HIS GAZE HITS HER AT THE SIDE OF THE FACE*:
An Analysis of the Intersubjective Gaze in
Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*

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B.A. University of Winnipeg, 1992

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of English

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

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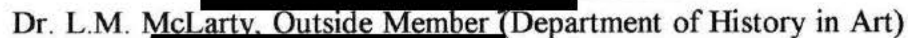
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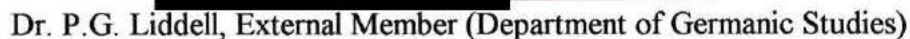
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*An adaptation of the title of Barbara Kruger's 1981 photograph, [*Your Gaze Hits the Side of My Face*]. Mary Boone Gallery, New York, New York.

PR4169
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ABSTRACT

The novels of Charlotte Brontë, with their frequent and sustained scenarios of inter-personal, erotic gazing between female and male characters, are receptive to the application of feminist film theory which focuses on spectatorship and its relation to desire, to the construction of gender, and to issues of subjectivity.

With particular emphasis on *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*, this thesis explores the inherent ambiguities of Brontë's gaze apparatus: the imbrication of a male scopic economy which denies the female gaze and subjectivity with disruptions of that system.

Similar to the methodology of feminist film criticism, this thesis also deploys the discourse of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis (frequently cited concepts in the thesis include the oedipal crisis, castration anxiety, defence mechanisms such as voyeurism, fetishism, sadism, and masochism) as a political weapon to expose the patriarchal unconscious which informs Brontë's texts.

In Brontë's first novel, *The Professor*, the censorious subtext which suggests William Crimsworth's monstrousness fails to mitigate the effects of a sadistic male gaze (and narrative voice) which negate Frances Henri's subjectivity.

Despite the representation of Jane Eyre's gaze and her subversive strategies to evade spectacularization in *Jane Eyre*, these attempts to incorporate female subjectivity collapse under the weight of Rochester's canny and relentless masculine surveillance system which is aided by the overall masculine scopic economy.

In *Villette*, Lucy Snowe's partial transvestism in the school play becomes a metaphor for her spectatorial transvestism: her seeming alternation between a masculine spectatorial position with its access to agency and desire, and a feminine position typified by passivity and a figurative or literal immobilization of her gaze. However, transvestism is recoverable as a metaphor and consequently, the patriarchal gaze apparatus consistently reconfirms the fixity of Lucy's feminine gender identity.

Brontë's novels perfectly illustrate the vicissitudes of the female gaze and subjectivity typical of texts which simultaneously address issues of female subjectivity yet also endorse traditional gender roles. Although the patriarchal imperative which underlies the novels ultimately circumscribes the female characters, Brontë's legacy resides in the attempt to envision moments——howsoever transitory——of resistance to that system.

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The author gratefully acknowledges the University of Victoria
Department of English for the generous award of the M.A. Graduate Fellowship
in 1993 and for its renewal in 1994.

Chapter One

It seems appropriate to commence an investigation of spectatorship and gender in Charlotte Brontë's *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette* with a solicitation of the reader's gaze, as I call attention to the cover illustrations of the three editions selected for this thesis. Portrayed on the cover of the 1989 Penguin edition of *The Professor* is a male figure whose gaze assertively looks out at the reader/spectator of the novel's cover, challenging her/his objectifying gaze. The hand which forcefully (and rather oddly) grips the edge of his coat and the ochreous hue which dominates the representation reinforce the unsettling effect of his confrontational male gaze. The illustrations for the covers of *Jane Eyre* (Oxford University Press 1975) and *Villette* (Penguin 1977) may be considered together, for both delineate a woman with a downcast gaze: in the case of *Jane Eyre*, the woman assiduously concentrates on her knitting——traditional woman's work; in the case of *Villette*, the woman removes a bouquet of violets from an envelope, thus linking her with the private realm's romantic concerns. Both women become objects of vision as the reader's/spectator's gaze hits the sides of their faces. While these images were not specifically rendered for these novels, the editors of the texts undoubtedly selected these particular artistic reproductions for the covers because they complement the narratives within. It is not surprising, then, that the accuracy with which they represent the male and female gazes (and reflect textual events) in Brontë's novels is uncanny. Before the reader even opens these editions of Charlotte Brontë's texts, the construction of gender has already commenced, and the work continues in the texts with the author's proliferation of scenarios which portray spectatorial interaction between male and female characters. Applying feminist film theory and its ideas on cinematic audience spectatorship to *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*, I contend that informing the dynamics of spectatorship in Brontë's novels is a patriarchal ideological imperative which operates to fulfill the following agenda: to align male and female characters with the appropriate spectatorial position of masculinity or femininity so as to privilege the male gaze and desire, and to regulate and negate the female gaze and sexuality. Admittedly, the

(whatever that may be taken to be)..." (Levine 8). Realist authors endeavour to authentically reflect the real world and the character's quotidian experience of society, and this objective is detected in Brontë's "plain and homely" discourse, which she defines in her own terms in her Preface to *The Professor*, drafted shortly after the release of *Shirley* in (false) anticipation of the publication of *The Professor*:

> I said to myself that my hero should work his way through life as I had seen real living men work theirs——that he should never get a shilling he had not earned——that no sudden turns should lift him in a moment to wealth and high station; that whatever small competency he might gain, should be won by the sweat of his brow; that, before he could find so much as an arbour to sit down in, he should master at least half the ascent of 'the Hill of Difficulty'; that he should not even marry a beautiful girl or a lady of rank. As Adam's son he should share Adam's doom, and drain throughout life a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment. (37)

Dolan proposes that underlying Realism's transparency of representation——that is, its seemingly straightforward reproduction of "reality"——is an insidious reification of oppressive patriarchal hierarchies and representations which construct woman as object (84-85). These embedded patriarchal meanings are also detected beneath the seemingly uncoded surface of classical Hollywood film.

Classical cinematic realism refers to the type of Hollywood-produced, feature-length, narrative sound films made between 1930 and 1960. Their "seamless" style attempts to duplicate the real world and conceal the constructed nature of the film from the audience (Bordwell *et al* 37; Chatman 154; Kaplan, *Women and Film* 13). Cinematic codes, such as continuity editing, close-ups, shot-reverse shot structures, and point-of-view shots, in combination with identification processes,[2] contribute to the manufacture

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2 Kuhn's explanation of identification processes is useful here: "In watching a fiction film, the spectator is involved in two forms of identification. One is with the movement of narrative itself, from the disruption of fictional equilibrium which constitutes its beginning, through the movement towards resolution and then final closure. The other identification is with the narrative's central character or characters. In these identification processes, the spectator is in varying degrees, depending on the linearity and economy of the narrative and the representation of central characters in terms of their fictional personality traits, drawn into the world of film" (*Women's Pictures* 132).

of patriarchal meaning (Kuhn, *Women's Pictures* 131-132). The woman's film or melodrama, a genre of classical Hollywood film that reached its apex of popularity during the 1930s and 1940s, most closely approximates Brontë's (and much Victorian) fiction: both deal with female protagonists and traditionally feminine themes concerning the private sphere (Doane, *Desire* 4). A specific parallel to Brontë's fiction is the "love story" sub-genre of the woman's film with its narratives which explore the possibility of female desire (Doane, *Desire* 36).

Beyond their common objectives of mimesis, the nineteenth-century realist novel and classical realist cinema share other similarities; indeed, classical film inherits many of its principles and conventions from literary sources such as the novel, the short story, and drama (Bordwell *et al* 13-19, 163-173). Despite the numerous parallels between the realist novel and classical realist cinema, such as narrative conventions, identification processes, principles of characterization[3], and hidden or assumed patriarchal ideological imperatives, I will limit my exploration of these affinities to the issue most relevant to my discussion of spectatorship——the gaze apparatus in both media.

The gaze apparatus of the novel must be distinguished from narrative point of view (although they are not entirely unrelated). The former term strictly refers to visual perceptions whereas the latter term is not limited to vision, and may include, for example, ideological perspectives (Chatman 140-141). The visual economy of the novel is comprised of three "looks" which roughly correspond to the three "looks" of classical

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3 Both fictional and cinematic narrative rely on similar methods to characterize a person, but as this chapter will reveal, regardless of the method, representations are always biased in some way. The character may be presented seemingly without the intervention of the narrator's or other character's judgements so that the reader/spectator infers the character's motives and personality traits. This method, referred to as "showing," is suited for the visual medium of film, but is not used exclusively. Moreover, "showing" as a method of representation does not necessarily guarantee an authentic reproduction of a character's perceptions (insofar as a fictional character can be "real") since the camera and director determine what is or is not shown, thus offering a mediated perspective. Alternatively, an intervening entity——the narrator, another character, or in film, a voice-over effect——may describe and evaluate a character for the reader/spectator. Both "showing" and "telling" (the second method) are widely used in Victorian realism, as in Brontë's novels (Abrams 21), but as Brontë's first-person narratives indicate, neither method conveys the pure perceptions of a character because all accounts are filtered through the narrator. See the section in this chapter which compares the three gazes of film and fiction for more extensive analysis of this issue.

cinema. These looks are those of 1) the narrator/implied author, and in film, the camera, 2) the implied reader, and in film, the implied spectator, and 3) the characters (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 30; Mulvey 25-26). Like the camera which frames the mise-en-scène and controls what the spectator sees, the narrator frames the events, objects, and characters for the reader. The first-person narrators of the three Brontë novels which I have selected report events and objects which she/he observed in the past. However, because these observations are represented as a function of memory and not of visual perception, the narrator does not actually "see" in the sense that the characters "see" (Chatman 144-146). In this regard, the narrator's gaze approaches point of view more than a veritable gaze. While I recognize this subtle distinction, for my purposes I will consider the narrator's memory perceptions as a gaze notwithstanding the fact that, technically, they are not true visual perceptions.

In narrative cinema, the camera guides the spectator's vision in a way that is analogous to the narrator's role in fiction. The camera, being a machine, cannot literally have visual perceptions nor does it have a gender in the way that the narrator may have. Nevertheless, cinematic technology has what Chatman defines as a "perceptual slant" which presents events and objects according to an ideological agenda (154-155). Feminist film theorists consider the camera to be inherently "male" because cinema, reliant on the dual psychoanalytic mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism usually affiliated with the male (to be discussed shortly), and its technical codes of representation (editing, shot sequence, close-ups, point-of-view shots), operates to satisfy male visual pleasure and construct the woman as the object of that desire (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 30; Mulvey 25-26). The narrator's gaze in the Victorian realist novel, however, is not intrinsically male, but as aforementioned, Realism has been criticized for its perpetuation of patriarchal representational practices (Dolan 84-85).[4] Because this motivating principle

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[4] Using Althusser's ideas on the interpellation of ideology to discuss the construction of the reader as subject(ed), Belsey also identifies classic realism as constituting "an ideological practice in addressing itself to readers as subjects, interpellating them in order that they freely accept their subjectivity and subjection" (52).

is ingrained in the Realist novel, the patriarchal ideological imperative that underlies Brontë's novels, for instance, is not erased by the fact that a female narrator relates the story in *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*.

Much feminist film theory addresses the issue of how the cinematic apparatus operates to construct spectatorial subjectivity. The fictional equivalent of the implied film spectator is the implied reader. In literary studies, the relationship between the reader and the text has evolved into a complicated and much debated issue. I do not intend to enter the foray of reader-response criticism, and thus the scope of my discussion of the implied film spectator's/reader's gaze will be broad, focusing on the spectator/reader as a construct of the cinematic apparatus or of the ideology of the text, rather than as an actual individual who reacts in unique ways to the screen image or novel. According to Mulvey, in its quest for verisimilitude, the cinematic apparatus of realist cinema negates the presence of the camera and denies the spectator's perspective: these two looks are superseded by the characters' gazes, "the conscious aim being always to eliminate intrusive camera presence and prevent a distancing awareness [of illusion] in the audience" (25). A characteristic feature of most Victorian fiction is the underlying ideological assumption that the implied reader's perceptions, opinions, and interpretations accord with the narrator's own perspective. This accounts for the sometimes very intrusive presence of the narrator, such as in each of Brontë's novels, wherein the narrator frequently appeals to the "Reader" as she/he defends her/his actions. Consequently, the gazes of the narrator and implied reader become conflated, just as the spectator of classical cinema, particularly the male viewer, becomes a participant in the voyeurism of the camera (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 30). This assimilation of the implied spectator's/reader's gaze also occurs intradiegetically in relation to the characters.[5] The cinematic apparatus and ideology of the text encourage a certain interaction between the implied spectator/reader and the screen image or text. Identification processes in the

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5 Intradiegetic refers to the events and characters in the film or literary text itself.

woman's film, for example, operate to align the implied female viewer with the objectified female character on screen, and this regulation of spectatorship ensures that "what the woman is sold is a certain image of femininity" (Doane, *Desire* 30). While determining the sex of the implied reader of one of Brontë's novels would constitute a topic for another paper, suffice it to note that similar processes are at work to promote the implied reader's identification and alignment with the narrator/character in each of her novels and his/her gendered spectatorial position. (*The Professor*, however, problematizes this fusion, as I will demonstrate.) I will conclude further comparisons between the looks of the implied reader and spectator since this is not the focus of my own study. Let it stand, then, that the implied reader and the implied film spectator "see" what the narrator in fiction or the film camera "sees."

Finally, I must address the subject of my thesis——the characters' gazes. In classical cinema, the camera conveys the visual perspective of a particular character with point of view shots and film editing techniques. As aforementioned, in fiction with a first-person narrative, regardless of whether the visual perceptions of the characters are conveyed by "showing" or by "telling," the characters' visual perceptions are always filtered through the narrator's point of view, and hence the narrator's regulation of their spectatorship must be considered in an analysis of the visual economy.

Aside from the narrator's/camera's role, the following points about the characters' ocular perceptions may be made. In classical cinema and traditional patriarchal narratives which address a male audience, voyeurism and fetishism typify the male character's gaze, which fuses with the looks of the male camera/narrator and the male spectator/implied reader to create a unified male gaze (Mulvey 25-26; Kaplan, *Women and Film* 30-31). In Brontë's novels and in the woman's film, this conventional alignment of the three male looks becomes complicated by such contingencies as a female narrator or a female protagonist. Doane comments that:

> ...the sustained attempt to incorporate female subjectivity for a female subject-spectator introduces perturbations and discrepancies which are frequently not quite successfully contained by the narrative process.

> Excesses and the revelation of incoherencies and contradictions are a by-product of the films' mode of address. (*Desire* 34)

For example, the objectifying male look of Rochester may be adumbrated by the female narrator-character of *Jane Eyre* in order to protect female subjectivity. But regardless of the attempts to posit a female subject, male dominance prevails due to various devices (to be discussed in this chapter) which undermine female subjectivity. In other words, neither the woman's film nor Brontë's female *bildungsroman* novels "provide us with an access to a pure and authentic female subjectivity, much as we might like [them] to do so. [They] provides us instead with an image repertoire of poses——classical feminine poses and assumptions about the female appropriation of the gaze" (Doane, *Desire* 4).

Given the variables that must be considered in an investigation of the visual economy (too many to consider in this summary), I reserve more specific examples and explanations for later chapters. Here, suffice it to note that the above discussion of the three "looks" in the nineteenth-century novel and in classical cinema demonstrates the complex and interactive qualities of the gaze apparatus (de Lauretis, *Alice* 138; Mulvey 26). Having justified the relevance of film theory to my study of spectatorial positioning[6] in Brontë's works, I will now proceed to trace the development of feminist film theory and define the terms which I will employ.

Feminist film criticism arose during the early 1970s out of the context of the Women's Liberation Movement. Laura Mulvey's 1975 article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," considered to be a vanguard formulation of film spectatorship (Doane, *Desire* 5; Kaplan, "Feminist Film Criticism" 158), has inspired other feminist film

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6 Spectatorial positioning, a theoretical concept using the ideas of psychoanalytic and film theory, refers to the positions in the signifying chain unconsciously assumed by the film spectator (Doane, *Desire* 34). As Doane is careful to point out, the biological sex of audience members must be distinguished from the gendered positions they assume. However, sex and gender often become conflated because social conditioning trains individuals to align themselves with the gendered position that accords with, or in the case of Brontë's characters, is proper to, their sex (8). In Brontë's novels, spectatorial positioning occurs alongside the male characters' sadistic and calculated positionings of female characters into places of subservience. See also Kuhn, *Women's Pictures* 191.

theorists to speculate on this issue. Almost twenty years later, feminist film criticism has developed into a dynamic area of study. With its speculations on issues such as representation, male and female subjectivity, desire, and spectatorial positioning, feminist film theory's relevance to fields other than cinema scholarship, such as literary studies, has gradually become recognized.

From the outset, feminist film critics such as Mulvey have employed the discourses of other disciplines (Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis, Saussurean semiotics, and Althusserian Marxism, for example) in their speculations on the cinematic medium (Kaplan, "Feminist Film Criticism" 158). In particular, Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic methodologies have had a formative influence on the work of feminist film critics, but not because these theories are viewed as truthful formulations about the human psyche (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 24). Rather, many feminist critics deploy psychoanalytic discourse (with its set of phallocentric assumptions) as a political weapon to reveal how the patriarchal unconscious, which informs the medium of film and all visual representation in a male-dominated society, constructs woman as Other, as Object (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 24; Mulvey 14).

In the following summary of some psychoanalytic concepts utilized by feminist film theorists and which I will apply to my own study, I begin with the most fundamental concept of Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis——the Oedipal crisis. Briefly, during the pre-Oedipal (Freud) or Imaginary (Lacan) period, the child experiences an illusory dyadic unity with the Mother. The movement from this pre-linguistic moment of plenitude and harmony with the Mother to the Oedipal crisis is inaugurated, in part, by the entry of the Third Term, the Father, who destroys this unity between the Mother and child. The little boy recognizes that his mother lacks a penis, or in Lacanian terms, she lacks the phallus, the cultural symbol of (male) power. The boy's fear of bodily mutilation, defined as the castration complex, and the resultant awareness of sexual difference, cause him to align himself with his father and assume his place of dominance in the Symbolic Order. This perception of sexual difference is essential for the boy's entry

into the Symbolic Order and for the child's acquisition of language and experience of desire because, firstly, linguistic systems are based on a differential structure (that is, a sign has meaning only because of its difference from other signs), and secondly, disengagement from the object is necessary for desire. (Doane, *Desire* 10). For the girl, however, the subjectivity which comes with language and desire is problematized since she lacks the phallus, signifier of desire (Doane, *Desire* 12). As Mulvey notes, "Woman's desire is subjugated to her image as bearer of the bleeding wound; she can exist only in relation to castration and cannot transcend it" (14). Thus, according to the signifying system of psychoanalysis and the Symbolic Order, the woman can only experience the "desire to desire" (Doane, *Desire* 9).

The castration complex and the woman's significance as a castration threat are important to my discussion of spectatorship because, as a consequence of castration anxiety, the male develops psychological and visual defence mechanisms to mitigate the emasculating threat that the woman poses. Castration anxiety, originating with the spectacle of female phallic absence, is thereafter reiterated with each sighting of the female body (Gallop 27). The male unconscious develops two possible ways to obviate this menace, and cinema, which mimics the processes of the male unconscious, structures itself around these twin mechanisms (Mulvey 21). The first, the psychic mechanism of voyeurism, requires a psychological distancing from the female erotic object to preserve male desire (Doane, *Desire* 11; Kuhn, *Power* 30). Voyeurism entails a complex operation of the male's surreptitious investigation of the woman, his detection of her perceived guilt (she is "castrated" and may castrate him), his devaluation of her, and his final punishment or forgiveness of her (Mulvey 21-22). This latter disciplinary element associates voyeurism with sadism since the male derives pleasure through the often violent subjugation of the allegedly guilty woman to his will (Mulvey 22). The violence of the male gaze which is typical of narratives with a patriarchal agenda "seduce[s] women into femininity," that is, it coerces them into this masochistic position (de Lauretis, *Alice* 142). Voyeurism is unavailable to the female since it is a defence against a castration which,

according to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse, has already occurred for the woman; furthermore, it is precluded for the woman because her proximity to the image prevents the detachment from the object that is the necessary pre-condition for the operation of this mechanism (Doane, *Desire* 12-13).

Fetishistic scopophilia, the second defence mechanism developed by the male psyche to alleviate castration anxiety, involves a process of the male subject's overvaluation of the woman in order to circumvent the knowledge of her castration and her imagined devirilizing threat (Doane, *Desire* 14-15; Mulvey 21-22). This visual cathexis involves a male fixation on the signifiers of the woman's sexual difference: the female body is metaphorically fragmented into parts or fetishes which substitute for the woman's phallic absence (Doane, *Desire* 15). The literary equivalent of fetishism is the figure of synecdoche (Michie 99). In fictional delineations of female characters, synecdoche mutilates the female body into parts so that the "represented [the fetish] must come to stand for the unrepresented [the signifiers of sexual difference and female sexuality], the present for the absent" (Michie 97-99). For similar reasons as voyeurism, fetishism is inaccessible to the woman (Doane, *Desire* 15).

Thus, the masculine spectatorial position may be defined as an active, desiring, and controlling gaze. The visual defence mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism, developed during the Oedipal crisis, operate to annihilate the threat that the woman represents by the male's distanciation from and objectification of her. The male owns the gaze and thereby possesses the woman, and she becomes the passive recipient of male scopophilia and desire (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 30-31). I now turn my attention to the feminine spectatorial position.

In the woman's film, identification processes act to encourage the (implied) female spectator's narcissistic and masochistic identification with images of suffering, victimized, or terrorized women (Doane, *Desire* 19), and in so doing, the female spectator's culturally learned, feminine submissiveness is reinforced, and her gaze carries no power (Doane, *Desire* 16; Kaplan, *Women and Film* 31). Similarly, the intradiegetic gaze apparatus

works to immobilize the female character's gaze by what Doane defines as "strategies of containment and discipline" (*Desire* 37). Editing, framing, and lighting techniques, and the organization of camera shots are some of the methods whereby the cinematic apparatus fulfils the patriarchal ideological imperative of denying female subjectivity (Doane, *Desire* 100-104). Analogous constraints are imposed on the gazes and desires of Brontë's female characters, in forms compatible with the written medium, of course. Moreover, in her discussion of the feminine position, Doane identifies a series of tropes derived from psychoanalytic scenarios which indicate the female spectator's problematic assumption of the gaze, and these tropes are appropriate to describe the female character's spectatorship in film and literature: the proximity, overinvolvement, and overidentification with the image which suggest the feminine position may be contradistinguished from the distanciation and separation which are necessary for the masculine mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism (Doane, *Desire* 2, 12-13). The final trope, feminine passivity, requires some additional remarks. As I have mentioned, Doane finds the mechanisms of voyeurism and fetishism inadequate to describe the feminine spectatorial position, using instead the Freudian scenario of masochism. Referring to Freud's article "A Child is Being Beaten," in which the female fantasizer's look is de-eroticized, Doane argues that in the woman's film, the female spectator's gaze is also desexualized in the process of identifying with the persecuted female figure on-screen whose normally "specularizable nature" (*Desire* 19) is attenuated in this genre (*Desire* 16-20).[7] In turn, this desexualization of the female character disembodies her, and obviously, "a bodyless [sic] woman cannot see" (Doane, *Desire* 20). The scenario of masochism, then, perfectly describes the process (in the woman's film or in Brontë's texts) of the disabling of the woman's vision and the

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[7] Doane argues that in the woman's film, the incorporation of female subjectivity suggested by figuring the female protagonist as agent of the gaze functions to counteract the patriarchal representational strategies which would objectify her. However, to reduce the potential danger of the female look, the cinematic apparatus ensures that her gaze is not invested with desire in the same manner as the male scopophilic gaze. Rather, the female look is associated with "fear, anxiety, horror." The result is a despectacularization of the female, "a deflection of scopophiliac energy in other directions away from the female body" (Doane, "The 'Woman's Film'" 70).

erasure of her desire at the "very precise moment of ideological danger——the woman's assumption of the gaze" (Doane, *Desire* 101-102).

As I have indicated, the masculine and feminine spectatorial positions may be described by the respective mechanisms of male sadism and female masochism. Kaplan observes that this "dominance-submission pattern" privileging the male subject typifies adult erotic relationships in Western patriarchal society; furthermore, the visual economy of classical Hollywood cinema reflects this hierarchical paradigm (*Women and Film* 29). I propose that this same pattern may be detected in the gaze apparatus of Brontë's fiction.

Here, I would like to broaden my summary of the psychoanalytic terms central to feminist film criticism to include a brief overview of the theories of Chodorow's feminist psychoanalysis, and Benjamin's application of Chodorow's object-relations theory to her own study of male sadism and female masochism. This exploration of another paradigm seems warranted because it will help to explain the development of the dominance-submission pattern in terms which depart from the phallocentric bias which typifies Freudian and linguistic psychoanalysis. Moreover, a thorough description of this hierarchical pattern which characterizes erotic relationships is appropriate considering that the sexuality of Brontë's male and female characters is structured according to these positions.

Benjamin's exploration of male sadism and female masochism pivots on Chodorow's interpretation of the psychoanalytic concept of differentiation. Chodorow defines differentiation as the process beginning in childhood and reiterated throughout adulthood whereby the individual struggles to be recognized as a subject by distinguishing the self as, paradoxically, separate from and connected to the Other. The Other, the child's primary caregiver, is traditionally the mother in patriarchal society. True differentiation occurs if there is mutual recognition of subjectivity between the Other and child. Chodorow posits that this process and the emergence of gender identity which accompanies this phase are much more conflictual for the male child in Western patriarchy since they develop into an issue of emphasizing his difference from the

mother. The male establishes rigid boundaries between himself and his mother which correspond to the hierarchical binary oppositions, such as subject and object, which underlie patriarchal systems. In the process of overdifferentiating, he resists "merger" with, and denies the subjectivity of, the Other.

The female child encounters difficulties during this process of differentiation and establishing a feminine gender identity (otherwise a straightforward process of mutual recognition between the girl and mother) because of the cultural devaluation of women, mothering, and femininity. She sacrifices her own subjectivity when connecting with the mother, recognizing in her mother her own powerlessness.

Using Chodorow's concept of differentiation, Benjamin reveals how this struggle for the recognition of subjectivity recurs in adult erotic relationships. Male overdifferentiation in infancy——the struggle for selfhood achieved (falsely) through separation and female objectification——reappears as (a culturally sanctioned) male domination and sadism. The female denial of her own subjectivity, also culturally reinforced, becomes in adulthood a masochistic passivity. The male and female maintain their respective adult positions of dominance or submission because each obtains the satisfaction of the original impulses of false differentiation: the male negates the Other and controls boundaries, thus ensuring his subjectivity, whereas the female achieves a (false) merger with the male by submitting to his limits. She comes to idealize the male because he embodies the active desire that, as a female, she cannot possess. Benjamin refers to this rejection of the powerless mother and the elevation of the father figure as "ideal love" ("A Desire" 80). Maternal absence in Brontë's novels and her heroines' idealization of and submission to paternal figures suggest this "ideal love." However, Brontë frequently seems to disrupt this traditional dominance-submission configuration, and in my study of the gaze apparatus in her novels, I will look at the reinforcements and disruptions of this arrangement.

In this introduction, I have outlined the theoretical framework necessary for my analysis of the scopic economy in selected Brontë texts. I recognize that what I have

provided is a brief and tentative treatment of relevant concepts of feminist film theory, Freudian and linguistic psychoanalysis, and feminist psychoanalysis. These selected concepts will be further clarified in the upcoming chapters with specific examples from the three novels. I would like to conclude this chapter by equipping the reader with some indication of the direction that my study will take. First, however, I would like to explain the absence of Brontë's third novel, *Shirley*, from my exploration. My reasons for the exclusion are pragmatic. First, spectatorship in this novel is not fully developed as a theme in comparison to *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Villette*: episodes of gazing are limited and the male visual economy is rarely challenged or disrupted. There are, nevertheless, some interesting moments of spectatorship in *Shirley* which I intend to invoke in my explications of the other texts to enhance the readings and convey a sense of pattern in Brontë's representations of gazing. Second, space parameters do not allow for an entire chapter to be devoted to *Shirley*, and given the paucity of scenes of prolonged spectatorial engagement, it seems the obvious choice for exclusion.

In the first of Brontë's novels,[8] *The Professor*, I will investigate, in turn, William Crimsworth's gaze at his female pupils, at Mademoiselle Zoraïde Reuter, and at Frances Evans Henri, to contend that the male gaze in this novel is typified by voyeuristic and sadistic devaluation, pornographic projection, and calculated and frequently violent manipulations of female spectatorship. While this representation of the monstrousness of male visual defence mechanisms may suggest Brontë's censure of the male visual economy, the elision of the female gaze is more than an effect of William's repulsive narrative: it is also the result of Brontë's reification of patriarchally-gendered (spectatorial) positionings. The scopic economy of *The Professor* reveals few gaps in its structure through which female subjectivity can emerge.

Beginning with a preliminary discussion of Jane Eyre's childhood tactics to evade spectacularization, in the chapter on *Jane Eyre* I will propose that even in adulthood,

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[8] Probably completed during 1846, this novel is chronologically the first, but in terms of its posthumous publication in 1857, it is the last.

Jane's attempts to protect her subjectivity fail when confronted with Edward Rochester's fetishistic objectification and relentless and insuperable erotic surveillance. Unlike *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre* represents protracted episodes of female scopophilia, and these memorable episodes will be examined in detail. However, Jane's visual pleasure is uniformly circumscribed by both Rochester's and textual containment strategies which deny her ownership of visual agency and desire. Hence, the possibility of female subjectivity in *Jane Eyre* is recuperated by the patriarchal imperative of the text.

Villette foregrounds what Doane refers to as "the vicissitudes of the female gaze" (*Desire* 36) as Lucy Snowe oscillates between masculine and feminine spectatorial positions, and between rebellion and submission to the male visual economy. Her scopophilic observations of Dr John Graham Bretton, in which she destabilizes the conventional structuration of vision, suggest a masculine position; however, in her personal relationship with Graham, the gaze apparatus operates to deflect her identification towards a feminine position, resulting in a metaphorical obscuration of her vision. Similarly, Lucy's oppositions to Paul Emanuel's voyeuristic gaze, which monitors her visual pleasure and desire, dissipate as she voluntarily submits to his "system of repression" (*Villette* 591) and assumes a masochistic position in which her gaze becomes effaced. I will argue that Brontë's final novel closes with the ambiguous representation of a woman with a disabled gaze, who is passive, desexualized, and forever waiting, yet whose act of writing——her self-representation——may suggest the possibility of an emerging female subject.

Mulvey concludes her famous article with the exhortation that female spectators must join the feminist project of destroying their visual pleasure in cinema by uncovering the oppressive representational practices in films (25-26). The final chapter of the thesis will explore alternatives to Mulvey's suggestion in terms of Brontë's texts: must the reader sacrifice her/his textual pleasure in these classics because of the patriarchal ideological imperative therein?

Chapter Two
The Professor

The Professor is unique among Brontë's novels for its consistently unsettling effect on the modern reader: from William Crimsworth's solipsistic epistolary introduction to the concluding image of his calculated non-recognition of his wife and friend as he inscribes the final words of his masterful narrative, the reader senses that there is something abhorrent about William's autobiography. The scopic economy of the novel contributes to its overall disturbing quality, as William (unsuccessfully) seeks to coerce the implied reader into participating in his depredatory ways of seeing. An analysis of the male gaze in the novel reveals that William obviates the devirilizing spectacle of a woman and protects his bodily integrity with pornographic visual strategies. This chapter, divided into three sections, will explore (in sequence) the (non-) interaction of gazes among William, the female pupils at the *Pensionnat de Demoiselles*, Zoraïde Reuter, and Frances Evans Henri. The first section will demonstrate how, through voyeurism and the pornographic strategy of projection, William displaces his own carnality onto his female pupils, whom he sadistically punishes for their solicitous and emasculating "Gorgon-like" (129) gazes. The section on Mlle Reuter will show how William's gaze shifts from fetishistic overvaluation to voyeuristic degradation once he invents an aberrant sensuality lurking beneath her veil of reserve. The third section will investigate William's role of "erotic mover" as he inserts Frances into his own (pre-) Oedipal fantasy and coerces her into a feminine spectatorial position. Overall, notwithstanding Brontë's seeming censure of William's limited ways of seeing femininity, the patriarchal spectatorial regime endures at the expense of female spectatorship and subjectivity.

I.

The Female Pupils:

"This Assemblage of All That Was Insignificant and Defective"

According to Freud (and patriarchy in general), female sexuality is "'still veiled in an impenetrable obscurity'" (Doane, *Femmes* 54), and the boarded window in William's room at Monsieur Pelet's boarding school, erected for the sake of propriety to hide the sight of the young women from the view of the male lodgers of Pelet's establishment, functions to maintain this construction of enigmatic femininity. William's wish to remove the boards mimics pornography's agenda of demystifying the female body in order to expose her phallic absence and assert the male viewer's phallic mastery (Griffin 29-34; Kuhn, *Power* 36-37).[9] He gazes with dissatisfaction on the "tantalizing" boards which he longs to remove so that he can study, himself "sheltered from view," the demoiselles at recreation (96). His fantasy, howsoever innocently justified by him, reflects the voyeur's desires: to assert dominance by looking without being seen, and to investigate the young women so that he may solve the riddle of femininity (Kuhn, *Power* 28-30). He idealizes rather than degrades the young women whom he wishes to spy upon, but his dream of visual mastery is, nonetheless, sadistic because objectification itself may be considered a humiliating assault of the female body. William's voyeuristic fantasy is a defensive manoeuvre that conceals his vulnerability, and the (temporary) failure of his gaze, his humiliation, and his overwhelmed response to the sight of female sexuality in the next

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9 Here, William merely responds to the equivocal message that the internal discourse of the pedagogical institution conveys (for example, the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, the surveillance system): according to Foucault, the secondary schools of the eighteenth century intensified the awareness of sex by constructing precautionary defences around it (Foucault, *History* 27-30; Glen 18-20; Kucich 12; Maynard 80).

episode indicate the impotency that hides beneath the male gaze.[10]

The sight of the female pupils upon his entrance into the classroom clearly overpowers William. He recalls that "I did not bear the first view like a stoic; I was dazzled, my eyes fell..."(113). Several points about this confession of his susceptibility are relevant. First, William indirectly admits his sexual response to the "dazzling" spectacle.[11] His lowered glance suggests his humiliation for being sexually stimulated and reveals his lack of control over himself and the situation. Second, three pupils detect his embarrassed sexual flush, and use this indication of his vulnerability to their advantage when they begin to mock him as a "'un véritable blanc-bec'" (114), that is, "a real Greenhorn," a term which is as emasculating as their gazes. William manages to activate his voyeuristic study of the three offending young women only after they have withdrawn their eyes. In his description of Eulalie, Caroline, and Hortense, William adopts the pornographic strategy of disavowing his vulnerability and desire by projecting his sensuality onto the women (Griffin 20ff.). By transferring his desire onto them, he achieves mastery and preserves his puritanical self-image. William's elaborate invective against Caroline demonstrates this displacement of his carnality. Regardless of his favourable physiognomical evaluation of Caroline's classic, regular, and perfect facial features, he still brands her as sensual, much to his own perplexity: "How, with the tintless pallor of her skin and the classic straightness of her lineaments, she managed to look sensual, I don't know. I think the lips and eyes contrived the affair between them, and the result left no uncertainty on the beholder's mind" (114-115). His detection of her

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[10] My analysis of his gaze is partly indebted to Clover's study of the male gaze in modern horror films: "So common is the theme of failed gazing in horror that I would venture as a rule of the genre that *whenever* a man imagines himself as a controlling voyeur——imagines, in Lacanian terms, that his 'look' at women constitutes a gaze——some sort of humiliation is soon to follow, typically in the form of his being overwhelmed by the very female he meant to master" (210).

[11] The word "dazzle" and its derivatives, constantly used throughout the text to refer to these women whose gazes of non-recognition or sexual challenge threaten William, comes from the Old Norse word *dasask* meaning "to become exhausted." The etymology of the word, therefore, emphasizes the blinding effect of the women and their gazes, and the resultant impotence.

allegedly unchaste and conscious sexuality and her exhibitionism typifies the voyeuristic operation: her calculated tossing of "her loose ringlets of abundant but somewhat coarse hair" to conceal her eyes, and her provocative "parting of lips" (115) to display her perfect teeth are suggestive of the pornographic sexual come-on (Kuhn, *Power* 38-43). He imagines that she displays her body for his pleasure, but in his opinion, her performance of active desire further condemns her.

The returned gazes of the three pupils also expose their guilty sexuality to William. His gaze may be improper, he states, but their looks are even more immoral than his own: "If I looked at these girls with little scruple, they looked at me with still less. Eulalie raised her unmoved eye to mine, and seemed to expect, passively but securely, an impromptu tribute to her majestic charms. Hortense regarded me boldly, and giggled at the same time..." (115). A double standard is evident here: William is entitled to the pleasure of "lawless seeing" (Kuhn, *Power* 30), but he is outraged by their supposedly desiring looks because they threaten his spectatorial subjectivity by turning him into an object.[12] He distances himself from the traumatizing spectacle by buckling on "a breastplate of steely indifference, and let down a visor of impassable austerity" (115). William deploys his "visor" of reserve as a weapon against the castrating female gaze and form, and thus the visor may be interpreted as a metaphor for voyeurism because it enables a (desiring) look that is imperceptible to others. Clover identifies the same armament in the horror film in which the male gaze "is in fact a mask——and not only a mask, but a secondary, counterdefective mask, designed and installed after the fact to protect a natural and original vulnerability" (193-194). William's austere gaze veils his scopophilic desire, and according to Lacan, "'the phallus can play its role only when

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12 Considering William's strategy of projection, the reader must question the reliability of his interpretation of their looks as indecently sexual in quality.

veiled'" (Gallop 99; Doane, *Femmes* 63).[13] William's preoccupation with the female gaze continues in Chapter 12, which may be considered the novel's most extended passage of pornographic female description in which he mocks the implied reader's idealism and commands such "dreamers" to be edified by the realism of his brutal voyeurism (126).[14] The reiteration of the pupils' solicitations of his gaze refutes their supposed insignificance to him: every female "specimen" seems to barrage him with lascivious looks (126). He recalls Aurelia's glance: "As I take my seat on the estrade, she fixes her eye on me; she seems resolved to attract, and, if possible, monopolize my notice: to this end she launches at me all sorts of looks, languishing, provoking, leering, laughing" to which, he

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[13] This power through veiling is also informed by and approximates Kucich's Foucauldian-influenced argument that "...strategic reserve is the means by which characters——male and female——appropriate the advantage of observation to themselves from a position of concealment" (81). In other words, William's reserve suggests not, as other critics have alternately interpreted it, repression, but mastery of oneself and others, and such self-negations heighten desire rather than deny it.

[14] Here, it is necessary to address the construction of the implied reader in *The Professor* because the implied reader's relationship to William——distanced or involved——and the codes which manufacture that (non-) identification, are clues to determining whether Brontë censures or affirms the patriarchal visual economy. In Chapter 12 and elsewhere in the novel, William's condescending attitude towards his implied reader and negation of the reader's beliefs about femininity (which he assumes are unrealistic) do not help to suture either the actual or implied reader's gaze with his vision. In addition to his contemptuous exhortation for the "idealists, the dreamers about earthly angels and human flowers, [to] just look here while I open my portfolio and show them a sketch or two, pencilled after nature" (126), later in Chapter 12, he continues to construct his reader as naive, and paternalistically "spare[s] my reader" further distressing exhibitions of corrupt women (130-131). His offensive stance in relation to his implied reader thwarts the usual alignment of the reader's gaze with his own, and this contributes to an overall deflection of identification processes which occurs in the text: his combative, disdainful tone, his withholding of information, his faulty memory, his temporal gaps alienate the actual and implied readers (Johnston 376-377). The reader thus becomes distanced from William's pornographic ways of seeing and resists his judgements, which reveal more about his own deviant mental processes than about the young women he so severely appraises. However, while this alienation effect would seem to suggest Brontë's disruption of the male scopic economy, identification processes still work for Oedipus by encouraging the implied reader's sympathetic and masochistic response to the persecuted female characters. Brontë inadvertently reinforces patriarchal representations of women by placing the female characters in the roles of victims of an objectifying male gaze, and thereby creates a specifically feminine subjectivity and spectatorial position for the female character and implied reader. This paradoxical ideological effect is typical of the hysterical text which "alienates the reader only to implicate him/her more fully in the process of representation——especially its operation *in other texts* and contexts" (Johnston 377). Thus, despite the author's critique of William's gaze by constructing a resisting reader (William also creates a resisting reader, whose detachment he imagines is due to idealism rather than to scepticism), the text ultimately confirms such patriarchal representations of female sexuality. Doane also discusses the ruptures in the hysterical classical cinematic text which "inadvertently reveal the weaknesses or breaking points of a contradictory ideological project (that of a classical genre addressed to a female spectator)" (*Desire* 44-45).

claims, he is immune (128). Obviously, he feels emasculated by the female gaze, and in his reference to Adele's gaze as "Gorgon-like" (129), Brontë anticipates Freud in using the myth of Medusa to articulate the castrating effects of female spectatorship (Sadoff 129). However, William negates these menacing gazes by catching the young women in the act of looking. Of course, the narrator's perceptions always take precedence over the visual perceptions of other characters in novels with first-person narration, but this erasure of the female gaze by his act of "looking at her looking" is symptomatic of the gaze apparatus in the novel (Doane, *Desire* 100). William contains female excessiveness and the threat of castration by his voyeuristic detection of the woman's desiring look and exhibitionism, and thereby assumes a position of power over the exhibitionist because "As much as she exposes herself and makes herself vulnerable, so he is also unexposed and invulnerable" (Griffin 48). For instance, William's visor of indifference contrasts to Aurelia's supposed mortification at being rejected by him. He observes Aurelia's response to his disregard: "...she has recourse to the expedient of making noises; sometimes she sighs, sometimes groans, sometimes utters inarticulate sounds, for which language has no name" (128). This representation of Aurelia effectively transforms her into an animal incapable of language, and hence deprives her of humanity and subjectivity (Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman* 322). William alone is the "master of language" as woman is relegated to the place of grunting or silent beasts once his pornographic mind projects his own bestiality/carnality onto her body and acts (Kappeler 65-66).

Overall, William, with his portfolio of "insignificant and defective" femininity (133), successfully displaces his fear of castration and emasculation onto women's bodies, which then carry the burden of this anxiety by being associated with deviance (Creed 134, 138-140). This works to negate the young women who terrify him sexually in the same way that pornography constructs women as "lack, nonmale, non-one" (Doane, *Desire* 15; Griffin 36). The text, however, constructs a reader who recoils from his "portfolio," not because of innocent incredulity, as William imagines (148), but out of horror at his malevolent images of femininity. His malicious delineations continue in his representation

of Mlle Reuter, whom he originally fetishistically overvalues, but soon debases once he discovers her supposedly guilty sexuality. Not surprisingly, his sadism escalates at this juncture.

II.
Mlle Zoraïde Reuter: Female Sexuality Unveiled

William's voyeuristic fantasies of mastering the female pupils diverge from the harsh reality of his vulnerability to their sexuality, and similarly, his initial fetishistic gaze and fantasies about Mlle Reuter are followed by episodes of visual combat with her, in which his weakness——his desire for her——becomes apparent (108-109, 112). He believes that Mlle Reuter attempts with her penetrating scrutiny, "to find some chink, some niche, where she could put in her little firm foot and stand upon my neck——mistress of my nature" (118). Here, William practices methods of impenetrability which efficiently veil his desire. While he interprets her gaze to be purely pragmatic, passionless, and politic, his disappointed admiration at detecting no glimmer of affection for him in her eye reveals the hidden, erotic quality of his own gaze. But he disavows his sexual feeling by narcissistically identifying with her impassable nature: he interprets their competition of gazes as a "game" which results in a tied score, implying their equal adeptness at reserve. Although he expresses his discouragement, the absence of desire in Mlle Reuter's gaze nevertheless impresses William. If she were to reveal her carnality, he would be able to condemn her, like her pupils, for her sexuality (as he will do later in the novel). Moreover, William enjoys evading Mlle Reuter's search for his weakness because he contents himself with believing that her gaze lacks legitimacy:

> ...me, she still watched, still tried by the most ingenious tests—she roved round me, baffled, yet persevering; I believe she thought I was like a smooth and bare precipice, which offered neither jutting stone nor tree-root, nor tuft of grass to aid the climber....I found it at once pleasant and easy to evade all these efforts; it was sweet, when she thought me nearly won, to turn round and to smile in her very eyes, half scornfully, and then to witness her scarcely veiled, though mute mortification (134).

This dismissal of the threat of her gaze "is an active recuperation of the contradictions which necessarily arise in attributing the epistemological gaze to the woman" (Doane, *Desire* 20). She cannot unveil him and expose his desire for her.

William's admiration for Mlle Reuter is brief, however, because he espies her "real nature" from the vantage point of the now unboarded window (183). His sentimental reverie about Mlle Reuter is interrupted by hearing the voices of Mlle Reuter and Pelet as they stroll in the forbidden alley between the two boarding schools. In a revelatory moment, the couple, previously obscured by shade, soon becomes illuminated by the moon which fully displays Mlle Reuter's desiring sexuality to William. Formerly framed by his artistic metaphor (she is a "pleasant picture" in his mind [137]), her image is now literally caught and contained by the parameters of the window frame at the crucial moment of the exposure of her sensuality. This view challenges William's former construction of her as embodying his ideal of austerity, and destroys his delusion that she feels (in a reserved way, of course) some affection for him (135). In addition, William's imperturbable self-image is undermined when he learns by eavesdropping that Mlle Reuter and Pelet have read the signs of his desire for Mlle Reuter in his face (139). Despite the distancing strategies used to alleviate the disturbing knowledge, his "feverish and fiery" reaction to the wounding sight betrays an excess of emotion and susceptibility which he cannot adequately suppress (141-142).[15]

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[15] Johnston refers to such melodramatic ruptures in the realist text as "hysterical moments": "those knots which cannot be comprehended by the realistic narrative system, which resist assimilation to consciousness and which therefore render totalization impossible" (376). William's hypochondriac hallucination also constitutes a "hysterical moment." Similarly, Tromly defines such instances as "leakages" in his "ostensibly water tight scheme" of self-improvement (36).

Regardless of his proclamation that he is not vindictive (141), William must reverse the emasculating effects of Mlle Reuter's rejection. The sadist, after all, must be impervious to feeling. He regains control with a gaze of negation: he ignores her proffered hand, petrifies himself against her charming smile ("it fell on my heart like light on stone"), and finally darts her a severe look of disrespect and scorn (142). These violent phallic assertions[16] transfer onto Mlle Reuter the castrating "wound" (143) which her "defection" causes him, and they confirm her "nothing-to-see" status. His emotional stiffening reassures him of his potency, and this phallic image of petrification recurs throughout the novel to convey William's sadistic non-recognition of Mlle Reuter (157, 187).

That Mlle Reuter is scarred by William's non-recognition is indicated by her assumption of a masochistic, feminine spectatorial position once the scopic dynamic between them shifts.[17] Prior to the discovery of her dissembling sexuality, the seemingly masculine quality of her penetrating gaze is suggested by the phallic metaphors employed in its representation, such as the foot which pries open the "chink" in his armour, and the probing finger which explores William's emotional recesses (143). Certainly, her gaze may be considered masculine because, firstly, it objectifies William (Sadoff 129) and, secondly, her system of surveillance is a way of seeing that serves the patriarchy because

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16 Here, I borrow Newman's term of "phallic assertion" which she uses in her discussion of the gaze in *Wuthering Heights* to refer to the defence by which the male mitigates the threat of the returned female gaze and retains his mastery, such as by the reassuring male stiffening (1031-1032). Maynard interprets such stony hard images in Brontë in much the same way (25).

17 Numerous critics refer to the positions in the dominance-submission pattern in Brontë as sadistic and masochistic, such as Burkhart (58), Eagleton (42), Moglen (41), and Tromly (35). However, some critics resist this framing of the hierarchical paradigm in sadomasochistic terms. Kucich argues that the "mutuality of suffering" in such relationships is evidence against a hierarchical formulation (75). Sadoff prefers to define the relationship as "a fantasy of desire and punishment" (135). However, I disagree with Kucich because I do not discern reciprocity in the relationships, particularly in the male-privileged scopic economy. Sadoff's alternate term seems to merely dress the relationship in new clothes when, essentially, the underlying dynamic remains the same: the male desires and the female is punished for her desire. For the sake of consistency with the psychoanalytic paradigm that feminist film theory employs and which I apply to the novels, I retain the labels of sadist and masochist, seeing no reason to alter the terms which so adequately describe the male and female positions in Brontë's oeuvre.

her investigative eye seeks to discover potential threats to the patriarchs' daughters housed in her Pensionnat. Mlle Reuter exemplifies the spectatorial transvestite who "adopts the sexuality of the other——the woman becomes a man in order to attain the necessary distance from the image" (Doane, *Femmes* 25).[18]

But like the little girl who, in her journey toward femininity, must reject her phallic ambitions, Mlle Reuter discards the masculine masquerade, and the tropes associated with the feminine spectatorial position are mobilized in the representations of her gaze after William's repudiation. In their final interview together, the moment of her assumption of the gaze coincides with her framing as spectacle: "She looked up again; she had compounded her glance well this time——much archness, more deference, a spicy dash of coquetry, an unveiled consciousness of capacity. I nodded; she treated me like the great Mogul; so I became the great Mogul as far as she was concerned" (184). William's gaze effaces her spectatorial subjectivity: although she looks, she does not see because William's vision overrides her own, turns her into an object, and thereby possesses her. In other words, rather than provoke with her castrating gaze, she is "absorbed herself on the side of the seen..." (de Lauretis, *Alice* 135). Although her gaze connotes a passive desire, in William's opinion, a woman's expression of desire incriminates her, and this insinuation of her guilty sexuality is expressed in his reference to the "unveiled consciousness of capacity" of her gaze. In classical cinema, the trope of the veil, when attached to the seductive female character, can suggest duplicity, and "the placement of a veil over a woman's face works to localize and hence contain dissimulation, to keep it from contaminating the male subject" (Doane, *Femmes* 49, 75). The exposé of Mlle Reuter's desire and deceptiveness, compounded by her prevarication about Frances Henri, instills in William "distaste" (184). Repelled by the image of the desiring woman, he negates her by ending their conversation and departing. Unveiling her gaze, then,

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18 For more discussion on the female spectator's oscillation between the masculine and feminine positions, variously referred to as transvestism, double identification, and masquerade, the reader may consult Doane *Desire* 6-7, de Lauretis, *Alice* 142-144, and Mulvey 30-33.

demystifies and reveals her femme fatale sexuality and her intrinsic wickedness. But, his repudiation essentially confirms that he is overpowered by her sexuality: he must figuratively blind himself to her existence by leaving, and this, in turn, suggests his actual impotence.

In a similar strategy of renunciation and nullification, William finally destroys Mlle Reuter's image only by escaping from it (by leaving his professorial positions at Mlle Reuter's and Pelet's establishments). His metaphorical murder of Mlle Reuter and his sexual feelings for her are accomplished by denigrating her as a depraved and polluted soul from a French romance novel who tempts him to commit evil (214-215). Ironically, as Maynard observes, though William frames himself as a captive of Mlle Reuter's sexual lures, he alone is the author and agent of this sordid and adulterous romance plot (84); only his active desire can move the narrative (de Lauretis, *Alice* 107). Mlle Reuter's evil eye and dangerous sexuality represent the monstrous obstacle in the Oedipal trajectory of William's narrative quest for mastery. She is defeated, metaphorically slain by her excision from his narrative after this point (except for Hunsden's brief reference to her "twelve stones" [168 lbs.], weight [290] a remark that confirms her excessive fleshliness) so that "he can go forward to fulfill his destiny——and his story" (de Lauretis, *Alice* 110). And Frances Henri, the topic of the next section, will be the "treasure" (195) at the end of William's quest for manhood.

III.

William's Monstrous Spectacles: The Positioning of Frances Henri

In contrast to the clarity with which he sees the effulgent spectacles of Mlle Reuter and her pupils once his awe dissipates, Frances is initially a shadowy figure to William, observed in fleeting glimpses (133, 146). Indeed, it is not until William dons his spectacles that he can examine Frances (151, also 163, 194), and this represents the first time in the novel that William mentions that he wears eyeglasses to correct

shortsightedness——a condition that he refers to earlier in the novel (78, 144). His sudden investiture of eyeglasses has ambiguous connotations, an equivocality that suggests Brontë's conflicting impulses to both challenge and affirm the hierarchical dynamics of the male scopic economy. Each of these contrasting possibilities will be investigated in turn.

Frances seems to defy objectification (unlike the female pupils, she cannot yet be pinned down under his scientific gaze) until William wears the eyeglasses that correct his ocular defect and enable his voyeuristic study of her. His visual mastery with the spectacles is complemented by his narrative mastery at this point: he deliberately paints a vague picture of her and, characteristically, withholds from the reader a more exact delineation until later in the novel (151-152). Thus, while he benefits from a more definite image of Frances, the reader still mentally sees her as a spectral figure.[19] Moreover, his improved vision assists him in noticing the effect that his rebukes and disregard have on Frances. William's calculated severity and negligence directly defy Mlle Reuter's request that he show consideration towards his new pupil (145): he enjoys observing the results of his humiliation of her, and ignores Frances's visual entreaties for compassion (146, 152-153, 155). Hence, the eyeglasses assist his sadism, so that he can more distinctly witness and revel in the results of his non-recognition of her——a familiar perverted pleasure, since it recalls his treatment of Mlle Reuter. The difference is that the spectacles magnify the intensity of the sadism by sharpening the image of the person he desires to degrade.

Obversely, the spectacles draw attention to William's flawed vision, and frame his voyeuristic look (Doane, *Desire* 100).[20] Because he must use his eyeglasses to see

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[19] His timing of his fetishistic delineation of France is interesting since he provides a description once her appearance has improved to the point of attaining his "notions of symmetry" and "ideas of grace" (176), thereby arousing his desire. His aesthetic rhetoric frames Frances as an object, an adornment that embodies his feminine ideal. Evidently, societal standards of beauty must sanction his desire.

[20] Gilbert and Gubar posit that his censoriousness of women reflects Brontë's own hostile attitudes since his brutal gaze is never undermined by the text itself (*Madwoman* 321-322). However, I would suggest that the foregrounding of his visual defect and the references to his eyeglasses subtly subvert his visual and moral perceptions.

Frances more clearly, his looking is formulated as a significant act, a contrived performance of (visual) mastery that conceals his impotency. In other words, the spectacles function in the same way as his visor of austerity or the Lacanian veil: they hide his weakness and assist his voyeurism, thus giving the appearance of power and control. Sadoff states that "Crimsworth clearly lacks potency; his arrogant voyeurism identifies him as a desiring male behind whose mastery and power lurks the continuing threat of the woman who gazes back, who threatens castration" (128). Sadoff's point about how William's visual defences veil his actual weakness is irrefutable, but her argument concerning the castrating female gaze strictly applies to Mlle Reuter and the female students, who represent the menacing gazes of the Gorgon sisters. In contradistinction to these dangerous glances, Frances's distressed look hardly devirilizes William; rather, her gaze confirms his mastery. Indeed, her insignificance as a threat is emphasized by the fact that she is indistinct until he puts on his glasses, an acute contrast to the "dazzling" female pupils who have a blinding effect on his vision. Frances's inoccuousness, then, which arises particularly from her disabled gaze, makes her an easy target for his cruelty, which is, essentially, a displaced punishment of Mlle Reuter for her desire and coquetry.

William soon notices Frances as an object worthy of more intense study, and hence she graduates from being merely a substitute on which to administer his castigation of Mlle Reuter, but his attentiveness to her does not suggest his acknowledgement of her subjectivity. Frances's face becomes a text which the bespectacled William deciphers for evidence of conceit or mortification (163). William's first few examinations of Frances are voyeuristic and are aimed at demystification: he cautiously scrutinizes her to determine what "real material" lies beneath the sober appearance, having been deceived by the false austerity of Mlle Reuter and the impressive beauty of the female pupils (158). Later, William regards Frances's visage as an extension of her devoir which he also reads with a rising "incipient sense of interest," hoping to obtain "an idea of the nature and extent of her powers" (161). Doane identifies the female face as being an especially

spectacularizable part of the female body: "The face, more than any other bodily part, is for the other. It is the most articulate sector of the body, but it is mute without the other's reading" (*Femmes* 47). Considering the accessible textuality of the female face, it is appropriate that William articulates his ability to see Frances with phrases such as he "could not read in her face..." (146) or he "read in her eye..." (153) . In addition, as his subjective judgements of her visage demonstrate, he begins to project emotions onto Frances, sometimes without even observing her countenance. He ascribes to her feelings of expectation, excitement, and disappointment in reaction to his treatment of her. For example, he "felt, rather than saw" her humiliation when he overlooked her (163), and interprets her smile or other facial expressions as expressing gratitude for his notice (165). Given his vengeful and exaggerated portraits of the female pupils, the reader must question the accuracy of his decipherment. Does he invent her vulnerability and sensitivity——her readability——in order to feel more effectively in control? Frances becomes a blank page on which William inscribes his own Oedipal story, on which he imposes his own meaning.[21]

William's insertion of Frances into his own sadistic script coincides with his framing of her as a text to be deciphered. Repeatedly, he physically positions her so that she is advantageously situated to promote his scopophilia while simultaneously foreclosing the possibility of her own subjectivity. His professorial role aids him in this endeavour of positioning Frances as object because his unprofessional ulterior motive is concealed by the master-pupil configuration which demands her to be in a deferential stance. This degrading relegation of Frances to a subordinate position constantly occurs in the novel, as he repeatedly gets her "placed just where I wanted her to be," that is, he arranges her in submissive postures to facilitate a masterful interrogation or chastisement of her (164-166, 175, 202 for example). His obsessive positioning of her is particularly pronounced in two episodes: their post-reunion meeting and the proposal scene, both of

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21 In a similar formulation, Tromly notes that William "places [Frances] on the conventional pedestal, a pedestal which fits nicely into the myth he is creating of his own 'successful' life" (34).

which are set in Frances's apartment.

In the scene in Frances's apartment after their reunion in the Protestant Cemetery, his calculated positioning of Frances assigns her to this "(impossible) place of a purely *passive* desire" (de Lauretis, *Alice* 151) where female spectatorship is disabled, while it allows him to gaze "undisturbed" at evidence of female desire (the active female gaze or passive blush). He implements his well-proven master-pupil "system" (176, 204) in the domestic setting, ostensibly to ease the discomfiture which his lascivious gaze causes Frances (202). By ordering Frances to read positioned deliberately and passively by his side, he can enjoy the auditory pleasure of listening to her voice and the visual gratification of gazing at her face without impediment or shame (202). William's fetishistic gaze[22] transforms Frances into the pre-Oedipal, uncastrated phallic mother, and the reassuring effect of her image resembles the comfort he receives when he narcissistically identifies with his mother's portrait (46, 57, 235). William's scopophilic relation to Frances and his mother's portrait suggests the processes of the Lacanian Mirror Stage when the child first masters his own or his mother's image in the mirror.[23] He identifies with Frances (as he does with his mother), and by replicating Frances as an image of himself, he "incorporates [her] into his own body" and denies the knowledge of her sexual difference so that "Woman qua *woman* disappears..." (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 5). Moreover, his maternal fetishization of Frances desexualizes her, and hence, he duplicates the patriarchal representation of the mother as "outside sexuality and therefore, within a certain definition, not threatening to man" (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 54). As

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22 Note that the course of his gaze at Frances shifts from voyeurism to fetishism whereas it follows the opposite direction in the case of William's gaze at Reuter which begins in overinvestment and ends in devaluation. Evidently, William is no longer the novice who innocently idealizes a woman at first sight.

23 Indeed, this similarity between Frances and William's mother is enhanced by the fact that at one point in the novel, in the scene in the Protestant Cemetery, Frances assumes the same posture as his mother's pose in the portrait: she possesses solemn, thoughtful eyes, and her cheek rests on her hand (194-195, 235). His identification with Frances is conveyed earlier in the reunion scene in the cemetery when he declares that Frances is his "best object of sympathy on earth, thinking such thoughts as I thought, feeling such feelings as I felt..." (195).

Creed notes, this narcissistically-motivated duplication process and desire for reunification with the (m)other are typical of the male hysteric's defences against castration (133, 140). William regains the original plenitude of the pre-Oedipal phase through this maternal construction of Frances, but, although he longs for the (m)other, he also despises her because the sight of her evokes dread and reminds him of his vulnerability. Thus, he punishes Frances, the (m)other, as the next episode will make clear.

In the proposal scene, William, the "erotic mover" of the diegesis (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 59) who inserts Frances into his own (pre-) Oedipal narrative, becomes violent as he disciplines her for his state of vulnerability to sexual and emotional feelings. Visual mastery combines with physical dominance in this episode as he seizes Frances with "exceeding tenacity" with the intent "to seek, demand, elicit an answering ardour" to his own passion (247). The gaze apparatus is also violently mobilized to prohibit female spectatorship since William's exertion of excessive force precludes Frances's spectatorship and coerces her into a feminine position of passivity in which she dares not lift her head, her downcast glance indicating her submission to his grasp. As de Lauretis comments, the female must be seduced or coerced into femininity to fulfil male desire, and hence, William's brutal treatment of Frances compels her to consent to his proposal and his story (*Alice* 133-134).[24] The terrorization of Frances in this scene (she is "as stirless in her happiness as a mouse in its terror" and paralysed by fear, not wanting to move lest his violence increases [249]) disables her gaze so that it turns violently against itself: the castrating, Medusan gaze becomes masochistically internalized, and Frances becomes horrified at the sight of her own (metaphorically) mutilated body and her own

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24 In *Shirley*, in another romantic relationship informed by a master-student dialectic, Louis Moore also intuits that the use of force will elicit Shirley Keeldar's confession of love for him. Physically obstructing her escape from the school-room because he realizes that "'she must be scared to be won'" (577), Louis triumphantly procures the rebellious Shirley's submission, signalled by the immobilization of her gaze (her "'declined brow'"). Unlike Frances in *The Professor*, however, Shirley's capitulation is not instantaneous, but occurs gradually as, paradoxically, the master, Louis, learns to rule Shirley in the manner that fulfils her masochistic fantasy (592).

powerlessness, like the female gaze in the horror film (Williams 88-89). William enacts his violent urge to inflict on Frances the pain that he felt as a child, abandoned by his parents. Significantly, Frances the (m)other becomes Frances the child in this scene as he paternalistically places her on his knee. Similarly, the pornographer's need to dominate also arises from "the child's desire to have the power his parents had, to inflict upon them the longing, rejection, frustration, pain, and humiliation that the infant once felt" (Griffin 60). His brutality against Frances hides his fear of merger, which is a dread of the pre-Oedipal closeness that might make him vulnerable to pain.[25]

In both the post-reunion and proposal scenes in Frances's rooms, William's system of positioning Frances endeavours to prevent female spectatorship. However, his programme actually has two (contradictory) effects, and the other side of his arrangement of the female body is his provocation of the female gaze. Although he asserts elsewhere that he craves a mutual gaze with Frances——he professes that he "loved with passion the light of Frances Evans' clear hazel eye when it did not fear to look straight into mine" (195, also 201, 204)——his fixing of Frances's potentially-menacing looks by asserting absolute control over the limits of her spectatorship suggests that he actually fears her returned gaze (just as he feared the provoking looks of the female pupils). Indeed, his sadistic fantasies about Frances pivot on his ability to rule her emotions and looks (224-225, 276, 278-280). For instance, in a scene which shows the depravity of his operations, he goads Frances into imagining her life if she had married "'a profligate, a prodigal, a drunkard, or a tyrant'" (278). Frances's masochism is suggested by her overidentification with this imaginary scenario of persecution (she cannot separate herself from the fantasy). Detecting her vulnerability in her heightened emotion, William

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[25] His bout of hypochondria, which, significantly, follows the proposal scene, makes sense if it is interpreted as the manifestation of his anxiety about communion with Frances. In his description about his breakdown, he personifies Hypochondria as a woman who performs both the role of nurturing William like a macabre mother, and acts as succubus who sleeps in his bed and deprives him of vitality and potency (253-254). These conflicting images also suggest his feelings toward Frances, in whose bosom he longs to nestle warm and content and listen to her milky utterances (253), yet he fears his loss of control over boundaries within himself (the division between Reason and Passion ruptures in both scenes in Frances's apartment, for example), and between himself and the Other.

sadistically conjures up increasingly oppressive scenarios which he demands that she respond to in order to further awaken her emotions, and especially, to arouse her passion and force her to look at him with desire. In a classic illustration of the politics of erotic domination, William's manipulation of Frances in this scene operates to elicit her recognition of his subjectivity and mastery whereas her spectatorship and subjectivity are negated by his objectification of her at the moment she assumes the "subject" position of spectator. As her state of abandon at the end of this episode suggests,[26] she derives pleasure (although, typically, her masochistic pleasure is mixed with pain) in the outcome of (false) merger that occurs, and William satisfies his desire to regulate the boundaries of her desire (Benjamin "Bonds," 50-51; "A Desire of One's Own" 97): as Frances meekly says to him afterwards, she knows that "'whenever [her "thrilling and ardent" glance] is wanted, it will come back again'" (280), and thus, she accepts her position as passive object. Frances is, therefore, an exhibitionist, although an unconscious one, who, at William's command, performs according to his sadomasochistic script and exposes her susceptibility. These male-produced scenes of female spectatorship represent the only instances in the novel when Frances gazes, and because they are fabricated for male pleasure, these spectatorial interludes do not constitute moments of resistance to the male scopic economy. The sadomasochistic drama enacted in this and other episodes of the novel are symptomatic of the larger patriarchal culture of violence that is represented in *The Professor* (Benjamin, "Bonds" 42).[27]

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[26] William describes her state: "She and I were standing side by side; she threw her arms round me, and strained me to her heart with passionate earnestness: the energy of her whole being glowed in her dark and then dilated eye, and crimsoned her animated cheek; her look and movement were like inspiration; in one there was such a flash, in the other such a power" (279-280). This is, perhaps, the most passionate scene in the novel, but consistent with the rest of the novel, it represents the incredibly grotesque dynamics of patriarchal romance and its violent circumscription of female desire.

[27] Glen, in her absorbing Introduction to *The Professor*, posits that Brontë's first novel "offers a disquieting vision of the construction and the cost of masculinity in that society and a chilling critique of some of its most cherished values. Here, manhood appears not as charismatically powerful but as blinkered [visored?] and crippled, the ideal of independence not as desirable but as fundamentally flawed" (31). Although Glen's analysis is valuable, I am not entirely convinced that Brontë succeeds in overturning patriarchal constructions of masculinity *or* femininity, and as mentioned, the failure of her project is

However, the reader may object to this bleak interpretation which perceives an absence of female subjectivity in the novel, and propose that there are "leakages" (to borrow Doane's term [*Desire* 104]) of female desire and subjectivity in this seemingly impermeable patriarchal construction of femininity. Surely, Frances's insistence on maintaining her professional independence compensates for the failure of her gaze and the erasure of her desire, and it suggests her potential for "stepping outside the rigid frame in which Crimsworth has enclosed her" (250-251, 272-273; Tromly 38)? But, as Moglen notes, Frances must request permission from her "master" to have this freedom since it is only by virtue of his generosity that she is permitted some liberty (98). Her subjectivity is illusory because the gaze apparatus and the ideology of the novel recuperate her back into the boundaries of patriarchal femininity to perpetually perform the duties of wife, mother, and other subordinate gender roles William desires her to enact in his narrative (variously his "little lacemender," "pupil," "novice," "child").

Brontë fashions William's narrative as a kind of horror story wherein he constructs women as the monsters which threaten male mutilation with their gazes: the female pupils and Mlle Reuter are represented as castrating Gorgons, and Frances constitutes the monster who recognizes her own deformity and submits to the man who has the desire and agency that she, the castrate, the non-male, lacks.[28] Brontë endorses the implied reader's resistance to this violent patriarchal myth by positing William as the monster whose inhumanity is exposed in his reiterated visual and sadistic acts of phallic mastery: a monstrousness that is sanctioned as *normal* masculine behaviour and rewarded by the world of the novel. It is partly this portrait of the quotidian form of ritualized and institutionalized rational violence that most terrifies the reader of *The Professor*, for William's misogynistic way of seeing is anything but extraordinary (Benjamin, "Bonds"

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primarily due to the deflection of the implied reader's identification towards a specifically feminine, and thus powerless, position of subjectivity and spectatorship.

28 Here, I once again invoke de Lauretis's Oedipal paradigm and apply it to William's story (103-157).

42). But in tandem with this representation of the routine degradation of women, I propose another cause for the reader's alarm. Notwithstanding Brontë's apparent interrogation of William's distorted and perverted gaze, the patriarchal ideology embedded beneath the surface of Brontë's subversive text manifests itself by precluding the implied reader's and the female characters' access to pure subjectivity. Repelled by William's narrative and gaze, the reader is then seduced by the text into identifying with his blinded female victims.[29] Ultimately, this insidious production of both an intradiegetic and a readerly non-subject displaces William's violence as the most frightening aspect of the novel. Similarly, in Brontë's next novel, *Jane Eyre*, regardless of the author's attempt to destabilize the male visual economy and incorporate female subjectivity, such as with the frequent representations of Jane Eyre's visual pleasure, the patriarchal spectatorial regime retains its potency.

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29 Here, I apply London's critique of subversive readings of *Jane Eyre* to *The Professor*, and continue to draw on Johnston's analysis of the novel's "foreclosure of feminine subjectivity" (376).

Chapter Three

Jane Eyre

Following the disappointing representation of female spectatorship in *The Professor*, Brontë's second novel, *Jane Eyre*, satisfies the reader with its numerous and sustained episodes of Jane's scopophilia. However, as this chapter will demonstrate, the representations of female spectatorship in this novel are deceptive, for invariably, Jane's spectatorship coincides with spectacularization which she vigorously tries to evade. Jane's subjection to and attempted subversions of various systems of surveillance commence in her childhood, and thus, a brief exploration of the gaze apparatus in the Gateshead and Lowood sections of the novel will help to illuminate later spectatorial relations. As a child, Jane becomes a spectacle of the naught(y)[30] child: according to the patriarchy, she is a cipher, a sexual, economic, and social non-entity, and, by attempting to use her cultural invisibility to enable a subversive spectatorship, she disobeys the system which relegates her to the place of "nothing-to-see," seeing nothing (Irigaray 101). Jane's strategic self-effacements inevitably fail, however, and her gaze and her body are exposed. At Thornfield, her objectification by a disciplinary gaze becomes eroticized with Rochester's "ceaseless surveillance" which monitors Jane's gaze and desire in order to regulate the female sexuality which threatens him. At Ferndean,[31] despite Jane's

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[30] The word "naughty," which has undergone a pejoration to come to mean "wicked," "vicious," or "disobedient," is etymologically related to the word "naught," denoting "nothingness." I will use the word in both its original, cipher sense, and in its more degraded denotation. Kincaid's historical and literary overview of the Victorian construction of the "naughty child" (in its pejorative meaning) alerted me to the good/naughty child dichotomy in *Jane Eyre* (Kincaid 246-274).

[31] The reader will note the conspicuous absence of the Moor House section of the novel. I have excluded this episode because, simply, the erotic gaze does not describe the spectatorial relations between Jane and St. John. The latter's "firm and piercing look" (351) which assiduously studies Jane during her entire ten month respite at Moor House to determine, at first, "her story, her identity" and then to judge her suitability to serve God's and his will (408), resembles Foucault's penetrating medical glance rather than the more superficial desiring gaze (Doane, *Desire* 43-44). Indeed, at one point, Jane compares St. John, who composedly observes her paroxysm, to a "...physician watching with the eye of science an unexpected and fully-understood crisis in a patient's malady" (405). Like the clinical gaze in the woman's film with a medical discourse, St. John observes Jane for "...lapses or difficulties in subjectivity," such as in the aforementioned scene in which he watches Jane as she has a hysterical fit, and he becomes for her "a crucial figure of constraint" (Doane, *Desire* 44), as Jane temporarily submits to his boundaries and negation of her.

superficial visual advantage over Rochester's blindness, Jane's gaze is co-opted by Rochester, and thus, the patriarchal gaze apparatus remains unchallenged at the end of the text. While admittedly, Brontë permits her heroine (limited) visual pleasure in the course of the novel, the ubiquitous containment of the female gaze erases the implications of Jane's spectatorial subjectivity. Thus, *Jane Eyre* reproduces the spectatorial regime of *The Professor*.

I.

Gateshead and Lowood

> "'The watchfulness over the young child, by day and night, is the first sacred duty, to be universally inculcated'" (Kincaid quoting Chavasse 91).

> "'I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover'" (*Jane Eyre* 12).

The first epigraph to this section, an excerpt from a Victorian advice book for mothers,[32] illustrates the vigilant methods of surveillance recommended by nineteenth-century child-rearing discourse to control both the sexuality of and moral influences on children (Kincaid 91; Foucault 46). From the outset of *Jane Eyre*, the girl-child Jane[33]

Despite Jane's visual appreciation of St. John's masculine beauty (349, 412-413), it is her spiritual desire for religious transcendence rather than physical desire which makes her susceptible to his charismatic personality. The reader may question why, if I omit the Moor House episodes because of the non-erotic quality of the gaze, will I then discuss at some length spectatorship in the Gateshead and Lowood sections when Jane is a child? As I will reveal, the surveillance system and spectacularization to which Jane is subjected as a child and the strategies she adopts to evade objectification are relevant to later discussions of spectatorial relations with Rochester at Thornfield.

[32] By Pye Henry Chavasse. *The Young Wife's and Mother's Book: Advice to Mothers on the Management of Their Offspring during the Periods of Infancy, Childhood, and Youth; Advice to Young Wives on the Management of Themselves During the Periods of Pregnancy and Lactation.* 2nd ed. London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1842. vii. (see Kincaid, chapter two, note 38).

[33] On page 32, the reader is informed that she is 10 years old. According to the contemporary British law, at age 10, a female was considered old enough to consent to sexual intercourse. Not until 1861 was the age of consent raised to 12 years (Kincaid 70). Thus, Jane is legally an adult under British law at the time of the novel's composition. But she is continually referred to as a "child" by the adults of the novel, and is expected to conform to the rules for children. Thus, I refer to Jane as a child because the

becomes the object of adult surveillance, punished by Mrs Reed with such "observation" for being "naughty" (an epithet to which others frequently have recourse in referring to Jane-15, 17, 32, 35, 39):

> ...because [she] gets out of the way and stays out of the way. Of course, this is the game: the child must vacate the position of the true child, become Other, so that the child-spot is left open for the adult. The child becomes naughty so that we may be the good child. Once sent around the corner [or excluded from the Reed family circle], the naughty child can be longed for and resented. It can be whacked for daring to leave. (Kincaid 247)

Jane obeys her aunt by withdrawing, but simultaneously rebels against her aunt's "formidable eye"[34] (28) by retreating out of view into the curtained window-seat of the breakfast room where she is safely "shrined in double retirement" (8). Thus, Jane subversively transforms her otherness into subjectivity and spectatorship: here, in the window-seat, that liminal position between inside and outside, between inclusion and exclusion, she contentedly looks at the pictures in *Bewick's*, boldly ignoring the words, and hoping that John Reed will not disturb her seclusion.[35] Jane, who has the audacity to leave the room in which the family coterie is assembled, is brutalized by John for her "sneaking way of getting behind curtains" (10), that is, for evading surveillance. Thus, as early as Jane's childhood, one detects the pattern of Jane's strategic self-

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novel itself seems to indicate such a designation.

34 Jane mentions her hatred of Mrs Reed's cold glance several times in the novel (27, 28, 36, 232)——a feeling which seems to be mutual because Mrs Reed cannot tolerate Jane's "unnatural watchings of one's movements" (234, 25, 36-37).

35 My argument that Jane uses her marginality or inconspicuousness in a subversive way is influenced by Spivak's article on *Jane Eyre*, in which she proposes that Jane "breaks the rules of the appropriate topography of withdrawal" by removing herself to a marginal architectural space, and then by reading the pictures rather than the letter-press (246). Spivak's article is valuable for its exposure of Jane Eyre's complicity in the ideology of imperialism and "meritocratic individualism" (246). Eagleton and Boumelha also explore the novel's collusion with patriarchal structures. Subsequent to the writing of this chapter, I read Boone's insightful analysis of Lucy Snowe's "strategic invisibility" in *Villette*. Clearly, all of Brontë's protagonists adopt, to quote Boone, such "undercover operations" to evade objectification (Boone 29, 31).

despectacularizations, performed to protect her subjectivity.

By sending Jane to Lowood, Mrs Reed transfers her responsibility of guarding Jane from bad influences onto the "strict eye" (33) of the pedagogical institution, which, as part of its system of discipline, regularly makes exhibitions of its supposedly disobedient pupils as a monitory lesson to warn them that, as Brocklehurst exhorts, there is "'[n]o sight so sad as that of a naughty child...especially a naughty little girl'" (32). Femaleness itself is a pathological condition (Doane, *Desire* 38-39) according to the patriarchal ideology of Lowood, and hence, Jane is once again punished with spectacularization for her otherness, but not without her attempt to "elude observation" (65). On the occasion of Brocklehurst's visit to Lowood, Jane fears that he will draw the teachers' and pupils' attention to her, and forever brand her as the "bad child" he incorrectly assumes her to be. Thus, she attempts to avoid objectification by hiding at the back of the classroom, deliberately holding her slate "in such manner as to conceal my face: I might have escaped notice, had not my treacherous slate somehow happened to slip from my hand, and falling with an obtrusive crash, directly drawn every eye upon me..." (65-66). As in the earlier episode with John Reed, Jane's endeavour to escape spectacularization fails, and as retribution, she is "mounted aloft" and "exposed to general view on a pedestal of infamy" (67-68)——the very exhibition that she struggles to avoid——and is threatened with additional degradation when Brocklehurst exhorts the teachers to magnify their examination of Jane: "'Teachers, you must watch her; keep your eyes on her movements, weigh well her words, scrutinize her actions, punish her body to save her soul...'" (67). Like the vigilance rigorously maintained by William at the *Pensionnat de Demoiselles* in *The Professor*, Lowood's surveillance system operates under the directive or "mission" of mortifying its pupils into female submission (65), and Jane's humiliating spectacular status certainly functions in both the short and long term to teach her to restrain her excessiveness. Despite her release from the "rules and systems" of Lowood (85), Jane is not liberated from the patriarchal Panopticon which supervises and thereby controls female sexuality because at Thornfield, Jane becomes the victim of

Rochester's relentless scrutiny.[36]

II.

Thornfield

Rochester's *Heimlich* Manoeuvres

In his essay "The Uncanny," Freud offers extensive denotations of the "uncanny" (*unheimlich*), but for my analysis of *Jane Eyre*, the two definitions which follow will suffice: the uncanny is "related to what is frightening——to what arouses dread and horror...[to] what excites fear in general" (219), and it is "'...the name for everything that ought to have remained...secret and hidden but has come to light'" (Freud quoting Schelling, 224). Among the numerous uncanny effects, Freud cites the "evil eye"[37] and the "female genital organs" as producing anxiety in the male when exposed to view because they represent the potential of castration (240, 245). In contrast, one of the numerous denotations of "canny" refers to that which is "[C]oncealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others" (Freud 223), in other words, the veiled and masterful male gaze. In the Thornfield section of *Jane Eyre*, the psychoanalytic categories of the uncanny and its opposite, the canny, have particular relevance to spectatorial relations between Jane and Rochester: Rochester's canny and voyeuristic "lawless seeing" repeatedly uncovers both Jane's "guilt" of female phallic absence and exposes her strategic self-effacements by which she conceals her spectatorship. However, as if anticipating Freud's statement that "the uncanny...is

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36 Jeremy Bentham's design of the Panopticon, and Foucault's adaptation of Bentham's idea in his own formulations of the disciplinary gaze, have been used by several Brontë critics to explicate the gaze apparatus in the texts. Boone discusses the "circuit of surveillance" in *Villette* (21), and Glen refers to the Panopticon in context of *The Professor* (18-19). These ideas are equally applicable to *Jane Eyre*.

37 In world mythology, the evil eye is often sexed as female (Walker 309), thus suggesting the fear of the female gaze. This dread of women's look arises from "their threat to...man's vision, and their power consists in their enigma and 'to-be-looked-at-ness' (in Mulvey's word), their luring of man's gaze into the 'dark continent,' as Freud put it, the enigma of femininity" (de Lauretis, *Alice Doesn't* 110).

something which is secretly familiar..." (245), Jane, the "uncanny" spectacle/spectator, becomes transformed into the most harmless incarnation of the word "canny": that is, not "hidden and dangerous" (Freud 226), but rather, an object that is so "familiar" that her identity is completely subsumed by Rochester.

Rochester's initial feigned disregard of Jane and his uncanny (spectral) representation of her during their first interview at Thornfield serves as a bold contrast to Jane's hypostatization of Rochester as a "human being" in their first encounter in Hay Lane (113). Jane welcomes Rochester's indifferent reception of her at their first tea-time meeting because her inconspicuousness provides her with a spectatorial "advantage" (121) conducive to an investigation of his physiognomy. However, the female spectator, constructed as icon by the patriarchal system of representation, cannot attain the prerequisite distance between subject and object and, therefore, Jane's physiognomical study of Rochester does not constitute objectification. Although Jane believes herself to be unnoticeable in this scene and countless others, her spectacular status is emphasized when Rochester's voyeuristic gaze searches her face and analyzes her actions for evidence of the goodness and intelligence he seeks yet, he later states, has hitherto found so lacking in womankind (263, 314, 316).[38] Indeed, as will become evident later in this chapter, Rochester's misogyny explains his habitual objectification of Jane as the uncanny: his ideal, deeroticized woman——"'the antipodes of the Creole'" (315), in other words, the opposite of Bertha's brand of excessive sexuality——reveals his dread of mature and active female sexuality (Moglen 127). This conjunction of Jane's spectatorship with Rochester's undetectable (canny) surveillance of Jane introduces what will be a recurring pattern of Rochester's destabilization of the spectacle-spectator relationship.[39]

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38 Rochester informs Jane in their final conference together before she flees Thornfield about how closely he has observed her during the initial stages of their acquaintance (318).

39 My reading of Rochester's strategic disruption of the spectacle-spectator dynamic is informed by Doane's analysis of the paranoid gothic woman's film, in which she identifies an instability between the subject and object opposition as a defining characteristic of this genre of film (130). Thus, even while the female protagonists of such films seem to be agents of the gaze, their spectatorship is undermined by their

Rochester augments his objectification of Jane during their first interview by commanding her to display her aesthetic achievements, thereby thwarting Jane's canny tactic of keeping in the shade whence she can observe him (125). Bellis argues that this transfer of focus from Jane's body onto her artwork "...deflects and tames [Rochester's] gaze, substituting her pictures for herself as object" (641); however, Bellis neglects to note that Rochester, not Jane, has power over his own gaze here, as *he* diverts it onto her drawings and positions Jane as a subordinate interrogatee while he becomes authoritative inquisitor. Rochester's visual agency and overall position of mastery override Jane's tactical inconspicuousness. Once again, Jane's spectatorship is undermined by the inevitable tendency of female spectacularization.

In subsequent episodes, such as during their second conversation, Jane takes more precautions to evade Rochester's objectifying gaze, but Rochester's canny ocular manoeuvres nullify Jane's strategic self-effacements (Kucich 81).[40] In a scene reminiscent of William's magisterial stationing of Frances, Rochester prompts Jane to desist from removing her chair to an obscure and marginal corner of the drawing-room, and to sit in the position he has designated for her——a placement which, much to Jane's chagrin, makes her more noticeable and secures his observation (130-131).[41] But oddly, Rochester's arrangement assists Jane in her physiognomical examination of him, and to further aid her gaze, he invites her to examine his forehead, and later, he arises from his chair and displays himself in front of the mantel-piece where, the narrator relates, "his

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being victims of a relentless and terrifying surveillance.

40 Rochester often becomes the reader's only source for accessing Jane's emotions, as he reports his observations of her affective responses (183, 253). In this capacity, he reveals his superior ability to penetrate the "cover" of others.

41 Litvak comments on Rochester's staging of his spectatorship, but in the context of his narrative about his affair with Céline Varens (62). I would extend this analysis to claim that Rochester obsessively stages his spectatorship throughout the novel. In an explication which also emphasizes Rochester's dramatic role, Williams posits that the reader does not "learn the full extent of Rochester's stage-managing until after everything is over; nor are we quite sure who is the audience and who the actors" (33).

shape was seen as well as his face" (133). In this interview, Rochester plays the dual roles of exhibitionist[42] and voyeur, positioning Jane where her gaze is unimpeded and posing himself for her benefit. Rather than organizing a reciprocal spectatorial arrangement, Rochester facilitates Jane's gaze to control and monitor her spectatorship. His vigilant inspection of her gaze is revealed in his remark that "'...[her] eyes [are] generally bent on the carpet (except by-the-by, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance)...'" (132). His active voyeurism, therefore, contravenes the passivity suggested by his exhibitionism. Moreover, to compound the erasure of Jane's gaze, her look lacks epistemological validity in contradistinction to Rochester's ability to decipher Jane's look(ing) (136). Like William's self-celebrated inscrutability when confronted with Mlle Reuter's piercing look, Rochester exults in Jane's perplexed gaze which lacks the potency to penetrate his enigmatical character (138, 139). This "dissociation of seeing and understanding" is a typical feature of the female gaze in the paranoid gothic woman's film in which "[q]uite often the female protagonist is endowed with the necessary curiosity and a desire to know but is revealed as impotent in terms of the actual ability to uncover the secret or attain the knowledge which she desires" (Doane, *Desire* 135).

Thus, Jane unwillingly becomes a spectacle whereas Rochester carefully manipulates spectatorship in this scene in order to "'draw [Jane] out: to learn more of [her]'" (134), and Jane resists this exposure. Ordering her to "'Speak,'" Rochester's command for her to perform for his pleasure is ignored by Jane who has wisely learned from their former interview in which she obediently exhibited her artistic achievements. She tells the reader that "Accordingly I sat and said nothing: 'If he expects me to talk for the mere sake of talking and showing off, he will find he has addressed himself to the

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[42] Rochester's exhibitionism is defined by Litvak as theatricality: "...the theatrical glamorization of a wealthy and powerful man like Rochester depends on the antitheatrical subordination of a poor and powerless woman like Jane Eyre" (67). However, Jane is spectacularized in this interview, as her spectatorship is staged by Rochester, becoming a performance for his scrutiny. Williams also discusses Rochester's habitual "playacting" (33).

wrong person,' I thought" (134). While Jane does not exhibitionistically display herself, she is nevertheless objectified by Rochester whose orchestrations of the gaze in this episode satisfy his scopophilic desire and act as a defense against the castrating image of her body. He later recalls that "'I was at once content and stimulated with what I saw: I liked what I had seen, and wished to see more'" (318).

The eroticization of Jane's heretofore curious gaze coincides with Rochester's recognition of her: he becomes for her "the object I best liked to see" (147). However, his acknowledgement of Jane must not be mistaken for an acceptance of her subjectivity; on the contrary, his calculated vacillations between recognition and non-recognition of Jane demonstrate his subjectivity and control of boundaries because his behaviour becomes a cue for Jane's approach or restraint.[43] She recalls that "The ease of his manner freed me from painful restraint: the friendly frankness, as correct as cordial, with which he treated me, drew me to him" (147). In other words, she responds to his desire and accepts his limits, including not activating her scopophilia until he solicits it. Regardless of Rochester's promptings to advance (265), Jane's desire and gaze are nevertheless threatening to his fastidious sexuality. He punishes her by departing from Thornfield (when he joins a neighbouring manor party), a literal distancing which may be interpreted as both a prolonged non-recognition of Jane and as an escape from imminent merger with Jane.[44] By withdrawing his notice, Rochester maintains control of the limits between himself and the Other, thus protecting his subjectivity, and Jane responds to his signal to retreat by disciplining herself for loving "where such a gift is not wanted and would be

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[43] Once again, the reader does not learn of his premeditated oscillations between distancing himself from and noticing Jane until after the fact (318-319).

[44] Wyatt argues that Rochester's absences reproduce Oedipal father-daughter relations because they train Jane "to idealize a distant and mysterious figure whose absences she can fill with glamorous projections" (227). According to this view, his absences intensify female desire. Sadoff also sees Rochester's absences in oedipal terms, but regards them as punishment of the daughter for desiring the father figure (135). I tend to regard his absences as a combination of these two interpretations: as a disciplinary tactic intended to force Jane to assume a passive position in relation to his desire.

despised" (164).[45]

The party scenes at Thornfield (on the occasion of the aristocratic Ingrams' visit) illustrate Jane's spectatorial response to Rochester's distanciation. Requested by Rochester to make an appearance in the drawing-room after the guests have dined, Jane secures herself against observation by entering the room early and sitting partly concealed in the shade of the recessed window-seat, where, as Mrs Fairfax ensures her, "'...nobody will notice you'" (171). The theatrical setting of the drawing-room with its platform raised like a stage, its wide arch, and its spectacular crimson curtains (105, 172, 173; Litvak 53; Williams 29, 34) becomes the mise-en-scène for the aristocratic ladies who, as the curtain rises and falls behind them, become players in a genteel drama which Jane intently observes. With Rochester's entrance, however, she averts her gaze and tries to focus on her sewing task, her diverted gaze and her knitting representing her control over her desire (Doane, *Desire* 110), or at least, her performance of restraint,[46] since the sight of Rochester at this moment evokes powerful and passionate memories of their last meeting (176).

But Jane's authority over her own gaze is overcome. The passages describing her looking are worth quoting in entirety. Her eyes

> ...were drawn *involuntarily* to his face: *I could not keep their lids under control*: they would rise, and the irids would fix on him. I looked and had

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[45] Like Caroline Helstone's self-torture for her love of Robert Moore in *Shirley*, Jane's masochism is punishment for the insanity of having "...loved without being asked to love..." (*Shirley* 129). Caroline's self-abuse rivals Jane's own for its severity and violence: "You expected bread, and you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyrized: do not doubt that your mental stomach——if you have such a thing——is strong as an ostrich's——the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through the palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob" (*Shirley* 128). Caroline's spectatorship becomes a combination of "pain and too much pleasure" (*Shirley* 187) after Robert implements distancing strategies in response to the threat of her desire. As we shall see, Jane's masochistic spectatorship resembles Caroline's gaze.

[46] In Kucich's words, "Jane's elaborately cool inscrutability before Rochester, in particular, takes on the quality of a theatrical self-negation when balanced against her passionate confessions to the reader: All of these situations involve Jane's controlled manipulation of her own persona in an active, energetic self-effacement" (68).

> an acute pleasure in looking,——a precious, yet poignant pleasure; pure gold, with a steely point of agony: a pleasure like what the thirst-perishing man might feel who knows the well to which he has crept is poisoned, yet stoops and drinks divine draughts nevertheless. (176; emphasis added)

And his features

> ...were full of an interest, an influence that quite *mastered* me,——that *took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his.* I had not intended to love him: the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected; and now, at the first renewed view of him, they spontaneously revived, green and strong! *He made me love him without looking at me.* (177; emphasis added)

Evidently, as these passages indicate, the rhetoric of domination and submission pervades Jane's description of her scopophilia. Her spectatorial agency, formerly exercised by strategic self-positionings which enable her gaze, is in this episode and in the following charades scene undermined by Rochester's magnetic power, and more importantly, by his surveillance which is imperceptible to Jane (and to the reader, since the narrator conveniently neglects to mention it at the time it occurs).[47] Moreover, the narrator's and the reader's gazes align with Rochester's (even though the reader is as yet unaware of Rochester's voyeurism) to create a totalizing male look which supervises Jane's visual consumption and desire (London 205). Thus, Jane assumes the feminine position in the patriarchal spectatorial regime, her gaze characterized by passivity (she has no control over her own looking) and by masochistic pleasure-in-pain (looking at him is agonizing

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[47] As a gypsy, Rochester reveals that he has been watching Jane throughout these episodes (200-201). Williams also comments on how Jane is also a spectacle in this scene: "...of course, while seeming not to notice Jane at all, Rochester is actually watching her watch the Ingrams: unknown to herself, Jane is the center of the whole episode. The Ingrams and the others are nothing more than stage properties brought in by Rochester for the purpose of putting Jane to a test; his whole motive is to evoke Jane's feeling..." (35). London regards the coincidental occurrence of Jane's spectatorship and spectacularization as typical of the classical feminine position of being stuck between subject and object (204). Related to this issue but not specifically focusing on Jane's gaze, Litvak's deconstruction of Jane's antitheatricality also reveals how she becomes a spectacle, though a well-camouflaged one (see his chapter on *Jane Eyre*).

yet satisfying), whereas Rochester's (fabricated) withheld gaze——a non-recognition which conceals his voyeuristic scopophilia——constitutes an elaborate and specifically masculine distancing strategy employed to maintain his subjectivity. For Jane, then, looking works ironically to deprive her of subjectivity.[48]

This passivation of the female spectator continues in the charades episode. In this scene, Jane does not have the option of retiring to her usual window-seat since the drawing-room platform has been appropriated as a stage (185; Litvak 53; Williams 34-35).[49] Rather, she sits on the periphery of the exclusive semi-circle of chairs, whence she may observe Rochester's and Blanche's on-stage and off-stage performances. Jane's spectatorial position is particularly contradictory in this scene, but the suggestion of her visual agency is merely a narrative effect by which Jane-the-narrator conceals Jane-the-character's actual spectacularization.[50] She sits in her "usual seat" of marginality, and like the "space-off" outside the film frame,[51] it is a potentially subversive place of unrepresentability (de Lauretis, *Technologies of Gender* 26; Doane, *Desire* 50-51). Indeed, in this predominantly descriptive passage (Litvak 53), Jane-the-narrator reports what Jane-the-character sees rather than objectifies her gaze as in the previous episode: it would appear that Jane and her "cover" (12) finally succeed in evading spectacularization. Active verbs of vision prevail in Jane's recount of her observation of Rochester and

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48 Gezari's use of feminist film theory in her analysis of Jane's gaze helps her to arrive at an opposite conclusion to my own. She sees Jane's gaze as "remarkable" because Jane is positioned as a subject with spectatorial agency in a reciprocal spectatorial relationship with Rochester (68-72).

49 Inexplicably, Jane comments that she stationed herself in her "usual seat," but because the drawing-room is otherwise occupied, I assume that she refers to her "usual seat" for that evening in the dining room, on the margins of the semi-circle of chairs arranged for the aristocratic spectators (184, 187). Thus, Jane's seating position can only be inferred.

50 Litvak comments on the "rhetorical effects" which protect Jane's subjectivity against theatrical spectacularizations (40-43).

51 De Lauretis defines this term, borrowed from film theory, as "the space not visible in the frame but inferable from what the frame makes visible" (26).

Blanche (page 187 is particularly rich with visual imagery), and her visual agency also seems to be emphasized by Jane's relegation of the histrionic courting lovers to the passive position of spectacle despite their spectatorship of the charades (187; Litvak 154). Jane appears to appropriate Rochester's tactic of destabilizing the subject-object opposition. Notwithstanding all this evidence for the narrator's attempts to deflect spectacularization and to preserve Jane-the-character's canny "cover," Jane's spectatorship in this scene is undermined because she is caught in the frame of Rochester's sadistic mise-en-scène which, ostensibly, he produces to render Jane jealous (265).[52] Another, more relevant, possibility is that he stages spectatorship so that he can survey the effect of his lesson which teaches Jane that an active, desiring female gaze (Blanche's unremitting glances [189]) is repugnant to him. From this courtship charade, Jane astutely learns that "silent conquest" and "sitting quietly at his side, saying little and looking less" would be more effective in impressing him than Blanche's visual assaults and showiness (189). In a related scene, Litvak proposes that Rochester intends with his narrative about his affair with Céline Varens to edify Jane on keeping within the boundaries of her social role (62-67), and I would extend his analysis to this episode which the finical Rochester orchestrates to instruct Jane in occupying a passive feminine position. Moreover, in designating the boundaries, he receives the recognition of his subjectivity as indicated by Jane's approval of his "ceaseless surveillance" of Blanche (188). His aggressive gaze and aversion towards feminine "excesses" (311) contribute to Jane's idealization of him (190). Hence, Jane's tactical marginality in this scene does not allow her to step outside the male spectatorial regime to occupy the place of subject.

Unlike Jane's consistent failure to avoid being subjected to the gaze and to conceal her spectatorship, Rochester's spectatorship triumphs because he veils it beneath a façade of non-recognition and invulnerability just as William Crimsworth conceals his

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[52] To add to the evidence for Jane-the-narrator's preservation of Jane's subjectivity, it is not until later that the reader learns that Jane is the centre of attention in this episode, and it is Rochester rather than the narrator who reveals her spectacularization. Such retrospective details are easily lost on the reader seduced by these scenes of female scopophilia.

voyeuristic look with an indifferent gaze. Rochester's transvestism as a female gypsy may be interpreted as a metaphor for his spectatorship, for it is this disguised or hidden gaze which gives him spectatorial potency.[53] Regardless of his feminine "masquerade," Rochester's cross-dressing confirms the fixity of his masculine spectatorial positioning because, throughout the episode, his "bold and direct" gaze frames Jane as a text to be analyzed and inscribed with the story of his desire (198; Bellis 644; Litvak 68). Even the lighting conspires to illuminate and spectacularize Jane whereas it conveniently obscures Rochester (200). Rochester's sibylline discourse entraps Jane in a "web of mystification" (202), and causes Jane's gaze to turn inwards as she narcissistically examines her desire and idly wonders, given the gypsy's accurate divinations, "what unseen spirit had been sitting for weeks by my heart, watching its workings, and taking record of every pulse" (202). Jane is unaware that the uncanny utterances of the "unseen spirit" are merely the effect of Rochester's canny surveillance system. As gypsy, he scrutinizes her for evidence of exceeding the limits he has prescribed, and to determine if she governs herself as carefully as he regulates his emotions (204-205), and certainly, because of his distaste for feminine "excesses" and aberrancy, he is unlikely to tolerate anything else but a woman who conforms to his boundaries. Although Rochester stages his own exhibition in the gypsy scene, his spectatorship is still absolutely guaranteed.

However, Rochester's masterful gaze actually conceals a susceptibility: his desire for Jane and castration anxiety evoked by her sexuality. Accordingly, then, as Jane and Rochester approach merger (marriage), Rochester's visual distancing mechanisms escalate, and Jane, too, implements her own strategies to preclude his objectification of her. The quality of Rochester's gaze also alters, shifting from voyeurism to fetishism, as he attempts to transform her into a "beauty," that is, a sexual and aesthetic object, divesting her in jewels, satin, lace, and with a new name, thereby robbing her of her identity (261).

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53 In the following analysis, I adapt Mary Ann Doane's discussion of the metaphor of the transvestite from her study *Femmes Fatales...* in theorizing Rochester's gaze. Kuhn also has a useful chapter on sexual disguise in cinema, though not related to the gaze, in *The Power of the Image*.

Rochester disavows her sexual difference and desire by fetishizing Jane, but his other separation tactic of constructing her as the uncanny despectacularizes Jane's body (Doane, *Desire* 19), and restricts her access to sexuality. In a similar manner, his infantilization of Jane deeroticizes her: female juvenility is clearly less menacing to him than adult female sexuality.[54] Despite this tension between the spectacularization and despectacularization of Jane, both tactics deny her sexual difference, so that Jane-the-woman disappears (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 5).

Jane resists his efforts to degrade her into an object, assertively proclaiming that "...I will be myself..." (262), and in rebellion, she averts her face and gaze from his own powerful and possessive gaze (271, 274). This self-imposed disabling of her gaze and her "system" of distanciation[55] are ostensibly performed for Jane's and Rochester's "mutual advantage" (276): as a "weapon of defence" (275), she hopes to regain her lost "sense of power over him" (268), and she represses her desire and her gaze in order to prevent both of them from plunging over the "edge of the gulph" (276) into total "self-abandonment" (325). However, rather than operating as a self-protective measure to guard her subjectivity, Jane's distancing programme actually relegates her to the feminine spectatorial position because her immobilization of her gaze permits her to "escape from the demands of the erotic side of her life altogether" (Freud, "A Child is Being Beaten" 199; Doane, *Desire* 18; Sadoff 158-159). Accordingly, episodes delineating Jane's (circumscribed) scopophilia decline after the party scenes, then entirely disappear from the text after their betrothal and her declaration of desire. Jane's withheld gaze, then,

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54 A survey of his epithets in this section of the novel reveals that she is alternately an "'unearthly thing'" (257), an "'angel'" (262, 319), she is "'elfish'" (263), a "'fire-spirit'" (265), a "'fairy'" (270), "'provoking puppet,'" "'malicious elf,'" "'sprite'" (276), "'changeling'" (277), and "'elf'" (317). Terms of infantilization, which include "'little sunny-face girl'" (260), "'girl-bride'" (261), "'good little girl'" (265), "'little English girl'" (271), and "'young girl'" (296), usually appear with a masculine possessive pronoun.

55 Jane's distancing tactic differs from the familiar male distanciation techniques because, firstly, her strategy sacrifices rather than protects her gaze, and secondly, rather than preserving her desire, Jane denies it by refusing herself spectatorial pleasures.

indicates her submission to, rather than rebellion against, the fastidious boundaries that Rochester dictates, and ultimately, this effacement of Jane's gaze reveals Brontë's capitulation to the patriarchal spectatorial regime and its ideology that a seeing and desiring woman is too dangerous to represent.

III.

Ferndean

Disappearing Acts

The conclusion of the novel reiterates that the male scopic economy prevails regardless of Rochester's blinding, as does the master-servant dialectic that characterizes Rochester's and Jane's relationship. Once again, although the ending seems to portray Jane's attainment of spectatorial subjectivity, there are contradictions in the text which tend to undermine positive interpretations of Jane's position at the end of the novel. Undoubtedly, such ambiguities contribute to the wide-ranging critical responses to Brontë's ending of *Jane Eyre*.[56] Rochester's visually-challenged condition——another topic engendering diverse critical responses[57]——would seem to finally free Jane from spectacularization and, by securing her permanent "cover," would appear to enable her own, unhindered scopophilia. The reiteration of scenarios in which Jane encounters

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56 A cursory survey of sources reveals that the celebratory approach to the text exemplified by Moglen's study (*Jane Eyre* is a "nascent feminist myth"-page 142), tends to be decreasing in popularity. Most criticism tends to be more hesitant to applaud the text as proto-feminist or revolutionary, emphasizing the implicit ambiguities of the text (Boumelha, Gilbert and Gubar, Maynard, Rowe, Williams), or revealing its complicity with dominant ideology (Eagleton, Gezari, London, Tromly, Wyatt).

57 The implications of Rochester's blindness continue to generate critical controversy, most critics elaborating or debunking Richard Chase's 1947 contention that Rochester's injuries constitute a symbolic castration (Chase 495). Among the most memorable responses is Sadoff's staunch defence of Chase's interpretation and attack on "feminist critics" who apologize for Brontë's vengeance (145 note). Maynard's amelioration of the implications of castration and concentration on the overall context provides an interesting change from the strict focus on Rochester's blindness (139), and Gezari follows Maynard in reading the end from a more expansive perspective (85). Gezari also provides her own survey and critique of this crux in the novel. In this post-Freudian era, the suggestion of symbolic castration cannot be denied, but as I will contend, regardless of Rochester's visually challenged condition, the male scopic economy is not subverted by Jane's seeming visual advantage.

Rochester at Ferndean and pauses to watch him unseen seems to suggest her attainment of visual advantage (436, 438, 444). However, Jane's visual pleasure at seeing Rochester is, as usual, mixed with agony, thus resembling her earlier masochistic scopophilia at Thornfield. In fact, Jane's gaze is completely deeroticized because she looks at Rochester with pity more than desire.[58] Beholding the blind and groping Rochester for the first time at Ferndean, Jane describes the vision, but as usual, the text regulates this instance of female spectatorship:

> I stayed my step, almost my breath, and stood to watch him—to examine him, myself unseen, and alas! to him invisible. It was a sudden meeting, and one in which rapture was kept well in check by pain. I had no difficulty in restraining my voice from exclamation, my step from hasty advance. (436)

This desexualized gaze continues throughout the Ferndean episode when, for example, she observes Rochester without his knowledge, yet her "lawless seeing" is attenuated by the erasure of eroticism from her look: "I had a view of him before he discovered my presence. It was mournful, indeed, to witness the subjugation of that vigorous spirit to a corporeal infirmity" (444). Jane's gaze and desire remain spectral because she is never permitted "...access to a pure and authentic female subjectivity" (Doane, *Desire* [59]).

Interestingly, despite Rochester's blindness, it is at Ferndean that he finally seems to recognize Jane's substantiality——his touch finally confirms what his gaze could

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58 Their anaclitic relationship is emphasized by Jane's metaphor of the tree and vines which grow about its trunk to represent their love: "'Plants will grow about your roots, whether you ask them or not, because they take delight in your bountiful shadow; and as they grow they will lean towards you, and wind round you, because your strength offers them so safe a prop'" (450). Jane's trope is appropriate given that anaclitic derives from the Greek, *anaklitos*, "to lean upon."

59 Tromly has an opposing interpretation, believing that Jane's hyperbolic descriptions of her married bliss render Rochester invisible (59). In response, I would argue that Rochester is very much present whereas Jane seems to be annihilated by sacrificing herself to his needs and desires.

not:[60] that she is, indeed, "'altogether a human being'" (442) and not just "'vacant like air'" (439)——whereas, in contrast, Jane's descriptions of the transformed Rochester underscore his uncanniness, and this would appear to compromise his subjectivity. He is unrecognizable to Jane in his dependent and desperate state: he reminds her of "...some wronged and fettered wild-beast or bird, dangerous to approach in his sullen woe. The caged eagle, whose gold-ringed eyes cruelty has extinguished, might look as looked that sightless Samson" (436); moreover, she teases Rochester that "'It is time some one undertook to re-humanize you...for I see you are being metamorphosed into a lion, or something of that sort... your hair reminds me of eagles' feathers; whether your nails are grown like birds' claws or not, I have not yet noticed'" (441).

But despite the signals indicating Jane's hypostatization and Rochester's degradation in subject status, the gaze apparatus actually operates in an ironic way to recuperate male subjectivity. Jane's gaze, already deeroticized, is now co-opted by and for the service of the patriarchy: she will serve her master by being his nurse and "gazing for his behalf" (440, 451, 456; London 207). Indeed, the "Oedipal trajectory" (de Lauretis, *Alice* 112) of this masculine narrative has primed Jane for domestic (ocular) "servitude" (86) to her master, and veils the fulfilment of this feminization of her gaze and subject position as the achievement of Jane's lifelong ambition to be "useful" (451). Jane's identity is subsumed into that of her master's and the uncanny Jane is transformed into the completely non-threatening and familiar Jane who becomes "bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh" (456), phallic mother to Rochester and actual mother to his son. Even Jane-the-narrator's autobiographical task, which Sadoff interprets as an act of composition which liberates and empowers Jane (158), may be interpreted pejoratively as a self-surveillance which demonstrates Jane's internalization of the patriarchal Panopticon

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60 Irigaray proposes that "Woman finds more pleasure in touch than in sight," vision being central to male eroticism (101). Rochester's reliance on voice and touch at the end of the novel (Bellis 648) seems to support Moglen's argument that at the end of the novel, Rochester is brought into Jane's more female sphere of psychic functioning (143). I would propose that masculine structures are fully intact at the end of the novel. The partial return of Rochester's vision at the fortuitous juncture when he can behold his first-born son's inheritance of his eyes further indicates that the patriarchal (visual) legacy carries on (457).

and ultimately contributes to the erasure of female subjectivity (London 199-200).[61]

Thus, *Jane Eyre*, with its representation of the vicissitudes between the spectacularizations and self-/despectacularizations of Jane and its instability between the spectator-spectacle opposition, would seem to provide some resistance to the patriarchal spectatorial regime which constructs woman as spectacle to ameliorate the knowledge of female phallic absence. This relentless objectification of Jane's body and the circumscription of her gaze and desire culminate in a disappearing act which finally makes Jane-the-woman vanish, thereby confirming her naught(y) status in the phallocentric system of representation. In Brontë's last novel, *Villette*, similar perturbations in the gaze apparatus are detected, but as I will illustrate in the next chapter on *Villette*, because Brontë fails to liberate her discourse from subjection to the same patriarchal surveillance which monitors the (narrow) limits of female desire, Lucy Snowe suffers a fate similar to Jane Eyre's confinement within well-defined masculine boundaries.

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61 Boone, detecting the same self-policing in *Villette*, comments that "...by making everyone agents of a mobile, diffuse power that circulates among a plurality of 'subsidiary authorities,' this system creates subjects who, in Foucault's words, assume responsibility for their own subjection; held captive by the ideal of a larger but unseen policing power we become our own best jailers" (26). However, in *Villette*, Boone argues that, without altogether escaping from the disciplinary gaze, Lucy's narrative manages to negotiate spectacularization by the patriarchal scopic economy because of her "ever-changing, elusive, provisionally autonomous" self-representation (40).

Chapter Four

Villette

In the chapter "The Fête" in Brontë's fourth and final novel, *Villette*, Lucy Snowe's startled reaction to Monsieur Paul Emanuel's violent disruption of her reading and reverie to enjoin her to participate in the school play reflects Brontë's reader's own surprise at the interruption of the heretofore domestic narrative with the unexpected dramatic spectacle of Lucy's (partial) transvestism as a "fop" (201). This polyvalent theatrical interlude signifies, among other things, a destabilization of gender categories, and as such, it has relevance to the gaze apparatus in the novel. As a trope in literature, the transvestite figure interrogates the concept of binaristic, fixed gender identities and instead, articulates gender as an investiture or divestiture (Garber 17). Formulations of cinematic spectatorship also utilize this notion of the transvestite figure's gender mutability. In their studies of the spectatorial position of the female audience member of classic cinema, Mulvey (32-33), de Lauretis (*Alice* 144), and Doane (*Desire* 6-8; *Femmes* 17-43) have each conceptualized spectatorial transvestism/double identification/bisexuality[62] to describe the alternating identification processes whereby the female spectator, usually associated with passivity and spectacle, obtains access to visual agency and desire: "The transvestite wears clothes which signify a different sexuality, a sexuality which, for the woman, allows a mastery over the image and the very possibility of attaching the gaze to desire" (Doane, *Femmes* 24). Lucy's partial transvestism——and it is a limited cross-dressing since she insists on retaining her feminine garb——may be considered to be a trope for her spectatorial position throughout the novel. Focusing primarily on the erotic and inter-personal gaze,[63] this

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62 The subtle variations between these conceptualizations of spectatorial transvestism are beyond the scope of this essay.

63 I concentrate on the gaze of desire rather than on the institutional gaze because firstly, this has been my focus in the previous chapters, and secondly, several excellent studies exist which explore pedagogical, religious, and medical surveillance in the novel. Boone's engaging article investigates all forms of institutional surveillance, and Shuttleworth examines Dr John Graham Bretton's clinical gaze in

chapter will trace Lucy's spectatorial relations with Dr John Graham Bretton and Monsieur Paul Emanuel to demonstrate how, of all Brontë's heroines, she best embodies what Doane refers to as the "vicissitudes of the female gaze" (*Desire* 36): Lucy, a "'personage in disguise'" (393), oscillates between a masculine position with its access to agency and desire, and a feminine position, typified by masochism, passivity, and, oftentimes, an immobilized gaze. Transvestism, particularly female-to-male (spectatorial) cross-dressing, is recuperable as a metaphor. This is evident in *Villette* in which, forcefully and consistently, the gaze apparatus reconfirms the fixity of Lucy's feminine gender identity and restores the gaze hierarchy.[64] This investigation will not be limited by a strict focus on alternations between femininity and masculinity. It will also discuss Lucy's shifts from rebellion against the patriarchal spectatorial regime to surrender, as her gaze and desire are (self-) contained. Lucy's subversive and/or transvestite spectatorial self vanishes with the possibility of fulfilled desire as she assumes her proper feminine place in the male visual economy.

"'Struck Stone Blind'":

Lucy Snowe and Dr John Graham Bretton[65]

The contradictoriness of female spectatorship——this simultaneous incorporation

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the context of contemporary medical discourse. However, I acknowledge that an erotic gaze can be disguised beneath institutional surveillance, as in the case of William Crimsworth or Monsieur Paul Emanuel, and therefore, the latter's voyeurism will be included in my discussion. I have decided to refrain from discussing Lucy's juvenile, predatory gaze at Paulina Home. Given the connection between the gaze, desire, and subjectivity which I have outlined in previous chapters, my exclusive focus is on the erotic, interpersonal gaze. Lucy's childhood gaze, while an interesting topic, does not constitute a look of desire.

64 See Doane, *Desire* 8, *Femmes* 25; Garber 72; Gilbert and Gubar, *Sexchanges* 350; Kuhn 60, for discussions of the recoverability of transvestism.

65 For the sake of consistency with the text, in the episodes prior to Lucy's identification of Dr John as the Graham Bretton of her youth, he will be referred to as Dr John. Thereafter, he will be designated as Graham.

and circumscription of female subjectivity——is particularly evident in the novel's first episode delineating Lucy's adult, heterosexual scopophilia.[66] Becoming increasingly fascinated with Dr John, the handsome young surgeon-physician at the Pensionnat, Lucy masks her ownership of the gaze beneath the grammatical disguise of the second person pronoun "you," and the indefinite pronoun "one" (160). On the occasion of an extended period of gazing at Dr John, Lucy's disavowal of her agency for looking continues. In a preliminary vindication of her observation of him, Lucy concedes that while it is not her "business" to observe Dr John,

> placed as I was, I could hardly help it. He laid himself open to my observation, according to my presence in the room just that degree of notice and consequence a person of my exterior habitually expects: that is to say, about what is given to unobtrusive articles of furniture, chairs of ordinary joiner's work, and carpets of no striking pattern. Often, while waiting for madame, he would muse, smile, watch, or listen like a man who thinks himself alone. (162-163)

As the above passage demonstrates, Lucy shifts from an initial apology for improper looking, to self-forgiveness, then blames her gaze on Dr John's non-recognition of her. Remarkably similar to Jane Eyre's involuntary looking at Rochester, Lucy's denial of responsibility for visual agency is further enhanced by her reference to the "somewhat perilous force" and "overmastering strength and power of attraction" exerted by Dr John's dazzling visage (163). While she initially frames him as passively exhibiting himself for her view ("He laid himself open to my observation..."), she later inverts the structuration of vision to suggest her passivity——even though she is the agent of the gaze——and to show his mastery in eliciting her gaze supposedly against her will. Lucy's masquerade of passivity guarantees the orthodox reader's approval because it is a classic pose of femininity, whereas she actually transgresses against her position in the spectatorial

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66 This litany of qualifiers must be explained. The reader learns later in the novel that Lucy's desiring gaze at Graham commences as an adolescent. Lucy recalls that she habitually gazed at Graham Bretton's portrait, experiencing pain and pleasure at the sight (243). Lucy's scopophilia is not limited to males since she also experiences pleasure at gazing at Ginevra and Paulina (149, 152, 214-215, 287, 346, 359, 399-400, 519, 397-398). However, I do not focus on either the adolescent or homospectatorial gazes.

regime.[67] The gaze apparatus must also be held accountable for this veiling of her adoption of a masculine position and covering of her desire.

Nonetheless, Lucy's representation of Dr John's mastery is not altogether fabricated. He proves his dominance when he detects Lucy's lawless seeing "...in a little oval mirror fixed in the side of the window recess——by the aid of which reflector madame often secretly spied persons walking in the garden below" (163). This framing of Lucy's gaze thus simultaneously states and negates her illicit gazing.[68] The mirror which imprisons Lucy as an image, however, also frames him within its parameters, for it is in the same reflective surface that Lucy realizes that she has been "caught in the act of looking" (Doane, *Desire* 100). Hence, Lucy and Dr John are both spectacularized in the mirror that usually serves as Madame Beck's instrument of surveillance. Dr John's phallic assertion to counteract Lucy's objectification (his sarcastic "rebuke") is undermined by his association with the mirror, a figure of narcissism, and the egotism of his reproof further emphasizes his "masculine self-love" (272).[69] His narcissism and this specular framing

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67 My interpretation of Lucy's gaze in this scene has been aided by Eagleton, who posits that Lucy's allegations claiming her involuntary participation in acts of significance function to absolve her from "a charge of self-interested calculation" (62-63). Similarly, Silver discusses Lucy's habitual evasions of responsibility for her actions: "At every turning point in the novel, at every moment of decision, Lucy chooses instinctively to break free of social constraints and go forward to self-discovery and growth, even while denying that the decision or action is hers" (98). Eagleton's and Silver's analyses are equally applicable to Lucy's gaze in the scene discussed above. This carefully crafted self-representation of her non-culpability is related to Lucy's overall stage-managing of her autobiography. Tromly proposes that "...Lucy's autobiography is her theatre; as director she manipulates not only the characters around her, but her own interpreted image as well. Having approved the script, she sets her own stage and then casts herself with determination in the role she has created. Behind her careful efforts to stage-manage her autobiography lies Lucy's constant awareness of what she refers to as 'surface'.... Lucy quite deliberately cultivates her surface in order to attract——and deflect——the common gaze. As character and autobiographer, she is most comfortable with her facade; she would prefer that the backstage workings of her theatre not be explored" (71-72).

68 Rabinowitz states that by looking at Graham "What she has actually broken are a series of gender, class, and narrative conventions: by gazing at Dr John, she has acted like a man and an equal, not like a woman who inhabits the nursery..." (247).

69 He sneers, "'Mademoiselle does not spare me: I am not vain enough to fancy that it is in my merits which attract her attention; it must then be some defect. Dare I ask——what?'" Graham's narcissism is evinced by the fact that while he espies her in the mirror, he fails to recognize her (Silver 102). Later, when Lucy and the Brettons are reunited, Graham once again betrays his narcissistic

device feminize him, and Brontë (and Lucy) thereby undercuts the masculine potency of his securing gaze.

Her silence and averted gaze after his reprimand suggest submission, but her retreat may be regarded as a subversive refusal to expose herself to those who would misapprehend her. She states that

> There is a perverse mood of the mind which is rather soothed than irritated by misconstruction; and in quarters where we can never be rightly known, we take pleasure, I think, in being consummately ignored. What honest man on being casually taken for a housebreaker, does not feel rather tickled than vexed at the mistake?[70] (164)

Lucy counteracts Dr John's non-recognition by concealing her acknowledgement of his identity and by withdrawing into her habitual, strategic inconspicuousness.[71] However, the reader later learns that beneath this performance of inscrutability lies her actual "mortification" (248). The narrator's retrospective confession of vulnerability proves that Dr John's aggressivity and non-recognition threaten her subjectivity regardless of her attempts to circumvent the effect of his humiliation. Viewing this episode with the narrator's admission in mind, then, her downcast glance represents a masochistic submission to his disciplinary rebuke rather than a strategy of defiance. Lucy's "perverse" and paradoxical strategies to secure subjectivity (denying responsibility conceals her visual agency, disabling her gaze is her retributive act of non-recognition) are

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perspective of this earlier incident. He tells Lucy that "'...shy and retiring as your general manner was, I wondered what personal or facial enormity in me proved so magnetic to your usually averted eyes'" (250).

70 Lucy frequently delights in how others misperceive her (see for example pp. 248, 386, 393, 403-404, 420-421), but often these misconstructions alert her to the bleak reality that accompanies her cultural invisibility, such as the fate of being "Loverless and inexpectant of love..." (186). In Lawrence's perceptive article, she posits that Lucy's deliberate invisibility and cypher status enable her to resist textualization by people who would misread her because she fails to conform to normative standards. This cultivation of her indecipherability gives her control over her own signification (452-453). Gezari also comments on the equivocality of Lucy's self-representation as a "cypher" (165).

71 Boone (31), Gezari (167), Rabinowitz (247), Silver (108), and Williams (87) each argue that Lucy's silent withdrawal empowers her.

ineffectual in alleviating the effects of Dr John's degrading lack of notice.

In this first, protracted representation of Lucy's gazing at Dr John, Lucy's desire is effectively disguised by Lucy-the-narrator as a curious gaze, a mixture of "force of surprise, and also of conviction" (163). But in the school production, Lucy's spectatorial transvestism temporarily and circuitously enables her to possess an erotic gaze which expresses her desire for him. However, these theatrics reveal that despite her male impersonation, her feminine gender remains fixed "without the slightest retrenchment" (209).

M. Paul overcomes Lucy's objection to "public display" and convinces her to participate as an actor in his vaudeville, thus drawing her out of a spectral existence (185) and into the world of action. Confronted with the prospect of divesting her feminine accoutrements to assume the masculine costume of the fop,[72] Lucy asserts her will: "To be dressed like a man did not please, and would not suit me. I had consented to take a man's name and part; as to his dress——*halte là*! No. I would keep my own dress; come what might" (208). The partial female-to-male transvestism suggested by her mixed masculine and feminine apparel is also reflected in her vacillating spectatorial position in the play. As spectacle, Lucy assumes the traditional feminine position as icon, a spectacularization which, off-stage, Lucy vigorously struggles to evade. Lucy's resistance to objectification continues in this scene as she takes the stage and immediately deflects the gaze back onto the spectators, turning the audience into the "spectacle" (210). Observing the direction of her fellow actor's (Ginevra's) gaze into the audience at Dr John and detecting the "suggestive" interplay of gazes——his look exposing his desire for

72 Lucy's rôle, the "empty-headed fop's," is a feminized part by virtue of its presence in the romantic drama. However, the etymology of the word "fop" and Lucy's explicit reference to the fop's treachery in the play associate the rôle with the patriarchal oppression of women. ("Fop" is akin to Middle English, *fobben*, "to deceive.") Doane discusses the feminization of the male in the love story genre of the woman's film (*Desire* 116-117). This mingling of masculine and feminine gender role behaviour in Lucy's dramatic rôle seems, at first, to invest Lucy with the same gender fluidity. Also on the topic of rakes, Lucy's representation of Colonel de Hamal, the dandy whom Ginevra pretends Lucy to be as they perform their roles in the play, mercilessly feminizes him (216-217, 281). It is significant that de Hamal is the only other transvestite figure in the novel, disguising himself as a nun to gain access to the Pensionnat and Ginevra.

Ginevra——Lucy adopts the behaviour associated with her masculine vestments: she plays with the rôle of agent of desire in her chivalric "wooing of Ginevra," displacing her desire for him onto Ginevra (210-211). However, the scopic economy forecloses the possibility of Lucy's usurpation of a masculine position of activity. First of all, her gaze and desire carry no power (Kaplan, *Women and Film* 28-29). She cannot act upon her desire for Dr John directly——only indirectly and thus, ineffectually. Secondly, her erotic act(ing) takes place in a fantasy realm of drama where the dangerous implications of her excessive performance are contained by the framed space which obviates the threat of her desire and gaze even before Lucy appears on the stage.[73] Thirdly, later in her performance, as liberating improvisatory energy emboldens Lucy, her looking is no longer represented and the reader may only surmise as to its object of focus. This erasure of her gaze may have two contradictory implications. On the one hand, by veiling her erotic gaze, Lucy protects it from being undermined by spectacularization: as she assumes the subject position, she is not objectified.[74] (Although, overall, she is framed as spectacle in the play.) In addition, by not displaying her gaze, Lucy's performance cannot be condemned for venturing beyond the frames erected to imprison the feminine gender, and thus, she maintains the conventional reader's support. On the other hand, Brontë may have deliberately omitted such a representation, fearing the dangerous connotations of a

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73 Tanner observes how the theatrical scenes and art gallery episode are set in "framed spaces" which "allow extremes of representation or action (which are only latent or totally suppressed in the social space) to be projected in a way which allows for contemplation without actual involvement. It is a mark of Lucy Snowe's sensibility that she is both repelled by and drawn into these representations. . . she both rebels against and needs the 'frames' which bourgeois society places around different areas of experience" (21-22).

74 This strategic obscuration of her gaze is related to what Boone refers to as the "larger artistic question that faces her as narrator (and, by extension, Brontë as Lucy's creator) of female representation and self-representation. For Lucy, the question becomes one of how to represent the female as *subject* without risking her immediate objectification by the privileged male gaze, that ubiquitous instrument of surveillance in a patriarchal society" (31). Pollock's study of how, ironically, feminist artistic attempts to subvert patriarchal representations of women often serve to "consolidate the potency of the signification rather than actually rupture it" (45) is useful here. There is always the danger that by not representing Lucy's gaze and desire, Brontë creates a spectral female sexuality which reproduces patriarchal representations.

seeing and desiring female character. According to this view, Lucy's transvestism is recovered by the text, her femininity indelibly marked because she is not permitted uninhibited visual agency despite her masculine vestiture.[75] Brontë's representations of (spectatorial) transvestism in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, therefore, confirm that gender is fixed: Rochester's feminine disguise does not attenuate his visual mastery, and Lucy's masculine costume and rôle do not liberate her from the constraining mechanisms which circumscribe the female gaze and desire. The incompleteness of her transvestism suggests the inevitability of her gendered position. Appropriately, after the school production she resumes her feminine position as a passive "looker-on at life," watching the fête and Dr John invisibly from the shadows (211).

In episodes following their reacquaintance, spectatorial relations between Lucy and Dr John Graham Bretton consist primarily of scenarios in which Lucy becomes an inveterate observer of Graham and his responses to spectacles of female sexuality.[76] In the chapter "The Cleopatra," in which Lucy notes Graham's "cool" and "fastidious" reaction to "'le type de voluptueux,'" that is, to excessive femininity (281), and again in the chapter "The Concert," when she witnesses his "severe" and unjust reaction to the

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75 Numerous critics interpret Lucy's retention of her feminine clothes to be of positive significance. Gilbert and Gubar (*Madwoman*, 413), Sadoff (161), Silver (100), and Tanner (31) agree that Lucy thereby asserts her female identity and voice. In contrast to these interpretations, Litvak perceives Lucy's partial transvestism in more equivocal terms: it "appears not so much daringly iconoclastic as grimly expressive of the ambitious woman's confinement to male impersonation. At these moments, theatricality itself wears an aspect that alternates painfully between the liberation of role-playing and the conventionality that circumscribes and ironizes any such improvisatory freedom" (85). While I agree with Litvak's interpretation of her performance as ambiguous in connotation, I am somewhat mystified by his subsequent comments which interpret Lucy's transvestite performance as evocative of Irigarayan female mimicry (94). This would imply that Lucy hyperbolizes her femininity to undo the effects of patriarchal representation. According to this view, she would play with female narcissism and exhibitionism——the behaviours traditionally ascribed to women by the patriarchy——which is not the case at all. His formulation denies the masculine aspects of her performance such as her attempt (although unsuccessful) to usurp the gaze rather than be its object.

76 Gilbert and Gubar detect this pattern in the "Cleopatra" chapter in which Lucy and Brontë examine "the ridiculous roles men assign women, and thus the chapter is arranged to maximize the reader's consciousness of how varying male responses to female images are uniformly produced by the male pride that seeks to control women...Brontë describes the range of male responses to the completely sexual Cleopatra and the completely desexed, exemplary, girl-wife-mother-widow..." (*Madwoman* 420).

sight of a mutual, desiring gaze between Ginevra and de Hamal (302), Lucy consistently turns a male subject of the gaze into an object for her own visual consumption, framing Graham as the spectacle instead of the aesthetic images of women displayed before her. But the cumulative effect of these scenes works to deflect Lucy's identification away from Graham, whose gaze she obediently serves in the capacity of Ginevra's "'guardian'" (191-193, 220, 293), and away from futilely trying to approximate his voyeuristic and fetishistic scopophilia (male operations which, as a woman, she cannot impersonate), towards a masochistic feminine identification. The "Vashti" chapter dramatically portrays the outcome of identification processes which align Lucy with a feminine spectatorial position.

Lucy's gaze at Vashti's performance exemplifies the feminine spectatorial position. From the outset, as Lucy awaits the "rising" of Vashti, Lucy's "peculiar anticipations" convey her excessive emotion, a "strange curiosity, with feelings severe and austere yet of riveted interest" (338). Her expectant rapture presages her "spectatorial ecstasy" (Doane, *Desire* 1) as she finally beholds the actress on stage. Lucy's overinvolvement with the image, a mark of the female spectatorship, is suggested by her associative and rhapsodic description of the sight in "rather obscure and stammering" rhetoric (282), and by her collapse of the opposition of the real and the imaginary as she renders Vashti the woman indistinguishable from Vashti the actress who performs a role in a tragedy. Even though Lucy regards the performance ambivalently ("It was a marvellous sight: a mighty revelation. It was a spectacle low, horrible, immoral" [339]), "her pleasure in viewing is somehow more *intense*" (Doane, *Desire* 1) than Graham's cool observation:

> When I took time and regained inclination to glance at him, it amused and enlightened me to discover that he was watching that sinister and sovereign Vashti, not with wonder, nor worship, nor yet dismay, but simply with intense curiosity. (341)

His detached scrutiny of the spectacle suggests the distancing from the image typical of voyeurism. His spectatorial pleasure lies in ascertaining Vashti's guilt: "...he judged her

as a woman, not an artist: it was a branding judgment" (342). Vashti's excess, her "wild and intense, dangerous, sudden, and flaming" femininity (341),[77] revolts Graham, who has previously denounced as corrupt the sensuous "Cleopatra" and Ginevra because they transgress patriarchal boundaries which restrict female sexuality. Indeed, Vashti trespasses against the perimeter of the stage as she sternly challenges the audience which objectifies her[78] (339). His "critical" and "callous" reactions to displays of female sexuality instruct Lucy that his insecure masculinity, veiled beneath an "unimpressible" facade, cannot recognize a femininity that overruns patriarchally-prescribed limits (341-342).[79] Lucy inscribes this revelation in her "book of life" with "a deep-red cross" (342) because Graham's non-recognition of Vashti's non-conformity emphatically demonstrates the impossibility of his ever properly apprehending Lucy, who exists in the shadowy margins of Graham's bourgeois world (I will return to this issue shortly). Notwithstanding Lucy's implicit critique of the inadequate male gaze, the patriarchal spectatorial regime is not dismantled because Lucy's gaze, conceptualized in terms which underline her excessive collusion with the image, is deflected towards an identification with Vashti. This identification hardly suggests Lucy's mastery since, to be a desiring woman means ostracism, elimination, or both, as is the case with Vashti, whose

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77 Litvak comments on Vashti's hyperbolic performance of femininity: "Vashti indeed seems to exemplify Irigaray's theory of female mimicry, whereby 'to play with mimesis is,...for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to become simply reduced to it.' Vashti's performance suggests that, if one is inscribed in a constraining social text, one can at least act out the various processes of one's textualization, thereby achieving a certain leverage with which to displace that preexistent order" (100-101).

78 Lucy's description of Vashti's resistance to the audience is interesting for the images of rigidity and petrification, becoming "like sculpture" (339). This metatrope functions to imprison Vashti at the instant that she becomes most dangerous: when she destabilizes the boundary between the real and imaginary, and defiantly confronts the collective male gaze.

79 Gezari notes: "His judgment is 'branding' because it invokes a different normative ideal, a femininity to which sensation, passion, and nervous excitability are alien. In this way too, Dr John's confrontation with the Vashti reenacts his confrontation with Lucy, who elicits his sympathy but cannot excite his admiration" (161). See also Shuttleworth (328) and Williams (95-96) for discussions of Graham's limited reaction to Vashti.

transcendent search for the boundless results in her own negation and dissolution into "Death" itself (339).

"The Cleopatra," "The Concert," and "Vashti" chapters constitute a series of spectacles within spectacles which expose Graham's limited masculine parameters and confirm Lucy's original conviction that she can "never be rightly known" by him (164). This series, effectively a set of representations to counterbalance the various images of women which also appear in these chapters, concludes with a final validation of Graham's inability to notice Lucy, a scene which may be considered to be a dramatic spectacle because it is staged by Lucy and Paulina to prove false Ginevra's boasts about Graham's desire for her (390-391). Once again, Lucy performs the rôle of romantic internuncio, but this time, for Paulina's benefit. On this particular evening, Graham's desire for Paulina and his small regard for Lucy, the "'being inoffensive as a shadow'" (407), become painfully apparent to Lucy. He insensitively enjoins her to participate in his scopophilia of Paulina and then tries to position her in the former rôle of "officious soubrette in a love drama" (400), stage-managing Lucy so that he may have the visual "delight" of watching Paulina react to Lucy's communication of his romantic sentiments (403). Heretofore, Lucy has always made Graham's desires "take precedence" over her own (298), but now she verbally resists Graham's request to satisfy his erotic pleasure by participating in his romantic script, and she declares her right to have a desire of her own. She rebels against Graham's feminine positioning which would deny her desire and subjectivity.

> 'Could I manage to make you ever grateful?' said I. 'No, *I could not*.' And I felt my fingers work and hands interlock: I felt, too, an inward courage, warm and resistant. In this matter I was not disposed to gratify Dr John: not at all. With now welcome force, I realized his entire misapprehension of my character and nature. He wanted always to give me a rôle not mine. Nature and I opposed him. He did not at all guess what I felt: he did not read my eyes, or face, or gestures; though, I doubt not, all spoke. (403-404)

For Lucy——a socially and economically disenfranchised person, physically not worthy

of notice according to Graham's conventional standards of beauty—— this incident serves to validate her suspicions of Graham's superficial way of seeing.[80] The manifestation of Lucy's outraged and outrageous desire, however, is quickly circumscribed along with Lucy's gaze once she observes the unmistakable signs of desire for Paulina in Graham's countenance (405; she has observed Graham's desiring look at Paulina on several previous occasions [264, 371-372, 375]). Lucy averts her gaze altogether, citing (ostensibly) temporal considerations for the disabling of her gaze: "He stood in her presence brave and bashful; subdued and unobtrusive, yet decided in his purpose and devoted in his ardour. I gathered all this by one view. I did not prolong my observation——time failed me, had inclination served..." (405). Dreading "'being struck stone blind'" (520) by Graham's non-recognition and by the spectacle of his desire for another woman, Lucy immobilizes her gaze to avoid being blinded by the sight of his potent and sometimes sadistic masculinity. The narrator represents Lucy's self-effacement of her gaze as a voluntary act performed to protect her subjectivity and vision, but in actuality, it signals the successful erasure of her desire and gaze by the gaze apparatus at the moment that her desire is uncovered. Certainly, Lucy's metaphorical self-blinding duplicates Jane's defensive deactivation of her desiring gaze in reaction to Rochester's objectifying and threatening masculine sexuality after their betrothal. But both Jane's and Lucy's disabled gazes signal the obliteration rather than the preservation of their subjectivity.

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80 Ironically, earlier in the novel Lucy naively remarks upon how Graham is "not superficially observant" of character (272), and she is impressed by "His sensitiveness——that peculiar, apprehensive, detective faculty of his..." (329), but evidence for his superficiality accumulates throughout the novel. Foremost is his underestimation of Lucy. From not recognizing her, to using her for the furtherance of his romances, to regarding her strictly from a clinical and "professional point of view" (328), to his "dry, materialist" (338) cure for her Hypochondria and explanation for her sightings of the nun, Graham's construction of Lucy evinces a lack of depth. To enhance the argument for his shallowness, his superficial gaze is not restricted to Lucy. His overvaluation of Ginevra shows his lack of perspicacity (193, 220-222), and then his hostile devaluation of her based strictly on visible evidence reveals a similar lack of keen vision. After witnessing the fastidious courtship of Graham and Paulina, Lucy can finally articulate the reason why Graham overlooks her, for he requires more than beauty alone "to conquer him as he was now vanquished, to bring him safe under dominion as now, without loss, and even with gain to his manly honour——one saw that he was reduced; there was about Dr John all the man of the world; to satisfy himself did not suffice; society must approve——the world must admire what he did or he counted his measures false and futile..." (460). Lucy, lacking all these material requirements, fails to attract his notice beyond the "one little closet" in his heart which he reserves for her (555).

The trajectory of the spectatorial relations between Lucy and Graham aims towards this figurative obstruction of Lucy's vision and desire, and, by circumscribing her male impersonations, it moves her into the feminine position where she properly belongs. In her relationship with M. Paul, the gaze apparatus also directs the course of Lucy's spectatorial positioning towards this same feminization.

Breaking Out and Breaking-in:
Lucy and M. Paul

From Lucy's arrival at the Pensionnat when M. Paul's gaze promptly unveils her divided self (128), his vision is delineated in terms which underscore its ubiquity and penetration.[81] His demystifying glance differs from Graham's superficial and clinical gaze which misperceives Lucy. But M. Paul's visual mastery is a counterdefensive mask for his actual vulnerability. For M. Paul as with William Crimsworth, their myopia signifies their perverse ways of seeing women. Once again, eyeglasses become the "utensil" which simultaneously frames and consolidates, and frames and makes uncanny——even monstrous——this potent male vision. Lucy is victimized by M. Paul's "peculiar" sight and surveillance throughout the novel, but in one particularly tense confrontation between Lucy and M. Paul, Brontë foregrounds and thus seems to critique, the horrifying impact of his bespectacled male vision (413).

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81 For example, Lucy describes how his eyes "hungrily dived" into her when he enlists her aid in the vaudeville (201); at the concert, when Lucy deliberately ignores him, "he had penetrated my thought and read my wish to shun him" (299); his inescapable surveillance is demonstrated when his "fixed gaze" relentlessly watches her fit of melancholy after she returns to the school from La Terrasse (310); he detects her desire for Graham by reading her face (and letters from Graham) (379); and finally, he elects himself to supervise her movements when her social life becomes active, becoming her "self-elected judge" (386-387). Finally, while M. Paul exaggerates Lucy's passion, regarding her not as a "'colourless shadow'" but as a woman who must be "'kept down'" (226), his sensitivity to her hidden qualities reveals an accuracy of vision. Lucy is amused by this new and refreshing apprehension of her person in contrast to the sober and austere views held by Graham and others (421). Nevertheless, one must be cautious not to praise his talents for unveiling (as some critics tend to do) because they are used in the interest of his "love of power" (438). His detection of her passion is decidedly voyeuristic, and he punishes her desire with additional surveillance and with the threat of "'checking, regulating, and keeping down'" (452).

Dispatched on the mission of delivering an urgent message to M. Paul during a lecture, Lucy inconspicuously enters his lair, and "with impunity," she actively investigates M. Paul, twice enjoying a "side-view" of his face, before her gaze is "caught and transfixed through its very pupil——transfixed by the 'lunettes.' Rosine was right; these utensils had in them a blank and immutable terror, beyond the mobile wrath of the wearer's own unglazed eyes" (411). This paralysing capacity of M. Paul's augmented vision will validate the later description of his "basilisk attention" which pierces Zélie St. Pierre's dissembling (423).[82] While M. Paul, the male voyeur, manages to distance himself from the horrifying spectacle of the female body, Rosine's and Lucy's looks of horror at M. Paul reveal their inability to separate themselves from the image: "...the monster's or the freak's own spectacular appearance holds her originally active, curious look in a trance-like passivity that allows him to master her through her look" (Williams 86). However, as if to suggest the provisionary power of his powerful 'lunettes,' they supposedly become useless with proximity, and once he divests himself of these "terrible" utensils, Lucy states that "he and I stood on more equal terms" (411). As will become evident, Lucy deludes herself because the removal of his 'lunettes' does not equalize the two at all. Ironically, his power becomes more terrifying once the eyeglasses are doffed and then broken. The 'lunettes' are not responsible for his masterful gaze; rather, underlying visual defence mechanisms invest M. Paul with this potency.

Her accidental breaking of the eyeglasses may be interpreted as an unconscious, yet nevertheless a significant, act of defiance against the monstrous mastery of the man and his gaze. M. Paul, rendered as a kind of mythical monster early in this episode, now holds the mirror to Lucy to reflect and recognize the power of her non-phallic sexuality (Williams 88): he represents her as a Medusa figure who is "'...resolved to have me quite

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82 Basilisk, from the Greek, *basiliskos*, meaning "little king serpent," is a legendary creature, part bird and snake, which has a lethal gaze: "Like the Gorgon Medusa, the basilisk was able to kill whatever it looked at, or, alternatively, breathed on. Thus it was an animal embodiment of the evil eye" (Walker 235). Given the horrifying implications of M. Paul's gaze, this monster seems a perfect symbol for this "little man."

blind and helpless in your hands!'" (413). But M. Paul's delineation of Lucy's threat to his potency and his self-representation of his (visual) lack are intended as a joke——a sadistic mockery of her fear——because her terrified, disabled gaze after she commits this crime (she "dared not look" at him) hardly evokes the image of a dangerous Medusa who will mutilate the vulnerable male. Regardless of Brontë's depiction of the grotesque power of M. Paul's male gaze——a subversive portrayal which does not occur in *The Professor*——the gaze apparatus operates to show that the woman is the monster not because she is a castration threat but because she is already mutilated. Like Frances Henri's downcast and agonized gaze in response to William's sadistic positionings, Lucy's gaze verifies rather than challenges M. Paul's dominance. As she stands before him, a "conscious and contrite offender," she is at the mercy of M. Paul's power (413). Lucy's unconscious and minatory gesture is reduced to a confirmation of *her* putative lack.[83]

Indeed, Lucy's (and Brontë's) oppositions to M. Paul's gaze frequently collapse under the weight of the patriarchal imperative to maintain the gaze hierarchy, and M. Paul's predatory voyeurism frequently becomes the focus of this criticism which dissipates.[84] In a scene which is unique for its representation of Lucy's overt and vocal

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83 Litvak regards Lucy's act as a "castratory flirtation" (106), but clearly, her terrified reaction signals otherwise.

84 M. Paul frequently advertises his espionage, but paradoxically, his vaunts do not unveil the powerful male gaze; rather, intimidation and boasts of immunity strengthen it. As Boone observes, in the novelistic world of *Villette*, the spy's confessions of his espionage "becomes a perverse way of consolidating and displaying one's superior powers. In such an economy, knowledge counts for everything" (20). Lucy marvels at his seeming ingenuousness: "People said that M. Emanuel had been brought up amongst Jesuits. I should more readily accredited this report had his manoeuvres been better masked. As it was I doubted it. Never was a more undisguised schemer, a franker, looser intriguer. He would analyze his own machinations: elaborately contrive plots, and forthwith indulge in explanatory boasts of their skill. I know not whether I was more amused or provoked, by his stepping up to me one morning and whispering solemnly that he 'had his eye on me: *he* at least would discharge the duty of a friend and not leave me entirely to my own devices...'" (386-387). Lucy also reflects on the injustice of his merciless vigilance of female teachers, such as Zélie St. Pierre, and pupils, and recalls former reprimands of M. Paul for his "cruel" and "wicked" humiliations of women: "He thought he did justice; for my part I doubt whether man has a right to do such justice on man: more than once in these visitations I have felt compelled to give tears to his victims, and not spared ire and keen reproach to himself. He deserved it; but it was difficult to shake him in his firm conviction that the work was righteous and needed" (424).

protest against M. Paul's surveillance——when he divulges his post of observation from his "'magic lattice'" overlooking the Pensionnat garden——Lucy's castigation of M. Paul for his "Jesuit system" and trespass on her personal space is quickly deflated by his nonchalance (453): she chides, "'...every glance you cast from that lattice is a wrong done to the best part of your own nature. To study the human heart thus, is to banquet secretly and sacrilegiously on Eve's apples. I wish you were a Protestant'" (455-456).[85] But Lucy's lecture falls on "[i]ndifferent" ears: "His attention seemed incapable of being arrested by this view of the subject" (455). Confident in the sanctity of his own gaze, M. Paul's subjectivity remains intact despite Lucy's reprimand, whereas his impudent violation of her personal boundaries is an act of non-recognition of her subjectivity.[86] Regardless of his peremptory dismissal of Lucy's reproof, representations of M. Paul's voyeurism disappear from the text after this confrontation. But as their subsequent spectatorial relations indicate, the elision of his invasive spying (more likely the result of an authorial omission rather than due to the impact of Lucy's lecture) does not suggest the eradication of the male spectatorial regime.

This inviolability of the male-privileged gaze hierarchy is further exhibited when M. Paul inflicts the long-threatened "show-trial" on Lucy to publicly prove that she possesses "a fund of knowledge which I was supposed criminally and craftily to conceal"

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85 Lucy's comment seems to reveal her awareness that beneath his religious surveillance is an erotic gaze (Michie 117; see also Shuttleworth 320), but her final wish for his religious conversion denies the sexual aspect of his looking, and does not recognize her own Protestant brand of espionage. In the world of the novel, surveillance of any kind, institutional or sexual/personal, is practised by everyone, regardless of religious affiliation. As Boumelha notes, "Those very practices which Lucy holds specific to and characteristic of Catholicism, and which most provoke her anger and distaste——that is, surveillance, confession, and duplicity——are replicated and examined in the tactics she employs as spectatorial, confessional, and unreliable narrator" (103).

86 Contrary to this negative interpretation, Eagleton argues that M. Paul's surveillance "lends him a seductive air of divinity, raises him above routine pettiness and plotting" (69). Tromly also excuses his spying because he does it "to seek understanding, and not to gain control. Perched high above the garden of the Pensionnat, Paul has a perspective on life that is considerably loftier than that of anyone else in the novel——and certainly more elevated than Lucy's outlook" (76). Apparently Tromly does not regard his voyeuristic demystifications of women as an attempt to gain mastery over them. Both Eagleton's and Tromly's absolutions of M. Paul collude with the patriarchal scopic economy in granting M. Paul almost god-like impunity to gaze upon women and thus deny them subjectivity.

(442). Lucy, referring to herself as someone who is "by nature a cypher..."[87] (445), dreads such an exhibition of herself. She assures M. Paul that "Never would I be tractable in this matter. Law itself should not compel me. I would pay a fine, or undergo an imprisonment, rather than write for a show and to order, perched up on a platform'" (446). Lucy fears such spectacularization both because she is anxious about intellectual embarrassment, claiming that she does not possess the "impromptu faculty" (445), and most importantly, because she prefers to remain indecipherable. However, he violently seizes her one afternoon (an act typical of M. Paul's disregard for Lucy's boundaries), and physically stations her in the centre of the classroom: she is "fixed with an emphasis which seemed to prohibit the remotest hope of our [Lucy and her desk] ever being permitted to stir thence again" (492), that is, "fixed" in her proper feminine place as spectacle. The brutality of M. Paul's positioning of Lucy recalls William's severe handling of Frances in the proposal scene: Frances's fearful paralysis resembles Lucy's seeming immovability and "scared wits" (492-493) as she finds herself the object of the combined, authoritative gazes of Messieurs Emanuel, Boissec, and Rochemorte, the latter two men being identified as those who stalked her on her first night in Villette (495).

Despite her immurement in front of these three imposing men, Lucy turns paralysis into rebellious nonfeasance when she refuses to "bear my testimony to the truth, and to be put to the torture of their examination" (493). She "*could* not, or *would* not" "show myself" (493) just as Jane resisted "showing off" for Rochester when he commands her to perform for his pleasure: Lucy remains perversely silent despite her knowledge of the answers to their barrage of questions. Later in the scene, morally outraged by the corrupt Rochemorte's and Boissec's command for her to write on the topic of "Human Justice," Lucy continues her rebellion against this cruel exhibition with

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87 The equivocality of her self-representation as a "cypher" is discussed by Lawrence: "As plain a Jane as her literary predecessor, Jane Eyre, Lucy runs the risk of being overlooked, relegated to a place of nonsignificance. But in articulating herself with a figure that covers, Lucy causes us to wonder if invisibility is not also a strategy, like the 'cloak of hodden gray,' specifically a strategy to avoid being 'textualized' or 'read'" (449).

her allegorical sketch of "Human Justice" as a drunk "beldame" disregardful of the suffering hordes beneath her feet (495-496). Upon the completion of her hurried and subversive essay, Lucy does not await dismissal, but excuses herself and withdraws, thus putting an end to her torture. In spite of her revolt against objectification, M. Paul's violation of her subjectivity is forgotten in the blissful (anaclitic) romantic moments following their oath of "fraternal alliance" (503). Lucy's defiance deteriorates into passive submission as M. Paul defines the asexual bounds of their friendship.

Coincident with their declaration of mutual, asexual desire, Lucy's gaze henceforward undergoes a complete passivation. As M. Paul prepares to ask Lucy to be his "sister," he commands her to raise her eyes and look at him (500). As an isolated instance, his order seems insignificant and harmless, but the fact is that henceforth, Lucy's gaze is activated only when M. Paul summons her looking.[88] The control M. Paul exerts over her gaze here and in episodes subsequent to their "covenant of friendship" (503) is symptomatic of the larger Brontëan pattern of female desire being a response to male

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88 The reverse, a woman asking a man to raise his averted gaze, never occurs in the novel (such a scenario in Brontë's novels seems absolutely ridiculous to imagine). In Pollock's study of magazine advertisements and their images of women, she performs such inversions to reveal that "There is a basic asymmetry inscribed into the language of visual representation which such reversals serve to expose" (46). Reversals using the gaze hierarchy show the impossibility of female visual mastery and male passivity. This lack of agency which defines Lucy's spectatorial position henceforth is also indicated in the fabulous night festival sequence. In this episode, the "space of possibility" (Garber 17) whence Lucy, the sometime spectatorial rebel and transvestite, emerges to assert her desire and gaze is not through that "gap in the paling" (547) through which Lucy escapes from the imprisoning Pensionnat to the night festival. Despite Lucy's active quest, her "vague aim" is to seek the stone basin in the city park (547, 551), her female agency and gaze are figured as distorted, the real and fantasy meld to create a decidedly surrealistic sequence which underscores the lack of epistemological solidity associated with the female gaze. While Lucy asserts that "illusion [is] unveiled" with her gaze (550), this uncovering is precisely what her female gaze cannot do in this scene. "To see and know..." are impossible for Lucy because the literal dimness of her eyes obscures "the homely web of truth" (563) from her when she jealously imagines M. Paul's and Justine Marie Sauveur's engagement (563-565). This violent obfuscation of her vision occurs as Lucy's (jealous) desire becomes almost monstrous, metaphorically figured as a cruel, torturing vulture, which tears at her, and then, her gaze is disabled: "...I *would* not look," she resolves, and "...I sealed my eyes and my ears" to the spectacle of M. Paul with his imagined fiancée (566-567). Lucy has immobilized her gaze once before in the novel——when she realizes that her desire and recognition of Graham will remain unreciprocated. Then, as now, the gaze apparatus effectively contains the female look and desire with a masochistic self-blinding. Boone, however, arrives at another conclusion, suggesting that Lucy thereby "*refuses* to be an onlooker to her own pain and renounces the roles of spy and voyeur with the defiant statement, 'I *would* not look'..." (38). But I would argue that, in a novelistic world that puts so much emphasis on the equation of vision and power, the representation of a (figuratively) blind woman is hardly an image of defiance.

desire.[89] A censor and bowdlerizer throughout the novel (for example, he excises portions of literary texts that he deems "unsuited" to a female audience [414]), he continues his supervisory role unto the end. In their final meeting at the Pensionnat in the Faubourg Clotilde, Lucy the "cypher" now becomes decipherable as M. Paul demands her to look at him so that he may interpret the inscription of desire in her eyes (582-583). After scrutinizing her passively uplifted visage, he concludes that "'...there is no denying that signature: Constancy wrote it; her pen is of iron...'" (583), thereby textualizing and framing Lucy with romantic abstraction at the moment that her desire declares itself in her gaze, which is unrepresented.[90] His "piercing glance" also consults her eyes as she explains the reason for her jealousy of Justine Marie Sauveur (591). The subjectivity associated with the articulation of her story is erased by his surveillance of her abandon (her "excitement, an impetuous throe, a disdainful resolve, an ire, a resistance of which no human eye or cheek could hide the flame, nor any truth-accustomed human tongue curb the cry" [590]). Lucy's masochistic expectations for severe discipline betray her submission to M. Paul's "system of repression" (591). Like William's calculated provocations of Frances, M. Paul remains in control even when he permits a temporary infringement of the boundaries. The outcome of her "mutiny" is false merger as M. Paul proposes, drawing her into the domestic sphere where her excessiveness is recuperated.

In addition to M. Paul's strategies of containment, Lucy's self-offering as icon also

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89 For example, after making their "covenant of friendship," M. Paul, fearing merger and obeying religious counsel, distances himself from Lucy, the "heretic" (508). Lucy conforms to this constriction of boundaries: "Left alone, I was passive; repulsed, I withdrew; forgotten——my lips would not utter, nor my eyes dart a reminder...." and she blames "an error somewhere in my calculations" for *his* non-recognition. In addition, not only does she fail to assert herself when Mme Beck physically intervenes between Lucy and M. Paul, thus blocking her from his view (541), but also Lucy is paralysed with passivity after this incident, waiting for M. Paul's visit, which appears to be more unlikely as the days pass (541).

90 In contrast, Michie argues that Lucy resists M. Paul's textualization of her until the very end with her ultimate act of indecipherability being her equivocal ending, in which she obscures the fate of her consummate "reader," M. Paul (117-118). I would posit that in this scene, in which M. Paul correctly translates and circumscribes the signs of female desire, proves otherwise. Boone interprets M. Paul's reading of Lucy less pejoratively, arguing that Lucy "presents herself to be read finally, by one who will not misinterpret her (in)significance, nor overlook her (in)visibility" (35).

deprives her of subjectivity. Her question, "'Do I displease your eyes much?'" (583), signals her capitulation to the objectifying spectatorial regime which she has endeavoured to evade throughout the novel.[91] It is interesting to note that she disavows responsibility for her self-spectacularization, claiming that "I could not help saying this; the words came unbidden..." because she has a "...great fear of displeasing——a strong wish to moderately please M. Paul" (583). Lucy's lack of agency and her voluntary subservience to M. Paul (she will be his "'faithful steward'" [587]) firmly demonstrate that the politics of erotic domination distinguish their relationship just as they define the dynamics of relationships in Brontë's previous novels.

In contrast to the conventional (and controversial) unions which close *The Professor*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Shirley*, *Villette* concludes with a difference, and in many ways, the ending challenges the myth of romantic love. M. Paul Emanuel, Lucy's redemptive "king" (587), dies and she is left to invest her energy in the establishment and maintenance of her school, and in writing her story. At the end, Lucy is "held by no man's gaze" (Doane, *Desire* 112), and she evades the reader's vision as she provides the fates of M. Paul and others yet herself vanishes from view. Hence, the conclusion seems to interrogate the love story with its final representation of an independent working woman with a room of her own in which she creates the art which helps her to circumvent ubiquitous spectacularization and to control her own representation. However, the conclusion also completes the work of constructing sexual difference (a task to which the gaze apparatus has contributed) with the image of Lucy's waiting and with her passive desire signified by presence-in-absence. Barthes's articulation of sexual differentiation in narrative perfectly describes the scenario at the end of Villette as Lucy interminably waits and weaves her story of her (desire to) desire, while M. Paul perpetually journeys:

> Absence can exist only as a consequence of the other: it is the other who leaves, it is I who remain. The other is a condition of perpetual departure,

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91 Moglen views Lucy's question more positively as "a validation of her transformed self that she requires" (224), but does not explore the disturbing implications of Lucy's appeal to male authority.

> of journeying....Historically, the discourse of absence is carried on by the Woman: Woman is sedentary, Man hunts, journeys; Woman is faithful (she waits), man is fickle (he sails away, he cruises). It is woman who gives shape to absence, elaborates its fiction, for she has time to do so; she weaves and she sings; the Spinning Songs express both immobility (by the hum of the Wheel) and absence (far away, rhythms of travel, sea surges, calvacades). (Doane, quoting Barthes, in *Desire* 109)

The conclusion is, therefore, consistent with the rest of the novel and its representation of a contradictory female (a-)subjectivity with oscillations between spectatorial positions of masculinity and femininity, and between rebellion and submission to the male scopic economy.[92] Yet as this chapter has demonstrated, the gaze apparatus uniformly dismantles these impersonations and perturbations to illustrate that Lucy's "gown of shadow" and her equally spectral femininity are irrevocable (200).

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92 Of course, the conclusion also may seem to undermine male subjectivity with the extermination of M. Paul. But, strangely, his death consolidates male ascendency because his Pauline and Christ-like connotations and Lucy's worship of her Emanuel reproduce the Christian mythology's hierarchical and patriarchal ideology.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have demonstrated through an analysis of the scopic economy how irrevocably the patriarchal discourse is inscribed in Charlotte Brontë's novels. The elaborate defensive manoeuvres, visual and otherwise (such as physically positioning the female characters to aid male scopophilia), deployed by William Crimsworth, Rochester, Graham Bretton, M. Paul, and by the underlying ideology of the text, stringently protect male (spectatorial) subjectivity. When the female characters dare to look with desire, these acts are punished either directly by the male characters with sadistic non-recognition, for example, or indirectly by the internal discourse of the novels: recontainment strategies, such as the complete erasure of the gaze (in *The Professor*, Frances Henri's unrepresented gaze which is, of course, also a product of the oppressive male narrative voice), or the metaphorical blindings (in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* at crucial points in the texts when Jane Eyre's and Lucy Snowe's respective desire is most overt and thus dangerous), constitute those oblique yet forceful attempts to preclude female subjectivity in texts which would otherwise seem to privilege female subjectivity given the apparent interrogations of a sadistic male gaze (*The Professor*), or considering the female narrative voice, point of view, and premise of (fictionalized) autobiography (*Jane Eyre*, *Villette*). Confronted with texts that insistently align the male and female characters (and through identification processes, the male and female implied readers) with their respective traditional positions of (spectatorial) masculinity and femininity, where does that leave the modern reader who may reject such negative representations of gender?

Perhaps renewed pleasure in these classics may be achieved through the process of exploration that this thesis has attempted to enact: closely evaluating those literary moments of resistance——howsoever transitory——to the hegemonic organization of vision and to patriarchal structures in general. Like Jane Eyre's strategic (although ultimately remediated) and literal occupations of the "space-off" (see page 48 of this

thesis), de Lauretis envisions this area located between oppressive representational practices and the space beyond representation as the potential site for "a different construction of gender" (*Technologies of Gender* 25-26). The ambiguities of Brontë's novels, so discernable in the gaze apparatus, may be appreciated by her readers, for they signify the author's careful negotiation between perpetuating and subverting patriarchal practices. While the female characters are ultimately recontained by the masterful discourse which underlies the novels, Brontë's attempt to envision that space of possibility wherein female subjectivity can exist cannot be disregarded. This "elsewhere" of potentiality detected in her novels is why Brontë's legacy endures.

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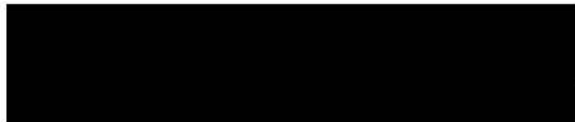
Author 

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