FEMALE HOMOSOCIAL RELATIONS AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE

By

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A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

1994
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by

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Elizabeth Langland for her continuous support, encouragement, and responsiveness. For over six years, she has been a true source of inspiration. I also thank Daniel Cottom, my committee members both past and present, and the Victorian dissertation reading group for their constructive criticism and intellectual stimulation. I wish to thank my endearing colleagues, Angela Kelsey and Jane Love, for their loving guidance throughout the stages of this project. In the Fall of 1990, I attended two remarkable seminars that helped me focus the issues developed here. I have been deeply influenced by this particular Victorian novel course taught by Elizabeth Langland and the Feminism and Popular Culture course taught by Caryl Flinn. I am grateful for the administrative assistance I have received from Kathy Williams. Kathryn Reed aided me continually both by her friendship and the use of her printing facilities. For this I thank her. For their emotional support and friendship, I would like to thank Edgar Rawlings and Charles Heaphy. And I am continually grateful to my parents for their help and guidance always, and I am especially grateful that they accompanied me to visit the Brontë parsonage in 1991.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................ iii  
ABSTRACT .................................................. v  

CHAPTERS  

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................... 1  
II. JANE EYRE ............................................ 31  
   Part One ............................................. 42  
   Part Two ........................................... 53  
   Part Three ........................................ 64  
   Part Four ......................................... 76  
III. SHIRLEY ................................................ 82  
   Volume One ......................................... 86  
   Volume Two ....................................... 94  
   Volume Three ................................... 115  
   Conclusion ....................................... 127  
IV. VILLETTE ............................................. 130  
   Miss Marchmont .................................. 141  
   The Long Vacation ............................... 149  
   Polly ............................................... 158  
   Repression ....................................... 161  
V. THE PROFESSOR ....................................... 184  
   The Conclusion .................................. 199  

WORKS CITED ............................................. 202  
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ................................. 209
Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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December 1994

Chair: Elizabeth Langland
Major Department: English

This dissertation analyzes the relationship of female homosocial desire and narrative structure in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Working from the premise that women's intimate relationships with each other were represented differently within personal correspondence compared to the representational system of the novel, I analyze how a woman novelist negotiates between representations of women in community with each other and the prescribed codes of narrative that circumscribe that representation. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg in Female World of Love and Ritual discovers that ardent, affectionate and passionate letters between women were common in the mid-nineteenth century. Reading mid-nineteenth century
novels, one notices a profound lack of representations of such homosocial relationships. I describe women's relationships with each other in terms of female homosociality. The term momentarily side steps the question of whether these relationships between women were sexual or not. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has demonstrated with *Between Men*, twentieth-century definitions of sexuality are anachronistic to nineteenth-century social/sexual behavior of both men and women. The term lesbian or heterosexual woman cannot sufficiently describe or delineate boundaries between what is more accurately thought of as a spectrum of female homosocial experience.

In analyzing the novels of Charlotte Brontë one can find a variety of responses to the circumscription of female homosocial representation. In each of the following chapters I foreground how, while working within the boundaries of what was ideologically sanctioned for the novel, Brontë's narratives were able to redress the apparent lack of female homosocial relations that the novel ostensibly dictated. The novels each employ different narrative strategies to address this lack. My goal in this dissertation is to bring to light ways in which women novelists, particularly Brontë, made use of a representational system in spite of its innate hostility towards their most personal concerns. Brontë spent her life in the company of women including her sisters, Ellen Nussey, Mary Taylor, Elizabeth Gaskell, etc. She had little contact with men except for her publishers and her father's curates. Yet, her novels, especially *Jane Eyre*, are known as
quintessential romance fiction representing intensely passionate heterosexual relationships. Drawing attention to particular narrative strategies, I show how the novel performs a managing function for both female anxieties and fantasies that arise out of a particular historical moment. Novels that appear to view women only in the context of relationships with men, actually function in a more complex relationship to middle-class ideology of femininity. The implications for this study extend to today's middle-class female reading public. Although this study remains focused on narrative strategies and not historical readers, it implicitly outlines a rationale as to what compels women to read the type of novel that ostensibly reifies a heterosexual paradigm of love and marriage, and excludes vital homosocial relations. I argue those relations have not been as excluded as they initially appear to be.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Thus towards the end of the eighteenth century a change came about which, if I were rewriting history, I would describe more fully and think of greater importance than the Crusades or the War of the Roses. The middle-class woman began to write. (Virginia Woolf 70)

The middle-class woman began to write. The reasons for and the repercussions of the introduction of women into British literature are yet to be fully appreciated. We have yet, as Virginia Woolf states, to describe the shift more fully or think of it as of greater importance than the Crusades or the War of the Roses. This dissertation addresses the relationship of Charlotte Brontë's narratives to formation and consolidation of the middle-class woman in nineteenth-century England. How did Brontë's novels reflect concerns, anxieties, and fantasies of middle-class women of this time period? How did their relationships among each other get defined and represented in these narratives? In order to facilitate and focus this project, I will combine a variety of critical methodologies, including historical, feminist, narratological, and psychoanalytic, from which will emerge a new paradigm that allows us to discuss in compelling ways the sociological and historical implications of certain representational strategies. This new paradigm breaks down the
oppositional textual framework of emancipatory versus oppressive that has anchored ideological debates of Victorian studies.

In the seventies, American feminists Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar reinvestigated emancipatory strategies in Victorian novels written by women. They returned to the few works by women within the existing canon and revitalized their relevance for the women's movement of the seventies and eighties in America. Their seminal study, The Madwoman in the Attic, examines the relationship of women writers to the tradition of writing as defined by men in patriarchal culture. They find subversive themes running through women's texts: themes waiting to be reinterpreted by the feminist critic. Their study defines representations of women's resistance to oppressive roles of middle-class society. Patricia Yeager's Honey-Mad Women, in a similar vein, interprets texts by women authors in terms of the emancipatory strategies by which they negotiate an ideology that has been oppressive to them. Yeager finds women adopting strategies of play to enable them "to transform and restructure a literary tradition that forbade them the right to speak" (18).

Gilbert, Gubar and Yeager and others have defined a counter-tradition of women's protest and resistance. Their work has been highly influential and ground breaking for much of feminist scholarship. However, they fall short of realizing how women, as authors and in representation, are implicated in the historical system

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1 Madwoman in the Attic was published in 1979. The reason I use it as a point of departure is because it was and still is so influential and important in many respects.
they seem to be resisting. They fail, for instance, to demonstrate how the white, middle-class woman author was implicated in creating a representational system that naturalized middle-class values and normalized unequal class relations. They also fail to see that, in Foucault's terms, there is no outside of power. "Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power" (Foucault 95-96). Grounding their arguments in a space outside and separate from patriarchy, these feminists were able to idealize the space of resistance and the space of feminist liberation. Arguing that a rebellious, liberating text exists within the constraints of even the most canonical of Victorian novels, these feminists oversimplified the relation of representational strategies to historical subjects.

In a different phase of Victorian studies, (popularized in the eighties by Stephen Greenblatt) New Historicism rejected the idea of emancipatory literature. New Historical methods of interpreting texts reexamined the relationship among text, ideology, power, and history, in a new light. D. A. Miller's *The Novel and the Police* and Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* are two examples of the type of New Historicism I would like to focus on. (Certainly, other critics might distance themselves from these critics and still call themselves New Historicists, just as not all feminist subscribe to Gilbert, Gubar, and Yeager.) In contrast to Gilbert and Gubar, these two critics adopt Foucault's notion that power is relational, and they proceed to determine that oppositional resistance to or transgression of middle-class ideology is actually part and parcel of a normalizing, disciplinary machine.
Miller views Victorian novels as disciplinary devices of an all-pervasive middle-class hegemony.² The particular hegemony he describes came into being as a result of representational technologies employed by the novel, e.g. characterization and the first-person narrator. Miller focuses on how the practice of reading stabilizes a hegemonic value system for its own ends. All is recuperated to reify the monologic narrative of the bourgeois subject.

For Miller, the nineteenth-century novel inevitably subjects the reader to the affirmation of specific political values, and these values are implicitly based on a patriarchal system. In his analysis, Miller overlooks the dimension of gender altogether. In The Novel and the Police, he never approaches the discussion of how gender might differentiate the relationship of a particular reader to a particular political value system. It is his greatest blind spot. And it is also the gap and fissure that I will exploit within a new paradigm.

Whereas Miller's study concentrates on how transgression is used as a mechanism for stabilizing the status quo, Nancy Armstrong's Desire and Domestic Fiction demonstrates how the desiring subject is used as a mechanism in fiction to consolidate middle-class identity by transforming political issues into psychological ones requiring regulation and surveillance. Any aberrant desires are turned into psychological pathologies. Within

² "The spiritual exercise of reading the novel catches us in confirming that which we might wish to bring into question, even before we quite know what this involves. Accordingly, whatever dissent we do manage is likely to remain within the bounds of moderation, since we have already put into practice some of the basic tenets of what gets preached" (130).
the framework of domestic fiction, change comes about not by modifying a political reality, but by self-regulation and domestication (Armstrong 164). Armstrong locates the middle-class woman writer as agent of middle-class ideology. "In representing the household as a world with its own form of social relations, a distinctly feminine discourse, this body of literature revised the semiotic of culture at its most basic level and enabled a coherent idea of the middle class to take shape" (63). Women did not write despite a patriarchal system hostile to them as Gilbert and Gubar have stated. Rather, Armstrong contends that modern culture empowered middle-class women with the authority to establish norms of subjectivity (254). (At the same time it denied them political authority (131).) Armstrong invests a great deal of authority in the figure of the middle-class, woman writer, but very little authority in the middle-class woman reader. Armstrong is rigorously tied to a narrative of the middle-class subject and is unable to entertain the notion that the evolution of her subject may be complicated by a middle-class readership also empowered with a type of authority. Armstrong overlooks the fact that "powerful" women writers were participating in a male-dominated publishing institution and working within norms set by male writers previously. Anyone familiar with Charlotte Brontë's biography can understand the influence that this industry had on women writers. Publishers were the source of much anxiety, and their relationships cannot be unproblematically neglected. By focusing solely on the identification of class for subjects, Armstrong effaces any form of politics that differentiates middle-class women from middle-class men (see Newton 87-121). What one needs in
order to appreciate the complicated relationship of middle-class women and narrative is a method of analysis that takes into account gender difference while not forsaking class and historical dimensions.

Some contemporary feminists critics have employed psychoanalytical insights to address the gender issue in the Victorian novel.\(^3\) However, psychoanalysis alone does not satisfactorily explain the relationship of women and novels in the nineteenth century because many of its premises imply an ahistorical essentialist view of gender. Texts exist in dialogue with their historical and social coordinates.\(^4\) They also exist in relation to certain psychoanalytic structures of subjectivity. Far from being mutually exclusive fields of study, cultural materialism and psychoanalysis can be used together to interpret texts. As Nancy Chodorow has shown us in *The Reproduction of Mothering*, sociological, historical patterns of mothering in the Western world have led to certain types of subjectivity. These gendered subjectivities are not biologically essential but are, to a certain extent, products of a historically specific habits of mothering. By introducing a historical context, we can more fully appreciate the

\(^3\) See Mary Jacobus' *Reading Woman* as well as Diane Sadoff's *Monsters of Affection* and others.

\(^4\) For more on how coordinates relate to the spatialization of narrative see Julia Kristeva's work in *Desire in Language* (35-37). She adopts Mikhail Bakhtin's insights to formulate the concept of intertextuality, that is, the text as a verbal surface grid that produces a dialogue between the bound axis of the characters and the unbound axis of the writer's and the reader's context. Also see Susan Stanford Friedman's elaboration of Kristeva's work in "Spatialization: a Strategy for Reading Narrative" in *Narrative*, January 1993.
evolution of a genre of texts and understand how it articulates psychic desires generated by a historically situated individual or society.

I will briefly survey the socio-historical position of the mid-nineteenth-century woman and subsequently postulate what fantasies and predispositions arose from this material context. Specifically, we can highlight how when girl children were brought up by same-sex mothers in this social context, they were encourage by the ideology of femininity to orient themselves in relation to others, especially to members of their own sex. Separate sphere ideology kept the two sexes separate through social and architectural barriers, yet heterosexual marriage was seen as a naturalized and valorized goal. Female homosocial relations and fantasies of female homosocial relations (which I will eventually identify specifically) subsequently arise out of a social context that initially insists on the division of sexes and then, suddenly, through the institution of marriage valorizes heterosexuality alone. Female homosocial fantasies can be attributed to symptoms of lingering attachments to mother figures in spite of the valorization of heterosexuality. Ultimately, I will draw a connection to how Victorian homosociality relates to the rise and popularization of women's novel writing. What is the coincidence between women's novel writing and the population growth of middle-class women? What shifts in society could account for the advent of this female genre (more important than the War of the Roses)? And how does this genre represent women in relation to each other?
In the nineteenth century, the male population in England dwindled due to colonialization and various military engagements. Large numbers of women were present due to various shifts and booms in population. "The scope of the problem had been widely publicized by the 1851 Census, which calculated that forty-two percent of the women between the ages of twenty and forty were unmarried" (Poovey 4). At the same time, advancements of women into the public sector were hotly debated.5 In spite of a number of different feminist positions that advocated outside employment for women, a large segment of the middle class became absorbed with the cult of domesticity. A woman's place was in the home. The end of the eighteenth century had ushered in "The Angel of the House" ideal; that ideal was eventually given its most explicit expression in Coventry Patmore's poem of the same name. Coincidental to the population increase of single women was the increased rhetoric to enforce their containment within the household and their segregation from the workplace. The existence of the single woman contradicted the "Natural" status of women as wives and mothers. A number of remedies were proposed including exporting women to the colonies (see W. R. Gregg's "Redundant Women" 136). The sheer volume of the debate points to a tremendous cultural anxiety over the "abnormality" that a single woman represented. Because the ideology grounded itself in a feminine essential nature that was natural and unmitigatable, the single woman increasingly

5 See Mary Poovey's Uneven Developments for specific details of how these debates advanced throughout the century.
problematized the woman-nurturer argument because she was not participating in an explicitly nurturing role.

The model of woman-as-nurturer dominated the representational system of the middle-class home. A family's status as middle class hinged upon whether the family could afford a servant to leave the wife free to be the moral sustainer. In *Family Fortunes*, Davidoff and Hall trace the migrations of up and coming families in Birmingham, England from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. Physically and psychologically, the middle class shielded itself from the laboring and disenfranchised poor. The middle-class home became the haven from the obvious political and economical inequalities. The home became fortress through architectural barriers as well as barriers of codes and etiquette. The woman who did not have to work outside the home became the signifier par excellence.

Although this ideology of the private sphere was hotly contested and made use of by opposing forces, it nonetheless became a major force in shaping the society that the middle-class woman existed in. Davidoff and Hall's research points out the continued and increasing isolation of the middle-class woman as her family moves out of communal villages and into the suburbs. Earlier in the eighteenth century a woman married to a tradesman would often help run the business or store. Their home often would be upstairs. And places of business were often located in town centers or in the marketing hub of the community. Increasing prosperity allowed many middle-class families to move away from town centers. This shift removed women from the site of representable and meaningful
public production and placed them in the new site of implicit yet meaningful social signification. This site of social signification was articulated through rigid codes of conduct and the suburban woman's exposure to the world outside her home was highly regulated and scrutinized. Barbara Leslie Epstein in The Politics of Domesticity observes this shift in American religious culture also.

In the early nineteenth century as world of commerce and politics was being created, a world that was detached from the home in a way that no aspect of Puritan society had been and one from which women were excluded. . . . These new values fit the aspirations of men of the professional, entrepreneurial, and trading classes, but their women were being confined to domesticity and thus excluded from the concerns most valued in their own milieus. (67)

Idle women in the suburban home became a major signifier for a firm establishment in the middle-class ranks. That is not to say that women were completely idle; but the representational rhetoric that proclaimed women as removed from the public sphere effaced all political, economic and domestic work that did take place in the home.6

In spite of the existence of rhetoric that seems to isolate women within the home, social historians have found evidence of close-knit women friendships between married and unmarried women alike. Within studies such as Family Fortunes and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's "The Female World of Love and Ritual," there are many examples of intense and important relationships between women. Just as Langland's study has shown that the rhetoric of the

"idle" wife effaces an active household manager, so to the rhetoric of the "isolated" woman, contained within the regulated home, effaces a woman engaged in forming small, close-knit communities. In The Brontës: Their Lives, Friendships, and Correspondence, for instance, Charlotte Brontë's relationship with Ellen Nussey is frequently charged with passionate epithets—"darling," "love," etc.

Many nineteenth century women lived their lives within a sympathetic network of female friends and relations. . . . Deep emotional ties and shared values and ideals were some compensation for a relatively confined and routinized existence with educational and economic restrictions as well as restrictions of the expression of sexuality and even individual personality. (Hunt 111)

Hunt relies on Brontë's private letters for her argument at this point, just as Davidoff, Hall and Smith-Rosenberg do. I am extremely interested in the revelations these sources provide. Finding this type of homosocial attachment represented outside of private correspondence is not easy. Social historical research of private correspondence points to a contradiction with the sanctioned, public, representational strategies for female communities in novels and the public debates. The findings of the above research do not demonstrate the "true" experience of women⁷, but rather, that there were two different representational strategies: one that encouraged the expression of intense and romantic ties between women, and one that required the effacement of such ties and worked toward the

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⁷ Unfortunately, in the work Family Fortunes, Davidoff and Hall seem to be unaware that private correspondences were mediated and created by certain representational strategies. At times, they use letters as a kind of evidence of a lived reality.
valorization of the heterosexual paradigm of love and marriage. I would like to investigate what was it that made the two representational strategies incompatible within the novel.

Victorian novels are most noted for their representations of women and men engaged in heterosexual romance. Janet Todd, in *Women's Friendship in Literature*, searches for the representation of women's homosocial relations in literature, but she relies heavily on French novels and on some novels written by men. Looking at the Victorian canon, especially works by Brontë, Eliot and Gaskell, explicit primary homosocial relationships are an oddity. Gaskell's *Cranford* is one interesting exception; the complexities of the women represented there and their relationship to narrative require an investigation beyond the scope of this introduction. Brontë's *Shirley* is another exception. I will discuss later how this novel negotiates its representation of homosociality and pays the consequences. In *Jane Eyre*, *Villette*, and *The Professor*, representations of women's friendships exist but are never allowed to be sustained. In looking closely at Charlotte Brontë's life and work, a contradiction appears between Brontë's life-long engagement with women—including her sisters, Ellen Nussey, and others, and her ostensible silence on the subject in her novels. Without public representational strategies, how did Brontë negotiate this enormous disparity between her lived experience and the conventions of narrative in the nineteenth century? Brontë draws intensely romantic relationships with men when she herself had little exposure to men outside her family and
actually married a man for whom, it seems, she at best, only cared.\(^8\) In her novel's, women's friendships are dismissed, rejected, or made secondary to heterosexual relations. Her fantasy—that of earning her own bread and living with Ellen Nussey—becomes the fantasy that cannot be represented explicitly in the context of the novel. On the one hand, one might say that Brontë's lived experience had nothing to do with her ability to be a writer of narrative. Biographical experience is not a prerequisite for creating fictions. I agree but will argue that there is a relationship between the two that is not causal but symptomatic. Brontë's saturation in female community seeps into her texts and surfaces in symptoms of alternative forms of desire and relations. I will argue that Brontë does make issues of homosociality articulatable by employing various narrative strategies. These strategies are not obvious but can be recovered by a particular critical approach I now wish to outline.

Using insights from feminism, New Historicism, psychoanalysis and social history, I propose a new paradigm of study. This paradigm will break down the oppositions constructed by materialist and psychoanalytical feminists and begin to account for how the novel relates to the experience of middle-class women in the nineteenth century, which included intense homosocial ties. As Terry Eagleton

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\(^8\) This is not to suggest that biographical experience be a necessary dictate for narrative content; but in the case of Brontë, whose life was so determined by her circumstances and isolation with her sisters, the gap between her lived experience with women and her heterosexual romances, make her a particularly interesting case study for the negotiation of homosocial desire.
has pointed out, we must learn to see how Brontë's novels are "rooted in but not reduced to specific social conditions" (3).

Turning back to our overview of previous approaches to Victorian studies, I have shown that these methods individually cannot be made use of for this particular endeavor. What I wish to bring into the foreground now is how Brontë simultaneously wrote within narrative conventions while bringing into representation her most vital interests through inobvious ways. My dissertation can be compared in some ways to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's project in *Between Men*. In that work she analyzes how the articulation of homosocial desire between men shifted and changed through time and how these shifts can only be understood in relation to issues of class and to men's relation to women and the gender system as a whole (1). My project is to decipher symptoms of female homosocial relations in the novels of Brontë and to note how those representations relate to and effect narrative structures of what are normally thought of as stories of heterosexual romantic progress. By way of a retheorization of narrative and what constitutes narrative, I will accomplish this project.

Michel De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* provides a useful guide to the kind of analysis that transcends the categorical structures of the above-mentioned methods. De Certeau gives us a rubric within which we can examine a text without reducing it to predetermined binaries of emancipatory or disciplinary. He shows how readings of narratives are made use of in countless ways. While not particularly focusing on novels, De Certeau does devote a chapter to reading as a particularly creative activity. He foregrounds what he
sees as a basic misunderstanding of the reading process—that it is a passive form of consumption where the reading audience is "imprinted by and like the text which is imposed upon it" (167). From De Certeau, we learn that the relationship to reading is more complicated than one might first surmise. Texts become neither emancipatory nor disciplinary. For my particular interests, De Certeau's insights will be applied to a gendered analysis of texts. Gender is an aspect of consumption that De Certeau fails to consider entirely. Narrative structures will be analyzed for their potential modes of consumption.

How can we determine a relationship between ideology, representation and historical participants? The Practice of Everyday Life demonstrates that demographics and testimonials bear little or no relationship to how cultural material is assimilated by cultural participants, i.e. consumers. Instead, De Certeau traces a secondary production out from under explicit codes of representation. In the introduction, he uses the example of the Native Americans' relation to the Spaniards as a model.

Submissive, and even consenting to their subjection, the Indians nevertheless often made of the rituals, representations, and laws imposed on them something quite different from what their conquerors had in mind; they subverted them not by rejecting or altering them, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept. . . . They escaped without leaving it. The strength of their difference lay in procedures of 'consumption.' . . . There is a secondary production hidden in the process of utilization. (xiii)
With this in mind, this study will forsake an investigation of primary accounts of reader-responses and personal memoir. Those accounts only serve to point a direction for investigation and actually add another layer of representational strategies to sift through. Instead, we can use De Certeau as a model to expand our conception of the potentials of narrative function. He invigorates narrative with the potential elasticity of irrecuperable productivity. By foregrounding how alternatives can exist within narrative structures, instead of insisting upon those structures in and of themselves, we transcend the binary of emancipatory and disciplinary. The texts are neither one nor the other, but capable of signifying both simultaneously. This double function and potential become vital for Brontë and contribute to the popular success with women readers. As a member of an oppressed group, Brontë can be shown to have "escaped without leaving" a representational system she had no choice but to accept. I will demonstrate how her novels make use of narrative constraints to bring into representation her preoccupation with homosocial desires. Symptoms of her strong attachments surface throughout her narratives. Deciphering these symptoms and connecting them to the historical position of women demonstrate how women escape patriarchy without leaving it. This method also can begin to account, in a way that other theories cannot, for why narratives similar in structure and plot continue to be told over and over again (in the form of romances), and why the audience for these narratives is predominately composed of middle-class women.
Before I proceed with my reading of Brontë's secondary production, I would like to demonstrate how this methodology, which correlates material conditions, ideology, narrative and psychoanalytical dispositions, has already been used successfully in film studies. Then, I will introduce a metaphor for the methodology of secondary production possible in Brontë texts by a short analysis of an eighteenth-century document.

Film studies has postulated that the film-noire genre became popular after World War II because it reflected anxieties and concerns of a male audience returning home from overseas. That is, one can read the story of the hero and the femme fatale not as the explicit content dictates but as an allegory of the confrontation of the white male returning to the workplace in order to displace the independent woman who had taken up his position during the war years. It also performs a psychoanalytic dramatization. Roland Barthes identified this narrative as the reenactment of the male Oedipal crisis. In order to preserve his individuation, the hero must overcome the omnipotent female figure, just as in the Oedipal crisis the male child must turn away from the mother, often with resentment and violence. The film audience, assumed to be male, displaced a cultural anxiety about sex role relations onto a particular narrative that could resolve that anxiety through the woman's denigration, submission and or death; the audience makes use of the film narrative to quell uneasiness. In this way, the narrative brings into representation and symbolically manages cultural concerns of a male audience that are historically grounded but could not be made obvious.
Another type of film can be read in terms of how it could be made use of. Stephen King's "Misery" presents another incidence of a misogynistic Oedipal drama. This reactionary movie was tremendously popular. In the movie, the injured male romance writer is taken care of and then mentally and physically tortured by his female "number one fan." She is characterized as an irrational, mother-like, omnivorous being from whom he must escape. She infantalizes him by binding and breaking his feet, (the same fate that befell baby Oedipus, whose name means "swollen foot"). He, in turn, must overcome her with violence in order to regain his place in society. This film, like film-noire, dwells excessively in male point of view, shutting off attempts to make the female figure human. She remains the mother/monster from whom he must escape. And the film audience can make use of both her denigration and his resurrection as an allegory for patriarchal patterns of subject development that require males to define themselves in opposition to the mother.

I use this example in particular because the cultural anxiety highlighted here revolves around the woman's relation to the romance genre. This film's existence points to a building anxiety of male audiences towards the ever-increasing market of contemporary, female, romance readers. Their patterns of consumption and modes of secondary production may not have carved out a space of feminist liberation (which could easily be recuperated by the market), but they have, nonetheless, had a felt effect.9

9 I develop this idea further in another article in which I use De Certeau to complicate our understanding of why and how
My third and final example before I turn to my outline of the chapters, functions on a metaphorical level to illustrate the way I have negotiated three different critical positions and why I have chosen to investigate Brontë's texts through narrative structure as opposed to any other means. I would like to cite at length a document that Susan S. Lanser brings to our attention in "Feminist Poetics of Narrative Voice" in *Fictions of Authority*. In this work, Lanser calls for a joining of feminist and narrative poetics in order to "explore through formal evidence, the intersection of social identity and textual form, reading certain aspects of narrative voice as a critical locus of ideology" (15). Lanser focuses on how gender intervenes in issues of voice and authority. Her project succinctly articulates part of the goal of this dissertation: "Not to reinforce notions of discursive sexual difference but, on the contrary, to suggest the complexity and specificity of women's narrative practices even in the obviously coded texts" (13) The letter "Ingenuity" is the obviously coded text that I wish to employ as a metaphor for how my methodology relates to the two textual frameworks (emancipatory and disciplining) that have anchored debates in Victorian studies.10

10 contemporary romance novels are read by women. Some critics (Douglas, Radway, et al.) represent women as passive receivers of a derogatory stereotype of femininity. My reading of the romance genre redresses the relationship between representation, fantasy and consumption. The paper is entitled, "Another World: Trajectories of Consumption for Romance."

10 I use the term metaphor to foreground the use of document as a vehicle for making obvious three different critical practices. The actual applications of these practices is only gestured to in the following readings.
It is necessary to cite the document in its entirety in order to demonstrate its function as a metaphor.

Female Ingenuity

*Secret Correspondence.*--A young Lady, newly married, being obliged to show her husband, all the letters she wrote, sent the following to an intimate friend.

I cannot be satisfied, my Dearest Friend! blest as I am in the matrimonial state, unless I pour into your friendly bosom, which has ever been in unison with mine, the various deep sensations which swell with the liveliest emotions of pleasure my almost bursting heart. I tell you my dear husband is one of the most amiable of men, I have been married seven weeks, and have never found the least reason to repent the day that joined us, my husband is in person and manners far from resembling ugly, crass, old, disagreeable, and jealous monsters, who think by confining to secure; a wife, it is his maxim to treat as a bosom-friend and confident, and not as a play thing or a menial slave, the woman chosen to be his companion. Neither party he says ought to obey implicitly; but each yield to the other by turns- An ancient maiden aunt, near seventy, a cheerful, venerable, and pleasant old lady, lives in the house with us--she is the delight of both young and old--she is civil to all the neighborhood round, generous and charitable to the poor-I know my husband loves nothing more than he does me; he flatters me more than the glass, and his intoxication (for so I must call the excess of his love,) often makes me blush for the unworthiness of its object, and I wish I could be more deserving
of the man whose name I bear. To say all in one word, my dear, ----, and to crown the whole, my former gallant lover in now my indulgent husband, my fondness is returned, and I might have had a Prince, without the felicity I find with him. Adieu! May you be as blest as I am unable to wish that I could be more happy.

Recall that the bride must show her correspondence to her husband. "A note at the bottom tells us that "the key to the above letter, is to read the first and then every alternate line" (Lanser 10). To facilitate this reading, here is the alternative letter.

I cannot be satisfied, my dearest Friend! unless I pour into your friendly bosom, the various deep sensations which swell my almost bursting heart. I tell you my dear I have been married seven weeks, and repent the day that joined us, my husband is ugly, crass, old, disagreeable, and jealous; a wife, it is his maxim to treat as a play thing or a menial slave, the woman he says ought to obey implicitly;-- An ancient maiden aunt, near seventy, lives in the house with us--she is the devil to all the neighborhood round, I know my husband loves nothing more than the glass, and his intoxication often makes me blush for the unworthiness of the man whose name I bear. To crown the whole, my former gallant lover is returned, and I might have had him. Adieu! may you be as blest as I am unhappy.

There are numerous aspects of this fascinating document that could be analyzed (some of which are its various narratees, its "plot,"
its publication in a public journal, the representation of the maiden aunt, etc). Lanser looks at conventions of "feminine" and "masculine" voices. But, as I have said above, the document(s) and three different readings of it, also serve as a metaphor for three different methodologies. The first reading of the document in its entirety can be read as an example of a "public," disciplined text complete with the panoptic husband who oversees all utterances. The woman, as narrator/author is empowered with the authority to define her relationship, but her subjection to exterior disciplining mechanisms is made obvious by her self-effacing, tentative, and "feminine" discourse. The second reading, that of the "private" subtext, functions as a liberated or emancipated text and conforms to the methods of textual interpretation that Gilbert and Gubar endorse-- the bringing to the surface of the angry voice of the oppressed woman. The "real" message is hidden behind the conventional utterances and needs only the proper key to be unlocked. "The surface designs conceal or obscure deeper, less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning" (Gilbert and Gubar 73, cited in Lanser 13).

The third level of meaning of the document, complicates the issues raised in the first two readings. Lanser looks at precisely what enables the narrative to function on the two disparate levels at the same time.

The articulation between surface and subtext, the syntactic hinge that binds and transforms the whole, is a set of negative constructions that the decoding process pares away. This negativity turns out to be more than the link between texts; it makes the surface text not simply a proclamation of one woman's marital happiness but an indirect indictment of marriage itself. (12)
By examining the narrative structure, Lanser was able to demonstrate how the third reading is neither disciplined, nor emancipatory but a much more complicated way addressing both the narrator's personal experience and her relationship to the institution of marriage. Through feminist narrative analysis, she is able to integrate relations of power, representation, gender, and history.

Underscoring crucial differences of function and form between "private" and "public" discourse, the letter represents its own formal practices as neither arbitrary nor simply representational, but as responses to situational imperatives produced by the relations of power that acts of telling entail. (13)

Lanser goes on to take up the issue of how narrative authority is constituted and implemented along gender lines. Her call for an expansive theory of narratology here and in an earlier article "Toward a Feminist Narratology" instigates the continued investigation of narrative's relation to gender beyond issues of authority and voice. My concerns focus on how narrative structures (both the story and the way the story is told), which I find also to be gendered and not neutral, operate in relation to representational strategies to introduce or repress homosocial relations. The third abbreviated interpretation of the letter begins to do what this dissertation sets out to do: connect issues of gender, specifically female homosocial relations, to relations of history and representation. The third method of interpretation, only gestured to here as a metaphor, scratches the surface of "the complexity and specificity of women's narrative practices" (Lanser 13).
In this introduction, I have contextualized my work within current Victorian studies. I have laid out the need for a shift in the discussion of the Victorian novel's function away from the emancipatory versus the disciplinary debate. Through De Certeau and Lanser, I also have outlined a new paradigm which allows us to discuss in compelling ways the sociological and historical implications of certain representational strategies.

As I have pointed out above, the constraints of the Victorian novel circumscribe the articulation of homosocial relationships between women. In analyzing the novels of Brontë, I find a variety of responses to that circumscription. In each of the following chapters I foreground how, while working within the boundaries of what was ideologically sanctioned for the novel, Brontë's novels were able to redress the apparent lack of homosocial relations that the novel ostensibly dictated. The novels each employ different narrative strategies to address this lack, with the notable exception of The Professor. My goal in this dissertation is to bring to light ways in which women novelists, particularly Brontë, made use of a representational system in spite of its innate hostility towards their most personal concerns. As I have stated above, Brontë spent much of her life in the company of women including her sisters, Ellen Nussey, Mary Taylor, Elizabeth Gaskell etc. Yet, her novels, especially Jane Eyre, are known as quintessential romance fiction representing intensely passionate heterosexual relationships. Drawing attention to particular narrative strategies, I show how the novel performs a managing function for both female anxieties and fantasies that arise out of a particular historical moment. Novels that appear to view
women only in the context of relationships with men, actually function in a more complex relationship to middle-class ideology, femininity and the narratable. The implications for this study extend to today's middle-class female reading public. Although this study remains focused on narrative strategies and not historical readers, it implicitly outlines a rationale as to what compels women to read the type of novel that ostensibly reifies a heterosexual paradigm of love and marriage, and excludes vital homosocial relations. I argue those relations have not been as excluded as they initially appear to be; and, therefore, the activity of novel reading does not function only in the ways that previous Victorian studies have suggested.

In Chapter two on Jane Eyre, a feminine value system of relating gets translated via allegory into a heterosexual fantasy. Female homosocial relations are imported into the heterosexual relation of romance fantasy. In this particular case, the narrative allegorizes a type of mother-daughter relation. In Jane Eyre this fantasy articulates itself as a mother-quest of the orphan Jane. Even though female, surrogate mothers are rejected, their value system is transposed into the heterosexual relation that closes the novel. Rochester is transformed from the brutal hero into a nurturing figure for Jane. The novel's narrative structure insists that male brutality and a male value system that privileges violence and falsehood must be done away with. The hero must abandon his value system and adopt the heroine's, which valorizes nurturance, equality, and truth. Jane herself is reduced from an independent woman to an infantile state in a necessary infantilization process that prepares her for her final union with Rochester. The narrative articulates the
developmental ambivalences experienced by women in an ideology that encourages them to define themselves both in relation to others and also insists on their independence and autonomy.

In Chapter three, I show how Shirley dramatizes a different homosocial fantasy: that of two women friends. Unlike Jane Eyre's quest for the mother-figure, the female characters in Shirley demonstrate a different pattern of circulating homosocial desire, a pattern not anchored in a quest for a mother-figure (as in Jane Eyre), but one that generates from what Linda Hunt has called the ideology of "The Female Subculture" and that Carroll Smith-Rosenberg calls "The Female World of Love and Ritual." Both Brontë novels represent fantasies that derive not from culturally repressed "true" desires in women. Rather, both fantasies of mother-daughter relations and of women's romantic friendships arise within the ideology of femininity itself in the nineteenth century. The material conditions of mother-daughter child rearing and the encouragement of female socialization patterns gave rise to these fantasies; but conventions of narrative made problematic their articulation in the progression of a heterosexual romance.

In the chapter on Shirley, Brontë brings into representation an explicit female homosocial relation at the expense of narrative

11 Michelle Foucault's "Repressive Hypothesis" in History of Sexuality has taught us that the concept of sexuality was a discursive formation that invented the need for a repressed reserve of desire that could then be regulated. See also Mixed Feelings, by Ann Cvetkovich for a summary of this theory applied to nineteenth-century women's popular culture (Chapter two) Rutgers UP 1992.
structure. She makes use of the commonplace Victorian association of women with Nature to discriminate an alternative female existence outside the domestic sphere, (which was also aligned with femininity). Brontë builds on and makes use of the classic association of woman and Nature not to validate such an essentialized notion of woman, but to facilitate the construction of a female friendship that exists independent of domestic scene. The domestic sphere in this novel comes to be aligned with sickness, death and heterosexuality. I foreground how the terms Nature and domesticity are employed for specific representational purposes and not simply to reinforce stereotypes of femininity. Brontë is able to exploit an unevenly developed ideology of femininity that attempted to define women both in terms of Nature and in terms of the domestic sphere.\textsuperscript{12} The representation of Caroline Helstone and Shirley Keeldar's romantic friendship also resembles friendships constructed in private letters of the time period, but when brought into representation in the context of historical romance, the homosocial relation ruptures the structure of that text through a bifurcated focus, structural division and an unconvincing closure. The novel was criticized for these ruptures demonstrating a tension between narrative structure and explicit homosocial attachments. I find this tension to be a productive one.

\textsuperscript{12} Mary Poovey has brought our attention to the concept of unevenly developed ideologies of femininity in her book, Uneven Developments: the Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England.
Turning to *Villette* for Chapter four, I continue the discussion of homosociality's relationship to narrative structure. In this chapter, I show the incompatibility of homosociality and the narrative of the female narrator. *Shirley* introduced intimate, homosocial ties of Shirley and Caroline by aligning them with Nature and discriminating those ties from the domestic scene of heterosexuality. It was subsequently faulted as a failed novel in terms of structure. *Villette* can be read as a response to the critiques of *Shirley*. This novel does not articulate an alternative space for homosociality. Rather, it realigns homosociality with the domestic and the incarceral. The narrative sets up an opposition between Lucy Snowe's relation to domesticity (the sphere of women) and her desire to make her way in the world as an independent woman who tells her own tale. Relations between women are consistently represented in opposition to the telling of her story. Domesticity and stability are consistently aligned with death and the end of the narrative. Repression of homosocial connection maintains an instability in Lucy's character that acts generatively in terms of narrative. *Villette* dramatizes the consequences of both Lucy Snowe's rejection of the domestic sphere identity and her inability to forge any other homosocial connection to women. Brontë (re)presents homosociality's absence. I demonstrate that the omission of homosocial interaction in this novel is not incidental but is integrally related to Lucy's identity as both a single woman and the teller of the tale. Lucy's lack of homosocial interaction becomes a profoundly present absence throughout the novel.
For Chapter five, I will address Brontë's *The Professor* and how it does not focus on key issues of female homosociality. Its male first-person narrator and awkward, idealized portrayal of womanhood, make it particularly resistant to the types of readings I discuss above. I speculate that the lack of female homosocial engagement may contribute to the novel's lack of both critical and popular success. What the narrative is explicitly faulted for is its all-too-seamless progression of its protagonist, William Crimsworth, as he moves from poverty to prosperity without encountering any significant disruptions or incidences of self-realization.\(^\text{13}\) In this case, the representation of a male homosocial relation has facilitated the transmission of the tale. Although female homosocial relations have been shown to have a disruptive effect on narrative structure, male homosocial relations, here represented by Crimsworth and his friend Yorke Hunsden, contributes to the opposite effect. Their relation works in the service of narrative and is used to maintain and transmit patriarchal power. One would assume that this seamlessness would contribute to a positive reception of the novel. However, such is not the case. Possibly, because the narrative is unable to address issues of female homosociality it remains an unengaging novel.

In this my last chapter, the coincidence of the novel's poor reception and its lack of female homosociality lead me to speculate that the representation of female homosociality in some form was integral to Brontë's successful narratives. I then speculate that the

\(^{13}\) For example, Helen Moglen (83).
representation of female homosociality is crucial to the romance novels that descend from *Jane Eyre* as well. I will briefly point to the implications of this study for contemporary romance novels today.
CHAPTER TWO

JANE EYRE

A woman is her mother
That’s the main thing.
--Anne Sexton

The cathexis between mother and daughter--essential distorted, misused --is the great unwritten story. . . .This relationship has been minimized and trivialized in the annals of patriarchy. (Adrienne Rich OWB 225-226)

There is a rectitude, a refinement, a constancy, a modesty, a sense of gentleness about the [letters of her mother] indescribable. I wish she had lived, and that I had known her. (Brontë to Ellen Nussey 2/16/1850)

_Jane Eyre_, the autobiography of its title character, articulates a romantic quest for a stable social position and identity. Jane Eyre attains that position by the end of the novel. She moves from an isolated heroine without social standing to the ideologically-sanctioned position of wife and mother of a middle-class household. The narrative works within the conventions of both realism and romance to negotiate her stages of development from a young girl to a grown woman. One can also read within _Jane Eyre_ an alternative narrative that tells a different story of subject development. This

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14 Every reference to a Brontë text page number in this chapter will be for Brontë's _Jane Eyre_. In each subsequent chapter the citation will be for the chapter title text.
alternative narrative is not subversively set in opposition to the quest narrative described above; rather, it makes use of conventions of the quest narrative to transform a heterosexual romance plot into a female homosocial fantasy that manages desires for mother-daughter relations. This dissertation addresses the narrative structure of the representation of female homosocial relations in general. This chapter will address mother-daughter relations as a particular manifestation of homosocial relations.

The mother-daughter fantasy I shall describe exists in a complicated and contradictory relationship to Victorian social history, Victorian codes of narrative, and to psychoanalytical models of subject development. Material conditions of Victorian, middle-class culture fostered homosocial relations between women. Yet conventions of narrative seem to prohibit the articulation of these relations. As stated in Chapter one, separate sphere ideology encouraged or required women to associate with one another. Women were idolized for being "naturally" nurturant, maternal caregivers. And a mother and daughter relationship stood as an ideally sacred model of this ideology. But Victorian conventions of narrative seem to have prohibited the articulation of these mother-daughter bonds in the representational system of the novel. As Marianne Hirsch has noted in *The Mother-Daughter Plot*, the mother-daughter story is hard to find explicitly represented.15 The lack of this

15 Hirsch's study *The Mother-Daughter Plot* examines the strong ties between mother and daughter. She points out that feminism and psychoanalysis have depended on an objectified, child-centered view of the mother. In every theorization, mother-daughter relations are replayed from the point of view of the child fantasy. This is also the case in my theorization of the function of the allegory. I find her
representation can be attributed to nineteenth-century narrative's innate hostility to the maternal figure, which in turn can be seen to relate to a particularly patriarchal paradigm of subject development.

Fictional narratives of individual development parallel the psychoanalytical narrative of individual development in the world. Conventions of narrative both reflect and construct classic notions of an individual's process of masculine identity acquisition. Separation from the mother-figure is a central component of this process. The Oedipus story can be seen as the "classic and paradigmatic story of individual development in Western Civilization" (Hirsch 1).

According to Freud's psychoanalytical narrative, the individual (presumed male) must overcome his primary attachment to the mother-figure and turn outward to identify with the father figure. To develop into a "normal" heterosexual, the boy must pass "through the stage of the 'positive' Oedipus, a homoerotic identification with his father, a position of effeminized subordination to the father, as a condition of finding a model for his own heterosexual role" (Klein quoted in Sedgwick 23). This "story," "motivated by mechanisms of pursuit of the mother as subject to be crucial to a future feminist project; however, I still believe the daughter-centered narrative can be elaborated on. Especially because I believe that Hirsch is wrong about positing a linear development of the mother-daughter narrative. She states that the nineteenth century rejected the mother outright in favor of the brother. Then she moves on to modernist literature which begins to introduce the mother as a figure. Then she privileges the post-modern text with the articulation of the mother as subject in the texts of Morrison. I do not dispute her findings on Morrison but I reject her linear history and instead want to read the fraternalism of the male character with the heroine as a maternalism.
masculine desire," demonstrates the necessity of individuating, or separating completely from the mother-figure (Hirsch 2). The example of "Misery" analyzed in the introductory chapter both exaggerates and is representative of this process of individuating. The scripting of this plot of male development is repeated time and again through narratives that silence or omit maternal relations of the protagonist.

Contemporary feminist psychoanalysts have problematized the psychoanalytic narrative of linear development for female figures. All subjects, male and female, must individuate from the mother-figure, but the studies have determined the process to be different for each gender. Nancy Chodorow's *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* and *The Reproduction of Mothering* demonstrate precisely how the process of subject individuation is different for daughters. Rather than reject their identification with the mother figure, daughters, because they are the same sex as the mother, retain and build on this tie.

> [T]he girl retains and builds upon her pre-Oedipal tie to her mother (an intense tie characterized by primary identification—a sense of oneness; primary love—not differentiated between her own and her mother's interest).  
> (Chodorow *FPT* 69)

For women, individuating is not a linear process of complete disidentification with the mother. Their connection to the mother remains introjected at the same time they move toward separation

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16 In different ways this project has been developed by Jessica Benjamin, Teresa De Lauretis, Julia Kristeva and others.
from the mother figure. These two contradictory impulses articulate, according to Chodorow, a blurred ego boundary that defines itself both in relation to others as well as separate from others. Because the identification with the mother is both physically obvious and culturally encouraged, the self-in-relation dominates a girl's ego structure. Because the boy's sex differs from the mother's, a boy's ego formation more clearly articulates itself as different from the mother. This mark of difference enables a more complete and contained individuation to occur, whereas, for girls of the same sex, separation and connection characterize individuation from the mother. These compulsions remain more indeterminate and in flux.

Feminists revaluation of individuation qualifies what can be valorized as successful subject development. "The celebration of individuality is gender-related project. Indeed, the feminist critique of individualism has taken psychoanalysis itself to task for its tendency to make independence and separateness the goal of development" (Benjamin 81). Freudian psychoanalysis describes complete and separate individuation as an essential end-point of subject formation. It can more productively be seen as a historically-specific response to relatively modern habits of mothering for heterosexual boy children. Women's more complicated process of individuation is likewise a product of historically-specific habits of mothering and not biologically essential. Habits of mothering give rise to the specific model of the female subject that is constructed in terms of a mother-daughter relation. When I employ the term mother-daughter model of subject development to describe Jane Eyre, I am referring to a model of subject development that is
characterized primarily in relation to others, but it also contains compulsions towards separation. Because the identification with the mother is primary, an ambivalence characterizes the compulsion for separation throughout adulthood.

Nineteenth-century narrative conventions of realism have been unable to assimilate the complications and indeterminance of female subject development. "The conventions of realism, resting on the structures of consent and containment, shut out various forms of indeterminacy, instability, and social fragmentation" (Hirsch 14). The heterosexual romance does not allow for the exploration of conflicts generated from the daughter's point of view. More readily apparent is the narrative structure that represents the successful shift away from mother-centered relationships towards the attachment to a member of the opposite sex. For women, the articulation of "their story" within narrative structures necessitates the submergence of a particularly strong bond to the mother-figure.

Stories of female subject development, of which Jane Eyre is an example, insert the girl/woman figure into conventions developed to mirror the process of male individuation. Both fictional narrative structures and psychoanalytical narrative structures have only belatedly theorized the shift that feminine gender incurs. On one hand, Jane's story follows the classic identity acquisition of the Oedipal narrative. She moves through stages of development towards a stable heterosexual position. Her attachment to her mother is excised from the narrative to facilitate the process of her
individuation. She has moved beyond a primary attachment to the maternal figure in favor of an outward turn toward an attachment to the father-figure Rochester. "This shift is utterly crucial Freud inasmuch as the very idea of heterosexuality and his definition of adult femininity in culture depend on its successful completion" (Hirsch 99). Jean Wyatt in Reconstructing Desire and Jerome Beaty in Victorian Literature and Society read Jane Eyre through this frame. However, I contend that lingering bonds to the maternal figure surface throughout the narrative of Jane Eyre.

When the narrative seems to be capitulating to patriarchal proscriptions, symptoms of woman's strong attachment to the mother surface through Jane's relation to other women in this narrative. We can read these symptoms in terms of a homosocial-centered fantasy; and in that regard, we can discover how women make use of a system of representation that circumscribes their experience. In other words, this homosocial fantasy is articulated through narrative conventions that ostensibly prohibit its representation.

17 Hirsch highlights Brontë specifically. "Not surprisingly," writes Hirsch, "mothers tend to be absent, silent or devalued in novels by Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, George Sand, the Brontës. George Eliot, and Kate Chopin" (14).

18 It is interesting to note that in the Hollywood adaptation of Jane Eyre starring Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine, all Jane’s relations to adult women except Bessie and Mrs. Fairfax (a servant and a housekeeper) were omitted from the film. Her Reed cousins and Rivers cousins as well as Miss Temple are all removed from the narrative. The good doctor stands in their place for plot facilitation. This omission is not incidental but demonstrates twentieth-century narrative’s inability to represent women in relation to each other without complicating the heterosexual drive of the narrative.
I argue that pre-Oedipal ties introjected throughout female subject formation, though not explicitly allowed by narrative conventions, punctuate conventional narrative structures. On one hand, women in heterosexual romances are asked to disidentify with other women, including especially mother-figures, in order to form a heterosexual bond. "In conventional nineteenth-century plots of European and American tradition, the fantasy that controls the female family romance is the desire for the heroine's singularity based on a disidentification from the fate of other women, especially mothers" (Hirsch 10). However, my reading Jane Eyre transforms the heterosexual union back into a relation based upon mother-daughter model of subject development. It does this through particular narrative strategies. Jane Eyre brings into representation relationships between women throughout the novel. Although all of these relationships are curtailed, excised, or made secondary to the heterosexual relation, the novel makes use of these relationships to articulate a particular feminine value system that will ultimately be valorized. This value-system can be defined as a series of ideologically-derived behaviors sanctioned within the homosocial subculture of women. This value system is not a vehicle for the natural expression of women's fondness for women, but becomes a vehicle through which women can articulate desires that derive from a mother-daughter model of subject development with its strong maternal ties. Although Jane's relationships to other women will be written out of the narrative, the value system is transposed and preserved in the heterosexual frame. This transposition indirectly narrates an alternative to the Oedipal narrative of subject
development. Whereas feminist psychoanalysts have complicated the Oedipal narrative using terms set up by Freud, I will complicate how *Jane Eyre* represents female subject development within the conventions of the heterosexual plot line. *Jane Eyre* replays homosocial issues of connection and separation in a way that successfully integrates them into a patriarchal frame. *Jane Eyre* defines herself in relation to many female characters in the novel. Conventions of narrative also prescribe that she define her progress of identity acquisition in terms of her separation from others. For Jane, as a female character, this process is charged with ambivalence. I will demonstrate that at times Jane Eyre's compulsions towards separation are coded as a positive tendency towards independence, and autonomy and at times her separation from others is characterized in negative terms of isolation, alienation and deprivation. The valorization of Jane's homosocial value system by the end of the novel defines an alternative narrative for women readers.

This alternative narrative enables a form of secondary production to take place and be utilized by women readers as a fantasy that manages desires arising from their own process of subject formation. The strength of this narrative strategy is that the fantasy does not articulate subversive, repressed desires in opposition to patriarchal proscriptions, rather, it works within the conventions of narrative to enable readers to "escape without leaving" the system of representation that inscribes their experience
(De Certeau xiii). I will employ the term allegory to describe the process by which this secondary production occurs. To speak of the transposition of the feminine value system in terms of an allegory enables one to get outside the masculine paradigm of subject development. Romantic, heterosexual love becomes a vehicle for the representation of lingering bonds to the maternal figure. Allegory enables one to interpret hunger and nurturance, truth and duplicity in terms of the complicated negotiation of the desire for connection; it also enables one to interpret representations of both isolation and independence in terms of the ambivalent desire for separation that takes place within the context of feminine subject development. The heterosexual romance comes to delineate the various fantasies and ambivalences generated through female subject formation in patriarchal culture.

Union in marriage temporarily resolves the desire to define oneself in both as separate and in relation to another. In the allegory, the hero eventually adopts a female homosocial value

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19 As I have mentioned in the introduction, The Practice of Everyday Life, outlines a theory of secondary production of cultural texts. He demonstrates that content, demographics and testimonials bear little or no relationship to how cultural material is assimilated into cultural participants, i.e. consumers. He complicates our notions of consumption by tracing a secondary mode of production out from under the explicit codes of representation. Cultural participants can subvert a dominant ideology not by rejecting or altering its codes, but by using them with respect to ends and references foreign to the system they had no choice but to accept..."They escaped without leaving it. The strength of their difference lay in procedures of "consumption."... There is a secondary production hidden in the process of utilization" (xiii).
system, as I will show. The heroine, as daughter, represents
alternately the infant in need of care and the adult subject in need of
separating. The allegory serves as a representation, not necessarily
of women's subordination to marriage, but as a representation of the
temporary resolution of contradictory impulses that evolve from the
material conditions of female subject development in patriarchal
culture. The reader participates in a process through which anxieties
and fantasies of female development are articulated and resolved
through heterosexual marriage. The "happy" ending in marriage
only temporarily resolves these ever recurring, ambivalent desires.
After the act of reading is completed, the romance as a homosocial
allegory compels its own repetition. The conditions that prompt this
fantasy for women have been paradoxically encouraged, inscribed
and prohibited in public representation. We need not disparage Jane
Eyre as a "drama of dependency" (as Ann Douglas has described
women's novels in The Feminization of American Culture).20
Rather, we can see how the fantasy functions in the larger context of
the circumscription of homosocial desire.21

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20 In this work, Ann Douglas postulates that what is wrong with
American culture is that we do not read enough Melville or
Hawthorne. American nineteenth-century literature suffers from an
inundation of sentimental, frivolous female writers. These scribbling
women and clergymen fostered the type of mass market that today
takes control of the unknowing mass readers. She rejects these texts
using the classic misogynist move that because they are written by
and for women they dupe their readership into social conformity and
vapidity.

21 For a reevaluation of contemporary romance novels see Ann
Snitow's "Soft-Porn Culture."
This chapter will not focus on the transformation of historical women readers but rather will function on the premise stated above: that nineteenth-century socialization patterns and material conditions both created the need for, encouraged, and paradoxically prohibited the articulation of a particular fantasy of mother-daughter relations. At times this mother-daughter value system is represented by explicit mother-figures such as Miss Temple. But I am concerned not only with explicit maternal figures but also with how Rochester becomes transformed, not into an explicit mother figure, but into a participant in a relation based on mother-daughter interactive values. Finally, I will describe how the conclusion of the fantasy brings women back to the position they started from, thus compelling the repetitious return for which romances such as *Jane Eyre* have been noted.

**Part One**

*Jane Eyre* begins with Jane as a ten-year-old girl at Gateshead during a cold bleak winter. Her orphan status dramatizes her separation from any maternal figure. Her Aunt Reed is her guardian and a female figure, but does not provide any maternal nurturing for Jane. Mrs. Reed's status as a woman does not guarantee her status as a maternal nurturer. Brontë complicates the automatic alignment of female with nurturer and shows that they are not biologically determined. Jane's isolation functions not only to mark Jane in terms
of a "different" middle-class notion of self, her isolation also stands to represent the condition of all women who feel ambivalent as a result of having to individuate themselves from, in this case, an absent mother-figure to whom they feel deeply connected. Individuation is an ambivalent process for daughters. Although a necessary stage of development, it can be accompanied by fears of abandonment and desolation. The young Jane at Gateshead dramatizes these fears and anxieties that are keenly felt by daughters. "Jane is (what most of us 'merely' fantasize ourselves to be) an extreme case: she is unloved, unlovely, unpleasant, poor and dependent orphan child" (Adams 181). In the scenes that follow, Jane dramatizes the negative aspects of the individuation process. At other points in the novel individuation is represented in the more positive light of independence and autonomy. But in these opening scenes, young Jane appears to be hopelessly abandoned by all.

Mrs. Reed and John Reed represent the most hostile and anti-maternal of intermediary figures. John Reed brutally cuts Jane off from any connection with others through physical violence to her

22 For decades critics have focused on the representational strategies used to create Jane Eyre's "depth" and difference from other characters. She becomes one of the greatest modern heroines precisely because of her renegotiation of her self-worth in terms of her depth of character and not her exterior position as orphan or governess without connections. Within a New Historicist's paradigm it is commonplace to see Jane Eyre as a representation of the middle-class self precisely because her value is denoted by her individual, interior convictions and not her birth or superficial position. See Nancy Armstrong's Desire and Domestic Fiction pages 42-48. Armstrong goes on to foreground how the inauguration of this type of self occurred though the instrument of writing.
body. Violence is the antithesis of mother-love and nurturing. John Reed throws a book at her. "The cut bled, the pain was sharp" (5). Then Jane states, "he ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. . . . I felt blood from my head trickle down my neck (5). All the forces around Jane seem to conspire against her.

All John Reed's violent tyrannies, all his sisters' proud indifference, all his mother's aversion, all the servant's partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, forever condemned? (Brontë 8)

The unanswered question represents an exaggerated question for all women: Why must one be forever condemned to an alienated, separate existence when the maternal bonds of connection are so strong? Mrs. Reed separates Jane from the other children of the household. She consistently thrusts Jane away from her even when Jane begs for mercy. As an interposing figure, Mrs. Reed consistently separates Jane from connecting with anyone. "'Loose Bessie's hands, child.' . . . Mrs. Reed, impatient of my now frantic anguish and wild sobs, abruptly thrust me back and locked me in, without further parley" (Brontë 11). After the red room episode, she becomes even more distant.

Mrs. Reed surveyed me at times with a severe eye, but seldom addressed me; since my illness she had drawn a more marked line of separation than ever between me and her own children, appointing me a small closet to sleep in by myself, condemning me to take my meals alone, and pass all my time in the nursery, while my
cousins were constantly in the drawing room.
(Brontë 20)

Jane's isolation works allegorically as the negative aspect of individuation which all daughters experience unconsciously.

Jane's individuation process is also negatively represented by way of her internalized alienation. Not only is Jane isolated and separated from others in the opening of the narrative, she frequently describes her interior self as divided. "The fact was I was a trifle beside myself; or rather out of myself, as the French would say" (5). Her consistent reference to herself as a "thing" confirms her alienation from herself. This description is repeated many times throughout this section. With John Reed she is "a desperate thing." Her own image in the red room mirror is described in third person as unhuman-like. "The strange little figure there gazing at me with a white face and arms specking the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving where all else was still, has the effect of a real spirit...half fairy, half imp" (8). She describes herself as "a thing that could not sympathize with one amongst them; a heterogeneous thing...a useless thing,...a noxious thing" (9). In terms of allegory, this alienation represents the most extreme model of a self defined solely in terms of separation, connected to no one not even herself.

After she falls ill in the red room, Jane is cared for by Bessie. Bessie becomes the first of a series of mother-substitutes who will give Jane affection and attention. After beginning the narrative with the dramatization of the negative fears that individuation can elicit, the narrative now, for the first time, depicts Jane in relation to
another. Throughout the novel, Jane will vacillate between her individuated self, frequently represented negatively in terms of isolation, but at times represented positively in terms of independence, and, her self in relation to others, represented positively through women characters from whom Jane receives necessary nurturance and care. Mother-substitutes play an important role in articulating Jane's fantasy of a mother-daughter relation; they establish the nurturing affectionate type of relationship that the narrative will ultimately authorize.23

Bessie is the first person to show Jane any affection. "When thus gentle, Bessie seemed to me the best, prettiest, kindest being in the world. . . . I preferred her to anyone else at Gateshead Hall" (Brontë 22). As Karen Rowe notes, "[p]residing over kitchen and nursery, Bessie fulfills the role of a classic Mother Goose or Mother Bunch" (Rowe 71). "In sharp contrast to Aunt Reed's authoritarian detachment, Bessie's maternal warmth enables Jane to anticipate fulfillment of her cherished fantasies about home and family" (72).

Bessie returns Jane's regard both verbally and physically. "I believe I am fonder of you than all the others" (Brontë 33). And "Bessie stooped; we mutually embraced, and I followed her into the house quite comforted. That afternoon lapsed in peace and harmony; and in the evening Bessie told me some of her most enchanting stories,

23 Elaine Showalter in A Literature of Their Own, states that Jane Eyre is virtually peopled with female surrogates for absent powerful males (112-124). I contend that these women act as stand ins for a mother and give Jane necessary maternal care. Adrienne Rich in "Temptations of a Motherless Woman" more accurately describes these women as mother figures (142).
and sang me some of her sweetest songs. Even for me life had its gleams of sunshine" (33). Bessie also gives Jane food: tea and cake (32). The sustaining effect of Bessie's feminine, maternal influence dramatically contrasts with the effects of Jane's isolation described above. The narrative moves from the model of the self defined in terms of isolation, metaphorized in terms of incarceration in the red room, towards a more interdependent self, a mutually-embracing model of the self and other.

When Jane begins to connect with another person, her world expands rather than contracts. Bessie's new-found affection for Jane is paradoxically linked with Jane's subsequent departure for the world outside Gateshead Hall. Her self-in-relation prompts her to seek out more nurturing relations. While out walking, she has just rejected the "sequestered" area of the grounds and is looking out the gate into an empty field when Bessie comes to tell her she will be leaving for school (31-32). The fantasy of getting back to a nurturing maternal relation is here articulated as a journey away from her one nurturing relation. She must get away from Gateshead, the site of her initial isolation. Bessie's maternalism cannot adequately remedy Jane's fears of abandonment that have been consistently emphasized by Mrs. Reed and John Reed.

The maternal role Bessie plays in nurturing and comforting Jane increases as Jane's departure nears, but it cannot last. Bessie is of another class (in spite of Jane's poverty) and class transgression becomes an insurmountable boundary even for a child. When asked by the apothecary, Jane cannot imagine choosing to live with poor people. "I should not like to belong to poor people" (18). Her
relationship with Bessie is suspended when she exits Gateshead. "Thus I was severed from Bessie" (35). The narrator evokes images of a severed umbilical cord. This severing places Jane in the position of the individuated self searching for a way to incorporate contrary desires for connection to a maternal figure.

After her separation from Bessie, Jane finds herself at Lowood. The physical and emotional deprivations of the school once again dramatize the pain that individuation can entail. Initially, Jane's lack of a maternal source of comfort parallels her physical lack of nourishment. "When Jane arrives at Lowood she is emotionally starved. . . . Her life has been one of extreme deprivation and her only reinforcement has come from the mercurial Bessie" (Moglen 113). At Lowood, "Jane is acutely conscious of her need for love" (Rich 146). Her need for love is closely aligned with her need for more food. The food at Lowood is not sufficient to supply Jane's needs. "Ravenous, and now very faint, I devoured a spoonful or two of my portion without thinking of its taste, but the first edge of hunger blunted, I perceived I had got in hand a nauseous mess--burnt porridge is almost as bad as rotten potatoes; famine itself soon sickens over it" (Brontë 39). Brocklehurst himself links the two forms of physical and emotional deprivation. He keeps the girls in a constant state of physical want to keep them humble emotionally and spiritually. His policy towards the children's eating habits reflects his policy regarding their moral upbringing: to mortify the lusts of the flesh through deprivation. Jane can never get enough bread just as she can never get enough affection. She states, "I devoured my bread and drank my coffee with relish: but I should
have been glad of as much more--I was still hungry... Such was my first day at Lowood" (45). Hunger represents Jane's craving need for both physical and emotional connection and nurturance.

Then Jane meets Helen Burns and Miss Temple, who come to function as maternal figures for Jane in different ways. Both characters directly figure in the satisfying of Jane's ravenous hunger for physical and emotional affection. First Helen Burns teaches Jane to "love your enemies" and bear injustice with patience. They quickly become intimate friends, and Jane comes to depend on Helen to sustain her. Helen consistently fulfills the maternal role of comforter. "Resting my head on Helen's shoulder, I put my arms round her waist; she drew me to her, and we reposed in silence" (62). Without her, Jane is again the abandoned infant severed from her caretaker. "Now I wept: Helen Burns was not there; nothing sustained me; left to myself I abandoned myself, my tears watered the boards" (60). Helen serves as Jane's emotional and spiritual nurturer. Although at thirteen Helen is young, her role in the narrative is maternal. As she is dying, she tells Jane not to be afraid. On her death bed, it is Helen who actively pulls Jane to her (73). They exchange endearments ("dear Helen," and "Darling") and fall asleep wrapped in each other's arms (74). Helen acts as a mother.

24 It has been noted that Helen Burns was modeled on Jane's oldest and adored sister, Maria (see Moglen 21). It is important to note that Maria had stood in place of mother for the younger Brontë children after their mother died. "Maria's death at the age of twelve meant to the others the loss of a second mother, better known than the first, perhaps more familiarly--more consciously--loved: a shining ideal, forever fixed, perfect and unattainable" (21).
substitute helping Jane to define herself in closer relation to others. Even though Helen dies, the representation of their friendship serves to dramatize the self-in-relation aspect of female development.

Miss Temple, as an adult middle-class woman, is a more obvious mother-figure for Jane than Bessie or Helen. As a mother figure, she gratifies Jane's needs for pleasure, food, and affection. After Jane is most devastatingly humiliated by Brocklehurst, she feels almost as abandoned as in the red room incident. Instead of being literally isolated, she is this time set apart as one to be publicly despised. This time she is "exposed to general view on a pedestal of infamy" (60). Rescuing her from this infamy, Miss Temple invites her and Helen to tea. Once Miss Temple believes Jane to be truthful, Miss Temple kisses her and keeps her at her side (64). She then feeds them "a cup of tea with one delicious but thin morsel of toast. . . [and] a good-sized seed-cake" (65). "We feasted that evening as on nectar and ambrosia. . . . We satisfied our famished appetites on the delicate fare she liberally supplied" (65). This fare is both the actual food and her affection; both restore Jane. After this incident, she forgets to fantasize about "the Barmecide supper of hot roast potatoes, or white bread and new milk" and instead "feasted on the spectacle of ideal drawings, which I saw in the dark" (67). "Miss Temple is maternal in a special sense: not simply sheltering and protective, but encouraging of intellectual growth" (Rich 146). Jane's relationship with her is based upon mutual respect, truthfulness, and sustaining nurturance, the basis for the relationship that will close the novel also.
Miss Temple's role as a mother figure grows more important as Jane grows older. But the particular narrative description of her role decreases as Jane grows older. After Helen Burns death, Jane Eyre narrates through years of experience quite quickly. She intervenes in the narrative with a direct address explaining the reasons for this abbreviation. She assumes that her relationship with Miss Temple could possess no degree of interest. The following passage explicitly belittles her eight years with Miss Temple and connects them to experience not worthy of telling, but rather, worthy of her silence.

Hitherto I have recorded in detail the events of my insignificant existence: to the first ten years of my life I have given almost as many chapters. But this is not to be a regular autobiography: I am only bound to invoke memory where I know her responses will possess some degree of interest; therefore I now pass a space of eight years almost in silence: a few lines only are necessary to keep up the links of connexion. (75)

The few lines that Jane uses to describe these eight years formulate Miss Temple as the most intimate and important figure in Jane's young life. "Her friendship and society has been my continual solace; she has stood me in the stead of mother, governess, and, latterly companion" (Brontë 76). In addition to providing for Jane's physical and emotional needs, Miss Temple also acts to foreshadow what Jane will become: first a teacher, then a wife. On the one hand, the importance of the relationship is undermined by its brevity. This most important and intimate friendship between the two women, which endures eight years, is not narrated but skipped over in a few sentences "almost in silence" (75). The intimate relationship of two
women cannot be narrated because it ostensibly is not of interest. On the other hand, the "continual solace" that Miss Temple provides, as well as her existence as a role model contribute to the centralization of their relation. Both Jane's explicit defense of her narrative abbreviation and then her subsequent contradictory description of this relationship's importance point toward the narrative obstacles to representing homosocial relations without detracting from the heterosexual romance. What the narrative does instead is to make use of the brief description of their interaction to establish a value system that will be carried throughout the novel. That value system is characterized by socially-constructed feminine ways of interacting, including maternal nurturance, honesty and solicitude. Miss Temple marries and is not heard from again, but her relationship with Jane prepares the groundwork for Jane's expansion into what she describes as "the real world." "Jane loses her first real mothers [Helen and Miss Temple]. Yet her separation from these two women enables Jane to move forward into a wider realm of experience" (Rich 147). "I remembered the real world was wide" says Jane (Brontë 77). Jane goes in to that "real world" outside of Lowood and brings with her the homosocial, maternal value system she has established with Miss Temple.

The novel continues to map a homosocial value system by contrasting it with Jane's interactions with Edward Rochester at Thornfield. At this point, the narrative begins the transfer of Jane's affection towards a masculine figure, Edward Rochester. Up until this point in the novel (and even first few months at Thornfield) Jane's only positive interactions are with women. Her homosocial
immersion would have been consistent with societal norms and certainly was consistent with Charlotte Brontë's experience. But narrative conventions demand romance and heterosexual engagement. Female homosocial engagement is of no degree of interest (75). In the next section, we will see how the novel maps Rochester's value system (characterized by grouchiness, deceitfulness, and mockery), in opposition to Jane's value system that privileges nurturance, integrity, and equality.

Part Two

The novel begins the process of mapping Rochester's way of being in the world in opposition to the established homosocial values of Lowood. We can divide Jane's interactions with Rochester into two parts: first, her time at Thornfield Hall as governess and, second, when she returns to him at Ferndean as an heiress. In their first interactions his character is morose at times. But Jane is nonetheless attracted to Rochester because she believes his manner is caused by some "cruel cross of fate." She states, "I believed he was naturally a man of better tendencies" (Brontë 137). In the first section, Rochester is likewise attracted to Jane, but he conceives of her in terms consistent with patriarchal domination and acquisition. First he is curt with Jane, then he is duplicitous and deceitful towards her. After their engagement he attempts to adorn her as his prized object. After Jane's return in the second part, he is finally tender, warm-hearted, and humbled. He changes from a coarse mastering figure into a loving, nurturing, and nurtured caretaker. The novel, as an
allegory of homosocial relations, will ultimately insist that their relationship be founded on the same principles of honesty, nurturance, and mutual support as Jane's relationship with Miss Temple was. Jane will return an independent heiress and at the same time she will nurture and be nurtured by the "bone of her bone." The ending of the novel as fantasy management temporarily resolves Jane's contradictory impulses toward independence and merger.

The narrative first depicts Rochester as a cold, brooding figure with only brief moments of tenderness. In their first encounter, when he falls off his horse, Rochester is gruff and unamiable to Jane. After her first inquiry he appears to be swearing. "I think he was swearing, but I am not certain; however, he was pronouncing some formula which prevented him from replying to me directly" (Brontë 104). "The frown, the roughness of the traveler set me at ease" (105). At their first meeting he is duplicitous to Jane in a way he will continue to be until the disrupted wedding scene. He asks her who is the owner of Thornfield Hall and whether she knows him or not and what is her position at the Hall.25 From the advantageous position of the knowing interviewer he pretends he is someone he is not in order to get information from Jane. Opening their relationship with his brusque and manipulative behavior is a commonplace

25 Interesting attention to class codes here. He finds that she lives at the Hall but cannot be a servant because of her "simple black merino wool cloak, a black beaver bonnet; neither of them half fine enough for a lady's maid" (106).
device of romance fiction. He leaves her never having shed light on his true identity. In one of their early interviews he also commands her in the imperative to do this or that. "Go to the library," "Fetch me your portfolio," "Approach the table," etc. (115). "Mr. Rochester had such a direct way of giving orders, it seemed a matter of course to obey him promptly" (121). She remarks to Mrs. Fairfax that he is a peculiar character, "changeful and abrupt" (118).

Even when Rochester does momentarily soften his demeanor, he still behaves contrary to the way Jane has learned to expect of someone who cares for her. When Jane saves his life in the middle of the night, he is most kind and intimate with her, but then he abandons her without explanation the next morning. "He held out his hand; I gave him mine: he took it first in one, then in both his own... . He paused; gazed at me: words almost visible trembled on his lips—but his voice was checked" (141). Their eyes are locked; her hand is joined in his, physically uniting them. Even the continuous sentences joined by semi-colons, colons, and dashes reflect the united intimacy of their moment in the dark. They are brought together visually, physically, and syntactically. The next morning Jane waits for him to call her to him. "During the early part of them morning I momentarily expected his coming; he was not in the frequent habit of entering the schoolroom, but he did step in for a few minutes sometimes, and I had the impression that he was sure to visit it that day" (142). "I have never heard Mr. Rochester's voice or step in the house to-day; but surely I shall see him before night: I feared the

26 See Janice Radway's *Reading the Romance*. 
meeting in the morning; now I desire it, because expectation had been so long baffled that it is grown impatient. . . . Surely I would not be wholly disappointed to-night when I had so many things to say to him!" (146-147). Rochester has left without a word and does not return for weeks: a cruel disappointment for Jane. She reprimands herself for thinking he might care for her and she swings back to her isolated position. "That a greater fool than Jane Erye had never breathed the breath of life: that a more fantastic idiot had never surfeited herself on sweet lies, and swallowed poison as if it were nectar" (149). From her point of view and her way of relating to others, she assumes he must not care for her if he acts the way he does. The apparent nourishment he had given her the night before turns poisonous as she spits it out in her epithets to herself.

He returns weeks later with his guests and forces Jane to endure painful episodes of drawing room coquetry between himself and Blanche Ingram. She contrasts the last moment she had seen him in the middle of the night with their hands intertwined and the moment he enters the parlor. "How near had I approached him at that moment! What had occurred since, calculated to change his and my relative positions? So far estranged, that I did not expect him to come and speak to me. I did not wonder, when, without looking at me, he took a seat at the other side of the room, and began conversing with some of the ladies" (163). "I might pass hours in his presence and he would never once turn his eyes in my direction--because I saw all his attentions appropriated by a great lady, who scorned to touch me with the hem of her robes as she passed" (174). We later learn that he is being duplicitous here because he is
watching her all the while, when she thinks he is ignoring her. At this point it appears to Jane only that he has distanced himself from her as if they had never had their moment in the dark when he held her hand and would not let her go. In light of the nurturing caregiving model of affection she had learned from other women, Jane assumes she had been terribly mistaken and he could not care for her. But she continues to care for him and continues to search for those brief moments of endearments that confirm Rochester's potential as a caregiver.

Different critics have different theories as to why the hero must be so distant and hostile. Janice Radway in Reading the Romance states that the hero's hostility teaches women how to accept male behavior.

The reader is not shown how to find a nurturant man. . . . What she is encouraged to do is to latch on to whatever expressions of thoughtfulness he might display, no matter how few, and to consider them, rather than his more obvious and frequent disinterest, as evidence of his true character. (148)

Indeed, this is precisely what Jane herself does in the novel. "I believed that his moodiness, his harshness, and his former faults of morality had their source in some cruel cross of fate" (137). She makes excuses for his cruelty. But this does not mean that the reader learns to make excuses for all men. I disagree with Radway's application to the reader. To understand reading solely in terms of a didactic function is to misunderstand the process of reading. The heroine does latch on to the hero's nurturant capability and this focus does become important, not in terms of a lesson for the reader,
but in terms of the roles in the allegory. His brusque behavior sets up an alternative way of being in the world that differs from the heroine's.27

In terms of the allegory, the description of the hero's initial antagonism and cruelty is important; however, the novel does not necessarily assure women it is all right to be cruel, or that cruelty, despite its frequent display, is not a person's true character. Instead the novel's narrative structure insists that male brutality and a male value system that privileges violence must be done away with. (John Reed's fate is called to mind here. He does not make it into adulthood.) The novel insists that the hero abandon his value system and adopt the heroine's, which values nurturance and love. It is the hero who must change to a more feminized way of interacting. The allegory uses cruelty as a marked point of contrast as it moves from the recognizable, hostile conditions of patriarchal society (which includes the existence of male brutality), towards the return to an ideal state of merger (when Jane returns to Rochester) characterized by maternal caregiving and nurturance. The more dramatic the hero's alienation from the heroine initially, the more dramatically effective is his transformation into a nurturing figure.

In the middle section of the novel, Rochester's interactions with Jane are consistently grounded in duplicity. Rochester's misleading of Jane in their first encounter on the path sets the dynamic in

27 Radway uncovers many interesting observations in her study, but her crude empirical determinations are problematic. Her evidence is derived from actual romance readers but she fails to see how her predetermined questions predispose certain responses.
motion for many of their subsequent interchanges. When Rochester returns with his entourage he continuously leads everyone, including Jane, to believe he desires to marry Blanche Ingram. At one point, they play a parlor game of charades, but, in actuality, Rochester is playing a charade during the whole visit. Jane watches and describes this charade and believes it to be true. She believes she watches others unobserved and watches them watch others unobserved. "No sooner did I see that his attention was riveted on them [the ladies] and that I might gaze without being observed, than my eyes were drawn involuntarily to his face; I could not keep their lids under control" (163). "I see Mr. Rochester turn to Miss Ingram, and Miss Ingram turn to him; I see her incline her head towards him" (173). She watches them play out the charade of marriage during the parlor game. In short, she watches all Rochester's attentions "appropriated by a great lady, who scorned to touch me with the hem of her robes as she passed" (174).

But once Rochester convinces Jane it is really she he wants to marry, he must explain why he performed the charade for so long and how he was actually watching her all the while. "I wondered what you thought of me--or if you ever thought of me; to find this out, I resumed my notice of you" (299). He confesses: "I feigned courtship of Miss Ingram, because I wished to render you as madly in love with me as I was with you; and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of that end" (249). Jane answers him, "You have a curious designing mind, Mr. Rochester" (249). Rochester is never completely truthful to Jane; rather, he
makes duplicitous efforts to extort confessions from her. He also
dresses up as a gypsy for this same reason.

As the gypsy he takes up the position of the all-knowing seer
who can see into Jane's heart. He uses the disguise in an attempt to
probe Jane's heart. "Have you no present interest in any of the
company who occupy the sofas and chairs before you? Is there not
one face you study? one figure whose movements you follow with at
least curiosity?" (186). "She" directly asks Jane if she thinks of the
master of the house (187). Rochester reveals himself and Jane
confronts him. "In short I believe you have been trying to draw me
out--or in; you have been talking nonsense to make me talk
nonsense. It is scarcely fair, sir" (190). Rochester does not play fair
but continues to mislead Jane. His affections are true but his manner
of interacting with Jane rely on a falseness that characterizes all his
relationships with women including Bertha, Celine Varens, and
Blanche Ingram.

Rochester's previous marriage to Bertha Mason motivates and
reflects his duplicity. His other forms of misrepresentation can be
seen as symptomatic of his most major one: misrepresenting himself
as an eligible bachelor. Inadvertently, Jane's perception of the false
courtship of Blanche Ingram can be read as a true perception of the
actual stumbling block to Jane's marrying Rochester. In their
confessional scene in the moonlight, Jane says to Rochester, "You are
a married man . . . wed to one inferior to you--to one with whom you
have no sympathy" (240). Bertha's insanity aligns her with one
inferior to Rochester in the value system of the novel. Jane also
states that she cannot be near him because his bride stands between
them (241). His marriage to Bertha does indeed stand between them. When Jane is requesting an answer to a puzzling question, Rochester fears she will ask about Bertha in the attic. His eyebrows grow thick as her fingers and Jane states perceptively, "That will be your married look" (249). It was his married look, as he fears the revelation of his true marriage. But Rochester has no intention of revealing the truth; he justifies his actions to himself setting his teeth and insisting that "it will atone" (243).

During their engagement Rochester is no longer so duplicitous or cruel with Jane, as they have confessed their feelings for each other. However, their relationship is still far from the mutually honest, supportive, nurturing type of relationship Jane had established with Miss Temple and will establish with the River sisters. Rochester, at this point in the novel, treats Jane the way he has treated other women. He attempts to objectify Jane through flirtatious coquetry and adorning her with jewels and fine clothes. Jane resists these attempts fervently. She maintains her sense of self and her self-respect through physical and emotional distance from him. "He rose and came towards me, and I saw his face all kindled... I quailed momentarily--then I rallied. Soft scene, daring demonstration, I would not have; and I stood in peril of both; a weapon of defense must be prepared--I whetted my tongue" (259). She behaves this way ostensibly for their mutual advantage (implicitly to secure her virginity till the wedding) (260), but as we are examining the allegorical paces of the novel, one can read this resistance more superficially, that is allegorically. Obstacles keep
Jane from Rochester until their relationship can be established on grounds of a homosocial relational system.

At this point in the novel, their exchanges are coded in terms of a virtual battle ground over who will possess Jane. Rochester's attempts to objectify Jane represent negative aspects of a self defined totally in relation to another. Rochester would have Jane obliterate her own identity to become his show piece. She struggles to maintain her own independence in the face of Rochester's overwhelming desires to possess, decorate, and display her. Here the daughter's desire for individuation is coded as a positive desire for independence. There has been no indication that their union would be a satisfactory way of negotiating Jane's contradictory desires for individuation and her need to define herself in relation. Their relationship will not be consummated within such a framework. The narrative will insist upon a framework that can balance and manage these contradictory desires. The structure of this relationship will be constructed by values that facilitate both the self in need of individuating and the self in need of merging. Jane learns these values from her interactions with other women; Rochester has not yet learned to accept these values.

Jane fervently resists Rochester's attempts to dress her up like a doll (255). "The more he bought me, the more my cheek burned with a sense of annoyance and degradation" (255). As a dependent, Jane senses the imbalance of power between her and Rochester. His purchase of fine things for her represent an unseemly economic exchange she is being forced to participate in. At this juncture Jane thinks to contact her Uncle John to see if she will someday gain
financial independence and could therefore "endure to be kept by him now" (255). But as their relationship stands in the interim, the imbalance is unendurable. This incidental idea arises to redress Jane's need to individuate positively. She wishes to establish the grounds of their relationship on a more equal footing. This desire forces the reconstruction of their relationship. The interrupted wedding occurs as a direct result of Jane having written to her relation in the West Indies. Allegorically, Jane's desire for their relationship to be changed represents the desire to shift the terms of heterosexual romance toward a homosocial value system, where one is not objectified and obliterated but mutually supported and supportive in an honest kinship relation.

Rochester proposes that Jane live with him in spite of his first wife. Jane cannot become another Celine Varens or one of his other mistresses. But this is what he asks of her. He fails to see that the economic and societal terms of their relationship would be the same.

'I now hate the recollection of the time I passed with Celine, Giancinta, and Clara.' I felt the truth of these words; and I drew from them the certain inference, that if I were so far to forget myself and all the teaching that had ever been instilled into me, as--under any pretext--with any justification--though nay temptation--to become the successor of these poor girls, he would one day regard me with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory. I did not give utterance to this conviction: it was enough to feel it. I impressed it on my heart, that it might remain there to serve me as aid in the time of trial. (297).

She leaves Thornfield and Rochester and continues her quest for nurturance, love and kinship. Paradoxically, she rejects Rochester's
plan in order both to maintain her sense of self-worth (her individuation) and to further her pursuit towards a more egalitarian union. "Jane flees not in order to be found [by Rochester], but to find herself, to achieve economic and moral independence" (Modleski 46). But the independence Jane desires and then achieves comes at an exorbitant cost. In Part three I will demonstrate how Jane's desire to maintain her sense of self-worth leads her first out in the world entirely independent of everyone. She leaves Thornfield with only her own meager purse to support her. After she loses this, her last possession, she ultimately is forced back to a state of complete and infantile dependence. In this state Jane will be nurtured in an ideal homosocial, domestic environment that will serve as a model to be transposed eventually to her relationship with Rochester.

Part Three

Jane's desire not to be Rochester's dependent mistress prompts her flight from Thornfield Hall. In fleeing Thornfield, Jane rejects the heterosexual model of objectification and dependence presented by Rochester. What she goes out in search of initially is her independence but once again nourishment and connection surface as immediate needs to be fulfilled. Jane does not seem to have a destination to move towards; rather, she is fleeing away from the temptation to be with Rochester on his terms. In leaving Thornfield, Jane severs her only tie, thus explicitly separating herself not only from Rochester, but from everyone. "Not a tie holds me to human society at this moment--not a charm or hope calls me where my
fellow-creatures are--none that saw me would have a kind thought or a good wish for me. I have no relative but the universal mother, Nature: I will seek her breast and ask repose" (307). Jane's independence becomes encoded as her disconnection from everyone. She seeks Nature, here a feminized source of comfort, but Nature is only a beneficent mother to the inhabitants of fields: the bees and the lizards. "I would fain at the moment have become bee or lizard, that I might have found fitting nutriment, permanent shelter here" (309). After being completely severed from society, Jane is also severed from a sustaining connection to Nature. With nothing and no one to aid her she is forced to admit her dependent condition. "I was a human being with a human being's wants: I must not linger where there was nothing to supply them. . . . I set out" (309). She reaches the town and begins searching for human food and nourishment. Her independent individuation now becomes encoded in negative terms once again.

Jane's hunger again is closely aligned with her need to connect with others and relinquish her independence. Hunger forces her to approach others and disables her from remaining independent of the care of others. "Much exhausted, and suffering greatly now for want of food, I turned aside into a lane and sat down under the hedge. Ere many minutes had elapsed, I was again on my feet, however, and again searching something--a resource, or at least an informant" (311). Hunger makes it impossible for her to endure being left alone. "I was so sick, so weak, so gnawed with nature's cravings, instinct kept me roaming round abodes where there was a chance of food. Solitude would be no solitude--rest no rest--while the vulture,
hunger, thus sank beak and talons in my side" (312). She grows more hungry and more desperate until she is reduced to a fainting heap on the Rivers' doorstep. "I sank on the wet doorstep; I groaned--I wrung my hands--I wept in utter anguish. Oh, this specter of death! Oh, this last hour, approaching in such horror! Alas, this isolation--this banishment from my own kind! (320). This last and most dramatic isolation brings Jane to a state of being utterly incapable of caring for herself. At this final moment of despair, she is taken in, fed and cared for by the Rivers.

She collapses on the doorstep in her most extremely dependent state. Her starvation and infantilization allegorically represent Jane as the regressed daughter in utter need of nurturing. Her self-subversion can be read as a relinquishing of the burden of autonomous self-hood and a returning to another way of being in the world. Completely unable to care for herself, Jane resembles the condition of an infant who has not yet differentiated itself from the mother-figure. Indeed Jane is not able to distinguish herself from anything, not even her bed; she is unable to speak or form words.

The recollection of about three days and nights succeeding this is very dim in my mind. I can recall some sensations felt in that interval; but few thoughts framed, and no actions performed. I knew I was in a small room and in a narrow bed. To that bed I seemed to have grown; I lay on it motionless as a stone....I could not answer; to open my lips or move my limbs was equally impossible. (323)

Fortunately for Jane, her need is met by the loving Rivers sisters. They perform the maternal functions that nurse Jane back to health. "Diana broke some bread, dipped it in milk, and put it to my lips.
Her face was near mine: I saw there was pity in it, and I felt sympathy in her hurried breathing. In her simple words, too, the same balm-like emotion spoke: 'Try to eat'" (321). The reduction to the infantile state allows Jane momentarily to slough off the burden of being independent and instead, she is to be taken care of. Phyllis Whitney in "Writing the Gothic Novel" has stated that being taken care of is of primary importance in the representation of a loving relationship. "Women want to love and be made love to as they love babies—that is, in a nurturant fashion" (quoted in Radway 69). Her cousins and their home become her surrogate womb for a short while. Once again, women fulfill this nurturing role but again this relation will not be sustained; it will be eventually transposed onto a heterosexual one.

After her near-starvation, Jane finds almost everything she is looking for in the house of the Rivers. This section of the novel brings into representation a domestic, homosocial ideal even more completely than was articulated with Miss Temple. Eventually, this representation will be transferred to the heterosexual relationship of Jane and Rochester. Their marriage will be characterized by domestic tranquillity, warmth, and true affection; the traditional heterosexual relation, as described in Part two with Rochester and his mistresses, will be replaced by an empowered, homosocial relation that redefines Jane as an equal partner in a very different exchange system.

Even though their relation will be ultimately subordinated, it constitutes an important step in the narrative. For the first time in the narrative, an ideal domestic scene is represented, and it is
composed of women (St. John does not partake in their activities). With the Rivers sisters Jane finds true companions. "There was a reviving pleasure in this intercourse, of a kind now tasted by me for the first time--the pleasure arising from perfect congeniality of tastes, sentiments, and principles. I liked to read what they liked to read: what they enjoyed, delighted me; what they approved I revered" (333). "Thought fitted thought: opinion met opinion: we coincided, in short, perfectly. . . . Our natures dovetailed: mutual affection--of the strongest kind--was the result" (334). It is hard to overestimate just how ideal the situation is for Jane. She moves from being literally destitute--lonely, starving and exposed--to the picture-perfect domestic scene which liberally bestows upon her love, food, affection, and shelter. The name of the house--Moor House, homonymically suggests the plenitude Jane experiences. This section most clearly dramatizes the novel as an allegorical quest for nurturance and affection.

However, their domestic bliss cannot be maintained economically. The Rivers sisters must return to their positions as governesses. And Jane's aversion to being a dependent surfaces again. St. John states her opinion for her. He states:

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28 Domestic scenes at Thornfield contrast with the harmony of these scenes. Either Jane is bored to tears spending the winter cooped up with the good-natured but unintellectual Mrs. Fairfax, or she passes enjoyable meetings with Rochester, but only after being formally summoned, or she passes dreadful and excruciating evenings with Rochester and his company in the drawing room where she is only one of the anathematized race of governesses.
'You would not like to be long dependent on our hospitality—you would wish, I see, to dispense as soon as may be with my sisters' compassion, and, above all, with my charity (I am quite sensible of the distinction drawn, nor do I resent it—it is just): you desire to be independent of us?' 'I do: I have already said so.'

Jane sets to work as village school mistress. In this position she is independent and able to provide for herself amidst the general regard of those around her. However, she develops a kind of split personality that vacillates between being content with her independence and longing for a more intimate connection. Her ambivalence surfaces in a number of scenes.

While I looked, I thought myself happy, and was surprised to find myself ere long weeping—and why? For the doom which had left me from adhesion to my master; for him I was no more to see; for a desperate grief and fatal fury—consequences of my departure. At this thought I turned my face aside from the lonely sky of eve and lonely vale of Morton. (343-344)

Her attainment of her independence has torn her from adhering to her master and left her looking at "the lonely sky." She vacillates between contentment and unfulfilled longing; she seems almost schizophrenic here in the following passage.

My heart swelled oftener with thankfulness than sank with dejection: and yet, reader, to tell you all, in the midst of this calm, this useful existence... I used to rush into strange dreams at night: dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy—dreams where... I still again and again met Mr. Rochester, always at some exciting crisis; and then the sense of being in his arms, hearing his voice, meeting his eye, touching his hand and cheek, loving him and being loved by him— the hope of passing a lifetime by his side, would be renewed, with all its force and fire... By nine the next morning I was punctually
opening the school; tranquil, settled, prepared for the steady duties of the day. (350)

Jane needs more than the respect and admiration of her students. Desires to define herself and her life in relation to Rochester surface in these dreams. Her dreams manifest her desire to be connected with him-- to be "in his arms, meeting his eye, touching his hand and cheek." Jane's need for this connection is undefeatable.

Discovering her relation to the Rivers would seem to be able to give Jane that intimate connection that she seeks. Her inheritance enables her and her cousins to be economically independent and that independence enables the cousins to foster a positive emotional dependency on each other as members of a household. Jane's wealth also enables her to purge and renew the household on her own terms, just as she will ultimately do with Rochester.

One of the first tasks Jane undertakes as a member of this family is to refurbish the house for the sisters' return from governessing. In this section, Jane describes in detail the cleaning and refurbishing of the house. Allegorically, this description plays a vital role in the way by which a homosocial fantasy is articulated. The preparation of the home may signify the transformation into middle-class respectability, but, again, if we read this episode of household management superficially and allegorically, one can see that the cleaning, rearranging and preparing is integral to the representation of the ideal homosocial fantasy. Jane is nesting, preparing the space for her beloved cousins to nurture and protect all of them from the outside world. The description articulates an
ideal feminine household and elevates feminine everyday occupations to the status of important action.\footnote{Ann Bar Snitow has noted this characteristic in Harlequins. "Harlequins revitalize daily routines by insisting that a woman combing her hair, a woman reaching up to put a plate on a high shelf a woman doing what women do all day, is in a constant state of potential sexuality" (145).} The particularized description renders what is normally drudgery, in this case housecleaning, as a pleasant and pleasure-inducing process on par with any other event in the novel. "Happy at Moor House I was, and hard I worked; and so did Hannah: she was charmed to see how jovial I could be amidst the bustle of a house turned topsy-turvy" (374). (The topsy-turvy household repeats with a difference the housecleaning scene at Thornfield. When Rochester orders all the house prepared for his guest, Jane's occupation is uninvested. "I was all day in the storeroom, helping (or hindering) her and the cook" (153).) She relays her plans to St. John Rivers.

My first aim will be to clean down (do you comprehend the full force of the expression?) --to clean down Moor House from chamber to cellar; my next to rub it up with beeswax, oil and an indefinite number of cloths, till it glitters again; my third, to arrange every chair, table, bed, carpet, with mathematical precision, afterwards I shall go near to ruin you in coals and peat to keep up good fires in every room; and lastly, the two days preceding that on which your sisters are expected will be devoted by Hannah and me to such a beating of eggs, sorting of currants, grating of spices, compounding of Christmas cakes, chopping up of materials for mince pies, and solemnizing of other culinary rites, as words can convey but an inadequate notion of to the uninitiated like you. (372-373)
Not only does she detail her plan of action, she then details the furnishings she bought for the house. The cleaning and refurbishing function as a purging of the household to rejuvenate it and make it partially her own.

Dark handsome new carpets and curtains, an arrangement of some carefully selected antique ornaments in porcelain and bronze, new coverings, and mirrors, and dressing-cases, for the toilet-tables, answered the end: they looked fresh without being glaring. A spare parlour and bedroom I refurnished entirely, with old mahogany and crimson upholstery: I laid canvas on the passage, and carpets on the stairs. When all was finished, I thought Moor House as complete a model of bright modest snugness within, as it was, at this season, a specimen of wintry waste and desert dreariness without. (374)

Details of everyday life surroundings such as these are a convention of both nineteenth and twentieth-century romances. Little has been written about their actual function in the context of women's lives. In The Feminization of Detail, Naomi Schor traces the history of the alignment of ornament with the feminine throughout the Western tradition. She finds this connection articulated repeatedly throughout different genres. Turning outside the academy, we can verify that the detail continues to be integral to the feminine genre of romance novels but it is unclear why. Contemporary romance writers, Jayne Ann Krentz and Linda Barlow point out in "Beneath the Surface: The Hidden Codes of Romance" that details are an absolute necessity in the romance genre. They argue that the details are highly connotative and emotionally loaded (25) and that they "increase women's feelings of connection to other women who share her most intimate thoughts, dreams, and fantasies" (27). This article
fails to address how women's thoughts, dreams and fantasies are constructed as a result of codes of romance; it also fails to address why details function in this way. Ann Snitow in "Soft-Porn Culture" begins to get to a possible rationale. She argues that the detailed description of a woman doing what women do everyday, whether getting dressed or taking dishes off a shelf, is a potentially erotic scene because it may be observed by the hero. But in this case, as with many others, it is actually the reader who is doing the watching/reading. Descriptions of the heroine's actions render everyday life as potentially erotic and pleasure-producing because we read/watch as voyeurs. The content of the description is of utmost importance here because for the viewer/reader of the homosocial fantasy, the domestic scene is the locus of that fantasy. Women are restricted from participating outside that scene and therefore, it becomes the idealized site of nurturance and harmony. Through description, the narrative brings into representation an idealized feminine scene. The details themselves induce pleasure in the reader by their simple yet lengthy articulation.

At Moor House the Rivers' and Jane's domestic bliss is described in detail. Jane purges the house and establishes her place within it; however, their homosocial relation cannot maintain narrative interest or provide sufficient closure according to nineteenth-century narrative conventions.

St. John Rivers has been Jane's most frequent companion throughout this section of the novel. His representation posits the possibility of Jane having a relationship with him. His existence as an eligible bachelor would seem to enable Jane to maintain her
intimacy with his sisters. However, his absolute inability to nurture disqualifies him from this role. He is handsome and intelligent, but he never becomes the nurturer that Jane needs. He remains an exacting, cold Greek statue (380) who seeks Jane out as a helpmate in his crusade for God. She remains resolute against his request until he begins to use gentleness, a more feminine quality. She is almost swayed at that point to become his wife. "Oh, that gentleness! how far more potent is it than force! I could resist St. John's wrath: I grew pliant as a reed under his kindness" (400). Only when he begins to become nurturing can Jane entertain the notion of becoming his wife. "The Impossible--that is, my marriage with St. John--was fast becoming Possible" (400). Commitment to him would represent a profound break from all domestic comfort from which Jane derives so much pleasure and sustenance. "That he asks me to be his wife, and has no more of a husband's heart for me than that frowning giant of a rock, down which the stream is foaming in yonder gorge. He prizes me as a soldier would a good weapon, and that is all. Unmarried to him, this would never grieve me" (388). St. John states: "I want a wife: the sole helpmeet I can influence efficiently in life, and retain till death" (388). Her conception of marriage would integrate the husband firmly into the blissful domestic scene. In Jane's ideal, the male would transpose himself into the position that the Rivers sisters occupy. Marriage to St. John is represented in opposition to all comforts, all nurturance and would quickly bring about Jane's death (397). But only his momentary softness and his momentary nurturing appeal to Jane's belief in a primary Comforter in heaven begin to sway her.
All was changing utterly with a sudden sweep. Religion called --Angels beckoned--God commanded--life rolled together like a scroll--death's gates opening showed eternity beyond: it seemed that for safety and bliss there, all might be sacrificed in a second. The dim room was full of visions. (400)

It is important to foreground that only at this point is she swayed, only when she begins to visualize an alternative space of comfort and nurturance. At this point it takes a different supernatural force to tear her away from a commitment to him.

Jane hears Rochester calling to her. The voice in the wind is closely aligned with the maternal voice Jane had heard at an earlier moment of crisis. During her moments of wavering indecision, comes a voice to direct her. "Jane! Jane! Jane!" cries the voice. "Oh, I will come!" (401) she answers. This voice seems to come from inside her. "It seemed in me and not in the external world" (403). This instance of hearing voices characterizes what psychoanalysis designates as a permeable ego structure. Jane is unable to distinguish inside from outside. "I asked was it a mere nervous impression--a delusion? I could not conceive or believe: it was more like an inspiration" (403). Nancy Chodorow has identified this characteristic as part of a daughter's inability to distinguish her own desires from her mother's. Jane's permeable ego structure has been maintained into adulthood and manifests itself at Moor House; it manifests itself through Jane's spiritualized kinship connection with Rochester. Jane has already noted that he is of her kind. "I am sure he is--I feel akin to him" (164). This kinship remains an important tie for Jane. And it is this tie that empowers Jane to venture out in search of Rochester. Her
journey back to Rochester contrasts with her journey away from him. "It was the same vehicle whence, a year ago, I had alighted one summer evening on this very spot, how desolate, and hopeless and objectless! Once more on the road to Thornfield, I felt like the messenger-pigeon flying home" (404). Jane's financial well-being marks the most important distinction between her independence a year previous and her condition returning to Rochester. No longer does Jane need to fear being financially dependent on Rochester. But Jane's economic status simply mirrors the other degrees of independence Jane has attained. She seeks out Rochester at this point because she has become sufficiently individuated as a character; her ability to run the school and then to refurbish Moor House have established this fact. At this point, Jane will be able to import all of her positive experiences with the Rivers sisters and their functioning household and bring them to bear on her relationship with Rochester.

Part Four

Circumstances between Jane and Rochester have changed dramatically and their relationship will be renewed in light of these changes. At this point in the novel, a homosocial ideal has been fully articulated, and Jane has derived much pleasure from experiencing it with the Rivers sisters. As she goes back to Rochester, her renewed relationship with him will be reconstructed in light of the homosocial value system that has been articulated. Rochester will not necessarily become an ideal maternal figure for Jane, but he will
become a participant in a relation based on mother-daughter interactive values. They will each provide necessary assistance to each other; they will also characterize their relationship in terms of a merged union, similar to the bond experienced by mother and daughter. A transposition takes place here; ideal situations that were brought into representation in terms of love and affection between women will be rearticulated between the newly-maimed Rochester and the newly-wealthy Jane.

After her tedious journey, Jane approaches Thornfield Hall apprehensively by foot. She discovers the place she had once lived with Edward Rochester has become a ruin. "I looked with timorous joy towards a stately house; I saw a blackened ruin... And there was the silence of death about it, the solitude of a lonesome wild" (406). Thornfield Hall, the place where their relationship was first founded has crumbled to the ground. Allegorically, this ruined, empty space forces a shifting of Jane and Rochester's relationship to a new ground. Their relationship will no longer be constructed within the patriarchal, ancestral halls that cloistered Rochester's duplicity and attempted bigamy.

Rather, Jane and Rochester will now meet in a new space at Ferndean. Since Bertha's "convenient" death, there are no obstacles to their marriage. After learning the history of the last year, Jane hires a conveyance to Ferndean. She has discovered from the inn keeper and then by witnessing herself that Rochester has been maimed and blinded. Tania Modleski has noted that Rochester's condition is a sad "admission that a woman only achieves equality with--not dominance over--men who are crippled in some way" (46).
Rather than reading Rochester's condition in this way, one might say that Rochester is now in need of Jane's care just as much as Jane is in need of his care. She states, "I love you better now, when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence" (426). Their relationship will be constituted in new terms of a mutual dependency, and Rochester's condition will also anchor him to the domestic sphere, the place where women interact with women.

The description of the place at Ferndean is important because Jane's participation there is implicitly connected to her domesticity at Moor House. She domesticates Ferndean and Rochester in a similar way that she refurbished the Rivers's residence. Almost the very first thing she does at Ferndean is to have the fire brightened and the room straightened. "This parlour looked gloomy; a neglectful handful of fire burnt low in the grate" (414). "Summoning Mary, I soon had the room in more cheerful order: I prepared him, likewise, a comfortable repast" (418). Later she asks if he has a pocket comb to comb his "shaggy black mane" (419). Jane's subsequent description of her interactions with Rochester also mirror the ease with which she conversed with the Rivers sisters.

My spirits were excited, and with pleasure and ease I talked to him during supper, and for a long time after. There was no harassing restraint, no repressing of glee and vivacity with him; for with him I was at perfect ease, because I knew I suited him; all I said or did seemed either to console or revive him. Delightful consciousness! It brought to life and light my whole nature: in his presence I thoroughly lived; and he lived in mine. Blind as he was, smiles played over his face, joy dawned on his forehead: his lineaments softened and warmed. 418
Jane is able to derive pleasure by rekindling an ideal domestic scene at Ferndean as she did at Moor House.

Jane's relationship with Rochester at this point becomes characterized as the nurturing food for which Jane has been searching. "'To be your wife is, for me, to be as happy as I can be on earth.' 'Because you delight in sacrifice?' 'Sacrifice! What do I sacrifice? Famine for food, expectation for content. To be privileged to put my arms round what I value--to press my lips to what I love--to repose on what I trust: is that to make a sacrifice? If so, then, certainly I delight in sacrifice'" (426). Their relationship comes to stand as the end quest for Jane's search for affection and nurturance. The narrative brings into representation the need and the means by which to satisfy that need through transposing homosocial interactions onto the relationship between Rochester and Jane.

I have describe this process in terms of an allegory; the heterosexual marriage that closes the novel fulfills desires and ideals that are derived from a woman's compulsion to manage her ambivalent bond with a mother-figure. In a romance narrative, marriage serves, not as an institution that requires women's subjection (which it may be outside the narrative), but rather as an allegory of the primary love for the mother-figure that is introjected into a woman's unconscious. To reiterate, that primary love is characterized by a sense of oneness and complete nurturance. Jane tells us at the close of her story: "No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows
none of mine, anymore than we each do the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together" (431-432). Her connection to Rochester, if taken literally, merges them together in eternal, uninterrupted bliss. It also reads as if their connection merges them both to the domestic sphere as Rochester is now incapable of performing outside of it.

The novel closes with this merged state of complete and enraptured love. But the reader's parting from the fantasy of the novel repeats the parting from the primary caregiver. The reader of this fantasy has participated, through the novel as allegory, in a regression fantasy that brought into representation both the anxieties and the desires of women raised in patriarchal culture. The novel as allegory resolved these anxieties and fulfilled the desires in a way that brought them in line with sanctioned roles for women in middle-class culture-- to be the wife of a husband. The marriage in the novel sustains what has been found to be a homosocial fantasy; but once the novel is over, the woman reader will find herself again in a culture where marriage does not perpetuate the ideal merger and connection to the domestic scene. Rather, that culture at once encourages her identification with and desires for other women yet forbids that desire's representation explicitly in narrative. The woman reader is left bereft and in need of those lingering desires to be resolved once again. This is what will compel the return to the novel or any number of other novels with basically the same plot line and hence the same allegorical structure. That structure can be summed up finally in the following way: The isolated heroine meets the brutal hero. At some point in the novel she derives pleasure
from the everyday details of domestic life. At some point in the novel she also becomes completely incapable of taking care of herself. Finally, the novel concludes with the hero's transformation into a nurturing figure, willing or unwilling, and he subsequently exchanges his value system for the homosocial, domesticated value system that has been brought into representation by the heroine and her activities.
CHAPTER THREE

SHIRLEY

Romances show you only the green tempting surface of the marsh, and give not one faithful or truthful hint of the slough underneath. (Brontë 366)

'There are happy marriages. . . . marriage must be happy.' 'It is never wholly happy. Two people can never literally be as one. . . . Be satisfied, my dear: let all the single be satisfied with their freedom.' . . . 'This is terrible!' (366)

Chapter two on Jane Eyre demonstrated the transposition of a female homosocial value system into the heterosexual relation that closes the novel. Shirley dramatizes homosocial relations and represents a female homosocial value system in a different way. Unlike Jane Eyre's quest for a mother-substitute, Shirley brings into representation and sustains a mutually supportive friendship between two women. Both novels represent female homosociality through a fantasy that derives not from "true" culturally repressed desires. Rather, both fantasies of mother-daughter relations and of women's romantic friendships arise within the ideology of femininity itself in the nineteenth century. The material conditions of mother-daughter child rearing and the strong encouragement of female socialization both gave rise to these fantasies and made them recognizable. What is of interest to me is the way that the representation of these fantasies relates to narratives structures.

82
Shirley, Brontë's third novel, adopts the third-person narrator to tell the story of two young women friends, Shirley Keeldar, an orphaned heiress, and Caroline Helstone, dependent niece of the Rector Helstone. The novel tells the story of their courtship with two brothers, Louis Moore, a dependent tutor, and Robert Moore, an innovative, upwardly mobile mill owner. The romances are set during the political and economic upheaval of the Napoleonic Wars. Begun before and finished after the deaths of her three siblings, Shirley occupies a traumatic space in the chronology of Brontë's work. Some say Shirley's character is modeled after Brontë's sister Emily and that Caroline is modeled after Anne, if they had been born with advantages (Winnifrith 91). Brontë's choice to adopt an omniscient narrator serves a number of functions. If it is true that the characters reflect people in her own life (in some of her letters, Brontë explicitly connects some of the curates to curates she knew), then the omniscient stance would enable her to appear more objective and removed from these characters. The novel is also set in the past, a generation before her time, possibly as an effort to displace biographical connections. But, more importantly, Brontë's adoption of the omniscient narrator enables her to attempt a specific narrative feat that is not attempted in her other narratives. The omniscient narrator enables her to move through two very different modes of representation. These two different modes, which I will subsequently define as female homosocial and heterosexual, remain

30 See Elizabeth Langland's "Dialogue, Discourse, Theft and Mimicry: Charlotte Brontë Rereads William Makepeace Thackeray."
separate and unassimilable from each other. I will discuss them in terms of how they structure the narration, as opposed to focusing on narrative voice. They structure a dual framework from which the narrative is articulated.

This chapter will not isolate a female homosexual politics but rather foregrounds how the representation of a female friendship structures an alternative strategy for narrative. My project has some similarities to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's project on male homosocial relations. Like Sedgwick's project, this chapter is "concerned not distinctly with homosexual experience, but with the shape of the entire [fe]male homosocial spectrum" (Sedgwick 90). I do not exclusively focus on homosexual undertones in the novel but rather attempt to see the relations between women as they relate to narrative structure, prescribed codes of femininity, domesticity, and codes of romantic love. What is of greatest interest here, in contrast to more conventional female friendships in novels, is that the friendship between Caroline and Shirley is independent of male interaction. "This friendship is not designed to assimilate either of the women to marriage; in fact, it leads away from marriage, into a peaceful, manless, female world of Nature" (Cosslett 111). Their respective courtships develop separate from their friendship.

The novel opens with an orientation to the historical setting of the time period during the Napoleonic wars and the Luddite riots. I will briefly outline the contents of Volume one to demonstrate the way in which Brontë sets up a particular narrative structure and a particular negative representation of heterosexuality that will be interrupted by Volume two. I will then examine representational
strategies of Volume two to see how Brontë worked with and against conventional codes of femininity to bring into the narrative a sustained a developed female friendship. Brontë imports representational strategies of homosociality from private letters and makes use of them throughout Volume two. In Volume two she also builds on the stereotypic association of women with Nature to differentiate a female homosocial realm that is independent of a female domestic realm of heterosexuality. In the feminized landscapes of Nature, female friendship flourishes and men are absent. The reintroduction of the heterosexual courtship plot, in Volume three, is associated with both sickness and incarcerating domesticity. The codes representing sickness, domesticity, and heterosexuality virtually collapse into each other in this volume. Both heroines will undergo an illness that symbolically reinitiates them as dependent women in a courtship plot. The representation of the closeness developed between Caroline and Shirley remains unassimilable from the issues and conflicts of Volume three. Volume three characterizes each of them as isolated individuals, separated from each other by curious narrative incidents that bring each of them into relation with her respective suitor. The closure of the novel does not resolve the tensions raised by the various representation strategies employed. The second volume stands as an alternative narrative of female experience outside the context of domesticity and heterosexual marriage.
As the novel opens, we meet the three boisterous and consuming curates. Their concerns are food and drink, and the scene soon descends into clamorous and hectoring conversation (42). No significant woman character is introduced until Chapter five. The chapter introduces what will be a major concern throughout the novel: controversy over the industrialization of textile production, particularly the mill of Robert Moore. Politics, guns, intrigue, suspense, murder plots, and violence compose the next chapters. The only women characters are Mrs. Gale, who serves the curates and is addressed only as "woman" (42), and then in Chapter four, there is an obscured "head in a screw of curl paper" (whom we later find is Hortense Moore). Women are absent from the political conflict being sketched. Their concerns will remain separate from this conflict throughout the novel.

In Chapter five, we are finally introduced to a domestic scene of Robert, his sister, and Caroline. The prolonged scene with Robert and Caroline initiates the courtship plot of the novel. Robert gives her a bouquet. "Moore plucked here and there a blossom and leaf, till he had collected a little bouquet; he returned to the parlour, pilfered a thread of silk from his sister's work-basket, tied the flowers, and laid them on Caroline's desk" (100). He then delays leaving, makes up excuses for lingering, and finally asks Caroline to stay till he returns.

Moore lingered yet two minutes: he bent over Caroline's desk and glanced at her grammar, he fingered her pen, he lifted her
bouquet and played with it; his horse stamped impatient; Fred. Murgatroyd hemmed and coughed at the gate, as is he wondered what in the world his master was doing. (101)

Caroline herself is bright and attentive to Robert. She nods her head to his request, and her eyes light up (101). After Robert exits, Caroline is unable to focus on her work. "Caroline forgot, again and again, the explanations which were given to her" (102). That evening, they spend in ideal domestic tranquillity. He walks her home leaving her "excited and joyously troubled" (120). Their courtship is not simply initiated; it appears well underway. But in the subsequent chapters, we find obstacles both thematic and logistic intervene in their courtship. Moore is not in a position to marry. The political and economic conditions of history appear to interfere with the linear development of their courtship.

Thematically, the courtship is also undermined by the various tirades against marriage by character after character. Heterosexual relationships in the first volume of the novel are characterized in the most negative light. Here, we first learn of Mary Cave, Reverend Helstone's wife and Caroline's aunt. Marriage to an indifferent husband who could not comprehend her, turned out to be fatal.

His wife after a year or two, was of no great importance to him in any shape; and when she one day, as he thought, suddenly--for he had scarcely noticed her decline--but others thought gradually, took her leave of him and of life, and there was only a still beautiful-featured mould of clay left, cold and white, in the conjugal couch, he felt his bereavement--who shall say how little? 82

Throughout the novel various characters make disparaging remarks about marriage. In the middle this volume Caroline is talking with her uncle and she remarks: "[W]henever you speak of marriage, you
speak of it scornfully: do you think people shouldn't marry?' 'It is decidedly the wisest plan to remain single, especially for women.' 'Are all marriages unhappy?' 'Millions of marriages are unhappy: if everybody confessed the truth, perhaps all are more or less so'" (Brontë 124).

Directly after this conversation, Caroline "sought 'Bonnie Robert's' presence speedily" (127). She finds him seemingly anxious to take leave of her, as dispassionately and coldly as Helstone treated Mary Cave. The narrator underscores Caroline's folly of participating in romantic illusions. "She has loved without being asked to love, - a natural, sometimes an inevitable chance, but big with misery" (129). She responds with shock and pain to his treatment, but continues to look for him with "False Hope" (130). The narrator continues to emphasize the hopelessness of men and women being happy together. "All men, taken single, are more or less selfish; and taken in bodies they are intensely so" (183). Also through the character of Mrs. Yorke, the first volume rails against marriage. "And sorely he has repented marrying me,' added Mrs. Yorke, who liked occasionally to crack a dry jest against matrimony, even though at her own expense" (171).

Volume one introduces a courtship plot and its subsequent miseries for the female character, Caroline. She waits and pines away while Robert works away at the mill. Her misery stems from the fact that she can only see Robert's neglect of her. Caroline's tortured existence continues throughout the volume as she wastes away in despair. Her home becomes saturated in death imagery--a closeted, solitary tomb-like place. "Mute was the room,--mute the
house" (189). It has now become painful to go to (Moore's) Hollow's cottage. Robert brings her too much pain and too much pleasure to look at (187). "I think only of him; he has no room, no leisure to think of me" (188). Her domestic incarceration contrasts with the world of Nature outside her house. "For Nunnely wood in June, she saw her narrow chamber; for songs of birds in alleys, she heard the rain on her casement; and for Moore's manly companionship, she had the thin illusion of her own dim shadow on the wall" (189).

Caroline's disappointment and depression over Robert is interspersed between chapters about Robert's controversial improvement of his mill and his investigation into the vandals who destroyed his machinery. He becomes "quite taken up with business: Hortense feared he was killing himself by application: he scarcely ever took a meal in the house; he lived in the countinghouse" (187).

This type of shifting focus, from Caroline's personal loneliness to the political, economic concerns of the mill, has prompted critics to disparage the novel for its fragmented structure and focus. Critics in Brontë's day and today criticize her inability to synthesize what has been described as a split between the public, historical concerns of the novel and the private, romantic concerns of the novel. "It has been faulted for failures of narrative power and synthesis, lack of organic plot and structural unity, and for inconsistent narrative voice" (Langland DPCN 25). As Elizabeth Langland has pointed out, critics as diverse as Gilbert and Gubar and Brontë's contemporary G. H. Lewes both condemn the novel as failed (25).31 Pauline Nestor

31 See Elizabeth Langland's "Dialogic Plots and Chameleon Narrators in the Novels of Victorian Women Writers: The example of Charlotte
articulates the public versus private incompatibility. "The novel remains fragmented at times, wrenching the focus awkwardly between two heroines, the two heroes, and the religious, political and social preoccupations of the work" (Nestor CB 70). Janet Gezari highlights the implications of such shifting focus from class conflict to personal conflict. "Shirley values individual conflict more than class conflict and each character struggles with himself or herself more than the social struggle in which they [sic] are caught up" (Gezari 110). "Shirley argues against any solution that is not an individualizing one. It denies that oppression, . . . is inherent in the warped system of things" (115). Although she does not seem conscious of it, Gezari's comment repeats the classic summarization of the function of nineteenth-century realism: to authorize and psychologize class and gender relations and thereby diffuse or regulate the need for political action.32 Gezari points out only the

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Brontë's Shirley." Langland will valorize the positive attributes of novel's dialogism rather than fault its structure. "Brontë has created alternative visions of romance and reality which remain in dialectical tension." This productive tension creates a space for artistic play as Brontë deconstructs and reconstructs the terms to suggest and alternative feminine reality that refuses assimilation (26). All references to this article are abbreviated as DPCN to distinguish them from her article "Dialogue, Discourse, Theft, and Mimicry: Charlotte Brontë Rereads William Makepeace Thackeray" which is abbreviated as DDTM.

32 See Nancy Armstrong's Desire and Domestic Fiction for the most thorough deployment of this theory. Armstrong insists the Victorian novel was used as a disciplining agent through this type of individualizing and psychologizing.
split here between public and private, not the way the terms deconstruct to manage the "warped system of things."

Tess Cosslett provides a final example of a critic who also sees the novel as a structural failure; her comment incidentally shifts focus from the political/personal dichotomy and raises a question I will continue to press on throughout this chapter. "The structure of Shirley has often been criticized for its loose and fragmentary qualities, but this very looseness is both caused by and allows a more sustained and central exploration of female friendship for its own sake than is usual in the well-structured marriage-plot" (Cosslett 111). Cosslett does not ask the question the comment presumes. What is it about well-structured marriage-plots that forecloses a sustained exploration of female friendship? Are they mutually exclusive? There is a more compelling reason as to why the novel is seen as disrupted.

It is not because of its dual focus on public and private institutions. That dichotomy was entrenched and naturalized in Victorian ideology and frequently articulated in novels, for example, in Trollope's Barchester Towers, Thackeray's Henry Esmond, and many others that combine private/romantic and historical/public concerns. This novel is seen as fragmented because it fails to sustain the allegiance between the courtship plot and linear development. But what disrupts that courtship is not Robert's cold shoulder to Caroline. Robert's concerns with the mill and subsequent rejection of Caroline act only as a postponement or delay of their courtship. He must work to attain a certain class position before he can marry her. The shift to his career pursuits demonstrates his desire to overcome
the obstacles that prevent him from courting Caroline. It works in the service of courtship, not against it.33

What does intercede and become incompatible with courtship is Volume two. There we are introduced to a female homosocial relationship. To read Shirley through the opposition between public and private is to overlook the succinct discrimination the novel articulates between heterosexual and homosocial, between a heterosexual domestic realm of marriage and an alternative, homosocial realm of female love and ritual. As Cosslett points out, the exploration and sustained female friendship plot has a narrative effect on the marriage plot. Traditional sequential narrative development has been determined in terms of heterosexuality. Susan Stanford Friedman notes that this merger of the courtship plot with linear narrative is so engrained as to make it seem part of the condition of narrative itself. She argues that this allegiance can and should be disaggregated (Homans 7). In the imposed system of novelistic conventions and linear development, women's interpersonal relations have generally gone unarticulated or have been represented solely in terms of their service towards heterosexual resolution. Even feminists critics, at times, can see women characters only in these terms. Tess Cosslett's study on women's friendships in literature focuses mainly on women whose friendships function to bring them into a heterosexual relation.

33 Recall that Robert phrases his proposal to Caroline in precisely economic terms after political events change. "Now I can have a house--a home...and now I can think of marriage; now I can seek a wife" (594).
Cosslett finds *Shirley* a profound exception. Janet Todd's study is limited to representations of women's friendships in the eighteenth century and frequently focuses on novels written by men and relationships that are constituted around men. Linda Hunt focuses on female friendship but unproblematically views the strongest bonds between women as the ones where one friend "altruistically" steps back if the young women both love the same man (60). Female friendship constructed in the service of heterosexual union is common in literature. A sustained and developed friendship that is constructed independently of men is rare. Brontë's *Shirley* gives us the representation of a female homosocial relation that is dynamic, sustained, and unassimilated into the heterosexual marriage plot.

Brontë broke the allegiance that Friedman says should be broken in the service of an alternative feminist narrative. The text valorizes a certain type of homosocial relation that it discriminates from a heterosexual one. Contemporary feminists theories of narrative, like Friedman's, all too frequently overlook the possible innovations that may have already been attempted within the novelistic tradition. Marianne Hirsch, Rachel Blau DuPlessis and others look to modern novelists like Woolf and Morrison for narrative innovation. Precisely because the structure of Brontë's novel came under attack, is exactly why we should investigate that structure and our assumptions about what constitutes structure. "We must illuminate different significances rather than read them as formal failures" (Langland DPCN 25).

Joseph Allen Boone has shown us in *Tradition Counter Tradition* that there are slippages present in the logic governing marriage and
marriage fiction. He says that these slippages "provide us with an avenue for a small subversive attack upon an evolving hegemony" (2). I do not see Brontë's innovation necessarily as a subversive attack but, rather, as an attempt to broaden what could be brought into the representational system of the novel.

The precise method by which Brontë accomplishes the broadening of narrative warrants an in-depth analysis. Margaret Homan's article "Feminist Fictions and Feminist Theories of Narrative" shows us that conventional sequential narrative poses a problem for representing middle-class, white women. Shirley can be read as an innovative narrative that introduces the concerns of women outside the context of love and marriage and within the context of a homosocial relationship. Brontë contains that representation within the second volume. I will subsequently demonstrate that the repercussions of this introduction surface as symptoms in Volume three.

Volume Two

Shirley is structured in such a way as to set apart its depiction of the two main characters-- Caroline and Shirley-- from other characters and storylines in the novel. In Shirley, the entire center of the novel, chapters eleven through twenty-two is devoted to the interactions of Shirley and Caroline. Originally published in three

34 Homan goes on to differentiate the concerns of middle-class white women, for instance Mary Wollstonecraft from other women writers of other races, for example, Zora Neale Hurston. Issues of narrative linearity are different for each.
volumes, the first volume ends just after Shirley's introduction in Chapter eleven, "Fieldhead." And the second volume ends just after Chapter twenty-three, the first chapter after many where Shirley and Caroline are not together. Between chapters eleven and twenty-two, Shirley and Caroline develop an ardent relationship. This formidable section of the novel (especially when it was published in a serial format in its own volume), dominates other parts of the novel that seem peripheral and disjuncted to the female relationship depicted there. "In Shirley, Bronte renders a friendship between two young women unsentimentally and yet with such power that the reader is encouraged to wonder if men are not after all a disruptive intrusion in women's lives" (Hunt 73).

The last chapter of Volume one acts as a transitional chapter from one volume to the next. Caroline meets Shirley. Initially, their relationship mocks a romantic heterosexual one; Bronte employs the codes of courtly love to describe their introduction. The chapter is contained in the volume characterized by its dealings with men, including Caroline's courtship with Robert. The text has not yet marked out a space for the articulation of homosocial desire, as it will in Volume two, and so it is fitting that their introduction to each other take on the characteristics of a heterosexual courtship within the domestic scene. The chapter functions as a hinge to the next volume which will develop and sustain their relationship.

35 Throughout the novel, Bronte will complicate our association of the domestic with the feminine or female homosocial. Rather, Elizabeth Langland has aligned the domestic scenes in Shirley with the carceral form of disciplining. The domestic for Caroline represents weariness, boredom, suffering, and "the inculcation of a
Shirley's first introduction to Caroline takes place as the Rector, Caroline's uncle, is commanding Shirley to recite the St. Athanasius' creed. Mr. Helstone and Caroline have come to visit the heiress for the first time. After keeping them waiting, Shirley enters the room wearing her "little silk apron full of flowers" (210). She interrupts the Rector's test to gather flowers previously scattered on the floor before Tartar lays down on them.

Miss Helstone and Miss Keeldar simultaneously stooped to the rescue. 'Thank you,' said the heiress, as she again held out her little apron for Caroline to heap the blossoms into it. 'Is this your daughter, Mr. Helstone?' she asked. 'My niece Caroline.' Miss Keeldar shook hands with her, and then looked at her. Caroline also looked at her hostess.

The exchanges that take place here are important to setting up the atmosphere in which we are asked to interpret their relationship— an atmosphere of romantic courtship. At their first contact they simultaneously move together to heap blossoms of "velvety petals" into Shirley's silk apron. Flowers have been aligned with femininity and even vaginal imagery; here the flowers combine that feminine association with the aesthetic pleasure of the interchange to create a romantic, sexualized atmosphere. Shirley has just entered from the garden of her ancestral home. Entering late after their arrival underscores the fact that Shirley has entered the novel late. In fact, she has entered the novel just after Robert's

social ideology that proves particularly destructive for women" (Langland 13). Bronte's novel explores the connection between "two seemingly different discursive formations: the domestic and the carceral" (18).
"rejection" of Caroline and so is in the perfect position, in terms of novelistic conventions, to take his place. Her man's name, her wealth, and social position all combine to position Shirley in an ambiguous relation to gender. As Gilbert and Gubar have pointed out, she "owns the ancestral mansion usually allotted to the hero" (in Bloom's Brontë 116). Shirley takes up the position of hero and sustains that position long enough to align herself as the new, intimate friend of Caroline.

The women participate in a number of romantic exchanges upon their introduction. Shirley "had selected a little bouquet of one brilliant and two or three delicate flowers, relieved by a spray of dark verdure" (212), which she ties with silk from her work box and places on Caroline's lap. The bouquet repeats the courtship signifier that introduced Caroline and Robert. He also gave her a "little bouquet" tied with a "thread of silk pilfered from his sister's work-basket" (100). First Caroline places velvety blossoms in Shirley's apron, then Shirley places flowers on Caroline's lap. Neither time are words exchanged. Rather, the narrator is careful to linger over the description of the flowers and their delivery -- both times the flowers are placed on the same specified location on the woman's body.

Through various exchanges, Shirley is positioned in such a way as to associate her in terms of a potential suitor to the shy Caroline. The two women exchange a deliberate gaze, which the narrator is careful to describe explicitly. Shirley "then looked at her. Caroline also looked at her hostess" (212). The deliberateness of the description forces us to linger on the scene of simultaneous
movement, velvety blossoms, handshakes, and eyes locking. Soon after, Shirley again gazes at Caroline. This time her look is differentiated from their exchange described above. "She examined Caroline seriously, inclining her head a little to one side, with a thoughtful air in a manner similar to a grave and gallant little cavalier" (212). In this instance looking is not exchange, but, rather, Caroline becomes an object to be looked at by Shirley's masculine gaze. Looking is the traditional mode of objectifying women.

"Investment in the look is not privileged in women as in men. More than the other senses, the eye objectifies and masters. It sets at a distance, maintains the distance" (Irigaray quoted in Sadoff 124 cited Speculum 177 French edition).36 Shirley talks over Caroline as if she is an object. Caroline remains silent throughout their introduction only muttering her age--"eighteen and six months." She moves into the position of the feminine beloved object at the same time that Shirley adopts her masculine pose. Shirley continues her manly guise verbally. "I am an esquire... They gave me a man's name; I hold a man's position; it is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood; really I feel quite gentlemenlike" (213).

Her gallant cavalier attitude aligns her in the position of the hero to Caroline's heroine, but the physical description of Shirley both feminizes and eroticizes her as an object of voyeuristic

36 In this same chapter Sadoff incorrectly summarizes Shirley's "castration" that takes place at the conclusion of the novel according to Sadoff. She states that Shirley is bitten by her own "hitherto trustworthy" dog, falls ill and fears she will die (155). She is bitten by the neighbor's dog and does rely on Louis, her master, to calm her fears. But this does not take place at the conclusion of the novel.
attention. The narrative blurs Shirley's gender assignation by positioning her in a masculine stance with all her femininity intact. Her hair was "parted on one temple and brushed in a glossy sweep above the forehead, whence it fell in curls that looked natural, so free were their wavy undulations" (212). Up until this point, Shirley has been represented in a way that associates her with masculinity. At this point, the narrative begins to describe Shirley in great physical detail. Naomi Schor has aligned the detail with the feminine in her Reading in Detail. By way describing Shirley with frivolous details of her physical appearance align her with the feminine. The detailed description of Shirley also functions to encode her romantically. Excessive adjectives contribute to the romantic undertones. We come to look at her voyeuristically, lingering over these details.37

37 The function of the detail in this episode and many others warrants further discussion. The description of her glossy sweep of undulating hair needs to be understood in the context of what has now become a Harlequin staple-- making everyday appearance more than it is through rich prose. In Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance, Linda Barlow calls this trait "romantic description" (23). She sees it as one of the necessary forms of discourse that romance novels participate in. According to Barlow, authors use details to best illustrate the archetypes they are portraying. "Lush use of symbols, metaphors, and allusion is emotionally powerful as well as mythologically evocative. Piling on the detail is an affective way of creating an alternative mythic world" (24). In this case with the invocation of the cavalier and bouquets of flowers, Shirley and Caroline are being described in the codes of courtly love. Barlow's rational behind romantic description may or may not be convincing, but alternative explanations of the detail's appeal are few and far between. Naomi Schor's The Feminization of the Detail surveys the ways in which the
Shirley will only temporarily play the hero. As stated above, the pose of Shirley's masculinity is in keeping with the tone of the first volume. The mock heterosexual framing of their relationship serves another function as well. Since Shirley enters late into the novel, the text makes use of the codes of courtly love to accelerate the level of intimacy established between the two characters. What better way to foreshadow the development of their relationship than to have their relationship grounded in a romantic attraction signaled by their exchange of flowers and lingering, curious gazes.

feminine has been aligned with the detail, the superfluous, and the frivolous throughout Western philosophical discourse, but the work itself ironically remains at the level of the details themselves and fails to theorize what effects this alignment has or what other function details perform. Ann Snitow's "Mass Market Romance: Pornography for Women is Different" theorizes in a compelling way the function of description in terms of the eroticization of everyday life. The description of the heroine going about her everyday activities is described in vivid, purple prose and hence rendered poetic and sexualized.

Harlequins revitalize daily routines by insisting that a woman combing her hair, a woman reaching up to put a plate on a high shelf (so that her knees show beneath the hen, if only there were a viewer), a woman doing what women do all day, is in a constant state of potential sexuality. (Snitow Radical History Review 20 Spring Summer 1979 145)

As voyeurs, we watch Shirley watching. The aesthetic details of this chapter from the first activity of picking up flowers, the romantic exchange of flowers, and then Shirley's chivalrous stance and undulating hair all contribute to the romantic undertones that pervade the introduction of the two women.
It seems important at this time to foreground that the text makes use of codes of romantic love for structural reasons and not to substitute Shirley for Robert. The text borrows conventions of heterosexual representation in order to highlight a homosocial relation. This is not the way female interaction would have been interpreted. Although characterized like a heterosexual relationship, romantic female friendship in the Victorian era is a separate issue from heterosexuality, not simply a substitute for it. It is difficult from a twentieth-century perspective to categorize the ardent affection of the two women that develops in the text. Women in the nineteenth century were encouraged to spend a great deal of time together to the exclusion of men. Linda Hunt has noted that women developed intense bonds of friendship characterized by a romantic intensity that would be considered lesbian if read today. "The expression of such intense feeling between women friends of the same sex who are not lesbians would be highly unusual in the twentieth century" (Hunt 54).

Socialization patterns between the sexes were much different in nineteenth-century England and America. "Nineteenth century society did not taboo close female relationships but rather recognized them as a socially viable form of human contact. Indeed it was not these homosocial ties that were inhibited but rather heterosexual leanings" (Carroll Smith-Rosenberg 74). Because the category of lesbian did not exist as we understand it today, it is difficult to
distinguish between homosocial relations and homosexual ones. But in Victorian England, women were not conceived in terms of having any sexuality independent of a man. As Tess Cosslett has pointed out: "Are these then lesbian relationships? It seems to me that this question is impossible to answer" (7). Smith-Rosenberg echoes this sentiment:

The twentieth-century tendency to view human love and sexuality within a dichotomized universe of deviance and normality, gentility and platonic love, is alien to the emotions and attitudes of the nineteenth century and fundamentally distorts the nature of these women's emotional interaction. (58-59)

In Volume two Caroline and Shirley move out of the ancestral mansion, which has initially encoded Shirley as hero, and into what has been described as a female sexual landscape: Nature. Throughout history, women have frequently been associated with Nature and the natural world; but in Brontë's novel Shirley, it is the female homosocial relation that is aligned with Nature while women's individual heterosexual relations remain within the confines of the domestic sphere's drawing rooms and dining rooms. The text discriminates between an alternative, homosocial realm of female love and ritual, which resembles the representations of female friendship found by Smith-Rosenberg, and the heterosexual realm of domesticity and marriage, which composes the framework of many

38 The court case of the two Scottish school teachers demonstrates this point explicitly. The court ruled that a sexual relationship between them was impossible for English women.
Victorian novels (and composes the framework of Volume three). The female world of love and ritual is predominately represented by scenes outside domestic space, but Brontë also uses intimate interior bedroom scenes to represent the closeness of Caroline and Shirley. The scenes of Caroline and Shirley in Volume two are characterized by supportive love, strength, calmness, mutual affection, and natural beauty, while the domestic scenes, especially with Caroline, are characterized by neglect, sickness, insomnia, and nervousness.

The development of Caroline's and Shirley's relationship throughout Volume two will exclude men. Earlier in the volume, the women concur on the difference between homosocial interactions and heterosexual ones. The excursions they take and the ones they only dream of taking will exclude men. "An excursion becomes quite a different thing when there are gentlemen of the party," says Caroline. "It dispels the last charm," replies Shirley (Brontë 221). The women fantasize about excursions out of their everyday lives, where they are required to live in the world of men.

The representation of Caroline and Shirley's friendship is similar to the representation of friendships studied by Carroll Smith-Rosenberg in "The Female World of Love and Ritual." The level of intimacy between the two women escalates throughout the novel. Initially, Shirley and Caroline are described in terms of their mutual likes and dislikes. "The minds of the two girls being tuned in harmony, often chimed very sweetly together" (Brontë 231). Brontë then represents Shirley and Caroline in terms of a growing interdependency. It is only Caroline's society that Shirley seeks. "No society did she need but that of Caroline, and it sufficed if she were
within call" (237). For Caroline, Shirley can provide emotional support to enable her to attend to her duties as the Rector's daughter. Caroline is in charge of hosting the church festival each year and each year previously she had dreaded the occupation. "This year Shirley was to be with her, and that changed the aspect of the trial singularly -- it changed it utterly: it was a trial no longer (291). Smith-Rosenberg, likewise, finds many letters that describe a tender and emotional dependency between women. "Such mutual dependency and deep affection are a central existential reality coloring the world of supportive networks and rituals" (73).

Smith-Rosenberg describes women whose friendship is characterized by physical as well as emotional intimacy. The two women in Shirley are frequently in physical proximity. They exchange kisses; they sleep in the same bed and dress each other. Shirley shows how within close knit homosocial relations there are virtually no barriers of behavioral codes in contrast to the rigidly segmented behavior and living arrangements of men and women, even husbands and wives.

Early on the church feast day Caroline is worried that Shirley will be late, so she "walks fearlessly" to Fieldhead where she then "penetrated to Miss Keeldar's dressing-room" and "with her own hands, commenced the business of disrobing and rerobing her" (292 emphasis mine). Caroline's penetration of Shirley's space foregrounds a closeness not permitted any other characters in the novel. (Even the relationship between Caroline and her mother, Mrs. Pryor, is obstructed by Mrs. Pryor's previous abandonment of Caroline, see Elizabeth Langland's DPCN 29) Caroline again dresses
Shirley in Chapter Twenty (Brontë 343). The interiors of Shirley's and Caroline's bedrooms do not have the heterosexual/domestic connotation of the dining room or the parlor. Today, a bedroom scene is considered sexualized from a heterosexual point of view. But Victorian husbands and wives frequently had separate bedrooms possibly with an adjoining closet or bath. The bedroom is encoded as a female space.

Caroline's and Shirley's relationship escalates as the novel advances. Once into volume three, the representation of the friendship still resembles Smith-Rosenberg's findings, but becomes either mediated or, I will show later, omitted entirely. Late in the novel, Caroline reveals to Robert that Shirley and she "occupied the same bed. [They] did not sleep much: [they] talked the whole night through" (559). "At the dead of night; when all the house was silent, ... then [she] saw Shirley's heart" (559). This passage, specifically my highlighted phrase, bears particular resemblance to one letter highlighted by Smith-Rosenberg in which a woman describes sitting up all night talking to a friend in her bedroom. "I have sat up to midnight listening to the confidences of Constance Kinney, whose heart was opened by that most charming of all situations, a seat on a bedside late at night, when all the household are asleep and only oneself and one's confidante survive in wakefulness" (Smith-Rosenberg 68-69). In this case in both the novel and the letter, the exchange between female friends is indeed constructed around their relationship to men; however, the subject of their confessions is
subordinated to the act of confessing itself.\textsuperscript{39} The men act as a vehicle to bring the two women friends into a closer relation much in the way that Eve Sedgwick describes the woman as conduit between two men (whether they be friends or rivals) in her study \textit{Between Men}.

In this particular scene the way the information is narrated demonstrates the tension of homosociality and its narrative containment. Caroline and Shirley's intense homosocial ties spill over into the third volume in this instance. But the \textit{representation} of these ties is mediated through a heterosexual conduit. Caroline is telling Robert of her night sleeping with Shirley. The scene is only described after the fact. The most intimate moment the two women share actually takes place in volume three- Caroline sees Shirley's heart ("her heart's core?" -- "her heart's core" (559)). Because Volume three is concerned with facilitating the heterosexual plot, this moment cannot be narrated between the two women, but must be channeled through a heterosexual relationship in order to be articulated. In the scene with Robert, she delays for pages and pages the actual revelation of Shirley's heart. Finally, when Caroline does tell Robert, she does so in a whisper. The text displaces the revelation again. "She whispered: Robert gave a start, a flash of the eye, a brief laugh" (564). Shirley and Caroline's most intimate revelatory moment in the text is doubly displaced, highlighting the

\textsuperscript{39} Using Foucault's work in \textit{The History of Sexuality}, one might examine in more detail the specific differentiation of power relations between a heterosexual confession of love and a female to female confession about love.
narrative's resistance to representing the most intense female homosocial intimacies beyond the boundaries of Volume two.  

Brontë's construction of an ideal female friendship that exists separate and independent of heterosexual relations is mirrored through the textual construction of the volume divisions. If we look again at Volume two, we can see that the representation of the female homosocial ideal makes use of conventional codes of femininity to expand conceptions of narrative within that space.

Shirley foregrounds the separateness and independence of Shirley and Caroline's friendship by frequently representing it metaphorically outside the confines of domestic space and outside the world of patriarchy. Shirley makes use of the classic association of women with Nature to differentiate women's experiences with each other and women's experience as related to domestic trials that revolve around men. Brontë gives us a fertile metaphor through which we can cultivate women's homosocial experience. On a superficial level, the novel "draws attention to the association of the females with the peaceful, natural world which is contrasted against the male's imperviousness to it" (Nestor CB 73). But Brontë does more than simply associate women with Nature. The flowers exchanged at their introduction to each other have foreshadowed the

40 See Tradition Counter Tradition by Joseph Allen Boone for another reading of the "ultimate displacement of the plot of Shirley and Caroline's friendship" (16). Boone reads the narration of the scene above in relation to the narration of Shirley's love relation with Louis, which is narrated from within his journal. "It is as if Brontë, unable to bear narrating Shirley's abdication in her own voice, places it in the mouth of the conquering hero in an attempt to deny her own hand in creating the situation" (16).
women's alignment with gardens and the world outside of both the domestic scene and the world of men and mills. (Shirley herself is called the flower of the parish (Brontë 210).) Brontë embues the association of women and Nature with eroticism, pleasure, and power. As with the codes of courtly love, she makes use of narrative devices and conventions to articulate a complicated world of female interaction and homosocial ties complete with their own redefined icons of feminine power. Brontë rescripts women's relation to Eve.

First, let us look at the way Brontë feminizes the landscape in opposition to domestic space and then turn to her rescripting of patriarchal mythology within that landscape.

Once out of doors, the women converse freely and question the ability of men to sustain a loving relationship within the domestic sphere. Caroline wonders "whether it is impossible to their natures to retain a constant interest and affection for those they see everyday" (Brontë 223). This question and other private musings about the predicament of women in the domestic situation are articulated out in Nature between the two women and serve to strengthen their homosocial ties. In Nature, especially at Nunnwood Common, they are able to communicate as they never have in their whole life (Brontë 226).

Nunnely Common functions as a signifier for female landscape, where the women will deepen their relationship and establish it on grounds that move beyond the mimicry of heterosexuality. Shirley and Caroline walk to Nunnely Common and from there they look down into the forest of Nunnwood. Deeper into Nunnwood forest, in the center, is a dell, "a deep, hollow cup" (221). With its abandoned
nunnery at its center, the landscape is clearly marked out as feminine territory.

In *Shirley*, the garden and the nun come together in Brontë's metaphor for the female, Nunnwood. This wood with the ruins of a nunnery at its center is, like Maggie Tulliver's red deeps, a female sexual landscape complete with metaphorical vagina at its center. (Sadoff 154)41

In addition to what Sadoff has called the "metaphorical vagina," the landscape description seethes with a feminine eroticism. As in Shirley and Caroline's introduction, language sexualizes the atmosphere in which they interact. In a paragraph describing the deep valley the adjectives accumulate around pleasurable, sexualized natural objects such as the following: meadows "pearled with daisies;" "young verdure" gleaming playfully; "breast-deep heather" with sleeping shadows; a hillside dappled with mother-of-pearl and "silvery blues, soft purples, evanescent greens and rose-shades, all melting into fleeces of white cloud;" the cloud "allured the eye with a remote glimpse" of heaven; the air was "fresh, sweet and bracing" (220). The colors, textures and attitudes described here all combine to form a space in the text for female reverie and interaction.

In this sexualized atmosphere on Nunnely Common, the two women solidify their friendship through intimate conversation and are able to articulate questions that cannot be formulated from within the domestic sphere. The two women idealize an excursion they might take deep into Nunnely Forest, but this excursion never

41 See also Ellen Moer's *Literary Women* on the feminization of landscape.
occurs in the narrative. It can only be pointed to as a potential narrative. The natural landscape metaphorically orders and collates the world of homosocial love and ritual. It remains a potent signifier precisely because it is not permanently occupiable and, therefore, not appropriable. The perfect female homosocial narrative—the manless excursion in the sexualized landscape—is always already about to occur in the perfect future. Nunnely Common is not the narrative's only space in which the women question patriarchal assumptions about a woman's place in the world. They also idealize trips to other feminized landscapes like the Faroe Islands.

Shirley's vision of their trip rescripts a female icon: the mermaid of the Faroe Islands, expanding narrative conventions of femininity and distinguishing homosocial feminine experience from domestic heterosexual experience. When Caroline's depression from her confined existence becomes extreme, she eagerly desires to escape her domestic prison, the "dreary old place" with graves under the out-kitchen (244). "Many that want food and clothing have cheerier lives and brighter prospects than she had; many harassed by poverty, are in a strait less afflictive" (247). To cheer her, Shirley proposes an excursion to the Faroe Isles, and men will not accompany them. In this fantasy sequence, Shirley introduces the mythological female figure of the mermaid. Shirley defines women's relation to her and, by inference, highlights their similarities. She differentiates between a man confronting the mermaid and their own confrontation with the "temptress-terror!" (249). Were they men, Shirley says, they would become victims of the cold enchantress, but they are women and therefore unmoved. The
mermaid has a face in the style of Caroline's but with a preternatural gleam in her eye. This scene becomes unassimilable by the rest of the narrative because it cannot be worked into a heterosexual framework. Like the fantasy description of the Titan-Eve that I will describe below, it ends abruptly; we can read this scene in terms of its rescripting of female icons from the woman's point of view and note its narrative displacement.

In Chapter Eighteen --"Which the Genteel Reader Is Recommended to Skip, Low Persons Here Introduced"-- Shirley rescripts the patriarchal myth of Eve while the women sit outside the doors of the church. The opposition is clearly articulated between the church full of men's stuffy speeches and solitary "Nature at her evening prayers" (314 emphasis mine). Shirley, who would rather not enter the church, instead stays outside the church to be "with my mother Eve." Shirley states that "she is taking me to her bosom, and showing me her heart" (316). In this passage Shirley redefines Eve's relation to history and to women. Susan Gubar notes that Shirley offers Caroline the alternative to Milton's Eve, setting up the opposition of domestic housekeeper and woman-Titan ("Genesis" 241). To press this opposition further, the domestic housekeeper of Milton is also a representative of the "indoor Eve" connected explicitly with heterosexual relations. Inside the church, Eve is a less

42 Elizabeth Langland has pointed out, "the two women 'Stand safe though not dreadless.' The mermaid 'cannot charm,' because they are like her, but 'she will appall,' again because they are like her (Langland DDTM 24). Langland goes on to note the scene's abrupt ending. "[The scene] remains an unassimilable bolus, undigested by the narrative."
than admirable character in the Old Testament, defined only in relation to Adam. Perhaps she is the "low person" here introduced in the chapter's title. *Outside* the church, the woman-Titan is defined outside of the terms of the home and heterosexuality. Shirley's "outdoor Eve" is recast to empower and reposition all women in relation to her as her descendants. Shirley's matriarchal "Titan" is defined in terms of her daring, her strength, and her vitality (315) These terms radically differ from both conceptions of woman as fallen temptress of Adam and from woman as the Angel of the House of Victorian ideology. Here Brontë's homosocial narrative facilitates rescription a classic female icon, Eve.

The first woman's breast that heaved with life on this world yielded the *daring* which could contend with Omnipotence, the *strength* which could bear a thousand years of bondage, the *vitality* which could feed that vulture death through uncounted ages -- the unexhausted life and uncorrupted excellence, sisters to immortality, which, after millenniums of crimes, struggles and woes, could conceive and bring forth a Messiah. The first woman was heaven-born: vast was the heart whence gushed the well-spring of the blood of nations; and grand the undegenerate head where rested the consort-crown of creation. 315 (emphasis mine)

Metaphorically outside the confines of religious and social structures, Shirley and Caroline participate as part of what Jane Thompkins has identified as the "monumental effort to reorganize culture from the woman's point of view" (207 in *The New Historicism*). Daring, strength and vitality of Eve contrast with the submission, weakness, and frailty often attributed to women in Victorian ideology (and often used to describe Caroline when she is confined to her house

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with her uncle). In the passage above, Eve displaces even God as a force felt throughout the ages that culminates in the production of Christ, the Messiah. Gushing forth the well-spring of the blood of nations, she single-handedly, inexhaustibly, and uncorruptedly creates life on earth. The passage becomes a new narrative alternative to the heterosexual positioning of women. This woman, far from being created from Adam's side, is created *ex nihilo* and produces *ad infinitum*. The text of *Shirley*, therefore, articulates not only an intimate female friendship, it also remythologizes the basis of all female relations. This passage serves as a trajectory out of more traditional storylines that see women only in terms of their relation to heterosexual marriage, that see women's reproductive capacity only in terms of its containment by patriarchy. Shirley's digressions, like the one above, textually attempt to redefine women's relation to narrative, but stand out as unassimilable by the rest of the plot.

The pressures of narrative conventions that drive toward heterosexuality and marriage fragment the musings on Eve. Men interrupt the women's homosocial fantasy and foreshadow the reintroduction of heterosexuality of Volume three. "A noise on the road roused Caroline from her filial hopes, and Shirley from her Titan visions" (317). Six soldiers ride by and, as soon as they disappear, "another and somewhat different disturbance broke the night-hush -- a child's impatient scream" (317). William Farren exits the church with his child in his arms. The unromantic world of Monday morning intrudes bringing the women back to the realm of men and heterosexuality. The interruption of the six soldiers underscores the
differentiation Shirley marks out between the homosocial world of women and the Monday morning world of domestic heterosexuality. Elizabeth Langland has aligned Shirley's representation of domesticity with the discourse of a disciplinary regime (DDTM 13), and it seems fitting that the narrative return to the heterosexual family, marked by William Farren, is signaled by the passing soldiers.

Volume three will draw out the association of heterosexuality with discipline through the metaphor of domestic incarceration and sickness. Brontë differentiates femininity and heterosexuality from femininity and homosociality by aligning the former with incarceration and sickness. Heterosexual attraction and marriage proposals consistently connect with scenes of sickness, sleeplessness, and near-death experiences. Volume three picks up themes introduced in Volume one that associate women's experience negatively with marriage and domesticity. In the next section, I will show how this alignment qualifies the closure of the heterosexual marriage ending and refers back to the more favorable representation of women in relation to each other. Joseph Allen Boone notes the way homosociality undermines the final volume. "As Brontë's text gradually overwrites the dominant plot of female friendship with a dual one of romance and marriage, inconsistencies between the two strands begin to surface and undermine the apparent unity of the text" (15).
Brontë attempts to make the transitions from one volume to the next more seamless by using a new character as a hinge. The transition from the first volume to the second volume was shown to be orchestrated through the introduction of the new character Shirley and her subsequent "courtship" scene with Caroline. The transition from Volume two to Volume three is structured in a similar way. The last chapter of Volume two introduces another new character, Louis Moore, Robert and Hortense's brother and Shirley's eventual suitor. He acts as a transitional figure for the concerns of one volume into the concerns of the next. Like Shirley, he is introduced in a domestic scene charged with romantic overtones and focused around Caroline. The Chapter "An Evening Out" blurs the identity of the two brothers in the growing darkness of the parlor scene. Caroline mistakes Louis for Robert.

Increasing puzzle! He bowed rather awkwardly, and turning from her with a stranger's embarrassment, he met the doubtful light from the window: it fell on his face, and the enigma of the dream (dream it seemed) was at its height: she saw a visage like and unlike, --Robert, and no Robert. (396)

In this chapter the slippage between Robert and Louis continues as Caroline addresses Louis while "her thoughts were elsewhere" (397). She resumed her conversation with Louis, but, while she talked to him... her heart beat on the side from which her face was half-averted. She acknowledged a steady, manly, kindly air in Louis; but she bent before the secret power of Robert. To be so near him--though he was silent-- though he did not touch so much as her scarf-fringe, or the white hem of her dress--affected her like a spell... . . . She felt that this evening she
appeared to advantage, and, as Robert was a spectator, the consciousness contented her: had he been called away, collapse would at once have succeeded stimulus. (397)

Louis becomes a conduit for Caroline's desires for Robert. The quotation emphasizes how all her energies are transferred through Louis for Robert's sake. Also at the end the chapter the brothers' individuality again blurs and shifts. The chapter closes with the insinuation that Robert is attached to Shirley. Caroline abruptly excuses herself as the idea upsets her previous pleasure. But Hortense has earlier hinted that Shirley is somehow connected to Louis' visit. It is she who insisted he come (393). Robert's interchanging identity with his brother, Louis, foreshadows how they will exchange places as suitors for Shirley.

But all Caroline knows is that Robert and Shirley seem attracted to each other, and she believes, "Of course, they will marry" (262). "And what--what shall I do when Robert is taken quite from me?" (262). Caroline had long recovered from her first thought of Robert and Shirley together and had been able to carry on even after witnessing them together. But when Louis asks if Robert is a favorite of Shirley's (398), Caroline runs directly home and promptly falls ill with a fever. The opening chapter of Volume three describes her protracted illness and separation from both Robert and Shirley. "The submerged plot that we can reconstruct retrospectively writes her illness as a response to Robert's proposal to Shirley, undisclosed to Caroline or the reader at this time" (Langland DPCN 29). Elizabeth Langland reads the illness as a response to the "final betrayal--in which Shirley becomes an unwitting accomplice" (29). But the illness also can be read retrospectively as a response to the end of the
courtship of Shirley and Robert. Shirley's flat rejection of Robert eventually turns Robert's attentions back toward Caroline, and Robert's double, Louis, will pursue the courtship of Shirley. Therefore, Caroline's fever signals not the betrayal of Caroline by Robert and Shirley, but the pivotal moment where the homosocial relation is displaced by the re-establishment of the courtship plot. The fever acts a metaphor for Caroline's compulsory heterosexuality; she steadily remains transfixed by it and cannot recover. Her attachment to Robert is not passionately inflamed but, rather, like her low-grade fever, persistently consumes her and makes her weaker and weaker.

It seemed, however, but a gentle fire: after two hot days and worried nights, there was no violence in the symptoms, and neither her uncle, nor Fanny, nor the doctor, nor Miss Keeldar, when she called, had any fear for her: a few days would restore her, every one believed. The few days passed, and --though it was still thought it could not long delay -- the revival had not begun. 400

Caroline's condition begins to mirror the decline of Mary Cave, Rector Helstone's wife. While he is "pondering over the unaccountable and feeble nature of women," he hears Mrs. Pryor singing to Caroline. "Why it reminded him of his forgotten dead wife, he could not tell; nor why it made him more concerned than he had hitherto been for Caroline's fading girlhood" (407). Caroline is first explicitly connected to the unfortunate Mary Cave here and in a comment by Hiram Yorke (503). Her fate is sealed up in the same tomb of a house. As Rose Yorke describes it: "I am resolved that my life shall be a life... not a long, slow death like yours in Briarfield Rectory" (384). Second, Helstone's concern for Caroline's fading girlhood is ambiguous. Is he
concerned with her life fading away from sickness, or is he concerned her girlhood is fading as she approaches womanhood? The narrative collapses the distinction. The ambiguity of his comment coupled with the previous connection of sickness to heterosexual desire underscore a narrative alignment of heterosexuality, sickness, and possible death within the confines of the domestic sphere. "Brontë has an impressive power to make us feel the coffin of social custom contracting around Caroline" (Langland DPCN 29). Social customs of heterosexuality force both the narrative and the women characters to undergo a change from their previous homosocial interactions. The famous passage quoted below characterizes the novel's attitude toward heterosexual relations and its explicit connection to pain and sickness. Heterosexuality contrasts with the nurturing, supportive female homosocial relation of Volume two. It is worth quoting at length.

Take the matter as you find it; ask no questions; utter no remonstrances; it is your best wisdom. You expected bread, and you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyred: 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 your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezes scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob... you will be stronger, wiser and less sensitive. (Brontë 128)

After Shirley's initial visit to Caroline's sick room, she is nowhere to be seen. As Caroline becomes dangerously ill, Shirley is
curiously unavailable.\textsuperscript{43} However, if we look at the structure of the novel in terms of the original volume divisions, we can see how the narrative contains its representation of the two women's close friendship within the central volume. The third volume takes up the details of both Caroline's and Shirley's courtships and is unable to continue representing the intense intimacy the two women have established. Both women in this volume suffer terrible distress without the aid of each other. Both their illnesses and the way they are inaccessible to each other signal the shift in narrative representation strategies towards the heterosexual courtship plot.

During Caroline's sickness she does find out her mother's identity in Mrs. Pryor. Her homosocial love and nurturance aid Caroline greatly in her crisis. But it is Robert who occupies her deliriums. "I went in to call Robert to breakfast: I have been with him in the garden: he asked me to go: a heavy dew has refreshed the flowers: the peaches are ripening" (Brontë 405). The illness is focused around him. "'Oh! that I should see him once more before all is over: Heaven might favour me thus far!' she cried. 'God grant me a little comfort before I die'" (404). Mrs. Pryor reveals her identity to Caroline in an attempt to substitute for the absent love of Robert, as he is totally unavailable. She tries to give the desolate Caroline some other reason to live. "But your mind, Caroline: your mind is crushed; you heart is almost broken: you have been so

\textsuperscript{43} Elizabeth Langland has also noted this curious plot turn. "It is surprising, in one sense, that Brontë should decide in structuring her narrative to send Shirley on a trip with relatives prior to Caroline's serious fever" (Langland DPCN 28).
neglected, so repulsed, left so desolate" (409). Caroline does recover after her mother's revelation. She builds a relationship with her that temporarily does substitute for her loss, but interestingly she also builds a relationship with William Farren. Her heterosocial relationship with him serves as a bridge toward her eventual relationship with Robert. Also, the primacy of her love with her mother is soon lost in the course of this volume as other concerns, including Shirley's love interest, take precedence. Caroline's plans to go and live with her mother are never recurred to. But Mrs. Pryor's tending the sick bed entitles her to compensatory consideration when Caroline and Robert decide to marry (595).

In the first chapter of Shirley's return, she does go to Caroline's side. But in this chapter in the third volume, the relationship has changed as a direct result of Louis Moore. The two women are alone in the summer-house when Caroline asks Shirley about Louis. Shirley eventually gets cross after they have an interchange with him, and he departs abruptly. Caroline pursues the subject but cannot read Shirley's reaction to Louis at all. Caroline does not have any idea that Shirley could be attracted to Louis; she sees only that Shirley treats him unfairly. Shirley is snide and sarcastic to Caroline and says finally, "He is a topic on which you and I shall quarrel if we discuss it often; so drop it henceforward and for ever" (433). Caroline can only marvel why "she is not often so inconsiderate--so irritable" (433).

Heterosexual attraction comes between them and their way of talking freely. Caroline also can never confront Shirley about Robert. They are characterized as out of sympathy with each other when it
comes to these most important heterosexual relationships. Shirley keeps other secret confidences from Caroline as well. Shirley's secret dog bite and the emotional turmoil she experiences act as a metaphor for her initiation into heterosexual engagement and contribute to her estrangement from Caroline.

In the chapter "Phoebe" Shirley is bitten by a potentially rabid dog. At first she tells no one for three weeks, approximately the same amount of time that Caroline was ill. Shirley also wastes away as Caroline does. Both are described as having a wasted little hand (403 and 474). Like Caroline's attraction to Robert, Shirley's attraction to Louis Moore will be closely connected to her illness. In her case, it will draw her closer to him by forcing her to make herself dependent on him. Everyone notices Shirley's changed manner and inquires. She suffers silently until she finally tells Louis after he had summoned and interrogated her. After she confesses her deepest fears of going mad, she gives him instructions as to what to do if madness does set in. She explicitly directs him in how to manage all her relatives and the people who know her. She never mentions Caroline in this phrase, not even to keep her away. She says, "If female help is needed, call in my housekeeper, Mrs. Gill. . . . But keep my good aunt and my timid cousins away. Once more, promise" (480).

Shirley's dog bite and her confessional scene initiate the courtship with Louis Moore, who soothes the heiress. They subsequently try to clear up their previous misunderstandings of each other and renew their friendship from years past. He thought her haughty and distant; she says she only reacted to his own
reserved gestures (483). They resolve to make amends, and their courtship begins. Shirley's illness brings her to the position of being in need of Louis. He is ready to demonstrate his role as her superior and comforter and does so.

Earlier in the novel, he, too, was briefly ill. His illness was directly connected narratively to the time period when Shirley was entertaining a number of suitors. "Flattered and fawned upon as Shirley was just now, it appeared she was not absolutely spoiled--that her better nature did not quite leave her" (449). This quotation, establishing Shirley's good nature, leads to a rationale for why she becomes so concerned when Louis has a sudden attack of illness (450). But narratively, her attention to suitors can be seen to cause his fever. His illness aligns him with heterosexual desire and the courtship narrative. The casualness with which Shirley treats her various suitors mirrors the unseriousness of his illness. He soon recovers and is able to assume the role of her teacher and eventually lover.

The final important character in the episodes of the third volume is Robert Moore. After his rejection by Shirley, he leaves town for an extended period of time. Neither he nor Shirley reveals any signs of sickness at this point in the novel. His proposal to Shirley originated from avaricious not heterosexual desire; his proposal to her was a great error. We do not learn of this episode until he returns. But soon after he does return, upon his first appearance in the third volume, he is struck down by a gunshot and severely wounded. He has just confessed to Hiram Yorke that he proposed to Shirley even though he did not love her. "I never felt as
if nature meant her to be my other and better self" (498). "I had to go over the whole proposal twice . . . before she would fully take it in" (498). Shirley tells him: "You spoke like a brigand who demanded my purse, rather than like a lover who asked my heart" (499). "I looked at her, dumb and wolfish: she at once enraged and shamed me" (499). "I stood to be scorned" (499). He has misconstrued Shirley's sisterly intentions to him. Because, of course, if she had been attracted to him, she would never had been so friendly. He was wrong to think that, because she showed interest in him, she was seeking gratification for herself.

That is to say, that you have the worst opinion of me: that you deny me the possession of all I value most. That is to say, that I am a traitor to all my sisters: that I have acted as no woman can act, without degrading herself and her sex: that I have sought where the incorrupt of my kind naturally scorn and abhor to seek. (500).

She tells him that time may give him the key to interpreting her actions more accurately. "Perhaps you will comprehend me and we will be reconciled" (501).

Directly after Moore's confession of his proposal and his departure from Yorke, he is shot. Bringing into representation Shirley's rejection of him removes an obstacle to his courtship of Caroline. But the narrative itself scorns his violation of conventions of courtship: he proposed marriage where he felt no love (501). His gunshot wound functions as both retribution for the violation and also as a code to his initiation in the courtship plot. Like the other characters, his illness positions him on the side of heterosexual desire while it also incarcerates him within the domestic sphere of Mrs. Yorke and Mrs. Horsfall. Moore's enforced bedrest give him precisely
the time he needs to reinterpret Shirley’s action, realize that she was acting on behalf of Caroline, and then realize he must now become dependent on Caroline.44

Again in Volume three, the narrative correlates various utterances and incidents with indirect reactions. Robert Moore’s subsequent injury and imprisonment in the Yorke’s bedroom will again align the domestic sphere with incarceration and heterosexual desire. He will first become a victim of the oppressive conditions of dependency in the domestic sphere; and, then, from this position, he will realize his heterosexual desire for and dependence on Caroline.

The "treacherously-inflicted wound" renders Moore a helpless invalid subject to women’s control. The chapters that narrate his confinement at the Yorke’s house almost never refer to his point of view. He is consistently an objectified body that women vie for control over and subject to their torturous disciplines. First, Mrs. Yorke and Hortense Moore "held the millowner captive" (525). They restrict his visitors and "hardly let the air breathe or the sun shine on him" (525). But after a mishap they get replaced by the "giantess" Zillah Horsfall. The women were perfectly cowed by her breadth, height, bone and brawn (526). Horsfall, more dragon-like than woman, disciplines Moore even worse than before. "As to Moore, no one now ventured to inquire about him: Mrs. Horsfall had him at dry-nurse: it was she who was to do for him" (526). "She taught him

44 Here also Langland makes a similar argument. "Robert now must experience a dependence inflicted on him by women to discover the real reliance and dependence he has on others" (Langland DPCN 31).
docility in a trice... She made no account of his six feet--his manly thews and sinews: she turned him in his bed as another woman would have turned a babe in its cradle" (526). In all of these pages describing his condition, he is only given one utterance, a comment on Horsfall's drinking (527). The rest of the time, he is a body being "knocked about terribly" (532). Moore's domestic incarceration is more severe than any other characters'. After his pride causes him to violate proper courtship rituals, he becomes subjected to the severest lesson in dependence, docility and the disciplining of the domestic regime. "Robert Moore had a pleasant time of it: in pain, danger; too weak to move; almost too weak to speak; a sort of giantess his keeper, three surgeons his sole society" (526). The narrator's sarcasm here and throughout this chapter reveals a lack of sympathy for his condition. The scenes of the "dragon" Horsfall are more comical than really worrisome. The narrator's ironic tone "betrays a barely disguised glee that he should feel what Caroline has felt" (Langland 31).

He is meant to feel what Caroline has felt. From this position, Moore will also reengage his courtship with Caroline. Their conditions are explicitly compared. Through his illness Caroline realizes that Robert does care for her. Martin Yorke orchestrates a secret visit for the two of them. Robert, "a tall, thin, wasted figure" greets Caroline with both hands (540). His wasted hands recall both Caroline's and Shirley's wasted fingers. "Come still nearer, Lina, and give me your hand -- if my thin fingers do not scare you" (543) He tells her how he wished for her. "Only last night, I despaired of ever seeing you again. Weakness has wrought terrible depression in me
--terrible depressions. . . . Not so much pain now; but I am hopelessly weak, and the state of my mind is inexpressible --dark, barren, impotent" (541). Caroline had also despaired of ever seeing Robert in her illness. She answers: "I understand your feelings: I experienced something like it. Since we met, I too have been very ill. . . . I thought I should die. . . . I had strange feelings. . . . I believed I should never see you again; and I grew so thin-- thin as you are now: I could do nothing for myself--neither rise nor lie down; and I could not eat -- yet, you see I am better" (542). "You speak my experience," he answers her at one point. Experience brings Robert to a position where he realizes Caroline's worth and their own mutual dependence on each other. "'May I be spared to make some atonement!' Such was his prayer" (542).

Robert describes himself under these conditions as impotent and unmanned; although his sickness temporarily renders him weak in this position, it ultimately brings out in him the most virile of sexual desires. After his encounter with Caroline, he breaks free of the Yorke prison-house, and returns to his cottage. His very first action is to invite Caroline over to tea. He confesses to her his proposal to Shirley. He refers indirectly to how the proposal related to his own staggering collapse. Caroline tells him, in turn, that Shirley was shocked by the proposal, and he responds, "I'll shock her no more, Cary, for the shock rebounded on myself till I staggered again" (560). Moore regains his footing on the track of his reestablished courtship routine with Caroline. Although his financial obstacles still exist, his path is clear. "I have no intention, because I have no right, to perturb your mind now, nor for months to come:
don't look as if you would leave me: we will make no more agitating allusions" (561). But the narrative itself does not delay for "months to come." The next scene portrays Caroline watering her plants when Robert entwines his arms around her. The church bells are ringing for the repeal of the Orders of Council. Historical, political concerns converge with the courtship plot to facilitate their marriage. "This day lays for my fortunes abroad, firm foundation; on which, for the first time in my life, I can securely build. . . . Will Caroline . . . pardon all I have made her suffer--all that long pain I have sickness caused her--all that sickness of body and mind she owed to me? . . . Is Caroline mine?" (594). After her acceptance of Robert the two of them join Shirley and Louis for the double marriage that closes the novel.

Conclusion

Volume three shows how all four of the major characters involved in courtship fall ill and how their illness is related to the initiation of their courtship plot. Do these marriages negate the representation of the homosocial relationship articulated in Volume two?

Terry Castle has noted that the "original homosocial bond between Shirley and Caroline. . . . is replaced at the end of the novel" with the marriages (73-74). Castle states that "even Brontë, like other Victorian novelists, gives way in the end to the force of fictional and ideological convention" (74). Rather, the narrative's relation to the representation of homosocial bonds is more
complicated than Castle assumes. First, she sets the homosocial bond in binary opposition to the heterosexual one; whereas, I have read the ways in which Brontë sets homosocial experience apart from heterosexual experience and domestic experience. The novel does not situate these experiences in terms of a substitution of one for the other. Shirley articulates a distinction between marriage which it aligns with sickness and incarceration, and female friendship, which is aligned with freedom, travel, and supportive community. Brontë conforms to the form of the novel with marriage as closure, but she has already undermined the foundation of this closure. The double marriage signifies an anxious acknowledgment that one marriage would not suffice to close off the ambivalence articulated toward marriage and heterosexuality.

Many other critics have views similar to Castle's, and they see the female friendship as ultimately working in the service of the more primary, heterosexual partnerships that close the novel. Janet Gezari states that Brontë is unable to change "her belief that the happiest women are those who are happily married" (104). Gezari does not cite any Brontë source for this comment, instead she reads the ending of the novel at face value. "[Brontë] is unable or unwilling to relinquish her faith in love as a solvent despite all the evidence in Shirley that marriage is not just regularly unhappy but suicidal, as in the story of Mary Cave, and degrading, as in the story of Mrs. Pryor" (Gezari 104). Linda Hunt concurs. Female friendship "offers no solutions that are useful in the real world of 'Monday morning,' which Brontë is determined to inhabit instead of the fantasy climes of her girlhood. Shirley and Caroline cannot really be votaries in the
sisterhood of Diana; in the actual world all they can be is sisters-in-law" (Hunt 77). According to Hunt, Charlotte Brontë recognizes that the masculine world cannot be ignored, and she "ultimately rejects woman's culture as a means to emotional fulfillment" (Hunt 77). "In spite of the lesbian connotation of the imagery in the Nunnwood passage, Brontë consciously equates erotic satisfaction with heterosexual union and so Caroline and Shirley must marry" (78).

To the contrary, I have shown that the narrative aligns heterosexuality with sickness and incarceration, not erotic satisfaction. Volume three reinforces the anti-marriage themes introduced in Volume one. The alignment qualifies the closure of the heterosexual marriage ending and refers back to the more favorable representation of women in relation to each other, contained in Volume two. The narrative proximity of heterosexuality and sickness informs and undermines the power of the "happy" ending. Conventions of narrative dictate that the courtship plot develop linearly towards the marriage closure, but the idealized second volume mediates that closure as an "unassimilable bolus" that has attempted to expand what can be narrated in the conventional novel. Do we say that this volume, then, contributes to the novel's lack of unity or do we celebrate the way it has negotiated an alternative strategy for women's narrative and women's existence? Brontë's strategy of separating the volumes and importing the private codes of homosocial bonds into the novel of heterosexual romance serves to bridge the representational gap between her life experience with women and narrative conventions of the Victorian novel.
CHAPTER FOUR

VILLETTE

In the chapter on Shirley we have seen how Brontë's narrative brought into representation a female homosocial relationship. Chapter Three also brought to light the narrative consequences of this representation. The representation of Caroline and Shirley's romantic friendship mirrors friendships constructed in private letters of the time period, but when brought into representation in the context of historical romance, the homosocial relation ruptures the structure of that text in ways I have demonstrated. Shirley shows the incommensurability of homosociality and heterosexual narrative through its exploitation of the separate and conflicting stereotypes of femininity: Nature and the domestic sphere. The deployment of these two representational strategies resulted in the novel's bifurcated focus, structural division, and unconvincing ending.

Turning to Villette we can continue the discussion of homosociality's relationship to narrative structure. Unlike Shirley's omniscient narrator, Villette has a first-person female narrator, Lucy Snowe. In this chapter, I will show the incompatibility of homosociality and the narrative of the female narrator. The introduction of the intimate, homosocial ties of Shirley Keeldar and Caroline Helstone are facilitated through an omniscient narrator. In
Villette, the first-person, female narrator, Lucy Snowe, is unable to maintain the distinction drawn in Shirley between female homosociality and Nature, and female heterosexuality and the domestic. The domestic and the homosocial collapse together in Villette and both are aligned with the carceral. In this homosocial sphere, the female characters are represented in terms of their differences from each other and their differences from Lucy. Throughout Villette Lucy develops no intimate relations with women characters. Their existence within the domestic sphere comes to signify a kind of death and the end of narrative.

This omission of women engaged with each other adds an interesting dimension to Robyn Warhol's thesis about narrative strategies and femininity in Gendered Interventions. Warhol's argument, in summary, states that middle-class women writers, like Brontë, adapted more frequently to first-person narrators for a variety of historically specific reasons. First person could convey a more personal immediate narrative persona, who would engage with the reader in order to persuade or convince the reader of his or her point of view. Omniscient narrators tend to distance the reader according to Warhol. Women writers had few sanctioned public venues to express their ideas, and therefore, the engaging narrator became the medium through which they expressed their vital concerns. Lucy frequently addresses the reader with her concerns and simultaneously detaches herself from the scene of narration as an observer. In Villette Lucy does employ many engaging strategies with her "readers." Yet, in order to engage with the reader, Lucy simultaneously distances herself from other characters in the book,
especially female characters. Warhol shows how engaging narrators relate to a gendered narrative. Further investigation reveals that this engaging narrator exists in a gendered relation to other characters. As I will show, Villette's engaging, first-person narrator does not represent herself engaged with any other female character. In Shirley, the omniscient narrator was able to represent a strong female friendship in spite of its effect on the structure of the narrative as a whole. In Villette, Brontë's most potentially feminine world, the representation of women in community with each other seems to become inarticulatable. This chapter will investigate the particulars of both a female narrator's relationship to her narrative and her relationship to other female characters within the narration. I will demonstrate that the omission of homosocial interaction is not incidental but is integrally related to Lucy's identity as both a single woman and the teller of the tale.

Lucy is consistently removed from the domestic, homosocial sphere. Unlike Shirley, in which Brontë differentiates homosociality from domesticity, in Villette homosociality and domesticity are aligned together, and both are consistently negated or rejected. Instead of representing Lucy in terms of female ties of homosociality, the novel focuses on the single woman without social ties of any sort.

45 The Rue Fossette school with its female head mistress, female teachers, and all-girl students would seem to be the ideal setting for homosocial interaction (as opposed to the masculine saturated world of Shirley).

46 Janet Gezari notes that "Lucy establishes her gender in the novel not in community with the women around her but in determined difference from the men" (130).
Lucy is introduced as a young girl visiting in her godmother's house at Bretton. At no time in the novel does Lucy mention her mother or father or anything about her home life except through vague and facetious metaphors. This initial and prolonged displacement of Lucy's identity, exacerbated by her reluctance to reveal even her name until the second chapter, sets up the structuring question of the text: "Who is Lucy Snowe?" As narrator, Lucy is careful to introduce other characters in terms of their family background, including Miss Paulina Home's grand uncle, "a French savant" (63). (She tells us about him before she even tells us her name.) Paulina's surname, "Home," and her detailed family background reemphasize Lucy's homelessness. Even when she does go home from Bretton, she narrates over a gap of eight years through metaphor and allusion, and she avoids the specifics that characterized her description of the Bretton home.

I betook myself home, having been absent six months. It will be conjectured that I was of course glad to return to the bosom of my kindred. Well! the amiable conjecture does no harm, and may therefore be left uncontradicted. Far from saying nay, indeed, I will permit the reader to picture me, for the next eight years, as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather, in a harbour still as glass. . . . A great many women and girls are supposed to pass their lives something in that fashion; why not I with the rest? Her phrasing of leaving the conjecture uncontradicted implies that it should be contradicted. This odd way of indirectly telling white lies to the reader conjures up the question of what Lucy's home life is actually like. Where does Lucy Snowe come from? Who is Lucy Snowe? What does happen to her and what will happen to her? These questions function as enigmas that structure the events that
follow in terms of the possibility of answers. Lucy's life undergoes a major change. The narrative moves forward to answer the questions generated. As Cohen and Shires have defined it, narrative is composed of two parts: the events in a sequence, the story, and the organization of the telling of those events, the narration. "Story consists of events placed in a sequence to delineate a process of change, the transformation of one event into another" (53). For Lucy Snowe, this process of change will entail her movement from a young girl to her eventual position as a teacher in charge of her own school.

Lucy Snowe's character moves through the novel on a quest for her own identity and independence; unlike Jane Eyre's quest for a mother substitute, and Caroline's and Shirley's quest for an Edenic, matriarchal past, Lucy continues through the novel as "a rising character" moving towards a stable position characterized by an independent income and position. Peter Brooks has noted ambition as "a defining characteristic of the modern novel (as of bourgeois society)".47 Brooks fails to discriminate how ambition is different or

47 The quote continues "that it takes aspiration, getting ahead, seriously, rather than simply as the object of satire (which was the case in much earlier, more aristocratically determined literature), and thus it makes ambition the vehicle and emblem of Eros, that which totalizes the world as possession and progress" (Reading for the Plot 39). Brooks account of narrative plots fails to address any novels written by women and how they may have negotiated plot and desire differently. He graciously admits only through littotes that "the female plot is not unrelated, but it takes a more complex stance toward ambition" (39). He seems to prefer to equate male desire with human desire in a gross elision of the subjectivity of the female character and female author. In his formulation, the female in narrative can only be the object of desire; "she is herself impervious to desire, a smooth surface on which desire cannot take hold (57). (This may be true in the texts he analyzes but he quickly
the same for female characters created by female authors. In Brontë's texts, a single woman's relationships to ambition and identity are very different from the male protagonists' Brookes analyzes. For a single woman in Brontë's novels, ambition must always be seen in the context of complicated oppositions of stability versus instability, dependence versus independence, working outside the home versus working inside the home.

Lucy's ambivalence towards ambition consistently positions her in terms of instability and delays the answering of the structuring enigmas mentioned earlier. This instability and delay relate to the conditions of narratability. D. A. Miller's *Narrative and Its Discontents* outlines a useful theory of narratability that foregrounds the necessity of instability and questions the totalizing power of closure. His study helps us deflect attention away from the narrative's ostensible referent and calls attention to the novel's principles of production (xi). Miller defines the narratable as "the instances of disequilibrium, suspense, and general insufficiency from which a given narrative appears to arise. . . . [I]t is thus opposed to the 'nonnarratable' state of quiescence assumed by a novel before moves from the particular to the general of "the anatomy of human desire" (40)."

Instability and insufficiency become the mechanism by which the narrative is uttered or made narratable (5). Miller foregrounds this unstable aspect of narrative to call into questions assumptions governing the claims of closure. Whereas the narratable inherently lacks finality by definition, narrative closure can only be a momentary suppression (xi). "The narrative dynamic itself can never be accommodated in a final settlement" (xii).
the beginning and supposedly recovered by it at the end" (x). However, like Peter Brooks, Miller fails to discriminate how gender intervenes in the conditions this production. In analyzing the narrative of Villette, the autobiography of a single woman, we must investigate how Lucy Snowe's gender relates to what becomes aligned with the unstable, the enigmatic, i.e. the narratable, and what becomes aligned with the stable, the enigma's solution, i.e. the non-narratable.

Instead of looking at Lucy's quest for identity as simply another trademark of the bourgeois novel, and instead of assuming that stability and instability are ungendered terms in the representational system of the novel, we can more succinctly discriminate the gendered implications of the text's structuring questions and more succinctly highlight the complicated relationship of homosociality to narrative utterance. The main enigma--"Who is Lucy Snowe?" is fraught with complications because Lucy is a single woman in Victorian England. Roland Barthes' S/Z provides some useful terms to begin discussing how the enigma functions narratively. He names the hermeneutic code as one of the five structuring codes of narratives that produce a network through which the text is produced. The hermeneutic code can be seen as "all the units whose function it is to articulate in various ways a question, its response, and the variety of chance events which can either

49 The predicament of the unmarried woman in an ideology based on a woman-as-nurturer model has been discussed at length. See Helsinger, Sheets and Veeder's The Woman Question (in three volumes) for examples of the debates that raged over her place in society in literature, science, law and religion.
formulate the question or delay its answer" (Barthes 17). One might highlight every particular lexia that functions in this way as Barthes does with "Sarrasine," but my project is not to repeat Barthes' but to make use of his naming as a starting point. When I discuss the question of Lucy's identity and the ways the texts suspends the answer to that question, I am discussing the effects of the hermeneutic code. Barthes discusses the hermeneutic code's relation to story in the following quotation:

The dynamics of the text (since it implies a truth to be deciphered) is thus paradoxical: it is a static dynamics: the problem is to maintain the enigma in the initial void of its answer; whereas sentences quicken the story's "unfolding" and cannot help but move the story along, the hermeneutic code performs an opposite action: it must set up delays (obstacles, deviations) in the flow of discourse; its structure is essentially reactive, since it opposes the ineluctable advance of language with an organized set of stoppages. (75)

As the story develops, the hermeneutic code opposes its immediate resolution by inserting new obstacles to the enigma's solution. For example, shortly after Lucy tells us her name, she finds herself homeless, jobless, and without connection; we are left asking again "Who is Lucy Snowe?" Barthes states that the hermeneutic code, in the form of obstacles or stoppages, works in the opposite direction of moving the story along. The hermeneutic code can also be thought of in terms of a generative function--that which keeps the reader reading because it stops the story from ending. Potential answers to the enigmas can be thought of as stoppages that must be avoided. Unlike Barthes, I will also show how these stoppages are gendered. The hermeneutic code, that which functions to suspend resolution,
will be discussed in terms of that which generates narrative, forestalls answers, and keeps the story going. In this narrative, homosocial relations will be shown to function as stoppages and reserve and repression will be shown to function productively.

In *Villette* the narrative of Lucy Snowe's life is constructed upon the pervading absence of domestic, homosocial connection because that connection represents an answer to the text's enigma and, therefore, "the utter end of discourse" (Barthes 62). For Lucy to align herself with other women in the narrative, she would also consign herself to a non-narratable, stable existence. Implicit to my argument then, is the narrative's innate hostility towards a female subject identification, which aligns itself in community with others.

In many narratives (including *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*) the heroine begins in an unstable and isolated position and moves towards closure or stability by way of a heterosexual relation. Even though I complicate this narrative structure in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley* can be read in this way. In those narratives, the heterosexual closure eventually aligns itself with the domestic sphere. The last scenes are frequently of the happy couple at their fireside surrounded by domestic bliss. *Villette* is a very different novel. It begins and ends with the isolated heroine who is alienated from the domestic sphere. The domestic scene is constructed solely in terms of homosociality, not heterosexuality. All heterosexual relations are constructed outside of domesticity: in the school, the theatre, the museum, or the Hotel de Crécy. Lucy will negotiate two heterosexual relations with John Graham Bretton and with M. Paul; neither one will be resolved through the traditional
resolution in domesticated marriage. Obviously, this is all determined before the narrative begins because it can begin only after Lucy has lived this section of her life. For Lucy, domesticity will always be homosocial, and because she will establish an alternative source of stability other than heterosexual marriage, she will reject every manifestation of it. Until she secures that alternative source of stability, the proprietorship of her own school, homosociality and domesticity represent a non-narratable detour that prohibit the articulation of her "autobiography."

Lucy Snowe's "autobiography" or "journey to selfhood" is articulated along a fine line which negotiates desire for and repression of homosocial connection and desire to tell a story. Brenda Silver highlights the incommensurability of Lucy's relation to characters and her relation to narrative.

Lucy both courts and laments the roles assigned to her by others in what is rightfully read as her search for selfhood. Ultimately, however, who Lucy is is inseparable from what she is: a teller of tales unspeakable in the presence of either her comfortable and comforting godmother and the friends who surround her at La Terrasse, or the colder, more worldly, yet equally uncomprehending eavesdroppers at the pensionat on the Rue Fossette. (90)  

50 Silver's argument in "The Reflecting Reader" calls attention to the construction of Lucy Snowe's identity as it is constructed in relation to the readers she addresses. She reads Villette and Lucy's identity in terms of a mutual act of creation done by the narrator and her readers. Only the readers' participation will give this untraditional heroine the recognition she needs and is denied by other characters. I find Silver's argument compelling in many ways. She highlights how heterosexual romanticism is "the fantasy that Lucy finds necessary to forego while she makes an independent life for herself" (107). But she does not foreground how Lucy's identity is also
The telling of the story of Lucy's life highlights a complicated relationship between narrativity, homosociality, domesticity, and repression which this chapter will unfold. In summary, this chapter will discriminate how the female homosocial realm and female interaction are always articulated in a domestic context and that context becomes aligned with dead-end stoppages or states of non-narrative quiescence. Instead of ending the novel with a heterosexual domestic scene, the narrative separates heterosexuality from domesticity throughout. Heterosexual interactions compose the activity of the narrative in opposition to the stasis represented by women at home with each other. This chapter will also identify how Lucy's own reticence, repression, and reserve function generatively to keep Lucy out of the domestic sphere and suspend the answer to the question "Who is Lucy Snowe?" "Between question and answer there is a whole dilatory area whose emblem might be named "reticence" (Barthes 75). The "dilatory area" of Lucy's narrative is manifested literally by her reticence. Her failure to act and her refusal to speak often generate narrative. Finally, I will examine the narrative's terms for closure. Roland Barthes likens closure to the end of a pregnancy; closure functions as a liberating catastrophe that brings about the utter end of discourse (62). As traditional forms of domesticity are rejected throughout the novel and Lucy does not marry at the end, alternative terms of stability are employed to answer the narrative's enigma. It is precisely by way of a liberating constructed in terms of her rejection of homosocial and domestic relations. I am also interested in how these constructions of Lucy relate to narrative explicitly.
catastrophe that Lucy brings her story to a close. M. Paul, after establishing her in her own school, dies in a ship wreck, leaving her an independent, autonomous working woman. Instead of resolving the narrative with a marriage, it ends with Lucy as a professional. From that position, an alternate term of stability, Lucy narrates her autobiography. Her self-fulfilling narrative brings her to the stable position from which she can tell her tale.

Miss Marchmont

One of the first examples of domesticity's alignment with the non-narratable occurs in Chapter Four. Ironically describing herself as a bark slumbering through life, basking and cushioned as other women and girls, Lucy here first makes the connection between a placid, sleepy existence and a woman's life with other women. "A great many women and girls are supposed to pass their lives something in that fashion; why not I with the rest?" (Brontë 94). That "there must have been a wreck at last" indicates the force of the hermeneutic code that pulls Lucy out of the domestic sphere and compels the story forward. If Lucy is not like other middle-class women and girls, what will she become? "She is traumatically cast out of the middle class, quite unprepared to live, for all the world had expected her to exist parasitically" (Millet 261). After the "shipwreck" of her kindred, Lucy has "fallen overboard" and is thrown on her own resources (Brontë 94).

At this point, her "mourning dress" and "faded and hollowed-eyed vision" position Lucy on the side of death and inactivity.
Though she still feels "life at life's sources" (96), she submits to a living internment with Miss Marchmont. Lucy takes care of the old woman and even comes to cling to this death-in-life existence. Within one paragraph Lucy details her entire existence with Miss Marchmont. The expanse of her sense of self and the space of the narrative narrow simultaneously. "All within me became narrowed to my lot" while "two hot, close rooms thus became my world" (97). With Miss Marchmont Lucy "would have crawled on with her for twenty years, if for twenty years longer her life of endurance had been protracted. But another decree was written" (97 emphasis mine). Twenty years in two hot close rooms would not be narratable due to lack of change. As Cohen and Shires have pointed out above, narrative is composed of a sequence of changes. Lucy's life with Miss Marchmont was characterized by its lack of change. Fate's writing foregrounds the implicit relationship of Lucy's life of non-narratable inaction and the action which will constitute the articulation of her story. Lucy's homosocial domestic existence with Miss Marchmont is antithetical to any activity that could constitute a narrative.

Therefore "Fate" in the novel can be read in terms of the hermeneutic code --as that which introduces instability, suspends resolution, and enables the narrative to move forward.

The chapter after Miss Marchmont's death, Chapter Five, is entitled "Turning a New Leaf." For Lucy and the readers of her narrative, the title has both a metaphorical and a literal meaning. As the metaphor defines itself for Lucy, she is beginning a new phase of her life after being forced into disequilibrium by losing her job. The relationship of making a new life and reading or writing on a new
page is made explicit in this metaphor. The "new leaf" of the book of her life is at this point yet to be known by the reader, but the title suggests that something does happen to Lucy that will constitute a narrative. We will read that narrative by physically turning the page; it will contain events that will compose a story. Karen Lawrence suggests that the fifth chapter which narrates "Lucy's journey to a foreign country, is her attempt and the narrative's to enhance narratability" (Lawrence 314). Being thrown on her own resources once more, Lucy is again characterized as "thin, haggard and hollow-eyed" (Brontë 103). But this time when again feeling at life's forces, she feels some "new power" one might call ambition, and draws in its energy (104). She does not submit to an existence within the domestic sphere, but instead, while wandering in the fields at night, she decides to head for London.

Directly after this decision, Lucy consults an old servant, now in another household. Here Lucy describes the existence of that household's mistress, an old schoolmate of hers, and again aligns domesticity and inactivity. "What a beautiful and kind-looking woman was the good-natured and comely, but unintellectual girl

51 In "The Cypher: Disclosure and Reticence in Villette" Lawrence highlights what she sees as Lucy's attempts to avoid signification by repression and reticence. I disagree with Lawrence's statement that Lucy's repressions and observation capacity enable her to avoid textualization (308). Lawrence does admit that Lucy cannot retreat from textuality totally and ultimately becomes signified as a person "stamped with deprivation" (309). I argue, rather, it is only by holding back that Lucy maintains a narrative self to textualize. Her holding back maintains narrative disequilibrium and generates story. She appears to be constructed in terms of lack because of our assumptions regarding women defined in connection to others.
become" (104). Her beauty and course of existence are associated with a feeble mentality. Her mental weakness is here closely associated with her domestic comforts, as if domestic comforts induced this state. In contrast, Lucy sets out for London on her own. As a woman traveling alone, outside the domestic sphere, people have difficulty reading her. "I believe at first they thought I was a servant; but in a little while they changed their minds, and hovered over me in doubtful state between patronage and politeness" (107). Thrown out of the domestic sphere and into this nebulous position by the workings of Fate and narrative, Lucy decides to move ahead and not remain in the same position. "A strong, vague persuasion, that it was better to go forward than backward, and that I could go forward" (107). Lucy's strong, vague persuasion, like that new power she previously had drawn in, aligns action against domestic existence and prolongs her destabilized position.

Rue Fossette

When Lucy first arrives at Rue Fossette, she attains a position as nursery-governess for Madame Beck's little girls. Lucy only vaguely describes her time looking after the girls and only in general terms. No action of any warrant occurs while she is thus positioned in a feminized occupation within this small, domestic space. Her position is similar to caretaking for Miss Marchmont. She describes herself at times "shut in with the children" (Brontë 139). Soon Lucy falls under the investigating gaze of Madame Beck. Lucy forewarns the reader, "I was to be called down from my watch-tower of the
nursery, whence I had hitherto made my observations, and was to be compelled into closer intercourse with this little world of the Rue Fossette" (Brontë 138, emphasis mine). Lucy's passive construction of this excerpt situates her as being acted upon by fate and other forces beyond her control. Her next move in the progress of her life is couched in terms of her personal reluctance and ability to remain in an existence that would never come to be narrated: shut in and teaching infants, etc. The following scenes demonstrate the way the text aligns certain activities and behaviors as masculine or feminine. These associations of masculinity and femininity refer not to some actual nature, but rather, come to operate in certain ways through textual alignments in the narrative. For example, Madame Beck asks her to teach the English class for an absent teacher.

[W]ith my usual habit of cowardice, I shrunk into my sloth, like a snail into its shell, and alleged incapacity and impracticability as a pretext to escape action. If left to myself, I should infallibly have let this chance slip. Inadventurous, unstirred by impulses of practical ambition, I was capable of sitting twenty years teaching infants the hornbook, turning silk dresses and making children's frocks. (139-140)

"Capable of sitting twenty years" echoes the phrase she used to described her life with Miss Marchmont: "I would have crawled on for twenty years" (97). Though Lucy's eyes are not hollowed-out from watching as with Miss Marchmont, she again associates this inactivity with watching and observing from her "watchtower." Now she must change. Miss Marchmont's death had forced Lucy into action; now, Madame Beck does. The narrative dilates. "Will you,
said [Madame Beck], 'go backward or forward?' . . . 'En avant,' I said" (141). In contrast to the Miss Marchmont situation, Lucy this time seems to have a choice. Madame Beck is here described in terms of her masculinity. "I saw in her countenance a something that made me think twice ere I decided. At that instant, she did not wear a woman's aspect, but rather a man's" (141). Lucy's choice becomes articulated in gendered terms. Madame Beck's manly aspect and decisiveness contrasts with Lucy's lack of ambition and reluctance. "I suddenly felt all the dishonour of my diffidence--all the pusillanimity of my slackness to aspire" (141). Madame Beck's manly aspect appears to prompt her to respond in reaction against what can be read as Lucy's feminine attitude. The narrative again discriminates between femininity aligned with repeated domestic activities for twenty years and the masculinity aligned with change, opportunity and advancement. Lucy does not shrink from the opportunity; to do so would put an end to her narrative.

She is determined to take command and not be thrown over. "'They always throw over timid teachers,' she said" (141). In order to succeed, Lucy positions herself in opposition to them not in relation to them. In order to move through the narrative, Lucy must position herself in opposition to female characters or else not just she but her narrative will be overthrown. Just as Madame Beck has learned to "wear a man's aspect" when getting what she wants, so Lucy must act in a masculine manner against the vicious, mutinous students, tearing one girl's paper in two and physically throwing and locking another into a closet (144). Lucy comments that Madame Beck's manly aspect was not "[her] kind of power: neither sympathy,
nor congeniality, nor submission, were the emotions it awakened" (141). Here Lucy tries to differentiate her kind of power from Madame Beck's by implicitly situating her power on the side of feminine sympathy, congeniality, etc. But the narrative realigns masculinity with a certain kind of power in the classroom in opposition to a power elicited by congeniality. As Lucy turns to command the class of students, she adopts precisely Madame Beck's manly style of power: unsympathetic, uncongenial, casual, and sneering. This masculine behavior enables Lucy to succeed; feminine behavior would have left her "thrown over."

Soon after, Lucy again adopts "manly aspects" that once again destabilize her own gender identification and demonstrate her inability to establish female homosocial relations. In the chapter entitled "Fête," she enacts the part of a man in the school play. Lucy plays the male fop who tries to woo the heroine, Ginevra Fanshawe, from the hero. Ginevra is Lucy's first acquaintance even before she arrives in Villette. She is characterized by her vanity, conspicuous consumption, and selfishness. Nonetheless, Lucy maintains a fairly intimate relation with this character, who differs so markedly from herself; they drink out of the same cup, walk arm in arm, and dress together. Lucy describes her habit of sitting so close to her at their work table as her being "gummed to me, keeping herself warm" (415). But Lucy's everyday relations with Ginevra are always narrated in terms of oppositional raillery and scolding. Their physical proximity belies a more intimate relation than Lucy's words suggest. Only under the disguise of a man can repressed desires for Ginevra Fanshawe surface. Lucy dons part of a male costume and
becomes amazed at how well she and Ginevra perform together. Aligning herself with the masculine, Lucy destabilizes her own gender and the narrative. She and Ginevra no longer interact in terms of a disparaged homosocial relation. She creates a scene to be narrated by "recklessly" constructing the tenor of the scene.

Now I know I acted as if wishful and resolute to win and conquer. Ginevra seconded me; between us we half-changed the nature of the role, gilding it from top to toe. Between the acts M. Paul told us he knew not what possessed us... I know not what possessed me either; but somehow my longing was to eclipse the "Ours:" i.e., Dr. John. Ginevra was tender; how could I be otherwise than chivalric? Retaining the letter, I recklessly altered the spirit of the role. ... It must be played--in went the yearned-for seasoning--thus flavoured, I played it with relish. (210)

"But I had acted enough for one evening. It was time I retired into myself and my ordinary life" (211). Lucy's momentary "possession" can be read as another moment in the text in which Lucy discriminates between the active world of engagement outside the domestic scene, the world of men and male-sided heterosexuality, and the more stable, feminine, passive role of retiring into oneself within the domestic scene. Within the confines of her narrative, Lucy cannot articulate her homosocial connection with Ginevra. Momentarily, under the disguise of a man, Lucy indulges in a more active and passionate connection with Ginevra. Wearing tokens to announce her "as of the nobler sex" (208), she is able to act both theatrically and narratively. When she renounces the role, she renounces the drama and creativity that went with it and moves to
the position of watcher once again. "Withdrawing to a quiet nook, whence unobserved I could observe—the ball, its splendours and its pleasures passed before me as a spectacle" (211).

The Long Vacation

After everyone leaves for vacation Lucy reverts to the domestic watcher as she tediously toils over the care of the "cretin." The deserted school and Lucy's lack of professional activity transform the school into a domestic space. Reverting to a narrowed existence does not suit Lucy or the narrative, and, ultimately, the monotony and loneliness will force her to seek out change. The cretin comes to represent the toll of domestic stasis and is closely associated with weakness of mind, as Lucy's former classmate was. "The cretin did not seem unhappy...Her weak faculties approved of inertion: her brain, her eyes, her ears, her heart slept content" (228). Lucy's caring for the cretin requires constraint of her own movements. "I could not take her out beyond the garden, and I could not leave her a minute alone...A vague bent towards mischief, an aimless malevolence made constant vigilance indispensable" (229). She again becomes the sleepless, "hollow-eyed" watcher who sits without action until the monotony drives her into deep depression and almost insanity.

The description of this period in the novel is characterized by a general retrospective tone in which Lucy tells us only generalities and never shows us descriptive scenes. It is similar to the brevity that characterizes passages describing her eight years after her time
at Bretton, her time with Miss Marchmont, and her time with Madame Beck's children, except this time she employs no irony for us to assume her experience was acceptable. She is clear about the toll of her isolation. "My heart almost died within me; miserable longings strained its chords. How long were the September days! How silent, how lifeless! How vast and void seemed the desolate premises! How gloomy the forsaken garden--gray now with the dust of a town-summer departed. . . . Even to look forward was not to hope: the dumb future spoke no comfort" (227-228). The incarceration within the domestic space is again allied with lack of nourishment and death. "It was more like being imprisoned with some strange tameless animal, than association with a human being. . . . Attendance to the cretin deprived me often of the power and inclination to swallow a meal, and sent me faint to the fresh air, and the well or fountain in the court" (229). Lucy's incarceration with the cretin can be read as the most striking example of the text's rejection of both domesticity and homosociality. The cretin becomes a metaphor for Lucy's own self, trapped under the domestic roof. "Lucy cares for the cretin as if for some maimed and hideous version of her self" (Brownstein 172). Domesticity is that which ties women to horrid responsibilities, disables them from free movement, and deprives them of social and physical nourishment.

Once the child is removed from Lucy's care she gets a slight respite, but she is so far into her depression that she worries: "What shall I do? How shall I keep well?" (231). The pressure of her isolation finally drives her out of the confines of the school. She walks all over Villette. Again Lucy characterizes her actions in terms
of being acted upon. "A goad thrust me on, a fever forbade me to rest; a want of companionship maintained in my soul the cravings of a most deadly famine. I often walked all day, through the burning noon and the arid afternoon, and the dusk evening, and came back with moonrise" (230). The domestic scene she keeps trying to escape from is described as "crushing as the slab of a tomb" (232).

Lucy's despair leads her to seek solace in a Catholic church. She goes out of the feminine sphere and towards a public patriarchal institution. There she finally finds relief from her despair through the act of telling. Again we can foreground Silver's point that Lucy's identity is inseparable from what she is: a teller of tales (90). "The mere pouring out of some portion of long accumulating, long pent-up pain into a vessel whence it could not be again diffused-- had done me good. I was already solaced" (Brontë 234). Telling is characterized as that which needs to be released. But the priest, observing Lucy's passionate nature, decides that her passionate nature needs the regulation of the Catholic church. He would assign her to an existence in which she would be completely contained and bottled up within a confined space that is aligned with the feminine: a convent. This space is explicitly aligned in terms of its opposition to the telling of her tale.

Did I, you suppose, reader, contemplate venturing again within that worthy priest's reach? As soon should I have thought of walking into a Babylonish furnace. . . . the probabilities are that had I visited Numero 10, Rue des Mages, at the hour and day appointed, I might just now, instead of writing this heretic narrative, be counting my beads in the cell of a certain Carmelite convent on the Boulevard of Crecy in Villette. (235)
When Lucy does pours her troubles out into the ear of another character, she jeopardizes her own liberty by such a revelation. Henceforward most of Lucy's outpourings will be confined to the heretic narrative and not to other characters who consistently try to circumscribe her experience and locate her within traditional boundaries of femininity, a non-narratable space characterized by lack of change.

So Lucy does not venture within his reach. She does not actively refuse to meet him; instead, the force of narrative closure and resolution is metaphorized as the strong and horizontal current of the wind which Lucy bends her head to meet. The forces overcome her. "Instead of sinking on the steps as I intended, I seemed to pitch headlong down an abyss" (236). Her collapse exempts her from her appointment with Pere Silas and her unconscious, stabilized body forms the closure for Volume One. Her unconsciousness forms a temporary closure for the narrative at this point.

La Terrasse

Volume Two opens with Lucy sitting up "appalled, wondering into what region, amongst what strange beings [she] was waking" (237). The interior scenes at La Terrasse are characterized initially by Lucy's disoriented relation to them. For the third time in the novel Lucy describes herself as hollow-eyed. "I saw myself laid, not in bed, but on a sofa. I looked spectral; my eyes larger and more hollow" (238). Her hollow eyes again are the result of her previous
weeks of isolated watching and waiting. And, like the earlier incidences, they also foreshadow the new sight to which Lucy will be introduced. (The telling of her tale to the priest was a momentary relief but offered a dead-end in terms of narratability, a dead-end in a convent.) Previously, we have noted that Lucy's alignment with the domestic scene works against narrative as with Miss Marchmont, and with Madame Beck's children. But temporarily, as Lucy withdraws into the domestic space, her physical recuperation parallels the narrative's temporary recuperation from inactivity by resuscitating characters from the early chapters. The previous dearth of characters in the preceding chapters is relieved by the reintroduction of the Brettons. The Brettons and their connections to the world of Villette will prove a more narratable direction for the storyline to follow (as opposed to Pere Silas).

While the opening scenes of La Terrasse work initially to enhance narratability by introducing new characters, Lucy's participation in these scenes confirms the correlation of domesticity, homosociality, and inactivity. Her time inside the house is characterized by her waiting for Graham to return from the outside world and her inability to move around or outside of La Terrasse. For example, she compares herself to the "Bedridden Hasan" transported in his sleep (240). Lucy cannot get up but looks wide-eyed about the room. When the "bonne" perceives her looking she moves to give her a "dark-tinged draught" so that she will not look anymore. She awakes again in a different room, still disoriented and trying to assimilate the familiar yet unfamiliar surroundings.
Though the atmosphere is consistently described in terms of "perfect domestic comfort," Lucy's behavior at La Terrasse is also consistently characterized in terms of incarceration and submersion. "Miss Snowe must retire now," says Dr. John. When Lucy is trying to dress the next morning, Mrs. Bretton enters saying, "Not so." "In two minutes she consigned me captive to my French bed" (253). When Mrs. Bretton asks her how she became ill, Lucy refrains from telling her of her isolation and hardship and her various times in "rough waters," circumscribing her own speech and employing metaphors of the sea to describe events in her life. Lucy's physical actions are limited as well as her verbal expressions of her experiences. As in the earlier incidents, (with the loss of her family, the loss of Miss Marchmont, and her collapse), moments of desolation are characterized in terms of literal and metaphorical storms, storms that Lucy is compelled to face on her own and relay only to the readers of the heretic narrative. Lucy emphasizes the gap in experience between her life and Louisa Bretton's by employing the metaphor of storms at sea. We note how the passage echoes the earlier passage that allied women and girls with sleeping on a smooth sailing ship.

The difference between her and me might be figured by that between the stately ship, cruising safe on smooth seas, with its full complement of crew, a captain gay and brave, adventurous and provident; and the life boat, which most days of the year lies dry and solitary in an old, dark boat-house, only putting out to sea when the billows run high in rough weather, when cloud encounters water, when danger and death divide between them the rule of the great deep. No, the "Louisa Bretton" never was out of harbour on such a night, and in such a scene: her crew could not conceive it; so the half-
drowned life-boat man keeps his own counsel, and spins no yarns. (254)

Louisa Bretton, as a domestic figure, contrasts sharply with the hideousness of the cretin mentioned above, but even her comforting and secure domesticity are found lacking when contrasted with the vitality of the outside world, which Lucy will consistently prefer even at the expense of "rough weather." At La Terrase, women sit and wait.

Cheerful as my godmother naturally was, and entertaining as, for our sakes, she made a point of being, there was no true enjoyment that evening at La Terrasse, till, through the wild howl of the winter-night, were heard the signal sounds of arrival. How often while women and girls sit warm at snug firesides, their hearts and imaginations are doomed divorced from the comfort surrounding their persons... to wait at lonely gates and stiles in wildest storms, watching and listening to see and hear the father, the son, the husband coming home. (362)

This quotation echoes an earlier observation Lucy made at while at Bretton. "As to Paulina, I observed that her little character never properly came out, except with young Bretton... [S]he proved tractable enough with Mrs. Bretton... [But] I ceased to watch her under such circumstances: she was not interesting. But the moment Graham's knock sounded of an evening, a change occurred" (V 81).

In both cases Lucy is bored by the uneventful existence of women home alone, an existence from which she consistently withdraws. Men are predominately outside the domestic scene. Their heterosexual engagements with women occur predominately in the public sphere of the theatre, the museum, or the hotel. Within the home, women sit and wait for men to return.
Lucy's life experience, as a life-boat man, stands in stark contrast to the sheltered harbour at La Terrasse. While at La Terrasse, Lucy comes under its protection and safety, but this safety and protection easily become blurred with incarceration. In contrast to her previous life on the stormy sea, at La Terrasse her room becomes not just a safe harbour but a "cave in the sea" (254).

My calm little room seemed somehow like a cave in the sea. There was no colour about it, except that white and pale green, suggestive of foam and deep water; the blanched cornice was adorned with shell-shaped ornaments, and there were white mouldings like dolphins in the ceiling-angles. Even that one touch of colour visible in the red satin pincushion bore an affinity to coral; even that dark, shining glass might have mirrored a mermaid. When I closed my eyes, I heard a gale, subsiding at last, bearing upon the house-front like a settling swell upon a rock-base. I heard it drawn and withdrawn far, far off, like a tide retiring from a shore of the upper world - a world so high above that the rush of its largest waves, the dash of its fiercest breakers could sound down in this submarine home, only like murmurs and a lullaby. (254-255)

As a life-boat man, she accumulates tales to tell, but while at La Terrasse, relegated to a confined space, Lucy becomes submerged underneath this sea where the world itself is removed and even outside sounds are muffled. The feminine womb-imagery of this cave in the sea underscores the homosocial orientation of this sphere. Men remain outside, among the "fiercest breakers."

The moment Lucy does step out of this cave, she has an encounter with M. Paul, the person with whom she will pursue a heterosexual relation. While at the museum, Lucy is accosted by M. Paul who reprimands her for being out alone and attempts to bring her back in line with female propriety. In this scene once again the
text reinforces the association of women and confinement. "But you
ought not to be here alone," he tells her. She taunts him, "If,
however, I have no society - no party, as you say? And then, what
does it signify whether I am alone, or unaccompanied? nobody
meddles with me" (277). Lucy's physical singleness and her
relationship to being a single woman is accentuated in this scene by
contrastintg images of femininity that are accepted by society. Lucy
becomes positioned in between the voluptuous Cleopatra, whom she
reads as an "enormous piece of claptrap" (276), and the panels of "La
Vie d'une femme," which she considers "grim and gray as burglars,
and cold and vapid as ghosts" (278). These static images of
womanhood offer no point of identification for Lucy. But M. Paul,
like Pere Silas and Graham, order her remain in a certain place.
"Setting down a chair with emphasis in a particularly dull corner,
before a series of most specially dreary 'cadres,' . . . [M. Paul tells
her,] "Mais, mademoiselle, asseyez vous, et ne bougez-pas--
entendez-vous? jusqu'a ce qu'on vienne vous chercher, or que je
vous donne la permission" (277). Her response is: "What women to
live with! As bad in their way as the indolent gipsy-giantess, the
Cleopatra, in hers" (278). The stillness of the images, the unengaging
subject matter they represent, and Lucy's enforced physical stillness
in front of them, all underscore the narrative's continual association
of a woman's life with nonnarratable stasis. When Monsieur tells
her, "Turn to the wall and study your four pictures of a woman's
life," Lucy refuses. "Excuse me, M. Paul; they are too hideous: but if
you admire them, allow me to vacate my seat and leave you to their
contemplation" (280). Her rejection of these standards of femininity
underscores her attitude throughout the narrative. The most interesting aspect of this scene is not necessarily the subject matter of their discussion, but the fact that Lucy and M. Paul are having a discussion. The scene contrasts with Lucy's predominately empty existence when secluded within the domestic sphere. The novel again positions heterosexual engagement in opposition to homosocial, domestic engagements.

Polly

Lucy's relationship to homosociality and domesticity has focused thus far on her relation to feminine spaces, feminine tasks, Ginevra, the cretin, Louisa Bretton and female images. Now let us turn to one of Lucy's most intimate connections with a female character, Paulina Mary Home de Bassompierre, little Polly. On a number of occasions she is characterized as Lucy's double and the one who knows her better than anybody. "What contradictory attributes of character we sometimes find ascribed to us, according to the eye with which we are viewed! I smiled at them all. If any one knew me it was little Paulina Mary" (386). "I wondered to find my thoughts hers: there are certain things in which we so rarely meet

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52 Lucy is well aware of the necessity for destabilization to hold an audience's interest. In her interactions with M. Paul she sometimes deliberately upsets a scene and even goes to the extent of causing herself violence. "I knew action would give a turn to his mood. He never liked to see me mend pens... On this occasion I cut my own finger-- half on purpose. I wanted to restore him to his natural state, to set him at his ease, to get him to chide" (511).
with our double that it seems a miracle when that chance befalls” (361). She takes German lessons with her and listens to her romantic confidences (463). Although she is intimately associated with this "double," Lucy consistently compares Polly to inhuman creatures and objects. Polly never becomes a viable subject with whom Lucy can interact narratively. Polly does not change from the beginning of the narrative. As Lucy's double, Polly represents a subjugated and domesticated version of Lucy Snowe. When describing M. Paul's spaniel, Lucy is reminded of Polly. "She was very tiny, and had the prettiest little innocent face, the silkiest long ears, the finest dark eyes in the world. I never saw her, but I thought of Paulina de Bassompierre: forgive the association, reader it would occur" (510). Polly behaves throughout the novel as a domesticated pet. She is "as beautiful, as innocent, as any little fawn . . . or any lamb" (372). These descriptions serve to demonstrate once again the opposition the narrative sets up between domesticated femininity, seen as vapid, decorative, and insubstantial; and life outside the domestic sphere, seen as engaging and substantial. In addition to comparing Polly to playful animals, the narrative effaces Polly's subjectivity further by way of her spectral nature. Even before she is involved in a heterosexual relationship with Graham (where her effacement could be read as part of heterosexual convention), she is not completely present in the novel. Polly is effaced both in heterosexual and homosocial relations. In the Bretton chapter where Polly is introduced, she haunts the room (69). When Polly comes back into the novel, she appears as an "it." "Between the candles appeared something dressing itself--an airy, fairy thing--small,
slight, white --a winter spirit" (357). "Her fairy symmetry" (358) erases her presence in the narrative. As Lucy's double, she represents the type of erasure that Lucy would undergo should she subscribe to domestic conditions of femininity prescribed by the codes of the novel.

Lucy is closer to Polly than to any of the other women characters. Yet she rejects Polly's offer of paid companionship because she has witnessed the subsequent erasure it entails. Lucy adamantly refuses a life of dependency.

Paulina Mary sought my frequent presence in the Rue Crecy. In the old Bretton days, though she had never professed herself fond of me, my society had soon become to her a sort of unconscious necessary... In the same spirit she urged me now--'Leave Rue Fossette,' she said, 'and come and live with us. Papa would give you far more than Madame Beck gives you.' Mr. Home himself offered me a handsome sum--thrice my present salary--if I would accept the office of companion to his daughter. I declined. I think I should have declined had I been poorer than I was... I had not that vocation. I could teach; I could give lessons; but to be either a private governess or a companion was unnatural to me. Rather than fill the former post in any great house, I would deliberately have taken a housemaid's place, bought a strong pair of gloves,... in peace and independence. Rather than be a companion, I would have made shirts and starved... I was no bright lady's shadow... the dimness and depression must both be voluntary--such as kept me docile at my desk,.... my qualifications were not convertible, not adaptable; they could not be made the foil of any gem, and adjunct of any beauty, the appendage of any greatness in Christendom. (382-83)

Polly, who had been but a fairy thing, now is a bright lady and a gem that throws Lucy into shadow: an "inoffensive shadow" Lucy does not wish to be. Shortly after this rejection she tells Ginevra she is
"somebody." "I am a rising character: once an old lady's companion, then a nursery-governess, now a school teacher" (394). In this context, Lucy's rejection of paid companionship functions in relation to what will be discussed in more detail in the next section. Lucy rejects Polly's offer in a move that reempowers her and underscores her independence and freedom. The voluntary self-negation (here giving up a life of relative ease) "becomes a form of power by reminding others of the relative shallowness of their own, more conservative emotional lives and of their impotence to effect the willingly self-negating individual" (Kucich 83). In the next section I will develop this rationale more completely and see how it applies to Lucy's voluntary reserve.

Repression

Lucy Snowe's repression throughout the narrative can be considered in terms of its productive effect. The term repression, as I use it here, refers not to a specific twentieth-century psychoanalytic condition, but rather, as John Kucich has defined it in Repression in Victorian Fiction, to "a self-conflictual, self-divided interiority that withdraws from the spheres of action and speech" (2). When I refer to Lucy's repression, I will be referring to her withdrawal from the spheres of action and speech within the narrative's story. Kucich also investigates Brontë's complicated relationship to reserve in "Passionate Reserve and Reserved Passion in the Work of Charlotte Brontë" in Essays on Charlotte Brontë. Whereas repression functions as the term to describe an inward
condition, reserve, for Kucich, refers to outward behavior as perceived by others. He reexamines our assumptions about reserve in our post-Freudian context. His theory is useful for understanding reserve and repression in terms of narrative productivity.

General reserve...is a pattern we have grown accustomed to think of as a tragic psychic compromise, a martyring of creative potential. Such reserve, by which I mean deliberate refusals of self-expression--refusals that ostentatiously dam up passion and desire--appear to us as hopelessly unhealthy, compelled both by outward oppression and deprivation, and by inward paralysis... The oppositional psychic tensions (passion and reserve) we tend to find so disturbing in Brontë's work are, in fact, unstable oppositions that, through their very instability, seek to intensify desire and the subjectivity within which desire circulates. (68)

This productive theory of reserve demonstrates its destabilizing effects and points the way to how Brontë uses reserve for various tactical advantages (69). Kucich highlights a double movement: one, toward a secretive self-concentration and two, towards the continual disruption of that concentrated self (74). The self becomes concentrated through its damming up of desire and refusal to express passion. The second movement, the self's disruption, comes as a result of desire's accumulation and intensification of inner conflict. He demonstrates this movement primarily in his readings of Brontë's The Professor and her juvenilia.53 We can apply this theory to Lucy Snowe taking Kucich's argument a step further. In terms of

53 He points to Zamorna as typifying Brontean desire and loneliness and oddly has little to say on Lucy Snowe. He mostly generalizes her experience with Jane Eyre's and focuses instead on Bronte's uncharacteristic male protagonists, Zamorna and Crimsworth.
narrative and the hermeneutic code, the productive inner conflict that reserve or repression generates can be seen to suspend and delay narrative closure or stasis. Lucy's position as a single woman determines the particular manifestations of her productive inner conflict. Issues of proper female behavior, passivity versus aggressivity, and romantic role playing, all intrude upon and construct the particular ways Lucy's repression enhances narratability. In *Villette*, Lucy's conflicts predominately circulate around her relationship with John Graham Bretton and then with M. Paul Emanuel. The following section will not attempt to serve as a thorough study of Lucy Snowe's repression and reserve but, rather, will demonstrate how reserve and repression relate, not to the denial of a notion of self, but to the constitution of a particularly superior self that Kucich refers as the Brontëan self. It is this superior self with its particular form of destabilization that will be able to generate a narrative. The constitution of this notion of self arises implicitly through the rejection of the self-in-relation; and for Lucy, the construction of her notion of self arises from her rejection of herself in relation to other women and domesticity. But in this section I would like to focus not on repression's function in relation to homosociality specifically, but, rather, on repression as a generative function in general.

In reading Lucy Snowe's repression, some critics fail to observe its productive nature. Rachel M. Brownstein's argument in

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54 see also comments on Karen Lawrence's article, footnote 8. She reads Lucy also in negative terms -- her unsuccessful ability to remain untextualized.
Becoming a Heroine suggests that Lucy can "only be suggested as a negative" (171) and that is because Lucy is so repressed she "can have no self-expressive destiny." She states that "this strange, inward, inconclusive novel sidesteps story" (178). Mary Jacobus states the "novel withholding the true subjectivity of Lucy Snowe by an act of repression" (42). Brownstein and Jacobus do not analyze the dialectic the narrative sets up between story and non-story. Lucy's so-called negativity actually becomes the condition of production for a female identity constructed outside the domestic sphere. They do not see how repression acts to construct Lucy's subjectivity and that there is no other true subjectivity somehow lurking behind. Nor do they see that the "autobiography" of Lucy Snowe is, as Pauline Nestor has pointed out, Lucy Snowe's principal achievement (CB 98).55 The narrative's articulation cannot be separated from Lucy's vacillation between what will move her story forward and what would derail it into non-story. All three of these critics fail to see how repression relates to the conditions of self and narratability. In a three-part process, the novel brings into representation repression itself; repression constitutes the destabilized basis for generating a particular sense of self; that destabilized self becomes the necessary condition for generating narrative as Miller has shown above. Thus Lucy's repressions are not simply submerged underneath the narrative; they are, rather, a productive discursive force by which the narrative and her identity are generated. Repression becomes a

55 However, Nestor also can only see Lucy's repression as "deeply internalized scarring" (85) and an actual "distortion of appropriately womanly behavior" (89) and not in terms of what it generates.
narrative strategy to enhance a particular representation of Lucy's selfhood. If female identity is traditionally to be constructed in relation to others, but the representation of the self in relation to others veers toward the non-narratable stasis, then it follows that Lucy's identity must refuse this relation and constitute its boundaries in another way. John Kucich's complicated theory of Brontëan self can be reiterated here.

[Repression] makes self-disjunctive experience the source of a formal boundary between self and other... The Brontëan self prevents the energy of destabilization from fully rending it apart; instead, that energy is turned outward, in order to empower a coherent and functional self and to enhance that self in relation to others... To the extent that they convert repression to power, mostly by representing its energies as the intimidating specter of cool emotional "reserve," Brontë's protagonists convert self-negating impulses into self-containing ones. (RIVF 78)

To push Kucich's argument further, I emphasize how this self-containment works in opposition to homosocial relations where the boundaries between self and other are blurred. And also I demonstrate how self-containment works in the service of not only formulating "a coherent and functional self" but also formulating a self capable of narration.

Reserving and Observing

The first manifestation of Lucy's self-disjunctive experience can be seen in her capacity to observe others while remaining separate herself. One way Lucy represses her own passions and
feelings is by observing and narrating the passions of others. She positions herself as observer from the very start of the novel, watching and relating the events at Bretton. Instead of telling the reader anything about herself, she produces information on other characters, primarily Graham and Polly. Gilbert and Gubar and Karen Lawrence note that Lucy's capacity for observation must be overcome and Lucy must be prompted into action in order for the text to begin (Lawrence 314). Lawrence states that due to Lucy's passivity, the first three chapters become a "disposable prologue before the real story" (314). Linda Hunt also reads the opening chapters negatively. She states that Lucy "is so repressed she can not place herself at the center of the action" (Hunt 115). But I argue her observational capacities are directly connected to her disjunctive and ultimately self-containing posture and that this posture is related to her role as a female narrator. Moments when Lucy hangs back represent not her non-textualization as Lawrence argues but, rather, Lucy's productive strategy to produce narrative.

We can discriminate the type of observing that Lucy participates in from the type of watching she does over Miss Marchmont and the Beck children. Her watching with them is characterized as monotonous, wearisome toil and operates in

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56 Hunt reads Villette in terms of a progression. Lucy eventually comes to terms with aspects of her otherwise repressed personality. Lucy becomes a woman of "genuine psychological complexity rather than a heroine idealized" (126). Hunt seems to be arguing again that Bronte has transcended ideology toward a "truer" conception of womanhood. She again, as I pointed out in my Chapter Three, valorizes rhetoric that "escapes" ideology.
opposition to story. For Miss Marchmont and for Madame Beck, watching is part of Lucy's job and what she has to do for her occupation. Watching Graham and Polly in the first three chapters provides us with story instead of working against it (as with Miss Marchmont and the Beck children). "It was sufficiently comical to observe her as she sat beside Graham, while he took that meal. In his absence she was a still personage, but with him the most officious, fidgetty (sic) little body possible" (82). By displacing information about herself, Lucy creates a disjuncture between herself as narrator and herself as a young girl. That gap is superficially filled in with her observation of the actions of others; Lucy simultaneously produces a narrative and establishes herself as an enigma to be solved, a destabilized subject of narration.

We find out only slightly more about Lucy when she takes her first job in Villette. She again does more observing of the people around her as she did in the opening episodes. She observes mostly without being seen herself. Once again she becomes an observer of Graham, this time as Dr. John. Only when her watching becomes too intense does he notice her; he does not yet know she is Lucy Snowe.

He, I believe, never remembered that I had eyes in my head; much less a brain behind them. Nor would he have found this out, but that one day, while he sat in the sunshine, and I was observing the colouring of his hair, whiskers, and complexion—... an idea new, sudden, and startling riveted my attention with an overmastering strength and power of attraction. (163)

We later learn that Lucy recognizes Dr. John here as Graham Bretton. But at this point we are only aware that Lucy's "passive" observation has had a profoundly disturbing affect on Dr. John. Her observation
is not passive; it has effects on other characters and on the narrative. Observing both describes action, produces reaction, and piques narrative curiosity. What did she see in Dr. John?

During this particular instance of observance, Lucy hides from the reader the reason for her staring. Lucy reserves information in a deliberate effort to construct the story a particular way. In contrast to Mary Jacobus, who states simply that "Lucy lies to us," Brenda Silver states that this omission is part of Lucy's attempt to construct a non-traditional story of a woman's life. Her reserve generates narrative.

Is it not possible that by this silence Lucy is creating a script other than that in which the lost god-brother/prince reappears and rescues her from her changeling role, the romantic or erotic fantasy that Lucy finds necessary to forgo while she makes an independent life for herself as a teacher? . . . Her silence and refusal reflect the lack of a language or a plot by which women can communicate ambitions and desires outside those encoded in the accepted social literary conventions. (107)

This rescripting veers the plot away from the stability that revelation would bring and exacerbates Lucy's ambiguous standing by destabilizing her telling of the tale. She gives no explanation of why she stares; yet she tells us precisely how she stares and its effect on Dr. John. This textual moment suspends itself over the narrative as an enigma that is not solved until Lucy reveals Dr. John's identity and also reveals that she had already known it.

I first recognized him on that occasion, noted several chapters back, when my unguardedly fixed attention had drawn me the mortification of an implied rebuke. To say anything on the subject, to hint at my discovery, had not
suited my habits of thought, or assimilated with my system of feeling. (248).

Her reserve has resulted in a dramatic narrative effect. Both the reader and Graham are left surprised by Lucy's perversity. Her relationship with Graham Bretton continuously demonstrates her characteristic outward reserve as she continuously represses her feelings for him, and generates narrative around that repression.

We have noted that Lucy rejects association with women and domesticity that would "bury her under a slab." In the following incidences, we can see how Lucy cultivates relationships with men through the seemingly distancing mechanism of reserve. These relations occur predominately outside the domestic sphere. Lucy's reserved, destabilized self engages with Graham and M. Paul in the service of generating narrative.

In the chapter "We Quarrel" Lucy describes her internal anguish at not being able to speak directly to Graham and inadvertently reveals how important he is to her. Driven to distraction with worry over their argument, Lucy haunts the house looking for an opportunity to bring up the subject of their disagreement—Ginevra Fanshawe. "Again and again that eye just met mine; but having nothing to say, it withdrew, and I was baffled. . . . I wish I could have dared go and sit near him. . . . I longed to speak out, and I dared not whisper" (265). Although she eventually forces herself to speak, it is an excruciating process for Lucy. The narration of this ordeal has constituted an entire chapter. Lucy's repressed anguish over an incident some may consider trivial reveals her deep but unacknowledged attachment to Graham. Kucich cites
Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick on this point of Brontë fiction. "Repression is often read as the sign of passion itself--as an idealized, remote site of energy and fulfillment" (Kucich RVF 49). Her frantic reactions and emotionally charged speech mark this passage as evidence of her intense attachment. She never will state her love for Graham explicitly.

The chapter entitled "Reaction" demonstrates a few incidents of Lucy's tendency to repress desire for Graham and to repress information that could possibly bring him closer to her. On a number of occasions she chooses to remain silent when she has the opportunity to speak. Her silence, which appears as her unhealthy refusal to connect with another, can be seen as a potlatch: "a demonstration of one's superior wealth of inner resources by proof of how much worldly value or advantage one can afford to destroy; a gesture of self-sufficiency and destructive luxury" (83). When he brings her back to the Pensionnat on a drizzling November evening, Lucy recalls the coincidence that it was Graham who had helped her find her way when she first arrived in Villette. "Just such a night was it as that on which, not a year ago, I had first stopped at this very threshold; just similar was the scene...On that night, too, I had briefly met him who now stood with me. Had I ever reminded him of that rencontre, or explained it? I had not, nor ever felt the inclination to do so: it was a pleasant thought, laid by in my own mind, and best kept there" (306). Her refusal contributes to the representation of her chosen autonomy as a single woman in spite of its isolating toll and establishes Lucy's separation. It is proof of how much worldly advantage she can afford to destroy. (Of course she
does tell us of both the connection and its omission in her earlier narrative.)

In this same passage, Lucy again represses her initial desire and deliberately refuses what she so earnestly desires. As Graham takes leave of her, he asks if she would like him to write to her. Inwardly, she answers joyfully, "Good, gallant heart!" But I shook my head, smiling, and said, "Never think of it: impose on yourself no such task" (306). Lucy refuses to allow herself actual expression of how she feels. Her internal dialogue with Reason and Feeling articulates Lucy's inner conflict explicitly. "But if I feel, may I never express?" 'Never!' declared Reason" (307). At every moment connected with her attraction to Graham, she represses all expression. As Kucich points out, initially we might see these characteristics as signs of martyred self-potential and tragic psychic compromise (68 PRRP), but repression allows the destabilized self both to enhance that self's autonomy and paradoxically to sustain the necessary flux to keep the narrative going forward to resolve the enigmas generated around Lucy's self.

Lucy gains strength from her shoring up of reserve. "My mind, calmer and stronger now than last night, made for itself some imperious rules, prohibiting under deadly penalties all weak retrospect of happiness past ... hushing the impulse of fond idolatry ... By degrees, a composite feeling of blended strength and pain wound itself wirily round my heart, sustained, or at least restrained, its throbings, and made me fit for the day's work. I lifted my head" (Brontë 309-310). Repression here directly contributes to Lucy's sustainability, to her ability to regain a strong sense of self. It
enables her to convert repression to power the way Kucich has described. "Brontë's protagonists convert self-negating impulses into self-containing ones" (78). And it is precisely those impulses that will enable Lucy to move towards an alternative source of closure.

One of the most obvious physical manifestations of Lucy's repression is her burial of her letters from Graham. Her painful repression of her feelings for him does not elicit any sympathy from Graham himself, but this chapter does a great deal in the service of defining the strength of Lucy's character. "I was not only going to hide a treasure--I meant also to bury a grief. That grief over which I had lately been weeping, as I wrapped it in it winding sheets, must be interred" (380). "Like any other mourner beside a newly-sodded grave" (381), Lucy mourns the death of Hope (of requited love from Graham). His letters had been her sustenance, and she characterizes them as rivers that were now bending to another course.

But I loved my Rhine, my Nile; I had almost worshipped my Ganges, and I grieved that the grand tide should roll estranged, should vanish like a false mirage. . . . the Hope I am bemoaning suffered and made me suffer much: it didn't die till it was full time: following an agony so lingering, death ought to be welcome. Welcome I endeavoured to make it. Indeed, long pain had made patience a habit. In the end I closed the eyes of my dead, covered its face, and composed its limbs with great calm. (378)

Eventually, Lucy will discover that Graham was never her soul mate (Kucich 95). She discovers in actuality their friendship was one-sided (Brontë 451). "He wanted always to give me a role not mine. . . . He did not at all guess what I felt: he did not read my eyes, or face, or gestures" (404). Lucy's repressed love for Graham did indeed enhance her destabilized, self-contained self and did
contribute to a great portion of the narrative, but, ultimately, his inability to perceive Lucy as anything more than an "inoffensive shadow" disables him from perceiving the boundaries generated by Lucy's self-negation and repression. His complete misapprehension of her ultimately wears her. "Let him whelm me with no such weight" (403). Lucy's successful negotiation of her feelings for Graham enables her to maintain a relationship with him even after his attentions are turned towards Polly.

**M Paul**

As the narrative moves forward, Lucy cultivates the appearance of invulnerability in her interactions with M Paul. At certain moments her cool reserve drives him to distraction. She demonstrates that this form of repression, which has empowered her with a fiercely independent exterior, transgresses expected feminine behavior that, according to M. Paul, should be characterized by weak and vulnerable dependence on him. With M. Paul, Lucy vacillates between maddening him with her reserve and endearing herself to him with her failures.\(^{57}\) Her reserve ignites in him a passion; her failures induce him to tenderness. I will examine how her reserve is manifested in three different ways; all three of these manifestations work towards the heterosexual engagement with M. Paul. One way, Lucy's reserve works is through smugly deriving pleasure from

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\(^{57}\) John Kucich also notes that "M. Paul is enticed with her inconsistencies" (Kucich 111).
maddening M. Paul. In another way, Lucy's insistent reserve results in a minor catastrophe that breaks down her reserve and elicits unconstrained emotions. And, finally, there are moments when Lucy's reserve acts against even her own conscious wishes to engage with M. Paul.

In the following scene, we can see that, when Lucy does maintain self-composure, she highlights the pleasure she derives from her reserve and that it is in direct proportion to M. Paul's displeasure and discomfort. Their engagement consistently functions within a heterosexual paradigm of attraction and repulsion.

As for me I took it with entire coolness. There I sat, isolate and cut off from human intercourse; I sat and minded my work, and was quiet and not at all unhappy. . . . The reading over, it appeared problematic whether he would depart with his anger unexpressed, or whether he would give it vent. . . . I kept my seat of punishment, and wrought while I munched my bread and sipped my beverage, the whole with easy sang froid; with a certain snugness of composure, indeed, scarcely in my habits, and pleasantly novel to my feelings. It seemed as if the presence of a nature so restless, chafing, thorny as that of M. Paul absorbed all feverish and unsettling influences like a magnet, and left me none but such as were placid and harmonious" (417).

M. Paul's objections to her and her behavior are received with cool reserve. Lucy indulges in the novelty of "teasing him with her obtrusive ray" (421). John Kucich develops the notion that self-negation of the sort that Lucy participates in makes visible a libidinal subtext of Victorian fiction (17 RVF). This libidinal subtext contributes to the destabilization of the narrative; its consummation must be avoided in the service of the narrative's continuance. Lucy's
and M. Paul's responses to each other, whether repressed or impassioned, reveal how much they are attracted to each other.

In her engagement with M. Paul, Lucy's silence can again be seen as a potlatch. Unlike Graham Bretton, M. Paul realizes the implied independence and self-sufficiency her reserve represents, and it enrages him. M. Paul is jealous of Lucy's letter from Bretton. After M Paul delivers a letter from Graham to Lucy, he berates both her and her students. He demands in his fury, was she the mistress of these girls? and did she teach them proper conduct? "What could I say to all this? Really nothing; and hoped he would allow me to be silent. The storm recommenced" (319). All the students end up in tears, but Lucy, "not yet much shaken" ventures to resume her work. "Something--either in my continued silence or in the movement of my hand, stitching--transported M. Emanuel beyond the last boundary of patience; he actually sprung from his estrade. The stove stood near my desk, and he attacked it; the little iron door was nearly dashed from its hinges, the fuel was made to fly" (320).

When she tries to speak, Lucy's voice falters, even though she says she is not afraid. "Still there was something in M Paul's anger a kind of passion of emotion--that specially tended to draw tears. I was not unhappy, nor much afraid, yet I wept" (320). As soon as her reserve falters, M. Paul is ready to be endearing, offering her his handkerchief and trying to make everyone smile. Moments when Lucy lacks reserve are moments when she can no longer "contain"

58 "a demonstration of one's superior wealth of inner resources by proof of how much worldly value or advantage one can afford to destroy; a gesture of self-sufficiency and destructive luxury" (83).
herself; her temporary breakdown serves as a signifier for a more feminine model of self-in-relation as opposed to the self-contained. Although M. Paul appears to approve the self breaking down over Lucy's resilient, cool reserve, it is precisely her reserve that will keep M. Paul engaged with her throughout the narrative. He seems to be fascinated with Lucy's rigorous ability to keep to herself.

At times Lucy's silence and reserve are couched in terms of a rigorous moral discipline about what is correct and what cannot be changed. This moral discipline also engages and enrages M. Paul.59 At one point in the novel, Rosine must give M. Paul a summons. She is afraid to interrupt him again. "Monsieur's lunettes are really terrible; and here is a commissionaire come with a message" (410). "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). But Lucy knows the summons must be delivered, and, therefore, she perseveres on the moral principle that it is his duty to go. He dismisses her immediately. "I stood there waiting in silence, as if he had not spoken" (412). With her steadfast insistence, she pushes his "bonnet-grec" towards him, and "it slid down the polished slope of the varnished and unbaized desk, carried before it the light steel-framed 'lunettes,' and, fearful to relate, they fell to the estrade. . . . [T]hey so fell that each clear pebble became shivered and shapeless star" (413). Her aggressive autonomy and insistence has smashed his lunettes. Again Lucy is overcome with emotion. And

59 John Kucich concurs. "Rigorous moral discipline is a kind of aggressive declaration of autonomy, an affront to external authority and a condition for Lucy's freedom (Kucich 80).
again, instead of getting angry, "he became graciously pliant as soon as I stood in his presence, a conscious and contrite offender" (413). Contradictory impulses construct the rubric of their relationship. Again Lucy repeats the pattern of trying to establish self-containment through outward reserve while simultaneously creating a destabilized narrative self. But moments where she loses control of herself enable M. Paul to gain the advantage in what can be read as his desire to attain mastery over Lucy. Her reserve represents her resistance to that mastery and the inevitable state of quiescence it would bring about.

At times Lucy consciously wishes not to repress her affection for M. Paul. Sometimes Lucy wants to speak, and yet she still presents herself as silent and reserved. On one occasion, M. Paul asks Lucy's opinion on his lecture. "He did care, and he was too natural to conceal, too impulsive to repress his wish. Well! if I blamed his over eagerness, I liked his naivete. I would have praised him: I had plenty of praise in my heart; but alas, no words on my lips. Who has words at the right moment? I stammered some lame expressions" (397). And another time she wants to speak with M. Paul, but she panics when she sees him coming to seek her out. "I could not find the courage to await his approach. . . . the coward in me . . . . was gone on the wings of panic" (476). And it takes her too long to summon the courage "to do what, after all, [she] most wished to do in the world--viz., meet him" (477). In these two odd instances, Lucy's reserve takes over even against her own outward desire. She does the opposite of what she thinks she wants. Theses evasions enable the continuance of narrative instability; they
highlight an aspect of narrative quiescence as discussed in Part One. Lucy has evaded M. Paul "as I would have evaded the leveled shaft of mortality" (477). She likens meeting him to the end of her life. Unlike the instances in which Lucy's deliberate reserve ignites his anger or a mishap has endeared her to him, these instances represent interaction unmediated by accidental loss of composure. She would have to reveal herself and define herself in relation to M. Paul. Both occasions require straightforward communication. Straightforward communication would put an end to the dynamic they have established between reserve and contrition and implicitly would bring their relationship to a state of mutual understanding, hence, a state of quiescence. Many novels would end with the mutual revelations of feeling, and the heterosexual couple would marry. But that is not allowed to occur in this novel. Even after Lucy and M. Paul have come to some determination of their attraction for each other, Lucy's reserve continues to prevent their connecting.

Madame Beck and Pere Silas make use of Lucy's reserve in order to keep her away from M. Paul. Madame Beck's bodily form intrudes between Lucy and M. Paul as he bids good-bye to the school children.

He was approaching; the semi-circle was almost traveled round; he came to the last pupil; he turned. But Madame was before me; she had stepped out suddenly; she seemed to magnify her proportions and amplify her drapery; she eclipsed me; I was hid. She knew my weakness and deficiency; she could calculate the degree of moral paralysis--the total default of self-assertion--with which in a crisis, I could be struck. (541)
Lucy's "total default of self-assertion" paralyzes her from taking action. Once again, reserve erects an obstacle to their union and creates suspense for the narrative to resolve. Will Lucy ever get to be with M. Paul? Or will they be separated forever by the antagonists?

As the novel draws to a close, convention would have it that the two protagonists overcome all obstacles to their union. But instead Lucy helplessly watches M. Paul leave the school room and then spends a worrisome night helplessly pacing the floor. After she believes M. Paul already gone, she allows the maid to administer her a sedative. The sedative has the opposite effect on Lucy and sends her in a kind of manic delirium that drives her out of dormitory and into the night toward the park. Only through a drug is Lucy able to transcend her own paralyzing incapacity to take action. The subsequent delirium acts as a device to pull together loose ends of the narrative; it reveals to Lucy that M. Paul is still in town, but that revelation is coupled with a new obstacle, a potential rival, Justine Marie.

Lucy's delirium momentarily suspends her reserve and enables the resolution of many minor narrative enigmas. She springs the bolts of her prison at the Pensionnat and heads to the park. She finds herself in the middle of a fête, a carnival-like celebration for the whole city. In her wandering Lucy learns a great deal. Her veiled appearance transforms her into an omniscient narrator who oversees the various characters. Some of what she sees confirms expectations of other characters and resolves minor enigmas; some of what she sees introduces yet more complicated enigmas. She sees
the "familiar and domestic group" of the Brettons and de Bassompieres (553). In her delirium she also learns of the resolution of Ginevra Fanshawe's fate. Lucy's temporary "frenzy" is induced by the drug and, therefore, not by any dramatic shift in her character. Even in the midst of her temporary delirium, Lucy is not able to engage with any of these characters, but rather, she hangs back the way she always has, not interacting. The drug enables her to act, to get out of the school, but when she encounters her friends and acquaintances, Lucy's veil of reserve descends once again as she ties the brim of her straw hat over her face. "I only took the precaution to bind down the broad leaf gipsy-wise, with a supplementary ribbon" (551). She takes pains to keep herself the anonymous observer once again. The delirium enables the narrator to outline the fates of the other minor characters, but does not facilitate Lucy's reunion with M. Paul.

Although the delirium acts in some ways to suspend Lucy reserve and enable her to learn things she would not have otherwise known, the delirium also results in the erection of yet another obstacle between her and M. Paul. She learns the existence of a living Justine Marie, who is accompanied by M. Paul. She observes his interaction with her and wrongly concludes that he will marry her. She accepts without a doubt "the project of a marriage between a poor and unselfish man of forty, and his wealthy ward of eighteen. . . .[She] hastened to accept the whole plan" (566). Lucy throws herself into a tumult of despair and jealousy over the incident. Instead of bringing her closer to M. Paul, the incident contributes to Lucy's despair over ever seeing him again.
The chapter entitled, "Faubourg Clotilde" contains the last scenes of Lucy with M. Paul. This chapter represents the one moment in the text when Lucy finally willingly overcomes her reserve and cries out in a passioned strain as she thinks M. Paul is leaving her forever. "Pierced deeper than I could endure, made now to feel what defied suppression, I cried-- 'My heart will break!" (580). She gives over to tears and the outpouring of emotion. In this chapter, Lucy and M. Paul will finally make clear their feelings for each other. Lucy listens to his pledge of love and the novel appears to be ending with the conventional closure of a heterosexual relation. The penultimate chapter describes in detail the ideal little school-house M. Paul has furnished for Lucy. No domestic detail is overlooked. They enjoy a simple meal in what potentially could be their own heterosexual domestic sphere. But the narrative has negotiated a different fate for Lucy, a different resolution of the enigmas of her identity. The chapter stands as an over-idealized tribute to conventional endings, as does the ending phrase of the final chapter, "leave sunny imaginations hope. . . . Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life" (596). The structure of the narrative works against the fulfillment of these wishes. Rather, it has orchestrated a different conclusion for Lucy Snowe. She attains her position as a schoolmistress and a teller of her tale by way of constructing an alternative source of stability. As the ideal union with M. Paul becomes an impossibility, Lucy falls back on what she has been constructing all along, her self-contained identity. M. Paul's shipwreck functions as her "liberating catastrophe" enabling her to come to the position of telling.
The double movement of reserve and passion Kucich describes also results in a reverse double movement of the narrative. First, passion and its repression maintain the necessary instability of Lucy's character, making her life narratably productive. Second, by the end of the novel, it will be precisely Lucy's earlier refusals and repressions that will enable her to get to the position of telling--a position she occupies as a single, professional woman outside the domestic sphere. Paradoxically, Lucy creates an alternative sense of "self," or a subject of narration, by repressing desires and remaining reticent to other characters. It is as if she has accumulated the dammed-up desire to constitute a self. Repression ultimately enables Lucy to arrive at her final destination of sufficiency--the single woman narrator of her autobiography. M Paul's presence and absence are integral to this process. He helps draw out the meaning of Lucy Snowe; "his presence enables a love plot, his absence allows the plot of ambition to thrive--Lucy succeeds as a headmistress and a writer in the space provided by Paul's absence" (Lawrence 317). The novel itself represses the consummation of their relationship in a move that secures Lucy's final containment of self, her establishment as schoolmistress of her own school. From this final position of closure, she is able to tell her story. The expanse in between that constitutes her story consistently maintains a destabilized Lucy Snowe. It does this through Lucy's avoidance of the homosocial, domestic sphere, where all is represented in terms of quiescence; and, as I have discussed in this section, through elaborating a complicated rubric of repression and reserve that enables Lucy to negotiate heterosexual relations in a way that allows her to avoid the
seemingly inevitable consummation of the narrative in heterosexual marriage.
CHAPTER FIVE
THE PROFESSOR AND THE CONCLUSION

The Professor was Brontë's first written novel but it was not published until after her death. During her lifetime no publisher would issue it, even after the success of Jane Eyre. Although Brontë herself always thought highly of the novel, it remains her least successful and most unpopular novel. As Annette Tromly points out, "critics have accorded it the same reception which greeted the return of Milton's Satan to Hell: 'a dismal universal hiss'" (103). Disagreement arises, however, over precisely what is the cause of this reception. It stands out amongst Brontë's other novels because

60 "The middle and latter portion of the work... is as good as I can write; it contains more pith, more substance, more reality, in my judgment, than much of 'Jane Eyre'." Quoted from the back of the Oxford edition.

61 Early critics attribute shortcomings to the novelist's professional immaturity and inexperience; some note the author's failure to achieve a certain critical distance from her characters. Others formulate more complicated responses. Tromly herself attributes The Professor's problem to the obtrusiveness of Crimsworth's narrative voice as an overbearing, manipulating and suppressive force. "The sheer energy Crimsworth expends in imposing a rationale on his life suggests that we should be wary of sharing his perceptions" (106). The act of narrating becomes an act of neurotic self-enclosure that mythologizes and oversimplifies his life's events, leaving us with no notion whatsoever of his own self-awareness. Judith Williams and Helen Moglen both call attention to the absence of passion that would make conflicts interesting or engaging.
it concerns a male protagonist instead of a female one. I will focus on the relationship between the novel's failure and its choice of subject matter. The coincidence of the male protagonist and the novel’s negative reception prompts further investigation. William Crimsworth tells the story of his life from the time he leaves college till the time he retires from a successful teaching career in Belgium to live in the English countryside. The narration proceeds conventionally as a kind of male *bildungsroman*. Female characters are depicted only in relation to his acquisition of a middle-class identity. But the representation of female characters' relation to each other and their homosocial concerns have been the main concerns of this dissertation. In this chapter, I speculate briefly that what is absent in *The Professor* contributes to its general failure overall.

Brontë's other novels demonstrate a particular ability to represent women characters in engaging ways. She makes use of conventions of femininity to complicate and critique limiting notions of womanhood. I have demonstrated that she not only represents women characters in her other novels, but she is able to address particular concerns of women's relationships to each other through her narrative strategies. My thesis developed throughout this dissertation has been that Brontë's way of representing women in relation to each other touches a chord with certain socio-historical conditions of nineteenth-century ideology. In *The Professor*, Brontë's

Crimsworth is so unaware of himself, he is unable to participate in his own *bildungsroman*. The fantasy of the *bildungsroman*'s form is here "but its energy is suppressed" (Moglen 83).
adoption of the first-person male narrator vitiates her ability to bring into representation women in relation to other women. The disparity between its reception and the reception of Brontë's other three novels suggests that the source of narrative interest and the other novels' enduring value is the way Brontë engages issues of female homosociality. In her first novel, Brontë's conventional story of Crimsworth's *bildungsroman* lacks these engaging issues.

The story is told from William Crimsworth's point of view. He constructs the story of his life in terms of the individuals he encounters. His limited point of view automatically circumscribes, to a certain degree, his ability to address women's relationships with other women. He represents women in relation to himself, but never in relation to each other. On the one hand, Brontë adheres to what I have described as a traditional narrative convention (to represent women only in terms of a heterosexual relation), but in striking contrast to her other novels, Brontë employs no narrative strategy to circumvent the representational codes that dictate female characters be defined only in terms of a heterosexual relation. In the chapter on *Jane Eyre*, I demonstrated that Brontë successfully depicted the transformation of the hero into a nurturer figure who adopted Jane's value system. In the chapter on *Shirley*, I showed that Brontë used the novel's structural division to articulate an explicit female homosocial relationship through certain representational strategies. Even in *Villette*, where I have shown that Lucy defines herself in opposition to other women, the concerns of the novel still address the position of women in relation to each other by addressing the absence of such a relation. *The Professor* does not demonstrate any
transformation of the hero, William Crimsworth, into a nurturing figure, nor does it represent women in relation to each other.

Using The Professor's reception as a clue, at the end of this chapter, I will make some concluding remarks on female homosociality's relationship to narrative interest and point to the implications of this study for further application to contemporary female reading audiences and the romances they read. We can understand these romances in terms of a negotiation of female homosocial relations. Many popular romances today take their plot outlines from Brontë's most successful novel, Jane Eyre. I will speculate that the continual appeal of this novel's descendants derives from the way the narrative manages and represents female homosocial desire.

To facilitate a demonstration of the way The Professor does not manage female homosocial issues, I will briefly summarize the various ways women are represented. The first woman in the text is Edward Crimsworth's wife; she is a kind of pretty doll. Zoraïde Reuter, the school mistress in Belgium, becomes a source of Crimsworth's qualified admiration until he finds her duplicitous. Crimsworth depicts the various school girls he teaches as depraved and unfeminine; and finally, he meets the perfected Frances Henri who becomes eventually a kind of super wife and mother as she works as a brilliant teacher by day, and an angel of the house by night. All of these various female characters are either indifferent, unsympathetic or explicitly cruel to each other. One might take the general rule of the school as a rule for the narrative:
Very little open quarreling ever took place amongst them, but back-biting and tale-bearing were universal; close friendships were forbidden by the rules of the school, and no one girl seemed to cultivate more regard for another than was just necessary to secure a companion when solitude would have been irksome.  

Because the content of the novel is the story of Crimsworth's life, one would not expect the representation of women to be a major concern of the novel. Yet, from the opening chapters, Crimsworth watches women and reports their character traits. His observations remain report-like as he sits in judgment on their worth. Female homosocial relationships that define women outside of their relationship to men would complicate the representational strategies he adopts to tell his story. Because his narrative never complicates female representation, the narrative itself can be seen as uncomplicated and hence, uninteresting, especially to a female reading public.62 For instance, when he first meets Edward's wife, who is never given a name other than Mrs. Crimsworth, he surveys her carefully.

62 This is not the same as arguing that a female reading public essentially and biologically reads differently than a male reading public. Rather, it is to argue, as I have in this dissertation, that particular anxieties and concerns of middle-class women may have prompted them to seek out narrative fantasies that could represent and resolve those anxieties and concerns in ways that enabled them to escape without leaving the dominant ideology. It is not an essentialist argument, but rather, as De Certeau has shown us, it is a problematization of our notions of consumption, especially when trying to understand the strategies of the oppressed. My argument demonstrates that the process of consumption is gendered in socially and historically specific ways.
I sought her eye, desirous to read there the intelligence which I could not discern in her face or hear in her conversation; it was merry, rather small; by turns I saw vivacity, vanity--coquetry, looked out through its irid, but I watched in vain for a glimpse of soul. . . . Having perused the fair page of Mrs. Crimsworth's face--a deep, involuntary sigh announced my disappointment. (Brontë 10)

Crimsworth spends much of the novel interrogating female character. He comments on his frustration when he is unable to observe women closely. At his brother's birthday party, he is isolated from them by his brother's ill will. "I was introduced to none of the band of young ladies who, enveloped in silvery clouds of white gauze and muslin sat in array against me on the opposite side of a long and large room. . . . I should have liked well enough to be introduced to some pleasing and intelligent girl" (19). On another occasion, when he first moves into his quarters in Belgium, his boarded window blocks his view of the girls' schoolyard below. "The first thing I did was to scrutinize closely the nailed boards, hoping to find some chink or crevice which I might enlarge and so get a peep at the consecrated ground" (58). "Many a time after, especially in moments of weariness and low spirits did I look with dissatisfied eyes on that most tantalizing board, longing to tear it away and get a glimpse of the green region which I imagined to lie beyond" (59).

That "green region" which he imagines stands as a metaphor for his idealized vision of female character.

Crimsworth validates his subsequent representation of the girl pupils and Zoraïde Reuter by employing a real versus ideal experience of them. "I cannot say I was chagrined or downcast by the contrast which the reality of a Pensionnat de demoiselles
presented to my vague ideal of the same community; I was only enlightened and amused" (Brontë 79).

Daily, as I continued my attendance at the seminary of Mdlle. Reuter, did I find fresh occasions to compare the ideal with the real. What had I known of female character previously to my arrival at Brussels? Precious little. And what was my notion of it? Something vague, slight, gauzy, glittering; now when I came in contact with it I found it to be a palpable substance enough; very hard too sometimes and often heavy--there was metal in it, both lead and iron. (88)

Thus he privileges his "objective" observations and positions his judgment as unquestionable because it is based on "real" not fictional experience. He sees himself as a privileged observer of their true character.

To the tutor, female youth, female charms are like tapestry hangings of which the wrong side is continually turned towards him, and even when he sees the smooth, neat, external surface, he so well knows what knots, long stitches and jagged ends are behind that he has scarce a temptation to admire too fondly the seemly forms and bright colours exposed to general view. (110)

From this position, he determines the female students are fixed in their depravity. "An air of bold, impudent flirtation or a loose, silly leer was sure to answer the most ordinary glance from a masculine eye. . . . They had all been carefully brought up, yet was the mass of them mentally depraved" (89).

In his description of Mdille. Reuter he also compares his knowledge of her to an ideal. "Look at this little real woman! is she
like the women of novelists and romancers? To read of female character as depicted in Poetry and Fiction, one would think it was made up of sentiment, either for good or bad--here is a specimen, and a most sensible and respectable specimen too, whose staple ingredient is abstract reason" (81). Eventually, Zoraïde Reuter will disappoint Crimsworth by her duplicity and he will come to despise her. For all Crimsworth's confrontation with the "reality" of female character, one would assume he would then reevaluate or readjust his understanding of the ideal. But instead, the "real" female characters become a source of Crimsworth's disgust and disapproval as he continues searching for an ideal woman.

Crimsworth represents the characters of various female students in great detail, yet, he never mentions any of his male students. We learn only retrospectively that he had saved one of them from drowning on a particular outing. On his first day at the girls' school, he names three troublesome coquettes, Eulalie, Hortense, and Caroline and he describes how he manages them. Later, he names at least five other students, Aurelia Koslow, Adele Dronsart, Juanna Trista, Louise Path, Sylvie. He describes each of their defects in turn. He then names the other teachers including an odd reference to Frances Henri.63 All his attention to the details of these

63 He names the other teachers including "a fourth maitresse I sometimes saw... her name I think was Mdlle Henri" (94). Crimsworth's narrative voice forgets that he is telling this story retrospectively from his country home where Mdlle Henri is now his wife. His description of her at this time reveals only his clouded uncertainty of her character. It appears he is trying to bring us into his own experience of the moment, but the paragraph jars the logic of the story's telling and contributes to its problem with representing female characters.
various women points to Crimsworth's preoccupation with women as part of the story of his life. But where this story fails to engage real interest may lie in Crimsworth's limited understanding of these women and his inability to portray them in relation to each other. All the "real" women characters are discarded once Crimsworth meets Frances Henri. She lives up to Crimsworth ideal in a way that no other woman can.

When he meets Frances Henri, he tests her character through a series of mean-spirited actions to see if she is like all the rest. "I said nothing of Mdlle. Henri's exercise and, spectacles on nose, I endeavoured to decipher in her countenance, her sentiments at the omission; I wanted to find out whether in her existed a consciousness of her own talents. 'If she thinks she did a clever thing in composing that devoir, she will now look mortified,' thought I" (124). She is not as depraved as the other students. Crimsworth finds her docile, passive but not too dull; she is a perfect student. She responds as an automaton to his tests. He assumes that he understands her and can anticipate her responses and feelings. "I divined her thoughts" he says at one point (135). And then later, when he knows her better, he has learned how to provoke responses on demand. He says to himself:

You know the effect of either system; you know her smile when pleased; you know the play of her looks when roused; you have the secret of awakening what expression you will, and you can choose amongst that pleasant variety. With you she will sit silent as long as it suits you to talk alone; you can hold her under a potent spell; intelligent as she is, eloquent as she can be, you can seal
her lips and veil her bright countenance with diffidence.

(185)

Frances Henri becomes an ideal female for Crimsworth. Her point of view is never revealed in this section. She is represented only as Crimsworth's object of affection.

When Zoraïde Reuter suspects his attraction for Frances Henri, she dismisses her and refuses to give Crimsworth any information. Zoraïde coyly defends her actions during a tête à tête with Crimsworth. Her malicious intervention is later revealed by Frances Henri. Frances tells Crimsworth how Zoraïde Reuter came to visit her and her aunt and told Frances not to come back to work. This is the only time we learn of two women engaging in the novel and their engagement is centered around their heterosexual interest, Crimsworth. Frances Henri, victim of the cruel Zoraïde, nurses her aunt until she dies and then she is left entirely without a relation or any contact with another female character.

Only when Frances Henri is left completely alone in the world, and especially left without a female relative, does she becomes reunited with Crimsworth. In the climatic moment when he finally finds her in the cemetery, he realizes just how perfect an object she will be for him, partly because she is now friendless and relationless. She has only her "master." At this point he foregrounds what an ideal receptacle she is for his love. "I loved her, as she stood there, penniless and parentless, for a sensualist--charmless, for me a treasure, my best object of sympathy on earth, thinking such thoughts as I thought, feeling such feelings as I felt, my ideal of the shrine in which to seal my stores of love" (156 emphasis mine). Her
isolation from her female relation contributes Crimsworth's idealization of her. It also may contribute to the narrative difficulty of viewing her as anything other than an object of Crimsworth's affection; she has no subjective identity.

Crimsworth convinces himself that he understands Frances' reactions, and by the time he proposes to her, he even stops looking for her reaction. Instead, he simply projects a reaction onto her, and wishes her to feel as he feels while restraining her.

Frances' thoughts during this interval, I know not, nor did I attempt to guess them; I was not occupied in searching her countenance, nor in otherwise troubling her composure; the peace I felt, I wished her to feel; my arm, it is true, still detained her, but with a restraint that was gentle enough, so long as no opposition tightened it.

He implies that if opposition did arise he would only tighten his grasp more forcefully and continue to insist on detaining and containing her. The following metaphor points to a possible contrary reaction that Frances could be feeling. He says she was "as stirless in her happiness, as a mouse in its terror" (207). The conflation of imagery points to the erasure of Frances' own possible response: terror. Crimsworth can only admit a shadow of doubt regarding Frances Henri. He says that he is not sure that she was listening to his "harangue" because she does not respond the way she usually does. Instead, she stirs uneasily in his arms (208). But Crimsworth's narrative smoothly rolls right through the possibility that she could actually be ambivalent about him. He consistently objectifies her and does not allow her to become a subject in the narrative.
After their marriage, Frances Henri fulfills the role of wife, mother while simultaneously continuing her teaching career. "In the day-time my house and establishment were conducted by Madame the Directress" (230). Frances Henri's double role as both wife and teacher forces Crimsworth to bifurcate her personality in a way that foregrounds the incommensurability of the two roles. The representation becomes almost absurd as she transforms from one role into the other.

At six o'clock p.m. my daily labors ceased-- I then came home, for my home was my heaven--ever at that hour, as I entered our private-sitting-room-- the lady directress vanished from before my eyes, and Frances Henri, my own little lace-mender, was magically restored to my arms; much disappointed she would have been if her master had not been as constant to the tryste as herself. (232).

Frances' perfection at both these roles and her lack of any negative characteristics result in the charicaturing of her as the ideal woman.

What becomes problematic for the novel is not only Crimsworth's inability to represent convincing female characters, but also his inability to transform from a masculine figure into a more nurturing one (the way Rochester and almost all subsequent romance heroes do). This inability stems from Crimsworth's character in general. It has been noted that Crimsworth is unable to entertain any notion of inner conflict or self awareness (see Judith Williams and Helen Moglen, footnote sixty). Throughout the novel, Crimsworth encounters many superficial conflicts concerning his occupation and his livelihood, but he represses any notion of self-doubt or inner conflict. "The struggle between willed feeling and felt truth has taken place well below the surface of this novel and the characters
emerge from it curiously flattened and dispassionate" (Moglen 84). His unflagging self-assuredness exacerbates his inability to transform into a more nurturing character.

Crimsworth's commanding stance towards Frances never vacillates throughout the novel, even during his proposal and their subsequent marriage. Whereas Rochester's attitude towards Jane undergoes a tremendous transformation by the end of the novel, Crimsworth's attitude toward Frances Henri does not. His actions and his verbal demand are quite uncharacteristic of other proposal scenes where the hero transforms from the self-assured man to the momentarily vulnerable and supplicating suitor. Rather, Crimsworth takes command of the situation. "Whereas, one moment I was sitting solus on the chair near the table, the next, I held Frances on my knee, placed there with sharpness and decision, and retained with exceeding tenacity. . . . "Frances, how much regard have you for me?" was my demand" (205-206). After their marriage, he maintains his teacher-role. He often commands her to "read English to me" and "frequently dosed her with Wordsworth" (233). Even after they are married for ten years, Frances still calls him "master" or "monsieur." Her idealized one-dimensional representation and Crimsworth's inability to transform his attitude towards her contribute to this novel's neglect of homosocial issues. The novel does not close with their marriage, but continues on

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64 The scene where the hero recognizes the heroines' worth and his own need to change is highlighted as pivotal by romance writers in Dangerous Men Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance.
describing their life ten years later. Marriage, which frequently ends most narratives, is here belittled by its position in relation to other events in the novel. Crimsworth's relationship with Frances Henri is also made less of by Crimsworth's reintroduction of Hunsden and other characters. Crimsworth's representation of his continued friendship with Yorke Hundsen may contribute to the narratives overall failure.

Hunsden is a dynamic and engaging character, and his relationship to Crimsworth competes with the romantic narrative in terms of textual prominence. Crimsworth remains connected to Hunsden from the beginning of the novel. Their relationship is represented as more dynamic and complicated than Crimsworth's relationship to Frances Henri. The novel gives us the sense that Hunsden affects Crimsworth in ways that Frances Henri never does. It appears to make male homosocial issues more central than either heterosexual or female homosocial issues.

Crimsworth's reluctance to say good-bye to Hunsden signifies the sustained emotional engagement that continues throughout the novel between the two men. At one point Hunsden tries to bid him good-bye as he asks for a 'thank you.' Crimsworth refuses to respond, ignoring his requests. Hunsden leaves the room laughing, and Crimsworth simply says to himself: "Let him go. We shall meet again some day" (48). The refusal to thank him or to say good-bye keeps them engaged. Later in Brussels the pattern is repeated. At the end of Hunsden's first visit in Belgium, he leaves again laughing. "He laughed. . . and so laughing vanished" (193). Their final parting in Brussels is equally abrupt. "With a simultaneous movement, each
turned his back on the other; neither said "God bless you" yet on the
morrow the sea was to roll between us" (225). They never actually
part from each other. Other things come in between them, but they
never take leave.

Although they do not linger over farewells, Crimsworth does
linger over the effects of Hunsden's interviews. One particular
interview in Brussels and an earlier one in England both leave
Crimsworth in a heightened emotional state. "A conference with him
affected one like a draught of Peruvian bark; it seemed a
concentration of the specially harsh, stringent, bitter... A ruffled
mind makes a restless pillow; I slept little after this interview"
(193). Earlier, after Crimsworth leaves Hunsden's house in X----, he
finds himself likewise excited and unable to sleep. "I had got a good
way on my return to my lodgings, before I found out that I was
walking very fast and breathing very hard, and that my nails were
almost stuck into the palms of my clenched hands, and that my teeth
were set fast. . . . Why did I enter Hunsden's house this evening? . . . I
got no sleep, my head burned, my feet froze" (33). Sleeplessness and
charged emotionality signify the centrality of their relationship.

Crimsworth and Hunsden's relationship is also the most
dynamic relationship in the novel. Crimsworth vacillates between
being pleased by Hunsden (22) to being infuriated by him (195). By
the end of the novel, however, Hunsden and Crimsworth have
secured an enduring friendship. They live next door to each other
and Hunsden is a frequent visitor to Crimsworth, Frances Henri, and
their son, Victor. Hunsden is not displaced by their marriage, nor
does his relationship seem to be subordinated to the heterosexual
one. Rather, through Hunsden's close relationship with Crimsworth and Crimsworth's son, Victor, Hunsden becomes part of the family scene that closes the novel.

**Conclusion**

I have theorized that *The Professor* does not satisfactorily manage female homosocial desire. Any number of circumstances can contribute to a novel's lack of popular and critical success, but the coincidences I have foregrounded in *The Professor* warrant speculation. *The Professor* is the only novel of Brontë's that does not end with the resolution of the heterosexual conflict. In *Jane Eyre* and in *Shirley* the narratives end in marriage.⁶⁵ Perhaps there is something about the resolution of marriage closure, even though it is a heterosexual relation, that contributes to the satisfactory management of homosocial desire. To what extent can romantic heterosexual relationships manage female homosocial desires? How do female homosocial relations, both explicit and implicit, contribute to narrative interest?

In this dissertation, I have demonstrated how various strategies of representing female homosocial relationships engage with issues of female subject formation in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. I have outlined a rationale for what may compel women to read the type of

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⁶⁵ In *Villette*, the narrative ends not with marriage, but with the likely death of Monsieur Paul. However, his death does resolve Lucy's heterosexual relation albeit through tragedy.
novel that ostensibly reifies a heterosexual paradigm of love and marriage, and excludes vital homosocial relations. I have argued, that in the novels of Charlotte Brontë, those relations have not been as excluded as they initially appear to be.

The implications of this study can be extended to an entire genre of novels written predominantly by and for women: the romance novel. How do the attributes of the various narratives I have foregrounded resurface in the narrative of these romance novels? The most consistent traits that I have foregrounded that repeat through contemporary romance are the transformation of the hero and the narrative's closure in a heterosexual marriage. In this conclusion, I can only begin to speculate how these traits work in contemporary novels; further research is required for an extensive investigation. But preliminary research reveals that romance writers themselves connect these traits to Jane Eyre and other Brontë novels, which they locate as the precursors of the genre (see Dangerous Men and Adventurous Women: Romance Writers on the Appeal of Romance pages 46, 65-66, 78). Most specifically, Daphne Clair sketches a genealogy of the female genre from Ann Radcliffe's Gothic The Mysteries of Udolpho, to the Brontës' novels, to Du Maurier's Rebecca, through to contemporary Gothic romances (63).

What I hope this study initiates is a re-evaluation of how narratives function in the context of female issues of subject development, homosociality and material culture. The enduring popularity of Jane Eyre with young female audiences points to the narrative's ability to perform a certain function for women readers. That function is neither a liberatory nor a disciplining one. Rather,
these narratives represent and manage desires and anxieties that arise from female subject formation in patriarchal culture. Various approaches by contemporary critics that set texts in a disciplining versus an emancipatory context are unable satisfactorily to reveal the complexities of a fantasy management function that has enabled women to "escape without leaving" the dominant ideology of patriarchal culture. This alternative function needs to be understood in the context of today's culture as well as in the context of nineteenth-century middle-class culture. I contend, as many other critics and writers have, that romances are vital stories that women tell themselves. They perform a fantasy management function that enables women to deal with conflicting desires inherent in patriarchal culture.

Psychologically, the fundamental romance novel situation—woman and man meet in an atmosphere of intense attraction and conflict that is eventually transformed by the conciliatory power of love into a lasting pair bond—may be the nearest thing a woman has to the oedipal myth that allows the male to separate from his mother and establish his autonomous adult personality. (Barlow 47)

The romance narrative may be an alternative female oedipal myth and not simply the nearest thing to it. The endurance and the repetition of the patterns certainly point to a mythic and archetypal dimension of the genre. The popularity of the genre with women since the nineteenth century calls us to investigate more precisely what the genre does for women and how it does it.
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Maryellen Burke received a Master of Arts degree in English from the University of Florida in 1989. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Saint Leo College in 1987. She has taught courses at both the University of Florida and Saint Leo College. Before moving to Florida in 1981, she grew up in Bethel, Connecticut with her parents and ten brothers. When not reading and studying Victorian literature, she enjoys book making and book binding which she studied at the Center for Book Arts in New York City.
I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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December 1994

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