only a year later in 1872. Primarily based on the 1824 rules, this version was highly dated, but it was the start of trend for military training *and* a leisure activity in England. In 1876, Verdy du Vernois created what we know as the "free" *Kriegsspiel,* which was translated into English in 1884 by J.R.

MacDonell and became more popular than the "strict" version. By granting the umpire (essentially a referee in charge of making decisions about possibility, probability, and fairness) more power, Verdy simplified the rules. Over the next several decades, the rules would be revised and modified for military training and entertainment. W. Britain's hollow lead soldier solidified the war game trend in the 1890s, and the activity became an important part of British culture. Adults and children played these games, often together but not exclusively so.

Theoretical Background

In discussing war games, I borrow Clifford Geertz's term "deep play" from his article "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." Originally, Jeremy Bentham uses this term to describe play "in which the stakes are so high that it is, from his utilitarian standpoint, irrational for men to engage in it at all" (Geertz 71). And yet, as Geertz notes, men continue to engage in these behaviors, as illogical as they are. Using Balinese cockfighting as his subject, Geertz differentiates between "deep" and "shallow" cockfight matches, the former of which involves an irrational amount of money. However, rather than side with Bentham, Geertz argues that "in deep [play], where the amounts of money are great, much more is at stake than material gain: namely, esteem, honor, dignity, respect—in a word, . . . status. It is a stake symbolically, for . . . no one's status is actually altered by the outcome of a cockfight" (71-2). Geertz's point is that it's not about the money, but rather what the money stands for: "a mock war of symbolical selves, and a formal simulation of status tensions" (80). Of course, the actual act is real: cocks are dying, but "the cockfight is 'really real' only to the cocks—it does not kill anyone, castrate anyone, reduce anyone to animal status, alter the hierarchical relations among people, nor

refashion the hierarchy" (79). One action (cockfighting) thus stands in for another (social tensions) without any personal physical repercussions.

Divorcing "deep play" from the pecuniary, the concept is helpful in understanding war games, which I argue are also ultimately about status. It is worth noting that these metaphorical cockfights, war games, are often between men and boys. Michael Paris notes that while "boys have played 'at war,' and historians have traced war toys back to the ancient world[,] whether this boyhood fascination with war reflects innate male aggression or simply a social conditioning for the masculine role is by no means certain" (71). This unknown leaves an impossible question to answer, but the tie between masculinity, war, and play is important to keep in mind. The texts I am looking at in this chapter are narratives of play between a father (or stepfather) and his son(s) or men taking on a role of authority over young boys. Geertz's claim that the cockfights do not "castrate anyone" helps to emphasize that very fear when losing is at stake, particularly in adults who are more aware of their vulnerability as authority figures and men. After all, they too are impersonating the "masculine role" that the toy soldiers represent, particularly if the adults playing did not serve in the military. I would add that, even symbolically, as a place in which people battle over status (a largely symbolic system in its own right), deep play is still a potentially dangerous space.

Moreover, as a space in which status is fought and won, deep play is a liminoid phenomenon, to use Victor Turner's phrase. A concept created in 1909 by Arnold van Gennep, the "liminal" referred to ritual rites that marked a period of transition. Gennep saw a common theme of three stages within rituals: separation, liminality, and reincorporation. The coming of age is a classic example, and particularly poignant for this study: a child passes over the threshold to adulthood first by being separated from the community, then by entering a liminal

stage of transition from child to adult (the ritual itself), and finally by being reincorporated into the community. The concept has since been used by scholars outside anthropology, and while to my knowledge scholars have not defined war games as liminal, they have used similar language. For instance, Richard Yarwood has argued that video games act as "a transitional third space between military and civilian lives that, in turn, has helped to enrol the public literally . . . and imaginatively to the military's task" (659).

In the foundational "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology," Turner differentiates the liminal from the liminoid. He sees the latter as a product of art and leisure activities in modern societies, using the Industrial Revolution as the point from which to distinguish the two concepts. Turner explains, "[L]eisure can be conceived of as a betwixt-and-between, a neither-this-nor-that domain between two spells of work or between occupational and familial and civic activity" (71). The liminoid is a choice rather than a cultural obligatary ritual such as the liminal, and yet the liminoid still marks a moment of being in-between that is potentially dangerous to the social order.

In the liminoid, power hierarchies can be questioned and power reversals are possible, if uncommon. Turner writes that "liminality is both more creative and more destructive than the structural norm. . . . It . . . invite[s man] to speculation and criticism" (78). Turner sees revolutions as liminal phases, but the results don't need to be nearly so dramatic. As Marvin Carlson explains, "liminoid, like liminal activities mark sites where conventional structure is no longer honored, but being more playful, more open to chance, they are also much more likely to be subversive, consciously or by accident introducing or exploring different structures that may develop into real alternatives to the status quo" (24). Carlson's point that the liminoid can be "subversive" even "by accident" is important here. I do not mean to imply either that children go

into war games to rebel and disrupt familial hierarchies, or that adults purposefully use them as tools to reaffirm those same hierarchies. Rather, like cockfighting, war games provide "a metasocial commentary upon the whole matter of assorting human beings into fixed hierarchical ranks and then organizing the major part of collective existence around that assortment" (Geertz 82). Whether adults and children are aware that they are involved in a mock war about their relationship (or the relationships between adults and children more broadly) is not particularly important. Instead, as a liminal space that allows for disruptions within typical societal confines, "deep play" provides a surrogate through which to explore and challenge the social matrix—in other words, an opportunity to battle it out.

The liminal is also disconcerting: "an interval, however brief, of '*margin'* or '*limen,*' when the past is momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun. There is an instant of pure potentiality when everything trembles in the balance, like the moment when the trembling quarterback with all the 'options' sees the very solid future moving menacingly towards him!" (Turner 75). So why would adults play? If liminal spaces open up the possibility of rebellion against the social order that privileges them, then why, as Bentham wonders, would anyone make such a high stakes bet? Thomas S. Henricks helps to explain Turner's trembling quarterback and the wargaming adult: "The exploration of disorder—involving the players' sense of improbability and their confusion, difficulties, and excitement—can feel like fun. The sense that order has been restored—during the various rest points when players realize what just happened and then reenergize themselves—feels exhilarating" (317). The uncertainty of winning, the strategy and thought that go into trying to win are fun; when an adult succeeds in winning, and so in reestablishing authority and prowess, it is exhilarating. If the adult loses, well, the game ends, and with it, the liminoid space that made deep play possible.

However, that potential loss must be very real in order for deep play to exist. As Geertz explains, "in genuine deep play, [both parties] . . . are both in over their heads. Having come together in search of pleasure they have entered into a relationship which will bring the participants, considered collectively, net pain rather than net pleasure" (71). The match has to be dangerous, if only symbolically. So the adult might lose status, but it is only temporary, and it is only symbolic. In the end, one player is still more adult than the other, leaving a hierarchy in play; the liminoid can't remove this hierarchy, but it can question it. Moreover, adults play games again and again. They play to win again, or to prove that they can win.[38] And, as I show below, they are more likely to win when their own (adult) rules are used to control a child's play. Ultimately, then, the liminoid phenomenon differentiates "deep play" from "shallow play" for adults; it is the potentiality of a disruption in the social order that makes "deep play" fun, and the eventual reestablishment of the social order that makes it so exhilarating to win. Adults who develop instructions for war games stress their own successes over their (typically young) opponents to create an ultimate narrative that provides proof of their prowess on the (toy) battlefield. By thinking about war games as deep play and deep play as liminoid, we can begin to think about the differences between war games and war play, and so better understand Victorian and Edwardian adult-child power structures.

The distinction between war *games* and war *play* is an important one. The former contains "depth" because it is liminoid, the latter is "shallow" because it is not. In war games, "there is no certainty concerning the outcome. Liminality is a world of contingency where events and ideas, and 'reality' itself, can be carried in different directions" (Thomassen 5). This uncertainty makes war games perilous—there is always the chance that the child will out-

[38] This is particularly true of war *games,* not war play, as I will explain.

strategize or out-perform the adult, thus upsetting the social hierarchy. Since "ritual passages are clearly also crucial moments for a process of differentiation, of age groups, of genders, of status groups, and of personalities" (11), these are also moments where either the adults differentiate themselves from the child, or the younger player transitions from a child into something more like an equal, even if only until the next game. This latter outcome subverts social hierarchies that (ideally to parents at least) confirm an adult's "natural" power over children. In contrast, while war play might contain some sort of strategy in some situations, it is more typical of what Roger Caillois classes as *mimicry*, where "the continuous submission to imperative and precise rules cannot be observed" (22). For instance, children might pretend sticks are guns and play out scenes of war, or they might use toy soldiers but without a set of rules to follow. They are effectively imitating adult culture, not challenging it.

And this is why "shallow" war play, as diminutive as the term sounds, is still meaningful without being frightening. Several scholars have discussed how children's play in particular reproduces cultural values and belief systems (see, e.g., Henricks 304). Jean Piaget argues that through trial and error, children learn how to "assimilate" and "accommodate" according to what they experience (298). War play is full of meaning, but it is not threatening to the social order. Rather, it helps children learn how to act and so reinforces "the way of things." Even when children go against the common grain, they are learning how to better "assimilate" to cultural values and "accommodate" the expectations of others. It is for this reason that Turner explains, "Only certain types of children's games and play are allowed some degree of freedom because they are defined as structurally 'irrelevant,' not 'mattering'" (61). War play is less threatening, irrelevant, meaningless. Furthermore, in "meaningless" play with children adults often let children win, confident in their own superiority at the game.

In part because of this tendency, I would suggest that age also demarcates war games from war play, deep play from shallow play. Although I've been using the term "children" throughout, "adolescent" might be more apt for describing young persons who play "serious" leisure activities such as war games. But what exactly qualifies as an adolescent? The debate over age suitability continued throughout the Victorian and Edwardian periods. To borrow Wells's subtitle to *Little Wars*, war games were "for boys from twelve years of age to one hundred and fifty and for that more intelligent sort of girl who likes boys' games and books." Of course, the sexism and gender ideologies are palpable here, but, perhaps unexpectedly, these age constraints leave out Wells's two sons, who were not yet twelve at the time of *Little Wars*' publication. While Wells felt perfectly fine discussing his young children's play in *Floor Games*, he excludes his children from the mini wars. I want to suggest a particular importance of twelve as a demarcation: Lloyd Osbourne was also twelve when he played war games with Robert Louis Stevenson; when the Boy Scouts began, twelve was the age where young boys could enter; and child labor laws still allowed children twelve and over to work.[39] As such, a distinction between those under and over twelve is important here; it marks a liminal stage, a coming of age. According to Geertz, a "deep" match is only possible when the opponents are as equal as possible. Martin Van Creveld similarly defines games of strategy as an "interplay between two sides" (3). And while there are still obvious power structures at play when an adult and adolescent play (as there are in cockfighting), twelve appears to be the age of an adequate opponent.

[39] There is certainly a class divide here. Most children who could afford to play with toy soldiers would not be working, meaning that their childhood in many ways lasted longer, but my point is that at twelve children *could* work, marking a distinction between those below and at or above this age.

In fact, the age difference might make war games even more contentious. As discussed, war games, as liminoid spaces, already threaten the distinction between hierarchies; children, as liminal figures, amplify this threat. Turner goes on to say, "When children are initiated into the early grades of adulthood, however, variabilities and liabilities of social behavior are drastically curtailed and controlled" (61). After all, "to be a child is to be in the process of becoming adult. . . . Childhood is conceptually what one might think of as a state of unbecoming; to be a child is to be in the process of no longer being a child. Hence, generational discourse is at once and the same time concerned with legitimizing the child-adult order while simultaneously erasing it" (Kelen and Sundmark 8). When children are younger, this state of unbecoming is easier to ignore, but if we think of twelve as a turning point, a nebulous stage in which they are nearing adulthood, then "curtail[ing] and controll[ing]" play with adult-made rules becomes more important—it also makes games in which adults can practice "adult" characteristics like strategy and patience more exciting.

H. G. Wells

Wells wrote two texts about war play in toy worlds: *Floor Games* and *Little Wars. Floor Games* is Wells's account of his two young, legitimate sons' play at building toy cities and countries on the floor using bricks, household detritus, and toy soldiers. In *Little Wars,* Wells uses the countries he describes in *Floor Games* to stage competitive wars for which he provides rules. *Little Wars* in particular has remained an important part of war game history. *Floor Games*, in contrast, is merely mentioned in passing, both by war gamers and scholars. Neither of the texts, however, dramatizes an idea new to Wells. In 1910, the same year Nesbit published *The Magic City*, Wells serialized his semi-autobiographical novel *The New Machiavelli.* The

novel features multiple references to the war games played by the main character, Dick Remington, and his friend Britten:

> We developed a war game of our own at Britten's home with nearly a couple of hundred lead soldiers, some excellent spring cannons that shot hard and true at six yards, hills of books and a constantly elaborated set of rules. For some months that occupied an immense proportion of our leisure. Some of the battles lasted several days. We kept the game a profound secret from the other fellows. They would not have understood. (79)

However, unlike Dick Remington, the publisher of Wells's two war games manuals, Frank Palmer, knew that "other fellows" would certainly understand the appeal of staging little wars.

Floor Games*, or "Citizens of Toyland"*

Palmer took advantage of the toy soldier trend in this age of imperialism when he asked Wells to write *Floor Games* and, later, *Little Wars*. Both narratives were published serially (under the copyright of Palmer) with several black and white photographs, and then as books with marginal illustrations of toy soldiers and toy worlds by J.R. Sinclair. *Floor Games* was first named "Citizens of Toyland" and published in *Everybody's Magazine*. Although it is often classified as children's literature, as Kimberley Reynolds points out, *Floor Games* is better understood as an instruction manual on playing *with* children. The sections—"The Toys to Have," "The Game of the Wonderful Islands," and "Of the Building of Cities"—detail the supplies needed to build miniature worlds on nursery floors along with providing descriptions of play and pithy comments on how to keep the peace between two children. *Everybody's Magazine,* an American publication, emphasizes "Citizens of Toyland" as a work for adults: "[W]hen such a man joins his little sons to play games on the floor, with the spirit of youth enthroned, the result is certain to be fine for the boys—for all boys and their parents. . . . If there are any fathers who don't just know how to play with the youngsters, they will find a charming

example in this picture of a great man in the nursery" (743). In effect, Wells becomes an authority on childhood and childrearing.

To return to war play and war games for a minute, it's important to note that the examples of shallow and deep play do have some commonalities. Toy soldiers are one of these. And, of course, both are leisure activities and both are often played by youths. Of the two, war games are more likely to include some sort of prop—typically, at least after 1893, toy soldiers. War play, however, can use completely imaginary objects or something as simple as sticks. And although *Floor Games* is not a war game, the text is steeped in (implied) violence and competition and contains at least one element of the Prussian invention of *Kriegsspiel*: the existence of a blue and a red side (designations for the two boys). Wells also reminds us that a large portion of the fun is the building of the set, a necessary step for floor games *and* war games. However, the play in *Floor Games* is far less structured, and the two boys never hold an outright battle. Instead, the book is largely aimed at how adults can help guide play among children, not participate in it themselves.

Wells understands his own power in the creation of his sons' cities as well, not only as author but as an adult: "The boundary [was] drawn by me as overlord (who also made the hills and tunnels and appointed the trees to grow)" (748). If Wells's god-like power over his sons' fictionalized game was not made clear enough by his title of "overlord," *Everybody's Magazine* included a full-page portrait of Wells towering over his sons' play. Wells explains that when creating the city to be published in *Floor Games*, "I took a larger share in the arrangement than I usually do. When the photographing was over, matters became more normal" (754). The sets Wells photographed are highly detailed—more polished than one would expect of two boys. Similarly, the direction of the narrative is also "arranged." Wells admits,

> I have to be a little artificial. Actual games of this kind I am illustrating here have been played by us, many and many a time, with joy and happy invention and no thought of publication. They have gone now, those games, into the vaguely luminous and iridescent world of memories into which all love-engendering happiness must go. But we have tried our best to set them out again and recall the good points in them here. (*Citizens* 748)

I call attention to the fictionalization because what Wells presents is *idealized* play; he patches together the "good points" from memory and makes the war play photo-ready.

The two boys get fictionalized as well. Referred to only by their initials, G.P.W. and F.R.W. come to embody elements of contemporary political and imperial culture. The elder, G.P.W., for instance, "carries heavy guns; his shop bristles with an extremely aggressive soldiery, who appear to be blazing away for the mere love of the thing. (I suspect him of Imperialist intentions)" ("Citizens" 751). Wells goes on to explain that his younger son's ship "is of a slightly more pacific type. I note on his deck a lady and a gentleman (of German origin) with a bag. . . . No doubt the bag contains samples and a small conversation dictionary in the negroid dialects. (I think F. R. W. may be a Liberal)" (751). The brothers also battle politically by arguing over who will be mayor, but G. P. W. always wins. It's no wonder. The real-world power structures still remain in the game—and beyond it, as Wells's control over the play demonstrates.

The play is likely liminoid for the child—an in-between space, a "microsphere" to borrow from Erik Erikson[40]—but not for the adult. Instead, Wells sees the real world playing out in these mini worlds. He sees social hierarchies reinforced, not questioned. And while this play is more abstract than two boys playing at outright war, it is still war play because ultimately it is a game of conquering, as the quotes above indicate. Age, race, and physical prowess still matter in this space, especially concerning G.P.W. and F.R.W.'s imperialistic presence—and even as a

[40] A "microsphere," or a "small world of manageable toys," works as "a harbor which the child establishes" (111). However, as Erikson notes, it may "be subject to confiscation by superiors."

liberal with a "dictionary in the negroid dialects," F.R.W. is indeed an imperialist. Wells is well aware of that. In describing "The Game of the Wonderful Islands," he explains that "here . . . is such an archipelago ready for its explorers, or rather on the verge of exploration. On the whole, it is Indian, East, and West and red Indian, as befits children of an imperial people" ("Citizens" 748). He goes on to describe how the pear-trees on one particularly less settled island are "[what] have attracted white settlers (I suppose they are)." Wells comically pairs the fictional with the nonfictional here, but he is laughing at his children's reenactment of imperialism. This scene is at once haunting because of its realism in depicting white imperialism played out by children enculturated to perpetuate that same violence, and laughable because these boys, not yet twelve, are play-acting as mayors and adventurers, *mimicking* adults for both their pleasure and that of Wells.

In fact, Wells is narrating a satirical anthropological study of contemporary culture through the lens of his sons' play. It's clear he sees parallels with the real world: "Once with this game fresh in our minds, we went to see the Docks, which struck us as just our old harbor game magnified" (754). The game does not exist in a liminal space for him, but is a play that mimics reality—a mimicry that's ripe for humor. At one point, Wells even pokes fun at modern debates about the vote:

> Only citizens with two legs and at least one arm and capable of standing up may vote, and voters may poll on horseback; boy scouts and women and children do not vote, though there is a vigorous agitation to remove these disabilities. Zulus and foreign-looking persons, such as Indian cavalry and Red Indian, are also disfranchised. So are riderless horses and camels; but the elephant has never attempted to vote on the occasion and does not seem to desire the privilege. It influences public opinion quite sufficiently as it is by nodding its head. (752)

It's especially important to see that even in this play world, children aren't allowed to vote. Being a child is maligned as a "disability" (alongside other offensive statements). Of course, this

passage is tongue-in-cheek and a commentary on the political climate, but I also want to suggest that Wells is very aware that he, at least, would have the vote—and that his children would not.

This is where I turn to the initial title: "Citizens of Toyland." In the text, Wells explains that "the nation will gain new strength from nursery floors" (743), but which nation? As the editor points out, Wells is English, but the place of publication, *Everybody's Magazine,* is American. The two sons are associated with English political parties, but they are children, a status of people who even in their fictional world would be denied the vote. They are, as Courtney Weikle-Mills would call them, "imaginary citizens." Perhaps, like the toys themselves, the children will be "Citizens of Toyland." But if these children are "citizens of toyland," or even mayors of toyland (subservient to their overlord, Wells), then how much power do they really hold? Wells and the editor certainly seem unconcerned at the potential threat to their own hegemony.

And yet, as "imaginary citizens" and "citizens of Toyland," children *are* in fact liminal figures. I've admitted this before, but it bears looking deeper. As I've tried to demonstrate, the difference between younger children playing at war and older children competing at war games rests in the potentiality of children *acting* like adults versus *mimicking* them. The editor of *Everybody's Magazine* notes: "And if Mr. Wells also tells how, in romping with the children, he helps them to learn some of their future as citizens, and how, with building-blocks and toy soldiers and toy civilians, to plan what cities and civilization might be like, it is further proof of his genius." Wells, the editor explains, "helps [children] learn some of their future as citizens." There is no disruption to the "natural" parent-child power structure here; Wells is teaching his sons through experimental play—play that would become the foundation of "sand play," and the psychotherapeutic theory surrounding it (Carmichael 302). The sons' plans for "what cities and

civilization *might* be like" (my emphasis), is attributed to Wells's genius; the play itself is a "meaningless," non-threatening way of learning about the world. Moreover, much as Wells feels the need to qualify any amount of power, often in terms of emphasizing age as the ultimate winner, the editor also emphasizes that these plans are potential and of the future—plans that could not come into being until the children grow up.

Wells similarly emphasizes this toy world as "meaningless," childish play that makes no threat of affecting the current world (even as he humorously compares his sons' mini cities to empires): "all the joys and sorrows and rivalries and successes of Blue End and Red End will pass, and follow Carthage and Nineveh, the empire of Aztec and Roman, the arts of Etruria and the palaces of Crete, and the plannings and contrivings of innumerable myriads of children, into the limbo of games exhausted . . . it may be, leaving some profit, in thoughts widened, in strengthened apprehensions. It may be leaving nothing but a memory that dies" (754). Comparing a child's play to the fall of empires points to the absurdity of the comparison; Blue End and Red End are merely episodes of play that might have taught the children. This point also echoes Sutton-Smith's claims that the child lives "without remorse, in blissful self-forgetfulness" and that "innocence is the child, and forgetfulness, a new beginning" (113). This transience of play is not necessarily a negative, but it is a part of children's play: they remember lessons (when repeated enough), but the specifics are fleeting memories.

Posing as an anthropological study of "toyland," *Floor Games* allows Wells to assert his dominance over children's play *and* confirms his status as a "great man of the nursery," becoming an example for parents to emulate. If anything, this is Wells's assertion of authority over other adults, rather than over his children; he is not worried about the latter. In fact, his narrative style invokes his superiority. As in contemporary anthropologic travel writing, Wells

uses observation alongside evaluation. His sons are his subjects of study, not his competition—perhaps, in this instance, Nodelman was correct in calling children "colonized." Moreover, through his use of humor Wells distances himself from the play while making fun of his own culture. He is the "overlord" of the game, a title that grants him ultimate power but that also distances him from the war *play* the children, these mayors and citizens of toyland, are engaged in. Instead, it's the war *game* Wells will really get lost in while his children disappear.

Little Wars

Little Wars seems like a natural progression from *Floor Games*. In the latter, Wells, while not threatened by his children's play, finds it fascinating. Like the nurse in Nesbit's *Magic City*, once Wells really paid attention to the cities his children had created, he couldn't resist participating in their construction—he gets pulled into the mini world. While war play lacks the threat to the social order provided by war games, it does offer a fantasy of control that adults are jealous of. However, shallow play does not offer the same kind of investment or realism for adults or provoke the same anxieties. It calls to mind Erikson's distinction between the microsphere and the macrosphere: war play exists within the miniature world, whereas war games have deeper meaning in the wider, social world. War games are deep play because they exist in liminoid spaces in which the social order has potential to be questioned. This space must involve some sort of equality among players to make winning a believable risk, but it also has to include the threat of a loss of status. War games are deep play, deep play is risky, and adults create rules that privilege strategy (an "adult" skill) to curtail risk. In so doing, they also control children's play (or as Stevenson calls young imagination, a "pedestrian fancy" ["Child's Play" 355])—both in their own household and, through publishing rulesets, in others.

Since Wells's boys were not yet twelve, Wells does not include them in his war game. In fact, Wells takes over play entirely, only allowing his children into their own nursery (which provides the best floor upon which to stage war) once they "take an increasingly responsible and less and less audible and distressing share in the operation" (*Wars* 91). Instead, Wells plays with adults, primarily Graham Wallas. The fantasy of toy soldiers attracted the young and the old. This dual audience and purpose are not new: "The blurred line between playthings for children and miniatures for adult amusement or other use, extends from prehistory" (Fleming 81). The inventions of W. Britain were not just for children. As Opie points out, that there was a resurgence of adult interest in war games starting in the late nineteenth century (103). W. Britain's toys were important to this and resulted in several war game manuals—even one published by W. Britain itself in 1909. While often marketed to children, war games enjoyed a mixed audience—and as Wells makes clear in *Little Wars*, sometimes these games were meant for and played without the accompaniment of children. Moreover, Wells was clearly not writing to an exclusively child audience. The venue in which *Little Wars* was serialized, *Windsor Magazine*, was for "men and women."

In fact, in *Little Wars* Wells becomes so engrossed in the game that when considering the best room to play war in, he explains, "It was an easy task for the head of the household to evict his offspring, annex these advantages, and set about planning a more realistic country. (I forget what became of the children)" (16). We can see here, once again, Wells's claims to being more powerful than his sons—they are not competition; indeed, they are not much more than toys themselves able to be placed aside and forgotten. The game took several iterations to develop, too, as Wells points out, marking a level of investment in the game itself. As a result, the text is far more than a straightforward account of rules. Esther MacCallum-Stewart points out that *Little*

Wars consists of three main sections: an early version of the "development diary" (chapter 2); a rules section (chapter 3); and an "example of play" detailing Wells's successful "Battle of Hook's Farm" (chapter 4) (556). Like writers of modern development diaries, Wells uses chapter 2 to chronicle how the game began and how it changed through play-testing various iterations. He records successes and failures; explains the reasoning behind certain rules; and gives advice about setting up "The Country" where the wars will take place, the making of which he had previously detailed in *Floor Games*.

There is something more important to Wells about this game too: unlike the war play in *Floor Games* that "may be leaving nothing but a memory that dies" (756), in *Little Wars* Wells explains: "I could go on now and tell of battles, copiously. In the memory of the one skirmish I have given I do but taste blood. I would like to go on, to a large, thick book. It would be an agreeable task" (128). These battles mean something to Wells. They leave lasting impressions, at least for the winner, because status is at stake. More than anything, perhaps, that is the crux: there is a winner. Whereas becoming Mayor of Toyland involves no real competition as the eldest always wins, here we have a *game* that involves *risk*. In the example for play, Wells explains this risk—and his superior strategy. And it is this, strategy, that appears to be at the center of what adults use war games to prove: their superior intellect. Physical skills are involved because in both *Little Wars* and Stevenson's war game a spring-loaded gun is used, meaning players had to aim, but it is the intellectual exercise of strategy that Wells, Stevenson, and other war game writers emphasize. This focus is, of course, related to status, but the emphasis on intellect reveals an emphasis on adult skills.

Even war games played by children either follow adult rulesets like Wells's or create their own based on their understanding of adult and war behaviors (one might even call it

mimicry). War games during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries realized this powerplay as well. The author of "The Great War Game" (1908) explains: "My brothers and I played this game ever since I can remember, and hush! Whisper! We play it yet. And, as we grew older our increasing intelligence suggested many new rules and improvements that actually added greatly to the realism and excitement of the game" (33). Here, the author suggests that with age, intelligence and competency improve. In many ways, then, he is insecure about his adolescent play. Even in making this statement, the author is declaring the war game a game of status: the more intelligent will win, and the more intelligent are practiced adults.

In fact, the very invention and publication of these games insists on the superiority of adult intellect. In his essay "Child's Play," Stevenson reminds the reader, "'Tis the grown people who make the nursery stories; all the children do, is jealously to preserve the text" (355). So too with rules. As Wells explains in his final chapter, "For the present, I have done all that I meant to do in this matter. It is for you, dear reader, now to get a floor, a friend, some soldiers and some guns, and show by a grovelling devotion your appreciation of this noble and beautiful gift of a limitless game that I have given you" (128). Of course, Wells is tongue-in-cheek here, but he is also proud of his successes because they are indications of status. If his rules are taken seriously and played by a variety of boys, and perhaps men, than Wells has also asserted a control over play that extends beyond his own family circle. These rules, then, depict the correct kind of play. They are rules that boys like Wells's own characters from *The New Machiavelli*, Dick Remington and his friend Britten, might benefit from. After all, they were created by an adult.

Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne

In 1878, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote "Child's Play," in which he comments: "the capacity to enjoy Shakespeare may balance a lost aptitude for playing at soldiers" (352). However, he and his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, played their war games from 1880 to 1882,[41] so it seems as though Stevenson never quite lost the "aptitude" for toy soldiers, at least not until Osbourne was older. During the early 1880s, Stevenson, his wife, and his stepson went to Davos, Switzerland for Stevenson's health. Osbourne later explained that:

> the abiding spirit of the child in Stevenson was seldom shown in more lively fashion than during those days of exile at Davos, where he brough a boy's eagerness, a man's intellect, a novelist's imagination, into the varied business of my holiday hours; the printing press, the toy theatre, the tin soldiers, all engaged his attention. Of these, however, the tin soldiers most took his fancy; and the war game was constantly improved and elaborated, until from a few hours a 'war' took weeks to play, and the critical operations in the attic monopolized half our thoughts. (709)

Stevenson invested wholeheartedly in the play, but Osbourne qualifies it: this play involved not only "a boy's eagerness," but also "a man's intellect." James D. Hart explains that Stevenson even studied military documents including Hamley's *Operations of War* to help prepare for the elaborate campaigns (23). This commitment to realizing military strategy again emphasizes adult skills. In fact, even when Stevenson and his stepson collaborated on their game, Stevenson was the one responsible for creating what Osbourne calls "an elaborate and most vexatious set of rules" ("Stevenson" 710). Although Osbourne and Stevenson did not publish the actual rules for their games like the other authors I discuss in the chapter, Osbourne did write an introduction that helps to set up the mimic war correspondence Stevenson wrote describing one of their

[41] Well before W. Britain's invention of the hollow lead soldier, Osbourne was left with the "flimsy Swiss" and Stevenson with "chubby cavalrymen" and an "Old Guard,' whose unfortunate peculiarity of carrying their weapons at the charge often involved whole regiments in a common ruin" ("Stevenson" 710).

extensive war games. Osbourne published these materials as "Stevenson at Play" in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1898.

Victoria Ford Smith has done much of the work on Stevenson and Osbourne's collaborative relationship, which reaches far beyond "Stevenson at Play." For instance, Stevenon's famous *Treasure Island* was first inspired by a map that Osbourne drew, at least according to Osbourne who saw himself as pivotal in the novel's creation. Stevenson had a different narrative. As Smith notes, "the difficulties of adult-child collaboration, always an uneven power relationship, are evident here" (*Between* 117); there's a sense of competition that is at once literary (especially since Osbourne was reflecting on his youth from the vantage point of an older aspiring writer) and physical (in regards to the fictive map and who actually created what).

Using a toy press, Stevenson and Osbourne also printed Stevenson's works, such as the poem used to begin the introduction. Ultimately, Smith explains that "one of the press's primary functions was to encourage a loving familial relationship between Osbourne and his new stepfather" (*Between* 101-2). The war games Stevenson and Osbourne engaged in, I argue, emphasize how this play created not only familial bonds, but also familial hierarchies, especially because Stevenson was so young when he married Osbourne's mother. Smith also claims that the toy press became a way for Stevenson to explore author-printer issues "lightheartedly" (Smith, *Between* 103) at a time when he was very strapped for money and authorial status. I argue that the war games were similar spaces in which Stevenson and Osbourne could use a toy to stand in for real-world struggles between relationships and power dynamics—this time between a stepfather and his stepson.

Stevenson was very aware of adult-child power structures and play. In "Child's Play," Stevenson reflects on a child's experience of play, using imagery of adults as gods to evoke the relationship between parents and children:

> What can they make of these bearded or petticoated giants who look down upon their games? who move upon a cloudy Olympus, following unknown designs apart from rational enjoyment? who profess the tenderest solicitude for children, and yet every now and again reach down out of their altitude and terribly vindicate the prerogatives of age? Off goes the child, corporally smarting, but morally rebellious. Were there ever such unthinkable deities as parents? (357-58)

Physically larger, these "bearded or petticoated giants" might disrupt or even stop play, exercising the "prerogatives of age." Smith notes that "true collaboration with a child, for Stevenson, requires . . . on the part of the adult, a physical exertion, a consideration of the embodied, youthful imagination" (*Between* 121). Stevenson certainly does this when playing at war with Osbourne, but it is still not a true collaboration—there are still the "prerogatives of age." And, after all, as Stevenson writes: "although the ways of children cross with those of their elders in a hundred places daily, they never go in the same direction nor so much as lie in the same element" (354-55). Perhaps Stevenson's play with Osbourne more obviously shows the power imbalance between adults and children than even Wells's *Little Wars* where the children are left out of the fun, even if he does end "Child's Play" with the plea: "Spare them yet a while, O conscientious parent! Let them doze among their playthings yet a little!" (359).

Stevenson certainly let Osbourne play. He played with him too, although their pastimes were more contentious than those of children "doz[ing] among their playthings." Osbourne wrote his introduction to "Stevenson at Play" as an adult, years after the play took place, and he thinks back on Stevenson's particularly harsh fake newspaper, the *Yallowbally Record.* What is perhaps most surprising is that while much of the mimic war correspondence Stevenson wrote was written as if by citizens of Stevenson's side, the fake news outlet, the *Yallowbally Record*, was

meant to be from General Osbourne's but was fiercely critical of Osbourne, showing just how competitive these games were. As Osbourne reflects:

> Yallowbally I shall always recall with bitterness, for it was there I first felt the thorn of a vindictive press. The reader will see what little cause I had to love the *Yallowbally Record,* a scurrilous sheet that often made my heart ache, for all I extended to laugh and see the humor of his attacks. It was indeed a relief when I learned I might exert my authority and suppress its publication—and even hang the editor—which I did, I fear, with unseemly haste. (16)

With a title that already insults, Osbourne points to the "vindictive" nature of the press, without ever implicating Stevenson. It is the press itself that is "vindictive," and the situation is violently resolved by the execution of the fictional editor. We can see here how Osbourne plays within the confines Stevenson creates. The stepson "learns" he can exert his authority over the fictional editor. And while Stevenson's next issue explains that "public opinion endorsed this act of severity," he also notes that McGuffog, as the editor is named, "was a man, as the extracts prove, not without a kind of vulgar talent" (717).

The extracts, perhaps, do prove this "talent," but they also emphasize Osbourne's lack of strategy (an "adult" skill): "We have never concealed our opinion that Osbourne was a bummer and a scallywag; but the entire collapse of his campaign beats the worst that we imagined possible" (715). The newspaper also notes: "Where were Osbourne's wits? . . . This old man of the sea, whom all the world knows to be an ass and whom we can prove to be a coward, is apparently a Peculator also. If we were to die to-morrow, the word Osbourne would be found engraven backside foremost on our hearts" (715). The fake paper would later emphasize this point, explaining that "[Osbourne] skulk[s] in cities instead of going to the front with the poor devils whom he butchers by his ignorance and starves with peculations. What we want to know is, when is Osbourne to be shot?" (717). It is after this last line that Osbourne has the war correspondent hanged.

Of course, Stevenson was being playful, and he also critiqued himself through his mimic war correspondence (though never so harshly). The magazine that takes the place of the *Yallowbally Record*, named the *Yallowbally Evening Herald*, is perhaps trying to make recompense to Osbourne by reporting that "addresses and congratulations pour in to General Osbourne" along with a statue manufactured in his name and a suggestion that *Yallowbally Record* might have been "receiving pay from the enemy" (718). However, with a name that still hints at Osbourne's cowardice, Stevenson shows his narrative superiority. Moreover, Stevenson wouldn't always allow Osbourne to see the fake news, imitating delays typical during wartime and highlighting Stevenson's ultimate control over the game.

And yet, play with Osbourne was not easy. Osbourne uses "Stevenson at Play" to argue his own *physical* aptitude: "I was so much the better shot that my marksmanship often frustrated the most admirable strategy and the most elaborate of military schemes" (710). As Osbourne remembers it, "It was in vain that we—or rather my opponent—wrestled with the difficulty and tried to find a substitute for the deadly and discriminating pop-gun" (710). The "or rather my opponent" is telling here; Stevenson, always sickly, tried to control the variant that gave his stepson power over him, even at twelve. But the tinkering proved futile: "It was all of no use. Whatever the missile—sleeve-link, marble, or button—I was invariably the better shot, and that skill stood me in good stead on many an ensanguined plain and helped to counteract the inequality between a boy of twelve and a man of mature years" (710). And yet, this physical skill did not cause Osbourne to win the game narrated in "Stevenson at Play"—Stevenson did. And again, we can see deep play at work here. Stevenson was challenged by his stepson's physical skill, making the game fun, but it was Stevenson's own ability to use "a man's intellect"—his re-establishment of the parental hierarchy—that was exhilarating.

Even with Osbourne's introduction, the actual game exists in the fake war correspondence Stevenson produced. Despite Osbourne's contextualization, it is hard to believe that Osbourne wasn't a "bummer" or a "scallywag," only remarkable in his physical, not intellectual, skills. The war game is, all in all, about status (and fun, of course), and the narratives produced about these games were also about power—power over how children played, power over children as opponents, narrative power over how a game is remembered.

Conclusion

As Wells and Stevenson both show in their play with (and without) children and adolescents, there is a contentious battle playing out about power. Wells creates a faux-anthropological study of his children in *Floor Games*, an example of war play, where his position of ultimate power is not questioned. But in the war game of *Little Wars* Wells takes over the enviable toy world, refusing to play with the children in preference of his adult friends. There, we can see how status is conferred even among adults. Stevenson, in contrast, does play with an adolescent—his stepson—where he continuously belittles his opponent using news from the front lines, establishing power over the narrative and cementing familial hierarchies. These games were fun, but they were also about power.

Rule books also helped to commodify play. C.P.H. declares himself "The Boys' Minister of War" and introduces the game by identifying himself as "I who write to you as a boy (of 35). At any rate, I am not too old to enjoy the excitement of a stirring and skilful fight, even if the gallant troops belong only to 'His Majesty's Army of Lead'" ("The Great" 33). Including a mail order list of W. Britain's lead soldiers, this rulebook was clearly for promotional purposes. But play as a commodity is also a part of the liminoid (Turner 86). Mergens argues that consumer

culture was an important part of children understanding their toys as private property since "toys—objects given by parents or adults to children to play with—were for a child's exclusive use. He or she *owned* toys, whereas they had formerly *shared* playthings" (qtd. in Michals 32). In many ways, then, toy wars were battles over this ownership. The toys, bought by (most likely middle-class) parents, were certainly not used exclusively for children, as Wells demonstrates. However, these toys were still signs of status, and through play children or adults could compete for the control of them.

Rule books themselves become a part of this commodity—a part of what potential and actual players buy into. And in his introduction, C.P.H. also aligns himself with younger boys—adolescents who might make worthy opponents despite their age. He is also, like Wells, making play with miniatures acceptable for adults *and* explicitly tying this play to imperialism while, like Wells, subtly making fun of himself. This approachable demeanor is key for commodifying play. While rulebooks by adults function as authorities of play, they must also be appealing; they must provide the rules necessary while allowing for an environment that encourages youth achievement—but that privileges an adult, "correct" form of play that tries to replicate real war and so adult culture. This "realism," however, invokes issues of its own.

And as if these games weren't personal enough as battles for status, C.P.H. suggests, as the Brontës do, naming the officers, particularly the practice of using real-life officers from history or the present-day or personal friends. In addition, "each boy should name one of the Lieutenants after himself, and promote him as he merits it" ("The Great" 37). Although C.P.H. published his war game in 1908, nearly twenty years after Stevenson and Osbourne played at war, we can see this method employed in the latter's own war games where Stevenson wonders, "when is Osbourne to be shot?" ("Stevenson" 717). The use of their own names in the battles

helps to demonstrate how these games were personal. A fictional general doesn't win or lose; rather it is Stevenson and Osbourne who battle over status.

Later, Wells commented that his pre-World War I self saw war games as an outlet, but the beginning of the "Great War" affected his outlook: "Up to 1914, I found a lively interest in playing a war game, with toy soldiers and guns, that recalled a peculiar quality and pleasure of those early reveries" (Wells, *Experiment* 75). In fact, Wells seems to have come to the belief that these games and the culture that produced them were actually dangerous as opposed to functioning as an outlet. He bemoans that "men in responsible positions," such as Winston Churchill, had imaginations "built upon a similar framework," causing them to remain "puerile in their political outlook" (76). Instead, Wells believed he had moved beyond his little wars: "I like to think I grew up out of that stage somewhere between 1916 and 1920 and began to think about war as a responsible adult should" (76). Notably, even before World War I some people spoke out against toy soldiers, including Oscar Wilde's wife, Constance Lloyd (Brown, "Modelling" 246). Brown and other scholars have also made causal connections between the popularization of militarism in Britain during the years before 1914 and the coming war. Because, as we shall see, adults also played at *real* war.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS: PLAYING AT (REAL) WAR

The Brontë paracosm was vast and chaotic[42]—a sort of war play "unfiltered" by adult desires and supervision. Lewis Carroll and Edith Nesbit curtailed this freedom in their own literature for children, and H. G. Wells and Robert Louis Stevenson show the difference between war play and war games, the former of which (when adults and children play together) reestablishes familial hierarchies while the latter questions those same hierarchies. This chapter, however, looks at what happens when adults take over play completely, using maps to play at real and current conflicts—a practice that, at least during the time period under discussion, at once distanced the reality of war and showed an ambivalence towards that same practice.

Wells had taken over play in theory. He played war games with adults, not children. However, his rules in *Little Wars* were designed to include adolescents of twelve and older, and he imagines his little wars as a pacifist exercise:

> And if I might for a moment trumpet! How much better is this amiable miniature than the Real Thing! Here is a homeopathic remedy for the imaginative strategist. Here is the premeditation, the thrill, the strain of accumulating victory or disaster—and no smashed nor sanguinary bodies, no shattered fine buildings nor devastated country sides, no petty cruelties, none of that awful universal boredom and embitterment, that tiresome delay or stoppage or embarrassment of every gracious, bold, sweet, and charming thing, that we who are old enough to remember a real modern war know to be the reality of belligerence. (97)

[42] I use the word "chaotic" here because although the Brontë poetry I discuss in Chapter 2 is relatively polished, the world itself is chaotic, as are the competing narratives.

He continues: “Great War is at present, I am convinced, not only the most expensive game in the universe, but it is a game out of all proportion. Not only are the masses of men and material and suffering and inconvenience too monstrously big for reason, but—the available heads we have for it, are too small” (100). But, as I’ve noted in the previous chapter, Wells later realized the danger in his war games—they still abstracted violence. There were “no smashed nor sanguinary bodies” in his games, and because of this, perhaps his Little Wars made real violence seem distanced, real war conceptual, despite his “trumpet[ing]” that “You have only to play at Little Wars three or four times to realise just what a blundering thing Great War must be” (100).

This chapter looks at what happens when “Great War” becomes the object of play. After all, there was nothing “Pax” about Victoriana. As Harold E. Ruagh Jr. explains, “Between 1815 and 1914, perhaps only six years—1820, 1829, 1830, 1833, 1907, and 1909—witnessed no major wars, campaigns, punitive expeditions, or other recorded military operations, although British soldiers were probably killed in hostile action nonetheless” (xiii). The period between 1815 and 1914 was filled with armed conflict, and the newspapers of the time were likewise brimming with news from the front. However, it wasn’t until the Crimean War (1853-56, with England getting involved in March 1854) that modern technologies allowed for more immediate news of war. Rather than relying on government officials and letters to let readers know of the current state of armed conflicts, *The Times* sent to the front William Howard Russell, who is often referred to as the first modern war correspondent. Although Russell was hesitant to use the new medium of the telegraph in his war reporting, the device sped up the news from the seat of battle, allowing the public to react to war in a way previously impossible—as it was happening.

Russell was only the first; Catherine Walters notes that “ever since Russell’s dispatches from the Crimea in the 1850s served to diminish the distance between the home front and remote

battlefields, the British reading public had come to demand reports from 'Our Special Correspondent at the seat of the war'" (26). That there was such a "demand" speaks to the interest in war that pervaded the long nineteenth century. But it wasn't just the news that caught the attention of readers; it was the maps.[43] As Diane Dillon explains, "Wars have long stimulated public interest in the geography of conflict-torn regions, prompting surges in cartographic production and consumption" (316). From the 1850s on, war maps became increasingly prevalent in newspapers, although I notice a particular surge with the start of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870-71.

For the purposes of this chapter, I am focusing on maps published within periodicals, although printers sold countless war atlases, and newspapers themselves would begin to develop their own large-scale war maps to be sold separately. The latter are not simply outside the scope of this chapter; while I have found a large number of references to newspapers' supplementary maps,[44] I have only been able to find one copy of such a map from World War I. This, of course, makes sense: if the maps were to be used for play, they were likely not preserved in good shape, but pinned through and marked up. However, newspapers and magazines often published small-scale war maps that have been preserved, and these are the focus of my study.

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[43] In *Experiment in Autobiography,* Wells talks a little about the practice of using the news to explore maps. As he explains about the South African wars taking place while he was at Mr. Thomas Morley's Academy, "at times [Morley] would get excited by his morning paper and then we would have a discourse on the geography of the North West Frontier with an appeal to a decaying yellow map of Asia that hung on the wall" (66).

[44] Although this study doesn't look at supplementary maps or other types of war games in general, it's worth noting one advertisement by the *Daily Mail* on October 30, 1899 that shows the attitude towards playing at martial conflicts during the Second Boer War. Declaring their war game "The Transvaal at your own fireside," the advertisement continues: "Most exciting and fascinating for all"; "No more dull winter evenings"; "Screaming fun for Christmas"; and "Defeat the Boers in your own home." Through these war games, then, players were able to imagine being at the location in question, and, especially for a war that involved the British, defeating the enemy of the crown. As the game is "screaming fun" for the whole family, however, any sense of the carnage gets lost in the excitement of playing at real war.

It is perhaps not obvious that tracing war upon a map is a game, but that's exactly how Victorian and Edwardian audiences saw it. A.A. Milne says it best in an article entitled "The War Game" in the October 19, 1912 issue of *The Sphere*, written when Milne was thirty years old. Confessing his joy at the beginning of the Balkan War, Milne explains the origins of his happiness: "the news of a great battle can drag us out of the warmest bed and make the coldest bath more bearable. . . . Best of all, it gives us a new map to study; and there is no game more fascinating than that of identifying on a map places about which we have read in the papers" (82). Milne's article helps to establish the popularity of imagining real war as a game and the relish with which it was played. Milne further details his interest in the war thus:

> I should like to pretend that I was glad of the war because I was convinced that war brought out all that was best in a nation, or because I had a passionate desire to see Turkey wiped off the map of Europe, or because I believed in the war as a war of religion, or because—because of any other noble and inspiring reason that occurs to you. Better still if I could pretend that I hated the war, that I was made miserable every day by the thought of it. But the truth is that I am made happier by it; and this simply because it makes the press particularly, and life generally, more interesting. A selfish reason. (82)

This "selfish" interest in war shows that battles had become entertainment. The more adults played at real war, the more those wars became abstracted. But that Milne realizes that it would be "better" to act as though he "hated the war" shows ambivalence about the practice of thinking about real war as a game.

Children also played at "Great War," to borrow from Wells, but I attribute the abstraction of war to adults' games. The war maps in the popular press were specifically designed for adults, although adults often shared information with the entire family. These maps were attempts to create an educated and involved citizenry bent on imperial practices. But unlike the precocious understanding of war trauma in the Brontë paracosm, when adults take over children's play and make it into a game, they actually distance the realities of armed conflict. Wars become

attractively schematic, abstracted maps with pins to represent entire armies, rather than violent worlds that focus on the people involved. These pre-First World War texts imply that adults romanticize—or at least distance—violence, although there is also ambivalence about playing at war that shows through these games. Adults, evidently covetous of toys and the power children have over playthings, take children's play about fictionalized war and turn it into games about the very real conflicts happening abroad—a practice that distances real war the more it emphasizes "adult" skills such as strategy. More than that, these games grant adults an illusion of control over martial conflicts happening abroad.

While the press often referred to war as a game even when maps weren't involved, these maps actually made current wars into a game. Glenn R. Wilkinson's book *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914* explores this trend. As Wilkinson remarks:

> The publication of maps to enable readers to follow the military action on the ground allowed them to generate particular perceptions of the war which were similar to that of a chess game. By following lines of advance or retreat, with symbols representing items or events of geographical and martial interest, readers were able to assume the role of opposing generals and leaders in order to anticipate, contradict or question 'moves' made. In such a way, readers would become distanced from the ravages of war, ensuring that conflict was perceived as a clean, strategic game. (81)

While Wilkinson and I agree that these maps abstracted war, he is more interested in the analogies between sports and war than I am. Rather, throughout this dissertation, I add to the discussion by situating these war maps in the broader context of war games taking place in Victorian and Edwardian living rooms and imaginations. Moreover, I explore the ways these newspaper maps attempt to distance themselves from child's play and, in so doing, actually abstract war further. Whether readers stuck pins or flags into the maps or actually rolled dice, these maps were a way for people to playfully interact with both British and foreign wars, giving the player a sense of participating in conflict, but with seemingly no repercussions.

But of course there were repercussions: the game aspect of these publications further distanced the realities of armed conflict. While there was no "Pax" in Victoriana, Victoria's "little wars" and the larger wars of other foreign powers became containable, easily held in the palm of the player's hands. Rather than a messy, complicated war, military operations were abstracted and made attractive, and the resulting activities were *fun*. It is perhaps obvious that the gamification of real war is disturbing, but a close look at these specialized maps gives us a better understanding of how these games, rather than educating the populace about current wars as the popular press would argue, actually confused readers as to the reality of far-flung battles. By removing or distancing bloodshed, these games gave readers the illusion that they were in control of the war even as they sat in their living rooms. This nominal control granted power to the average Joe (or John Bull), but it was a power with dangerous consequences: real soldiers were visualized as paper cutouts, real deaths by the moving of flags. War became a game to be played at home, which perhaps aided and abetted the nearly constant military conflicts that occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and certainly played a role in how people thought about war even at the beginning of World War I. Perhaps this chapter shows best that there were, indeed, "Deadly Toys."

Maps

Maps are always abstractions. As William Rankin notes, "Maps operate through representation. They create a miniature version of the world and give us a detached view from above, with the messy complexities of reality simplified and reduced to a legible system of lines and colors" (2). Because maps *represent* reality while not fully capturing it, they create distance between the viewer and the landscape (and violence) pictured on the map. And, of course, maps

are not always stable. What's included or not included—in J.B. Harley's word, the "silences" on maps—change depending on the purpose of the map. For instance, a map might include elevation, or it might not; it might include information about local resources, or it might not. So while maps function as a representation, what's represented requires conscious decisions about what information is most valuable. Although Wilkinson (above) compares the war games in the popular press to a game of chess, Megan A. Norcia argues that geographical games for children were "less abstract [than chess], instead representing particular areas of the world or specific historical events, with a clearly defined framework designed to promote nationalism, missionary activity, or commercial ventures" (13). The maps I discuss are certainly less abstract than chess, but as I'm sure Norcia would agree, they are still very much abstracted from reality even as they attempt to represent locations abroad.

Maps are also "scripted things," particularly when they are used for play. To again borrow from Robin Bernstein, "literature and material culture . . . co-scripted nineteenth-century practices of play" (211). War games in the popular press did indeed prompt "meaningful bodily behaviors" (Bernstein 71), and while readers might not play at all or play "incorrectly" (perhaps by using one newspaper's map while using another newspaper to follow the news), war maps and their accompanying articles were meant to induce readers to read the news (itself a scripted practice[45]) and play at real war. In regards to children, Bernstein notes, "Children do not passively receive culture. Rather, children expertly field the co-scripts of narratives and material culture and then collectively forge a third prompt: play itself" (29). Of course, adults do not

[45] As Bernstein notes, "To use an English-language, printed book as a book, one must open the covers and read words from left to right" (74). So too with newspapers, although there is more flexibility: one might, for instance, read articles out of order or skip articles entirely. But to understand these articles, you must read according to the norms of left to right.

"passively receive culture" either, but when they are playing at war games in the popular press, in some ways they do. While they might imagine what comes next in the war, the game is "following the flags"; adult readers are no longer "playing" as such, but rather engaged in a real-life "game" dictated by moves made thousands of miles off. There is very little choice in how to play, unlike the speculations Norcia makes about similar cartographic objects intended for children or the black dolls Bernstein deals with. While board games have rules that may be ignored or repurposed, war game maps in the popular press are tied to a reality that literally dictates movement in most cases, although below I discuss one map from the Second Boer War that is more reminiscent of a board game. In general, however, these "scripted things" are less playful than other objects and literatures discussed in this dissertation. Instead, the game element results from bodily movements (placing pins or toy soldiers on a map) and speculative strategy—an "adult" skill, as I argue in my third chapter.

I contend that war maps in particular come in three different forms: tactical, strategic, and propagandistic. These categories are not mutually exclusive, but the divisions are helpful in better understanding how cartographers use maps for different purposes. Tactical maps are most useful for military officials because they offer information about the landscape and resources that will be helpful in better planning military campaigns. These maps tend to be more complex, simply because they attempt to represent more. Strategic maps, in contrast, are even more abstracted. Typically lacking detailed information about elevation, for instance, strategic maps focus on places and often cover a larger land area. They are about large-scale operations rather than actual preparation for battle. So while depictions of parts of the landscape and resources do exist (waterways and railroads, in particular), the emphasis tends to be on the conquerable space rather than the information needed in order to conquer that space. The war maps published in the

popular press are largely strategic maps, meant to illustrate the broader themes of war rather than to allow readers to attempt tactical decisions, although more tactical maps certainly did exist. Propaganda war maps often move away from an "accurate" depiction of reality towards something more like the Serio-Comic War Map of 1877 or the John Bull and His Friends war map of 1900, which both depict Russia as a giant octopus. As allegorical maps, these maps further distort "reality," while arguing for certain political outlooks.

Strategic war maps, however, are propaganda as well. Norcia explains, "Maps promote forms of power and knowledge, and further study of these texts has revealed that they transmit ideology, beliefs, and practices along with technical information" (6-7). Maps are also intimately tied to power play, and the maps I discuss here are inherently imperialistic. Rather than embodying an overwhelming landmass, strategic war maps literally allow viewers to hold a portion of the world in their hands. As Rankin notes, "It is also a powerful argument that certain kinds of information—railroads, mountains, coastlines, administrative borders—are 'basic' and universal" (26). He goes on to explain, "Base maps are therefore a powerful political imaginary, transforming physical terrain into political territory" (26). Strategic maps are typically base maps, but they also inherently question these political boundaries because war was often fought over land. Giving the illusion of control, these maps allow viewers to imagine a conquerable space.

In doing so, maps promote political and military goals, especially when a game element is added in. Norcia argues about children's board games, "The games promote, and invite children to rehearse, imperial ideology through recreative and recreational play on the surface of the map" (7). So too for adults; the strategic war maps published in the popular press asked readers to follow along with imperial wars. Since these war maps were published by the British

for the British, readers became a part of an "imagined community," to borrow Benedict Anderson's term, that centered on British imperial goals, even when the maps themselves represented battles that the British were not directly involved in. Norcia goes on: "Games presented future imperial actors with the chance to improve their knowledge of imperial geography as well as hone the skills necessary for occupying positions of power within its administrative system" (8). However, war maps in the popular press complicate this point; aimed at adults rather than children, these maps were not necessarily meant to train anyone for colonialism because the adult readers of these newspapers likely already had a profession. Instead, it was all about furthering the imperial imagination.

Popular press strategic war maps pushed these imperial goals by asking readers to engage with the wars from the comfort of their own homes, creating a personal connection between far-flung imperial pursuits and the average man (or woman).[46] Moreover, as Anderson writes, the map functions as a logo, and "each colony appeared like a detachable piece of a jigsaw puzzle. As this 'jigsaw' effect became normal, each 'piece' could be wholly detached from its geographic context" (175). The popular press strategic war map, while often not printed in color like the ones that Anderson is directly referencing, still divides the land into jigsaw pieces, capable of being abstracted from any geographical positioning, thus allowing readers to think of the war as separate from themselves and their lives even as they form a personal connection to it. And power structures are an inherent part of the puzzle here. In *Imperial Eyes,* Mary Louise Pratt coined the term "monarch-of-all-I-survey" to refer to travel writers' descriptions of the view from a promontory. I would like to use this term, too, to describe the viewing pleasure of looking

[46] Although the maps I look at in this chapter often assume a male readership, women were certainly playing war games too. As Glenn R. Wilkinson notes, "One wife was found to have tacked up a map of the war area and was 'evidently taking the cheeriest interest in the grim game at the Cape'" (82).

at a strategic war map. For Pratt, the three tropes of the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" are estheticization, density of meaning, and domination (213), all of which apply to map viewing. Much as the intrepid traveler describes the landscape for the armchair explorer, the cartographer paints a vivid picture of conquered, soon-to-be conquered, and conquerable areas for the armchair general.

The map is an inherently esthetical exercise. Maps are beautiful objects, taking information and visualizing it, like the verbal paintings of the traveler. Pratt comments that "the esthetic *pleasure* of the sight singlehandedly constitutes the value and significance of the journey" (200). Similarly, the pleasure of viewing the map and marking troop movements gives the war value and significance to the everyday citizen. But what's perhaps more interesting is that these war maps rarely include a signature of the cartographer, helping to create an illusion that the creator of the image does not exist. While armchair travellers must reconcile with the real explorer's presence as the viewer, the map-consumer does not. Rather, such a consumer becomes the viewer, the one who holds ultimate control over the scene, blurring the lines between reality and play.

The second and third tropes of the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" theme are density of meaning and domination. As Pratt explains, "the landscape is represented as extremely rich in material and semantic substance" (200). Although Pratt is referring to verbal elements here, the map also includes a certain density of meaning by its very nature. Maps are made to be visually pleasing and yet full of relevant information; the landscape is, after all, represented on the map. Furthermore, the map allows the viewer to master the scene. In Pratt's discussion of Richard Burton, she explains, "If the scene is a painting, then Burton is both the viewer there to judge and appreciate it, and the verbal painter who reproduces it for others" (200). Likewise, the armchair

general is able to judge and appreciate the sight of the map while engaging in moving troops along the surface of the map to reproduce a war going on thousands of miles away. What's more, the map-viewer takes on the role of monarch or general in moving these troops. And again, because the cartographer fades into the background, the armchair general takes total control of the viewing pleasure, dominating the map and what it has come to represent.

The "monarch-of-all-I-survey" comparison is helpful in better understanding the appeal of war maps. As mini-monarchs, moving troops along an esthetically pleasing war map, dense with meaning, map-viewers gain a feeling of control over a war in which they have no actual part. As I've noted, this phenomenon helps to create an imagined community—a way for the general public to engage with imperial pursuits, whether the wars in question include British involvement or not. It also grants adults control over children's war play—they take seemingly "meaningless" play about war and add on to it "scripts" about the realities of war, even as they distance those same realities. Adults see playing these war games in the popular press as a meaningful activity, one that has repercussions for the "real" world as opposed to fictional violence played out by children. By following along with the news in a literal embodiment of active reading, adults distance themselves from children's play. The war game of the popular press becomes educative rather than imitative, at least in theory.

Milne helps elucidate this idea, writing, "I have been studying the map with a loving interest. There is a little town called Tzrkoles on the borders of Montenegro and Turkey. I wonder what will happen at Tzrkoles; some desperate battles, some casual skirmish, some great treaty of peace?" (82). He goes on: "It is thrilling to look at this map and to think that the most desperate affairs may be going on now at this moment in almost any part of it. And it is humiliating to look at it and to realize how little of it we knew before." The war allows adult

readers to learn geography even as it "educates" them about war. This "thrilling" game that Milne and his peers look on at with "loving interest" also allows them the chance to play at being mini-monarchs, literally imagining what will take place at locations in the map they study.

Notably, the children get left out of Milne's war game, despite Milne becoming a prominent children's literature writer years later with the publication of *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926). Instead, Milne focuses on what the war means for adults:

> What a chance this for the daily papers with their maps and their A B C's of the War, and their Diaries of the Crisis; with their special articles labeled "The Real Servia," "Bulgaria from Within," and "Montenegro as I knew it." What a chance for the man who has travelled in his fortnight's holiday to speak importantly of the Serb and the Bulgar, and in dreamy reminiscence of the little tobacconist's shop in Plevna on the left-hand side as you go in. What a chance for our amateur military critics and our students of foreign affairs. Aren't we all going to get something out of this war? Some credit, some excitement, some money, something that we want? Some sport anyhow? (82)

Children are mentioned, but only in the context of their history lessons: "Will the name of Tzrkoles go down in history? It were better not so for the sake of those our children who would have to speak about it. 'The Battle of Tzrkoles—1912'; I can hear them trying to say it in the schoolroom." While the children will struggle to name foreign places during their lessons, the adults are the ones who will play at war—will glory (even if perhaps a little tongue-in-cheek) at the start of a new war and a new map.

And yet because maps are abstractions of reality, this type of play further abstracts the actuality of armed conflict. By playing at *real* war, Victorian and Edwardian adults further distanced military violence in the years before World War I. The maps allowed for a concern and interest in the war as a whole, rather than the individual experience of war. Even without a map, war was discussed as a game, and these maps help emphasize that understanding, making British

citizens less aware of the blood and gore, and more aware of the tactics. It was all about the excitement, not the devastation.

War Maps in the Popular Press

By the time of the Franco-Prussian war in 1870-71, the practice of tracing war maneuvers on a map had become widespread enough to attract the satire of *Punch.* On August 27, 1870 an anonymous poem, "Paterfamilias on the War," relates the excitement felt by people at home, even for (perhaps *especially* for) a foreign war (italics my own):

> My brain's in a maze, and my mind's in a muddle,
> With this War, and these rumours of War:
> I'd no notion one's head upon news one could fuddle,
> And worse than on brandy by far!
> I'm a peaceful JOHN BULL,[47] of manoeuvres and armies
> Know as little as most Volunteers,
> *And I can't for the life of me think what the charm is*
> *In reading of folks by the ears.*
>
> Yet I buy thrice the number of papers I used to,
> From the newsboy, and newsman, and stall,
> A cipher in business I'm being reduced to,
> All pleasures, but telegrams pall.
> *I invest in the war-maps, French, English, and German,*
> *Stick pins in 'em—red, white, and blue;*
> Till in church the War comes betwixt me and the sermon,
> And disturbs the repose of my pew. (88)

These two stanzas illustrate just how hungry for news about current wars people were. The poem even makes this comparison to hunger: "At breakfast my wife finds my nose in the paper, / Till the tea and the muffins are cold" (88). Taking the place of food, work, and church, war news

[47] As a "peaceful JOHN BULL," the author takes on the personification of England, and yet to imagine John Bull as "peaceful" is fascinating. In 1803, a caricature by James Gillroy shows John Bull holding the head of Napoleon on a stick. John Bull was later used in recruitment to the military, not unlike Uncle Sam. War was quite closely linked to the figure of John Bull, although perhaps it is apt to imagine that he was ignorant of "manoeuvres and armies."

becomes a substance to live upon. “The War” here is the Franco-Prussian War, but that the poem is “on the War” points to the universality of this poem. Of course, *Punch* was a satirical magazine, but this poem shows the fascination with war that consumed the Victorian reader, specifically the man of the household, or the “Paterfamilias.” This chapter, then, is not so much about children’s play as it is about adults’ games. After all, even when children played at real war, the information about it was often disseminated through adults as the primary subscribers of newspapers that detailed news from the front.

The poet explains that he “invest[s] in the war-maps, French, English, and German, / Stick pins in ‘em—red, white, and blue” (88). Although the poem likely refers to war atlases, the idea behind this and maps published in newspapers is the same: made to be pasted on cardboard and used to track the movements of troops following the day’s news, these maps were a part of popular culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. And yet the poem’s author also shows some ambivalence about this practice, and the practice of avidly consuming war materials: “And I can’t for the life of me think what the charm is / In reading of folks by the ears.” The poem abstracts this violence by referring to bloodshed as “folks by the ears,” but the author is also concerned about his own interest in this violence. There is a “charm” in reading about war, but the author is aware, at least, that this is problematic.

To help elucidate just how popular these war maps were, I turn to the American Mark Twain, who published a mock war map in the *Buffalo Express* one month after “Paterfamilias on the War” was published in *Punch.* On September 17, 1870 Twain published a completely mirrored, crudely drawn map along with a description and made-up accolades. Featuring real locations such as Paris and Saint Cloud, the map also includes “Podunk.” There are three forts, drawn almost to the size of Paris. As Twain explains, “The idea of this map is not original with

me, but is borrowed from the *Tribune* and the other great metropolitan journals" (2). Clearly inspired by other popular press maps, we can see here a growing trend in both American and British publications to include war maps in descriptions of the day's news. Susan Schulten, for instance, comments: "Newspapers began a tradition of popular mapping during wartime that would grow exponentially in the twentieth century" (22).

Clearly parodying maps printed in the popular press, Twain's description (but not the map) was reprinted in several newspapers and periodicals. Tongue-in-cheek, Twain continues: "I claim no other merit for this production (if I may so call it) than that it is accurate. The main blemish of the city paper maps, of which it is an imitation, is that in them more attention seems paid to artistic picturesqueness than geographical reliability." Of course, Twain's map is *not* accurate, but through this feature he is poking fun at the popular maps that are also not quite accurate, made more to sell papers than to educate. Pointing to the flipped nature of the map, Twain explains, "[L]et the student who desires to contemplate the map stand on his head or hold it before her looking-glass. That will bring it right." That Twain references the "student" of the map again points to the potentially edifying nature of these maps, made ridiculous by his parody. And although previously he says the map is accurate, he explains that because of a mistake he had to "change the course of the Rhine or else spoil the map," once again hinting that the making of these maps is not accurate in the least. This handmade, wonky map, Twain suggests, should be framed "for future reference, so that it may aid in extending popular intelligence and dispelling the wide-spread ignorance of the day."

In fact, Twain compares the making of the map to a war itself: "I never had so much trouble with anything in my life as I did with this map. I had heaps of little fortifications scattered all around Paris, at first, but every now and then my instrument would slip and fetch

away whole miles of batteries and leave the vicinity as clean as if the Prussians had been there." But in doing so, Twain further abstracts the war. Laughing at the potential for Prussia to wipe France "clean," he makes the carnage of warfare obsolete.

The laughable "official commendations" come from those long-dead such as William III; current French and Prussian military officials Napoleon, Francois Achille Bazaine, Louis-Jules Trochu, and Otto von Bismarck; Civil War generals U.S. Grant and W.T. Sherman; and the generalized American reader, John Smith. Ranging from the ridiculous (John Smith's "My wife was for years afflicted with freckles, and though everything was done for her relief that could be done, all was in vain. But, sir, since her first glance at your map they have entirely left her. She has nothing but convulsions now") to the politically accurate (Bazaine, currently fighting off a siege at Metz in which he would finally surrender, "If I had this map I could go out of Metz without any trouble"), these commendations poke fun at how the military has invaded popular culture. The civilians ostensibly creating war maps know no more about war than Mark Twain's speaker,[48] whose parody of a map makes this clear.

But that these popular press maps were being parodied by Twain and the anonymous author of "Paterfamilias on the War" shows just how widespread these war maps were in both American and British culture during the long nineteenth century. It is a field ripe for study, yet little has been done on the war map aside from brief mentions by Wilkinson. And that both of these parodies are about the Franco-Prussian War is important: this is really the point at which war maps became a part of the popular press. Although Schulten argues that "the Spanish-American War established a powerful relationship between war and maps that would grow

[48] Samuel Clemens, or Mark Twain, did serve in the American Civil War briefly, but this probably added to his disillusionment with the practice of playing at war using a map.

exponentially during the First and Second World Wars" (38), my research has shown that the Franco-Prussian War, which took place nearly thirty years earlier, is really when war maps and war reporting became so intermingled, at least in Britain. Although I have found one war map of the Crimean War, the Franco-Prussian War resulted in a plethora of maps published in regional and national newspapers. Schulten also notes, of course, the American Civil War maps that brought war to readers back home in the United States, but the Franco-Prussian War was a foreign war, making its prominence in the British press notable. Waters finds a similar trend in war reporting, arguing that "it was the Franco-Prussian war that marked a watershed in war reporting in Britain as old and new transport and communication technologies competed to deliver the latest intelligence" (26). This watershed moment helped to increase the circulation of not just war reporting, but accompanying war maps.

However, a drawing in the *Illustrated London News* from August 6, 1870 entitled "The War: Parisians Consulting the War Map" shows that this was a Western practice more largely. And the image, showing a crowd of people looking at a war map pasted on a wall, illustrates the communal nature of this activity (even if that community is only imagined and formed from the privacy of one's home). Moreover, a woman holding baguettes while awaiting her turn at the map demonstrates the daily nature of looking at a map that helps readers to better understand the progress of the war that either concerns them directly (as it does the Parisians) or does not (as the Americans and British). But that the map pasted on the wall in this illustration is titled "Carte Du Theatre De La Guerre," or "Map of the Theatre of the War," points to the fact that war has become a spectacle: a theatre or a game. It is something to be watched and played. And it was adults who primarily played at real war. The image from the *Illustrated London News* shows a group of adults. Likewise, it is the "Paterfamilias" who plays at war, or the grown-up Mark

Twain who draws his own parody of the war map he saw being sold to men and women. That these war maps attracted satire shows ambivalence about the practice of imagining real war as a game, but even then war is abstracted and made ridiculous.

Second Boer War

In 1900, the *Daily Mail* printed a handkerchief, reprinted in Philip Curtis and Jakob Sondergard Persen's *War Map: Pictorial Conflict Maps, 1900-1950*, which includes a map of the South African Republic, or the Transvaal, and the song "The Absent-Minded Beggar," by Rudyard Kipling and Arthur Sullivan. Featuring a portrait of Queen Victoria and the words "God Save the Queen" in the bottom right corner and a prominent portrait of Lord Roberts, the British general who helped win the war, in the upper left, the map is quite detailed for a handkerchief. As we can see here, war maps invaded popular culture and served as propaganda: the first lines of Kipling's song reads, "WHEN you've shouted 'Rule Britannia'—when you've sung 'God Save the Queen'— / When you've finished killing Kruger[49] with your mouth— / Will you kindly drop a shilling in my little tambourine / For a gentleman in khaki ordered South" (qtd. in Curtis and Sondergard 4). The song and all its merchandise raised £250,000 (5), an astonishing sum. That the song is accompanied by a map in this publication shows the importance that Victorian culture placed on visualizing war.

Milne explains that his joy in the Balkan War is, at least in part, because it was so distant: "In the first place it is far enough away to be considered with detachment, but not too far away to be outside the range of our emotions" (82). However, war games were published about the

[49] Kruger was President of the South African Republic during the Second Boer War.

Second Boer War, which was much closer to home, if not geographically, then at least when it came to the English soldiers abroad. There is also evidence that children were playing at war, though in a different way. "Too Realistic War Game" was published in the *Daily Mail* on December 27, 1900 and describes two boys playing at being the British and the Boer. Both on horseback, the "Briton" accidentally shot the "Boer" in the skull with a "boy's gun," knocking the "Boer" unconscious and leaving him in critical condition (3). Although this game went terribly wrong, war maps allowed for a much less outwardly dangerous game. While children might have preferred acting out war, as this and the Russo-Japanese War example below show, adults seemed content to play out the war on paper. In fact, in many ways they saw this practice as superior because the war *play* of the children was all bodily exertion and mimicry, while the war *games* the adults played were cerebral activities that only grown-ups could really understand, at least according to them. Creating this hierarchy was thus another way in which adults used war games to affirm their primacy over children, although this particular method required age-segregated play rather than mixed play.

Of course, children played the war games provided by the popular press as well, but seemingly with adult supervision. A later illustration in the *Illustrated London News* shows an entire family marking up a map. Titled "Following the Flags" and published on December 16, 1899, two months after the start of the Second Boer War, the illustration shows the "Paterfamilias" reading the paper and calling out places on the map. Two young women and a boy in a kilt stand poised to pin flags to the map of the Transvaal. The description of the image reads:

> The map which the family party is studying so carefully in our illustration is not quite so big as the great war map outside the office of *The Illustrated London News*. But it seems to hold their attention almost as much as the great war map holds the attention of the

> crowds who block the Strand in order to look at it. The father is reading all about the latest positions from his newspaper, and the eldest daughter is expected to place the Union Jack in accordance with her father's directions. But she is not quite sure of the matter, and hesitates, with the flag in her uplifted hand. There is no hesitation, however, in her brother, who, with finger planted on the map, insists that she should "stick it there." He feels that *he* ought to know; for does he not wear the kilt of a soldier, is he not a brother in spirit (and sporran) to the heroes who stormed up Talana Hill? Note the way in which he looks up at his sister, as who should say, "You're staring at the wrong place. you silly; it's down here, I tell you!" Meanwhile the second sister looks on with frank interest; she doesn't know much about strategy, but she is as keen as any of them. I think by the way her hand is resting on the table that she is about to make a suggestion. And you may be sure that her brother will scout it! (862).

The *Illustrated London News* proclaims the popularity of war maps, not just for those at home like the family pictured in their illustration, but for people "block[ing] the Strand" just to see a glimpse of the war map outside the *News*'s office. Moreover, this is pictured as an activity for the whole family—but the father is in charge, and the young boy who identifies with the soldiers currently engaged in the Second Boer War is leading the activity. The girls, in contrast, are hesitant and ignorant of strategy, although also (politely) engaged. There is "no hesitation" in the brother, the youngest of the family but the most adept in locating positions on the map, dressed in his soldier's sporran. The periodical also points to how this activity allows the participant, at least the men, to identify with the soldiers abroad, even as the soldiers' difficult campaign has been glorified ("the heroes who stormed up Talana Hill") and abstracted to successes and failures, marked by a pin and a flag. The ending exclamation point suggests just how exciting this activity is, despite the bloodshed and the worries surrounding the current war.

And yet, the Second Boer War was a complicated matter. Raugh explains, "Frequently dismissed as only one of 'Queen Victoria's little wars,' the Second Boer War was much more significant. It was Britain's longest (lasting over 32 months), most expensive (costing over £200 million), and bloodiest war (with over 22,000 British, 25,000 Boers, and 12,000 Africans losing

their lives) fought from the end of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815 until the beginning of the Great War in 1914" (xiii). Having lost the First Boer War, the British were likely concerned about the outcome of its successor.

In the *Illustrated London News*, the peaceful image of a family playing at war is surrounded by scenes of battle. The page directly after is titled, "The Transvaal War: Casualties at the Front," and contains sixteen images of dead and wounded men. However, they are all officers—lieutenants, captains, and majors—rendering the common soldier invisible. Preceded by five pages and followed by four pages of photographs and illustrations of "Scenes from the Front," some rather bloody in nature, the "Following the Flag" illustration seems out of place. There is also Hal Hurst's "Inspired," a haunting image of a man's dead body over which stands his murderer. Out of the literal smoking gun comes an angel of death, brandishing a sword. This composition of the periodical seems to show the ambivalence regarding the war. Is it a game to be played, or a scenario where people are actually dying? Both? The *Illustrated London News* and other popular papers seem to think the latter, but they were conscious of speaking to a variety of audiences who had differing ideas about the war:

> The panorama of moving battle-scenes and associated subjects presented by our war pictures this week is a thrilling one. From half-a-dozen totally distinct standpoints does this notable pictorial record appeal to every class in the community, from the fiery patriot to the cool and calculating student, from the critical expert to the ardent sentimentalist to whom—though not by any means to him alone—Mr. Hal Hurst's "Inspired" will appeal with especial force.

Note that no one here is anti-war. That is not expected; although the reader may be a sentimentalist, everyone is assumed to support British imperial pursuits and should be, as the newspaper seems to indicate, "Following the Flags."

And yet, the paper also undercuts the danger of the war: "Our veteran Correspondent has been under fire so often, and in such a long succession of campaigns, that he seems to regard bullets and shells with much the same indifference that he would display in a summer shower." If a war correspondent can be indifferent to bullets, then certainly a soldier should be. But people were dying: "Dr. A.C. Stark, upon whose notes this sketch is founded, has since been killed by a shell at Ladysmith." Another correspondent has been taken prisoner, although he is "in excellent company" and will likely be released soon. The overwhelming narrative is one of positive optimism, despite the fact that "other pictures strike various notes of mingled strife and peacefulness." There is an attempt at a balance here: to represent the horrors of the war to some extent, but to remind the reader of the good parts of war. As the paper notes: "There are ambulance-wagons passing through the streets of Cape Town. But the 'bitter constraint and sad occasion' of this reflection is partially balanced by the magnificent outburst of national sentiment exhibited in repeated displays of well-ordered benevolence, of which the Ice Carnival at Niagara in aid of soldier's wives and children is a happy example." Thus ends the written section on the war photographs, concluding the short article on a good note. And this is the overwhelming point of these photographs: they are meant to excite pro-national sentiment, while the war game pictured in the middle of these images of war is meant to remind readers of what *they* can do from the safety of their own homes.

Following the flags allowed for a personal connection with the war, as did viewing images from the front lines, but it also abstracted the violence even as it visualized it. The family playing at war is featured at the center of the scenes from the front, giving the viewer a momentary peace from the bloodshed, but also placing this image in a seat of importance. The war scenes become supplementary to the practice of playing at war; they allow readers to

imagine the battle as they place pins in an abstracted map, and yet these images are static representations of war. A combination of peace and strife, the scenes from the front allow readers to feel as if they are in the battle without any actual danger. The armchair general, commanding family members to locate battles upon a map, further abstracts these images of war by marking them with a flag that has come to represent success and failure, rather than bloodshed. Thus this practice furthers imperial goals while distancing the realities of armed conflict. Adults had taken over war play and turned it to their own purposes: imagining real war as a game.

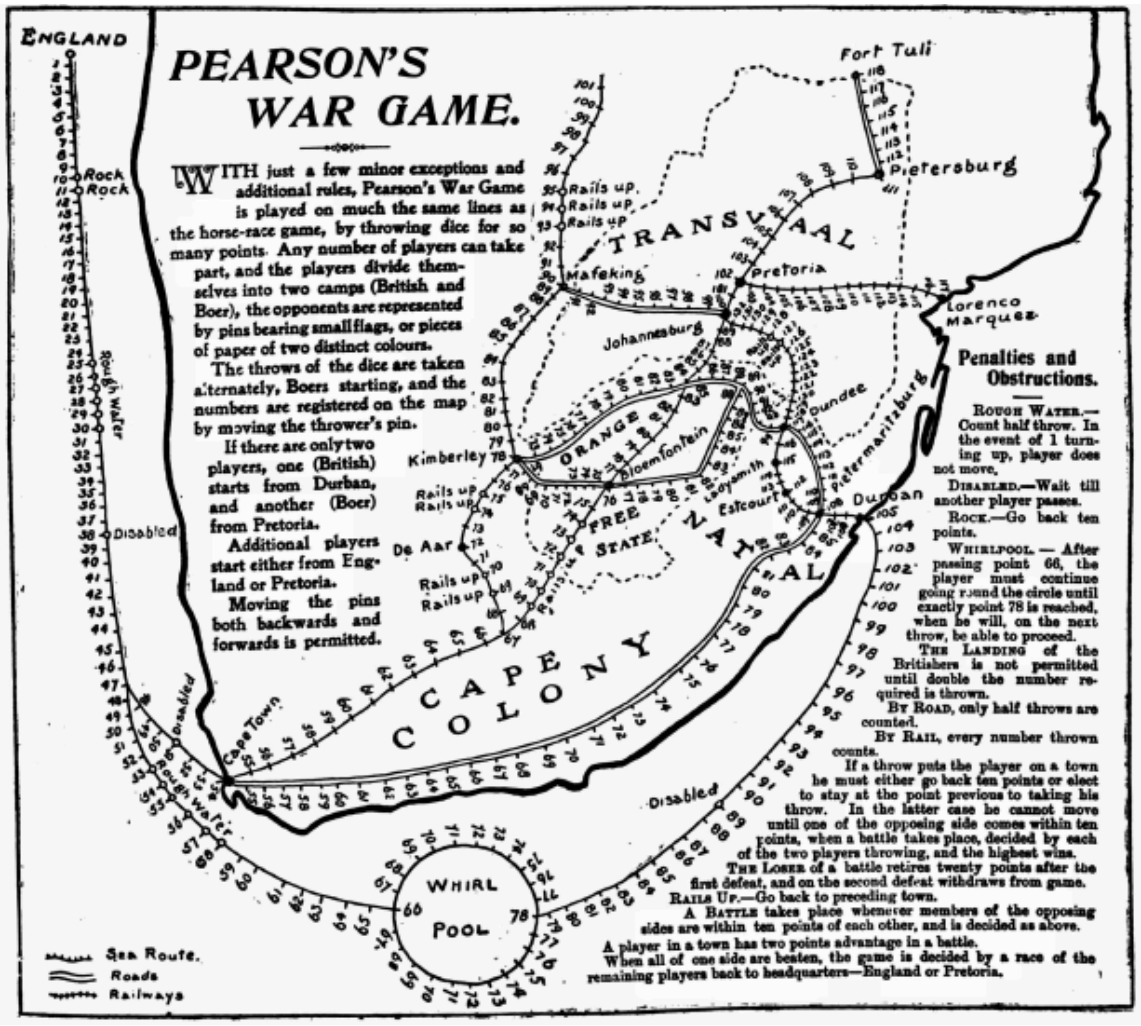

Figure 1: ***Pearson's*** **War Game.** Newspaper image © The British Library Board. All rights reserved. With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

The *Pearson's Magazine* war game (see Figure 1) also abstracted war. *Pearson's* game is set up much like a board game; there must be at least two players (although the rules really are designed for a larger group). Players can represent either the British troops or the Boers. This feature in itself is interesting, as it allows the general public to make-believe at being an "other" and try to win the war. So there are contradictory impulses here—on the one hand, the game functions as a way to build awareness and nationalist and imperialist sentiment at an early

moment in the war (which was in its second month when *Pearson's* published the game), but on the other hand, it also encourages taking on the role of the enemy, potentially licensing a show of ambivalence towards imperialist practices, while still emphasizing that war is a game to be played.

That this is a game of chance, too, where players roll dice to see where they land and battle by competing dice throws, shows a sense of anxiety over the actual outcome of the Boer War. The British had lost the First Boer War and were still not prepared for the guerrilla warfare of the Boers; the outcome of the new conflict certainly wasn't yet decided, although British troops had recently had some small victories. The reliance on chance for the *Pearson's* map, I argue, points to anxieties about the British empire's strength.

And yet, even as these maps educated civilians about wars abroad, they also desensitized them to the real trauma of war. Instead, the dangers of the Boer War become obstacles to overcome for pleasure. The game fictionalizes the very real practice of going to war, even the dangers of traveling across vast terrain. The players begin in England and must make it to the Transvaal before any actual battles can even take place. On the way, there is a whirlpool where players may get stuck in an infinite loop, rough waters where movement is halved, places where ships are disabled and must wait for assistance from another player.[50] On land, the primary danger is that railroad tracks have been destroyed, causing players to retreat. As Norcia states, "Movement on the game board, especially if it is consigned to a regulated track, shows the limitations on players' narrative agencies—these games do not offer tangents or subplots that players can choose to explore on their own, and that was typical of the period" (21). In her

[50] There are some flaws in the game design here since the instructions say this game can be played by two people on opposing sides, meaning a disabled ship would be stuck indefinitely.

discussion of William Spooner's *Voyage of Discovery* (1836) in particular, Norcia points out that "players roll the dice and are sent, detained, or hastened according to the dictates of the board, thus training them to sublimate their individual agency in deference to the Great Game's[51] itinerary" (22). The *Pearson's* war game, by similarly tracing the Great Game of imperialism, limits the "narrative agenc[y]" of the players, but so does the more traditional game of "follow the flag." The players, of course, have an advantage here that real soldiers do not: they can see the map in its entirety. And yet, because this is a game of chance, they have no control; no strategy can win the game. Victory is, quite literally, up to the roll of the dice.

Through playing and possibly re-playing this game, British citizens were able to imagine possible outcomes of a war that was at once very distant and very close—and very current. War games specifically helped readers to feel attached to the wars abroad, which can often fade from daily life. These war games were complicit in creating an educated and engaged citizenry—a citizenry bent on imperialistic practices. Norcia comments about children playing board games, "In each session of gameplay, the game and the player would experience a different story depending on a number of variables" because "the narrative produced in an individual gaming session varies depending on the player's experience, improvisation of rules, and the presence of other players" (12). But more than that, there's a tension here between reality and imaginary play. As Hazel Sheeky Bird explains, "the purpose of the imperial geographic imagination was to possess" (88). Even as the game in *Pearson's* allowed players to live out anxieties and ambivalence about a current war, it was also a place in which to establish control—or at least the illusion of it. Being able to see a map in its entirety, to make decisions about paths of attack

[51] This term for imperial pursuits was first made popular by Rudyard Kipling's 1901 novel *Kim.*

(even if dice disrupted the strategic possibilities of the game), and to take in the geography of a place England was fighting for, allowed players to have visual mastery over the Transvaal—a mastery that mirrored the empire's goals.

Russo-Japanese War

The Russo-Japanese War seems to have sparked a particular fascination when it comes to war maps. Russia was major competition (and a threat), and Japan's ultimate victory over them was both an amazing feat and a reminder of the ability for small powers to take on large ones—a not so welcome reminder for a world power (although, of course, Japan had its own imperial intentions and an obviously sophisticated military). According to other newspapers, this war was so popular in England that children were playing at being a part of it. In an article, "Playing at 'Port Arthur': London Street Arabs Catch the War Fever," published in the *Daily Mirror* two months after their own Russo-Japanese war map, of which I will talk later, was published, the author describes street urchins playing at war: "An amusing scene was enacted," writes the author, explaining the Port Arthur game played, of which "the only difficulty apparently is to persuade some of the boys to be Russians, as they all want to be Japs" (5). This "war fever," then, was spread far and wide, from upper- and middle-class players of war games, to street urchins acting out scenes from the war. The author sees this as "amusing" even though property is destroyed and looted during the fake battle. Again, there is a difference between children engaging in war *play* and adults with their war *games.* The children are simply play-acting the war rather than "critically" engaging with it. But adults, too, had caught the "war fever."

Of course, Britain had its own stakes in this war. As part of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance signed in 1902, Britain and Japan were allies, although England had decided not to join the

Russo-Japanese War unless provoked. Despite the British alliance with Japan, the *Daily Mail* did publish a particularly heartbreaking (and racist) letter from a "lady of high standing at St. Petersburg" entitled "Victims of the War" (7) on November 29, 1904. In a section entitled "The Ever-Present Dead," the woman's letter reads:

> To all of us in the educated classes there is the dread that a still worse day will come, and grave changes take place. Our children play the war game with their toy soldiers, and stamp on them: 'Now the Japanese are dead' they say laughingly. They hear, but cannot understand; they wonder sometimes why their father is so much more at home, that they are more frequently kissed and taken on his knee; and they chatter to him till they see the tears spring to his eyes, and suddenly he disappears. 'Now my father has gone a long journey to kill the yellow devils,' say the children to their playmates; then they again stamp on their soldiers, and sing patriotic songs with clear, shrill voices. The mother weeps. But they ask, 'Why? Father will come back with a decoration, and will have shot all the Japanese devils dead.'

Hauntingly, this letter depicts children as war-hungry and, in stark contrast to the Brontës, unaware of the horrors of war. And again, it depicts childhood play as having nothing to do with reality; it may be haunting, but it is "meaningless." However, perhaps more haunting is the fact that the British as a whole were likewise playing the games—children, yes, but also grown men and women. The press presented the war as a game with these maps, but also in making the war itself a game as the *Daily Express* does on May 6, 1904: "Japan is playing the war game with most extraordinary precision. She seems unable to make a mistake" (4). How would the "lady of high standing" react to the idea that the Paterfamilias, an armchair general, sits at home, enacting the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" theme over a map of Korea?

And play they did. The *Daily Mail* appears to have been one of the first to publish a war map of the Far East, before war had even begun. An advertisement in the *Daily Mirror* on January 23, 1904 explained that "For an intelligent study of the Far Eastern question a good map is indispensable, and the best obtainable by the ordinary person is that issued by the 'Daily Mail,'

which indicates all fortified positions, dockyards, and arsenals" (3). Although I have not found this map, the *Daily Mirror* would go on to publish their own in February, as I discuss below. However, even after the *Daily Mirror* published their own war map, they still advertised the *Daily Mail*'s map, explaining that it was "attractive coloured" and of a larger scale (9). Eighty thousand copies had been produced by February 15th (9) and another twenty thousand by the 23rd (2).

The *Daily Mirror's* war game map was published on February 11, 1904, only three days after Japan declared war and launched a surprise attack on Port Arthur. Despite advertising for the *Daily Mail* repeatedly, the press emphasized the importance of their map in engaging with the far-flung war: "To understand the daily progress of events in the Far East, it is essential to follow the different movements of the opposing forces on a good map." And, of course, these maps were also promotional: "These miniature armies and navies should be moved about each day as the war news is given in the columns of the 'Mirror.'" But it's the miniatures referenced here that make this map particularly interesting. On either side of the map, there are six cut-out paper soldiers, four flags, and two ships. The left features Japan, while Russia is on the right. Above these figurines is a description of the state of the respective armies. In a box at the bottom right of the map, there are instructions for "How to Play the War Game":

> The best way in which to use this map is to paste it upon cardboard, and to do the same with the figures representing Japanese and Russian troops and battleships. The figures are so drawn that, by bending over the dotted portion below each figure, they will stand upright. The flags can be best mounted on a fairly long pin, and should be used to mark bases of operation, permanent camps, and forts. (9)

Earlier in the same issue, more detailed directions appear. Self-promotional, the short blurb ends with the statement: "Each day instructions will be given in the *Daily Illustrated Mirror* as to how to keep the map up to date, and by following these our readers will be in possession of clear

means of seeing the exact position" (2). Armed with miniature figures, flags, and ships, the reader can then play at a real war upon the page.

And that the *Daily Mirror* advertises itself as "A Paper for Men and Women" points to the intended audience here: not children, but adults. The front cover even advertises the war map above the heading along with a striking drawing of a Russian ship capsizing and the headline "Day of Victory," which explains how the Japanese navy sunk two ships and disabled seven more. It is a celebratory issue, not one meant to make readers think, at least critically, about the death tolls resulting from a surprise, Pearl Harbor-like attack. Instead, like Milne's excitement about the start of the Balkan War eight years later, war is something to be excited for—it is time for a war map, this time one that very clearly invites readers to *play* at a current, real war, complete with everything they could need: soldiers, ships, flags.

Not only are the Russian and Japanese sides presented as even, although the little blurbs on the state of both armies suggest otherwise, but pasted on cardboard, these toy soldiers are at once fragile (made of paper) and sturdy (pasted on cardboard, the same as the map). Easily knocked over with a paper base, these toy soldiers are made for simulated death. But the fact that large numbers of troops have been replaced by paper-cardboard cut-outs further abstracts the war. Like men, they are fragile, easily knocked down, but they represent larger, sturdier armies. When real men become toy figures, it further distorts reality. Their lives mean less when rendered as simply a paper-cardboard cutout that can be knocked down, replaced, thrown away. The map itself is rather simple. Printed in gray-scale, Manchuria and China are a light gray, Japan a dark gray, and the land in dispute, Korea, is in white. There are no features regarding resources or topography excepting a railway from Harbin to Thinlenwan, built by the Russians in Manchuria. Place names are marked, and although there is no legend, the crosses appear to mark

naval stations. The simplicity of the map places the focus on the locations, rather than the tactics. When using a purely strategic map, the armchair general merely marks battles as they occur rather than imagining how the war might play out. And yet, this map still gives the viewer an illusion of control, and the less tactical nature of the map makes it less complicated, more easily grasped as a whole. That Korea is in white highlights it, giving visual cues about the war and making it understood that although Korea was self-ruled, it is up for grabs, ready to be colored in by the war's winner. The simple nature of this map is part of its appeal: it provides an abstracted view of the war that allows viewers to fill in the map with troops and flags and boats, imagining the bloodshed in a sanitized way.

The *Daily Mirror* would continue to publish war maps of the Russo-Japanese War, likely because they were a success. Four days later, the newspaper would publish a similar map, all in white, with troops, ships, and flags already presented on the map. Otherwise the map is the same. Entitled "Follow the Great War Game with this Map," the caption continues: "The Russian Fleet at Port Arthur is being watched by the Japanese Fleet at Blonde Island. The fleet at Vladiostok sailing through Tsugaru Strait was blown up. The Russian troops are concentrated at Yalu River, and have won in a skirmish with the outposts of the Japanese army which is marching from Seoul" (3). That this is all in a caption further abstracts the violence of the war. Here we get a succinct summary with none of the gore. Represented is just a map with abstracted troops and a brief caption explaining the state of the battle.

On September 3, 1904 the paper would publish another, smaller map, this time focusing on the Russian retreat from Liao-yang, complete with flags, the Hun-Ho River, and the Siberian Railway. Again, there is a caption, but this one mentions the death toll: "This week's casualties, as far as can be ascertained, have amounted to close on 40,000." However, even here this

information is tucked away in the paragraph, and the last line emphasizes the importance of the map: “This map shows the present position of the Japanese yesterday and the retreat of the Russian soldiers.” The object is, in the end, to inform the reader about the state of the war, not to encourage critical thinking about the deaths that resulted.

The importance of the war map to the *Daily Mirror* is perhaps best represented by a nearly full-page article on “War Maps for Popular Use” published on February 22, 1904. Detailing “How Skilful Artists and Careful Printers from Crude Materials Produce the Finished Article,” the piece shows a “rough ma[p] made by the explorer,” which is in essence a topographical map. The resulting example of a more finished map, interestingly of Cork Harbour in Ireland, lacks most topographical features, but it shows “great accuracy” and focuses instead on place names. There is also a picture of “Making Transfers” and “Engraving the map on copper from the drawing,” highlighting the process behind these maps that readers are meant to consume. The article begins by re-emphasizing the importance of a map during times of war: “To-day, when every man, woman, and child is taking so unwonted interest in the scenes now being enacted in the Far East, a reliable war map is essential for an intelligent appreciation of what may literally be called ‘the march of events.’”

According to this article, the map-maker compiles all the large scale maps published by War Offices, “which are almost entirely of foreign make,” and

> having procured all these scale maps, the draughtsman fixes the size and scale on which the war may [sic] is to be made, and if it is for popular use, like the “Daily Mail” map, it must be sufficiently large to show all the names likely to become of importance in the course of the war operations. Important towns and essential roads are abstracted from the scale maps, and the care which has to be exercised in selecting these was illustrated in the case of the “Daily Mail” map, for, after it was roughly drafted, it was revised by an expert from Tokio, who pointed out a very important road in Manchuria which had been of great service to the Japanese in the war with China, and was certain to be used again.

The article continues: “In addition to making abstracts from the scale maps, the draughtsman has to read up many books of travel relating to the district, and from the whole produces a drawing similar to the one published.” This article, although speaking specifically of the *Daily Mail* supplementary map, is an argument for the accuracy of the maps used by popular audiences, even as it admits that “errors indeed often occur, and are continually being rectified as fresh surveys are made. It is, for instance, by no means infrequent to find that the position of a town has been wrongly placed by as many as seven or eight miles, and the heights of mountains are rarely at first stated correctly.” In other words, these are errors reproduced even by War Offices, and so should be forgiven. After all, these areas were far-flung and continually being explored throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In any case, *The Daily Mirror* makes the case that the war map is an important investment for “every man, woman, and child.”

The Russo-Japanese War map published in the *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* on February 15, 1904 is much more tactical and detailed than the *Daily Mirror*’s, however. Along with a key explaining the major features (Naval Stations, Treaty Ports, Fortifications, and Railways) along with a scale and recorded distances between ports, there’s even a “Mercator’s Projection” that features a world map “Shewing the Trans-Siberian Railway and the various Sea Routes to Japan.” Because the Battle of Port Arthur had just occurred and would continue to be an important part of the war, there is a close-up of Port Arthur featuring all of the forts with a separate scale marker. The larger map shows much more of the land mass surrounding Korea, whereas the *Daily Mirror* war map focuses on Japan and Korea primarily. In the *Yorkshire Post* the map is awash with labeled waterways and smaller cities, a stark comparison to the *Daily Mirror*.

On the *Yorkshire Post* map itself is a description of Korea, "the bone of contention" (9). Below the map is a piece on "The Far East. How War News Will Come," which gives information about the special correspondence and telegrams that the *Yorkshire Post* will draw from. Essentially another marketing move, this piece reminds readers that the news from the *Yorkshire Post* will be the most accurate and detailed war reporting—war reports for which the subscriber can then use the map.

While the less tactical war map of the *Daily Mirror* is, in essence, more abstracted, I would argue that the *Yorkshire Post*'s map still distances the realities of armed conflict and thereby heightens the authority conferred upon the adult consumer. Not only is it a ploy to sell more papers, but it also furthers the feel of the armchair general and the "monarch-of-all-I-survey" theme. Given more information about the location of the war, the reader/player back home can imagine possibilities for the war's future. With a more tactical war map, the armchair general can predict movements of troops based on the distances and resources outlined on the map and disagree with army decisions, not just follow the movement of troops. It gives the viewer more power over the scene, and an esthetic mastery of the landscape, which has become a series of lines and icons rather than a war-torn group of countries.

However, the war proved not to be as exciting as the newspapers predicted. By March, at least one editorial writer was frustrated with "The Slow March of Mars." Published in the March 23, 1904 issue of *The Bystander,* the report reads:

> Except for some few gory moments, the War still refuses to move with the speed needful in these days of endless evening editions. The posters having served up the opening conflict in four or five different ways, have sunk to Strange Rumours and Rumours Denied. "Fall of Port Arthur" yields to "Reported Fall," which in turn makes room for "Has Port Arthur Fallen?" leading naturally to "The Fall Contradicted." On several mornings the British householder has found no news in his morning Daily. This will never do. What is the use of having a War Map to play with if one may never move the

> flags? If the War refuses to hurry with the times, we shall have to give up talking of it, and start a discussion on, say, "Should Men Propose?"

This editorial is telling. The writer is interested in the "gory moments" of the battles—"gore" that has been abstracted by the war maps he references. What's more, these war maps make readers want to spur on the pace of battle. After all, "what is the use of having a War Map to play with if one may never move the flags?" The war, if slow-paced, becomes more boring to play at. So boring, in fact, that people may have to "give up talking about it" and begin discussing the tongue-in-cheek suggestion of "Should Men Propose?" Although this is a joke, the ability for the writer to compare talking about the war to something so banal suggests that war itself, even one in which the British have some vested interest, is banal. Perhaps this isn't surprising. War was a near-constant for the Victorians and Edwardians, and yet, as this piece illustrates, the war map and the excitement it adds to the way war was experienced by those back home played a large part in making war so abstracted. The "gory moments" become flags moved around on a map. The lives lost become discussion points for tactical decisions and family gatherings. And armchair generals may even yearn for those deaths, albeit in an unconscious way, because it speeds up the pace of the war, giving them news to read and games to play.

Conclusion

War games invaded the popular press during the Victorian and Edwardian eras—and beyond. "Popular mapping," as Schulten calls it, was rampant, especially since the start of the Franco-Prussian War in 1870. But Schulten is right in saying that popular mapping of wars continued through the twentieth century up until at least World War II. *The Daily Mail*, for instance, published their supplementary map of World War I in 1914. A clear call for people to

enlist, the map of Europe includes information about the relative strength of the armies involved and Britain is sorely lacking. Despite the devastation of World War I, people were still playing at war.

A few things contributed to the rise of war maps in the popular press. War reporting is perhaps the biggest, which explains why war maps started to be reported in newspapers beginning with the Crimean War and why there was a watershed moment during the Franco-Prussian War. But cartographic advancements also aided the popularity and increasing affordability of maps. By the late nineteenth century, as Rankin elucidates, the IMW, or International Map of the World, was in progress. Rankin argues:

> The subjectivity of the IMW is somewhat . . . elusive, since the goal of the map was essentially to construct a 'view from nowhere'—a god's eye view that could be shared by anyone, anywhere. But this ideal of neutral detachment was again strongly political, since the implied reader of the IMW would always be looking at the world from *elsewhere*. (41-42)

In similar fashion, the war maps, while not attempting to illustrate the entire world, do attempt to give a "view from nowhere." England was rarely featured in these war maps because wars were occurring abroad, allowing British citizens to imagine a world far away while forgetting their own positionality. Earlier, Rankin stated: "Taken to an extreme, this faith in representation is what transforms *maps* (in the plural) into *the map*—a singular, universal record of geographic fact that includes everything worthy of attention, and nothing more. Armed with such a map, it is no longer even necessary to leave your desk: the world has come to you" (2-3). Instead, map viewers get a god's eye view, or perhaps more aptly, a monarch's eye view, taking in locations on the map in their entirety. Such representations also gave map viewers a false sense of control over what was in reality messy conflict. Civilians became "educated" about the war, with very little real understanding of what military action required or cost. Instead, war became something

to look forward to with, in Milne's words, a sense of "detachment." As Raugh argues, "The popular press, available to an increasingly literate public, encouraged . . . patriotic and militaristic sentiments as the British Army engaged in frequently romanticized colonial wars and campaigns "(xvi). Although little discussed, war maps furthered this romantic ideal of war and led to more public support for wars, even when those wars cost British lives. War was a game to be played, not something to survive.

This game, too, was seen as separate from children's play. Children, of course, took adult war culture and made it their own, as shown by the Brontë siblings; children also acted out scenes from war as illustrated by the two articles about children playing at war discussed in this chapter. However, as Wells's *Floor Games* and *Little Wars* indicate, there is a difference between war play and war games. Children were seen as engaging in the former, and although adolescents could participate in the games adults played, when it came to the war games published in the popular press, adults became the focus. Children imagine and play out wars, often with toys, but adults take back this power, upping the stakes. Rather than fictional violence, adults used real war as the basis of their games, practicing "adult" skills such as strategy and patience. In doing so, they abstract the very real deaths happening abroad, even if they felt some ambivalence as well.

Children may want their own play culture, as Brian Sutton-Smith argues (125), but so do adults. Entire families may have played these games as shown by *The Illustrated London News* example above, but articles such as Milne's help to show that adults also played alone—in fact, that children were left out of the play entirely. Children are not absent, but they are left in the background. And there is a hierarchy to this—adults' games have higher stakes than children's war play, in part because adults are playing at real war. But in taking away children's playthings

for their own enjoyment, adults not only abstract violence—they actually become passive consumers themselves. While Jacqueline Rose has commented that "Children's fiction sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product, receiver)" (1-2), adults playing at war games in the popular press makes them readers and receivers and the men at war that the pins and flags represent, products. Of course, adults are also the authors, makers, and givers, but the one's actually playing these games become passive consumers—a trait often thought of as child-like.

The Brontës certainly proved that children actually do have agency, even when it comes to war. They invented entire worlds out of a simple gift of toy soldiers and claimed power over powerful adult figures from recent military memory. Their poetry shows a precocious understanding of war trauma, as well, proving that children (and young adults) can engage in "adult" themes with some sense of trauma and power. However, when adults become a part of children experiencing wars, such as in Edith Nesbit's *The Magic City* and Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass,* they take back control, positioning children as figures with some agency, sure, but no real power. When adults fight with children as in H. G. Wells's *Floor Games* and *Little Wars* or Robert Louis Stevenson and Lloyd Osbourne's "Stevenson at Play," they are battling over status. Adults may have the upper hand when it comes to strategy, but adolescents at least can often handle their own on the toy battlefield. These games however, separate form war play, become locations where adults try to reestablish their own superiority, both mentally and physically, over their children and the toys they play with. When adults take over completely, as in this chapter, adults may well imagine that they are in complete control of toy war, but by playing at *real* war—war in which they have no actual part, nor any say in—adults actually become powerless themselves.

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