

“READER” IN *JANE EYRE*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is designed to show the development of feminist power of Jane Eyre, the heroine of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, by examining how her reader is addressed in the totality of this novel. The main body of this thesis will follow the four parts of Jane Eyre's different period of her life: in childhood, in Thornfield, in Moor House and in Ferndean Manor. The rhetorical instrument of addressing her reader is influenced by her speech and silence, and appears in a gradually increasing frequency in the four parts. In this sense, Jane Eyre's female voice is also empowered by the increasing addresses of her reader. Through the overturning the male voices by Jane's female voice, her self-empowerment is achieved.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my parents Zhi Li, Xiaomei Qi, and my boyfriend Ningyu Zhang.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

This thesis, as the title shows, will examine the place of the reader in the totality of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Since *Jane Eyre*'s publication in 1847 by Smith, Elder & Co., Brontë and this novel have appealed to both general readers' and critics' attention. Various studies about this novel that focus on different areas have emerged in Brontë criticisms. Among one of the most contentious issues, is Jane Eyre's feminist attitude. Generally, critics tend to view Jane's female role in this novel as superior than those of her related male characters, especially in the episode after her childhood life; but the critics achieve their conclusion using different approaches in the discussions of Jane Eyre's character, as well as Charlotte Brontë's supposed projection of herself into this novel. Some scholars used the relationship between Jane and her reader to argue their positions. However, Jane Eyre's increasing voice through the growing frequency of addressing her reader has never been the exclusive focus of Brontë criticism. Thus, the aim of this thesis is to analyze how the address of the reader throughout the story manifests Jane Eyre's self-empowerment.

However successful this novel was after it was first published, Charlotte Brontë, like other nineteenth-century women writers, was "literally and figuratively confined" (xi).¹ As Gilbert and Gubar state,

¹ From the preface of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1980).

Enclosed in the architecture of an overwhelmingly male-dominated society, these literary women were also, inevitably, trapped in the specifically literary constructs of what Gertrude Stein was to call “patriarchal poetry.” For not only did a nineteenth-century woman writer have to inhabit ancestral mansions (or cottages) owned and built by men, she was also constricted and restricted by the Palaces of Art and Houses of Fiction male writers author. (xi)

Therefore, they suggest that the literature by women in the Victorian period features the female impulse to “struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinitions of self, art, and society” (xii). To struggle against those who deemed that “whatever is unusual is wrong” (1) and thus attacked the theme of this novel, Brontë also stated in her 1847 preface of the first edition of *Jane Eyre* that “conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion” (1), therefore “to attack the first is not to assail the last” (1). In this sense, Jane Eyre’s pilgrimage can be analyzed as her redefinition of her female power and her negation of her natural inferiority and unusualness through increasing her female voice and breaking the confinement of silence and male voices.

Since Jane’s voice is gradually increased through the address of her reader, the role that reader plays is also worth deeply analyzing as narrator and narration itself, as suggested in *Reader-response Criticism: from Formalism to Post-structuralism* (1980). In this book, Walker Gibson and of Gerald Prince provide their perspectives on the reader’s role in a narrative when he/she is not a real person, but an unobserved listener to whom the writer has intended to write. Gibson names the unreal reader as the “mock reader,” putting it in a comparison with a real reader and setting this pair in an analogy with the common pair of comparison between the first-person narrator and the real author. Gerald Prince in his article “Introduction to the Study of the Narratee” also argues the roles of different types of the reader, as a foundation for his real focus on the definition, classification and the role of the

narratee—the narration’s direct receiver within the story. Jane P. Tompkins, the editor of *Reader-response Criticism*, offers a simple but exact comment on Gibson and Prince’s discussion that “the focus on mock readers and narratees is ultimately a way of re-focusing on the text” (xii-xiii). When Prince compares the narratee and the ideal reader, he sets the context of the discussion within the text. That means, both the narratee and the ideal reader exist only within the text. An ideal reader for a writer, as Prince has defined, is the one “who would understand perfectly and would approve entirely the least of his words, the most subtle of his intentions” (Tompkins, 9) while a narratee exists as a character who would interrupt, stop, and resume the story-telling. As an example for this function, Prince suggests that *A Thousand and One Nights* provides an illustration for the importance of the narratee:

Scheherazade must exercise her talent as a storyteller or die, for as long as she is able to retain the attention of the caliph with her stories, she will not be executed. It is evident that her heroine’s fate and that of the narration depend not only upon her capabilities as a storyteller, but also upon the humor of the narratee. If the caliph should become tired and stop listening, Scheherazade will die and the narrative will end. (8)

Following the example given by Prince above, I would pose a good example for the role of the narratee in a novel which would be Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847), mainly because of the novel’s unique narrative structure. The double narrative of this story allows the existence of a narratee who is also a character in the outer story and serves to be the receiver of the inner story. Mr. Lockwood, the narrator of the outer story, is a tenant who arrives on the scene many years later than when the central conflicts happened in the moorland farmhouse “Wuthering Heights” and is exposed to the evidence of the mysterious past of this house both in his room as well as from the odd and unusual characteristics of Heathcliff. He then seizes an opportunity to inquire into the history of Wuthering Heights

from the housekeeper Nelly Dean, who becomes the narrator of the inner story. As the inner narration begins, Mr. Lockwood's role automatically switches to a narratee, the receiver of Nelly's story. Thanks to Mr. Lockwood, the actual readers of this novel are also informed of what he desires to know. In this narrative structure, since Lockwood is a real person whose situation and feeling will affect the story-telling, Nelly's narration is easily changed: "But here is Kenneth; I'll go down, and tell him how much better you are. My history is dree as we say, and will serve to wile away another morning" (130).² Since Lockwood is still in his recovery from the terror he encounters in Heathcliff's *Wuthering Heights*, he is not able to wait until Nelly finishes the whole story. In this way, the situation of Lockwood the narratee easily influences Nelly's story-telling.

In a contrast to the narratee in *Wuthering Heights*, we look now to the "ideal reader" mentioned earlier that suits the reader's role in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Reading through this novel carefully, the actual word *reader* appears so many times that it should not be merely regarded as a simple address by the narrator Jane Eyre. It deserves a special treatment because it signals a way to interpret the heroine's psychological development as she grows and her feminist attitude in this novel. To state this more specifically, the address of the reader affects Jane's voice change, which demonstrates that her characteristic power also changes with her voice.

Carla Kaplan (1996), Janet Freeman (1984), and Edgar Shannon (1955)'s works, as far as seen from the title, are obviously concerned with the narrative of this novel. Shannon's view on the change of the narrative tense offers a direct analysis concerning the narrative

² Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. New York: Norton, 1963. Print.

characteristic and how it works to help Jane Eyre express herself. He argues that because the stories have lost their freshness when it is told after so many years of occurrence, the present tense is occasionally used. However, “Charlotte Brontë reduces the handicap inherent in her method by pertinent shifts from the past to the present tense” (141). Carla Kaplan introduces a new term—the “erotics of talk.” In the definition of this term she suggests that “the competing topos...is the search not for a voice, but for a listener capable of hearing that voice and responding appropriately to it. Within many individual texts, this topos takes the form of a repeated and structuring metaphor—a performative trope” (15). She argues that, traditionally, Jane Eyre’s power of using her speech to gain control in the fictional patriarchal society is a successful demonstration of the “politics of voice”—how Jane Eyre uses her voice to overpower the voices of the male figures. However, from the description of her marriage life in the last chapter, one would trace Jane’s actual desire of finding a companion to carry out a conversation—an “erotics of talk” which means an ideal listener. She suggests that “nothing seems to shake her longing to talk, her desire for narrative and story, her belief in the possibilities of exchange” (8). In my argument, I would combine these two aspects together, noting that Jane owns both the “politics of voice” and “the erotics of talk”—the power of her voice to overshadow the male figures and her desire of carrying out a conversation with a listener.

Janet Freeman’s arguments touch more upon the issue of Jane Eyre’s reader by analyzing the importance of Jane Eyre’s speech and silence in different situations in this novel. The reader that Freeman refers to is not an invisible figure; instead, she refers the reader to “us”—the actual volume holders—and analyzes what Jane intends to convey to us:

“What else are we to make of the thirty times Jane Eyre—for all her concentrated vision—turns away from her story and addresses *us* directly?” (685). Her point on the importance of the reader is that “only her reader is allowed to know what Jane Eyre is really thinking; and so her reader must be addressed” (699). I would not deny that the reader Jane refers to includes us, or her contemporary public and critics. Nevertheless, I prefer to treat this reader more as, using Prince’s term, an ideal and unobserved reader, as stated before, in respect that Jane Eyre’s reader is also an invisible figure who does not show disapproval to her narration. The fictional Jane Eyre has expected an ideal reader, who approves her story by acquiescence, disregarding Charlotte Brontë’s actual readership. Critics have accused the narrator Jane of being too subjective and involved in writing her own feelings and ordeals she has received from her host family, her school, Edward Rochester and her cousin. However, if her heartbroken experience is what she intends to tell, the existence of an ideal reader is necessary. Still, Jane is not writing a diary, recording the daily chores simultaneously as they happen; she is rewriting her past life, as an adult who strives to deliver her past ordeals. In this sense, she needs approval. Although *Jane Eyre* did receive a great popularity after it was published, before the favorable acceptance appeared, Brontë was anxious when waiting for the comments from “Quarterly Review” in 1848, one year after the novel’s publication. She “was conjecturing that it was unfavorable” (Gaskell 395). Brontë’s sensitivity to the reception of this female narration thus allows her fictitious self to have a silent reader that she is able to address who would never offer negative comments toward this story.

Sally Shuttleworth in her book *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996) strives to analyze Brontë’s four major novels from the perspective of what she calls the

“contemporary psychological discourse.” She argues that Brontë’s novels, if discussed from the psychological viewpoints, should involve the novels’ contemporary psychological trend, the Victorian psychology, in order to thus successfully disclose the true intentions of Brontë in creating those masterpieces: “Nowhere has this tendency to consider novels in isolation from contemporary psychological discourse been more evident than in the domain of Brontë scholarship” (1). Neither Freudian nor other modern psychological theories could sufficiently reveal the psychological struggles within the Victorian novels. Shuttleworth has made an interesting comparison between physicians and novelists concerning their roles in treating people in their effective areas in the mid-Victorian period. She argues that “the goal of the novelist, like that of the physician, is to penetrate hidden recesses, to unveil the concealed inner processes of the social body or the individual mind” (15). In her sense of “penetration,” this superficially inconceivable movement of the examiner’s mind functions by viewing others’ appearances and by reading what has been suggested either on people’s faces or through their gestures and behaviors. The difference of the narrative perspective may affect the “character-penetration” by the narrator. In *Shirley*, the whole story is narrated from the third-person perspective; therefore the responsibility of the omniscient narrator is to inform the audience of the plot of the story. Therefore, the narrator’s responsibility is to perform an action of informing and analyzing rather than mere narrating. The omniscient narrator hardly involves his/her own feelings because so much happens to every character that he/she has to take care of in the narration. Whereas in *Jane Eyre*, when the narrator, the adult Jane Eyre appears, especially as a major character on whose experience this story is based, she imbues the narration with her feelings and thoughts. In other words, the story is full of Jane’s own

adventures and emotions, as well as her penetration of different characters around her. Therefore, the reader is needed by the narrator Jane in order to express herself. The communication with her reader involves, for the most part, her feelings toward Rochester and other male figures as well as how she is treated by them. In this sense, through the address of her reader, Jane gradually increases her own voice by informing the reader of her pilgrimage.

Critics like Lisa Sternlieb and Susan Lanser prefer to argue the issue of Jane Eyre's narrative from the perspectives in which Jane's relationship with her reader has not developed in a harmonious way as is demonstrated in Freeman, Kaplan and Shannon's arguments. Sternlieb and Lanser's viewpoints include the separation of Jane's narrative from the plot and its effects on the reader as well as Jane's narrative authority over her reader. In "Jane Eyre--Hazarding Confidence" (1999), Sternlieb tries to "defamiliarize the heroine who has engendered a profound but false sense of intimacy with her reader" (455) because she deems that Jane's narrative and the plot should not be merged together. Before she starts her argument, she already defines this novel as "a revenge novel, one that exposes Rochester's cruelty to Bertha, to Adèle, and especially to herself" (454) setting the keynote of her perspective and discussion as a negative tone. Jane Eyre thus, in Sternlieb's eyes, is a writer instead of a narrator. In order to write a novel of revenge, Jane had to have actually started collecting information for her autobiography at the beginning period of her acquaintance with Rochester. Sternlieb also analyzes how Jane uses her subterfuge of narrative to ruin her opportunity to get close with both Rochester and her reader by "tracing Jane's fascination with vengeance" (455). Susan Lanser studies the narrative voice of Jane Eyre in "Jane Eyre's Legacy: The Powers and Dangers of Singularity" (1992), arguing that "nothing is more

crucial to the development of Jane's character than the preservation of her right to speak. For voice is the trope par excellence of power in *Jane Eyre*" (183). But she continues by saying that Jane's narrative power actually covers both her readers and other figures in this novel, suggesting that "Jane's rejection of other people's representations of herself in favor of a 'new way of talking' based on the authority of her own perceptions, feelings, and experience--that is, on an essentially Romantic authority" (183). In a word, Lanser defines Jane's voice as a narrator as based on the "unacknowledged foundation" of "imperialism" (191).

I agree with the elements in Lanser's argument which concern Jane's narrative power over other figures. However, I disagree with her argument that the "imperialism" shown in Jane's narrative also affects her reader. Neither will I approve Sternlieb's argument claiming the false intimacy between Jane and her reader, as well as her point that the narrative and the plot are separated. I would suggest that Jane has never endeavored to control her reader in order to show her unparalleled narrative authority. Differing from Lanser's point of view that "Jane's struggle, then, is not to gain a voice but to sustain it in the face of increasingly seductive pressures to yield" (183), I suggest that initially Jane is deprived of her power and her voice. She then gradually empowers herself from the moment of her first self-declaration. Kaplan argues that "in spite of her extreme youth, her habits of quiescence and submission, her need to be loved and approved even if only by her oppressors, Jane stands up for herself and for fairness" (Kaplan 5). In this process, her reader is invited to witness the development of her feminist attitude. Therefore, in this sense, the plot and the narrative are closely bound together.

The approach I will apply in my main argument of Jane's development is to find out how Jane introduces and communicates with her ideal reader by the direct address and use of the word *reader* when she is struggling against male figures in the novel, as well as how this word signifies the growing feminist attitude within Jane Eyre's character, according to different life periods that I identify in this novel. The story can be divided into five parts: Part I is from Chapter 1 to Chapter 4, Jane's life in Gateshead with her aunt and cousins; Part II is from Chapter 5 to Chapter 10, Jane's life in Lowood School; Part III is from Chapter 11 to Chapter 27, her life in Thornfield Hall with Mr. Rochester; Part IV is from Chapter 28 to Chapter 35, her life in her cousins' house; Part V is from Chapter 36 to the end, her life after going back to Rochester. The word *reader* appears with different frequencies in every part of this novel; and it shows with the highest frequency when the two important male figures step into Jane's life.³ Therefore, my main argument will focus on four chapters, which follow the five stages of Jane's development reflected in her voice in chronological order as listed above (I will combine the first two parts together as Jane Eyre's childhood). I will analyze how Jane gains her voice and female power by tracing her use of the word "reader." Freeman also argues at the beginning of "Speech and Silence in *Jane Eyre*" that "though no one else in the novel possesses the authority to tell Jane's story truly, it is told again and again" (684). Then she continues to list how people around defines her. Following Freeman's argument, I suggest that the characters that appear around Jane can also be identified as the "readers" of Jane's

³ I will use the Norton Critical 3rd Edition of *Jane Eyre*. According to my identification of the frequencies of the *reader* appearing in different chapters, there are altogether thirty-five direct addresses, locating respectively on page 66, 74, 79, 93, 107, 125, 147, 149, 158, 220, 235, 245, 255, 272, 274, 280, 281, 294, 312, 325, 327, 334, 340, 346, 351, 352, 355, 357, 361, 367, 381, 382, 383. Actually, Freeman and Sternlieb have mentioned the fact that the reader is addressed for over thirty times by using the number given by Sylvère Monod in "Charlotte Brontë and the Thirty 'Readers' of *Jane Eyre*." I also listed the actual page in order to count the appearance of this word. There is none in Part I, two in Part II, 15 in Part III, 13 in Part IV, and 5 in Part V.

story as well as her personality; they can also be categorized as good readers and bad readers according to how Jane and her story are received by them. When the good readers appear, Jane's ideal reader is not needed, for the good readers are able to offer what Jane needs for comfort; whereas when the bad readers appear, Jane turns to the good readers and her ideal reader for help. Before I start with the interpretation of the text, in the following chapter, I will first focus on the relationship between *Jane Eyre* and Charlotte Brontë, aiming at revealing the reason that Brontë chose the first-person narrative perspective and the necessity of inserting a frequently addressed reader.

CHAPTER 2

CHARLOTTE BRONTË AND JANE EYRE

Whether Jane Eyre is the autobiographical reflection of Charlotte Brontë in this novel remains uncertain, for the reason that Brontë herself never confessed, or avoided making, this connection. Clearly in Brontë's biographies, especially the famous *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857) written by her friend Elizabeth Gaskell after Brontë's death, there is no definite claim that Jane Eyre's experience exactly parallels Brontë's. When Mrs. Gaskell creates this biography, she has avoided using the words that are too definite in describing the similarities between Brontë's life and the plots in this novel. Brontë herself more than once claimed to Mrs. Gaskell that "she should not have written what she did of Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan Bridge"⁴ (65). Gaskell revealed that when Brontë was asked about certain occasions that she alluded to, "she replied with reserve and hesitation, evidently shying away from what she imagined might lead to too much conversation on one of her books" (66). Even though Mrs. Gaskell did not obtain the first-hand information about the impetus of writing *Jane Eyre* from Brontë directly, neither from her other huge number of informants, she still disclosed in *Life* several discoveries from the information she had obtained that might contribute to the creation of Brontë's novels.

⁴ Cowan Bridge School was a Lowood-like school because it had so many rules that the pupils had to follow. The children of Patrick Brontë, the father of Brontë family, all went to Cowan Bridge School except Branwell and Anne.

The experience in Cowan Bridge School did not leave Charlotte Brontë too many positive impressions not only because the rules were strict for children who were not over ten years old, but also because the ill treatments that her sister Maria Brontë had ever received here, which finally led to her death in a very young age. In Maria's short period of accommodation in Cowan Bridge, she became the target of one of the superintendents, "who is depicted as 'Miss Scatcherd' in 'Jane Eyre'" (73). The experience of Maria and Helen Burns in *Jane Eyre* was so paralleled that Mrs. Gaskell claimed that: "I need hardly say that Helen Burns is as exact a transcript of Maria Brontë as Charlotte's wonderful power of reproducing character could give" (73). Besides the ordeal that Maria had experienced from the "Miss Scatcherd,"⁵ a low fever also broke out in the spring of 1825, which was also described in *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte therefore, was regarded as an "avenging sister of the sufferer" (73) who had kept a vivid record of her sister's suffering in Cowan Bridge in her depiction of Helen Burns.⁶

Except for Maria being the prototype of Helen Burns, the creation of St. John Rivers may also be traced back to a brother of Brontë's best friend Ellen Nussey,⁷ according to Gaskell's discovery. In one letter that Brontë wrote to Ellen Nussey, she disclosed her true feelings towards Henry Nussey:

Now, my dear Ellen, there were in this proposal some things which might have proved a strong temptation. I thought if I were to marry Henry Nussey his sister could live with me, and how happy I should be. But again I asked myself two questions: Do I love him as much as a woman ought to love the man she marries?

⁵ Elizabeth Gaskell chose not to disclose the real name of the prototype of Miss Scatcherd in *Jane Eyre* for the sake of privacy and personal security.

⁶ Actually not just the suffering that "Miss Scatcherd" was giving to Maria Brontë which was included in *Jane Eyre*, the poor living condition, the bad food, all the terrible managements in this school were vividly depicted into the *Jane Eyre*'s experience at Lowood School.

⁷ Henry Nussey.

Am I the person best qualified to make him happy? Alas! Ellen, my conscience answered *no* to both these questions... Moreover, I was aware that he knew so little of me he could hardly be conscious to whom he was writing. Why! It would startle him to see me in my natural home character; he would think I was a wild, romantic enthusiast indeed. I could not sit all day long making a grave face before my husband. (173)

From Brontë's depiction of Henry Nussey, who was also a curate at Donnington in Sussex, and their short courtship and marriage proposal, it is not hard to imagine that Henry was the prototype of St. John Rivers. In writing *Jane Eyre*, Brontë clearly magnifies either the characteristics of Henry Nussey in the depiction of St. John Rivers, or their relationship when describing Jane's accommodation at the Moor House.

Having found the prototypes of certain characters in *Jane Eyre* does not indicate that Jane's prototype is Charlotte Brontë herself, even though it is the best guess that the critics can make when regarding this novel as a semi-autobiography. This conjecture might be the last reception of this novel that Charlotte Brontë had expected to receive. To avoid being recognized as the author of either the collection of the poems or the later prose in the suspicion of self-publicity, Charlotte Brontë informed her friend in one letter:

Averse to personal publicity, we veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming Christian names positively *masculine*, while we did not like to declare ourselves women, because—without at the time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called “feminine”—we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice. (Gaskell 299)

Even though Brontë preferred not to admit *Jane Eyre*'s story derived from her own experience, she told her sister that “I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours” (Gaskell 324). She did contemplate on the idea of creating a heroine who maintained the same appearance of herself and characteristics of her

sisters' heroines, opposing to their opinion of making their heroines beautiful and gorgeous to gain popularity.

Actually before the pseudonym "Currer Bell" appeared in the published edition of *Jane Eyre*, the other pseudonym that she used before had already been made familiar with some of her correspondents, as Gaskell has revealed from some letter extracts:

There are two or three things noticeable in the letter from which these extracts are taken. The first is the initials [C.T.]⁸ with which she had evidently signed the former one to which she alludes. About this time, to her more familiar correspondents, she occasionally calls herself 'Charles Thunder,' making a kind of *pseudonym* for herself out of her Christian name and the meaning of her Greek surname. (195)

Not only did Brontë refuse to reveal herself clearly as a woman in the letters under her pseudonym, she also applied manly style in writing those letters. According to Gaskell, Brontë wrote letters to Robert Southey with a copy of her first poems and asked for comments. Her womanly style of writing was deliberately designed to leave Southey a clear impression that it was a woman who had decided to devote herself in literature and inquired opinions on this decision. Unfortunately, Southey denied her passion and determination of entering the literary field, claiming that she is too young and unfitting for this career.⁹ However, many years later when she wrote to William Wordsworth, this time she asked for "purely literary criticisms" (Gaskell 196). Therefore, she attached her manly writing with a manly pseudonym. From this shift, it is proper to speculate that when Brontë decided to devote herself to literature, she chose not to reveal her real identity as a female writer.

⁸ I added the information in the brackets.

⁹ Philip Davis also includes this record in his *The Victorians*: "Notoriously in a letter of 1837 the Poet Laureate Robert Southey had dismissed the youthful poems sent him by Charlotte Brontë as an indulgence in a literary day-dreaming which, he wrote, unfitted a young woman for the ordinary uses of the world without fitting her for anything else. No wonder Charlotte Brontë and Marian Evans first published under masculine pseudonyms: Currer Bell and George Eliot." (239-240)

Details on the publication of *Jane Eyre* were disclosed in Gaskell's *Life*. In fact, *The Professor* was written prior to *Jane Eyre* but was published as the last of Brontë's four novels chronologically. The story was not attractive enough to convince the publishers that it would be a good sale. The letter came from the publisher informing Brontë that for business reasons, this book would not be published, and added that "a work in three volumes would meet with careful attention" (Gaskell 334). Accordingly, in the letter that was written to request the publication of *Jane Eyre*, Brontë took the suggestion given by the publisher:

I now send you per rail a MS. Entitled "Jane Eyre," a novel in three volumes, by Currer Bell...It is better in future to address Mr. Currer Bell, under cover to Miss Brontë, Haworth, Bradford, Yorkshire, as there is a risk of letters otherwise directed not reaching me at present. (338)

As it was mentioned above, the Brontë sisters were using masculine names to conceal their female identities. In doing so, they convinced themselves that the stories, though written by female writers, would be able to appeal to more readers. Failed in either establishing a school elsewhere, or opening one up right at their living parsonage, their desire of delivering their knowledge and talent became so intense, after so many times of declination. Therefore, in writing their first published novels, the three sisters tried to insert someone as their audience: Emily Brontë used the double narrative, inviting a narratee to be the story listener, setting the story-telling as natural as possible; Anne Brontë and Charlotte Brontë deliberately invited an invisible "reader" to whom they would tell their stories without being interrupted. Before the actual publication of *Jane Eyre*, Brontë had already underestimated this novel by claiming that "I would still endeavor to keep my expectations low respecting the ultimate success of *Jane Eyre*" (Spark 137) because "a mere domestic novel will, I fear, seem trivial to men to large views and solid attainments" (137). Nevertheless, under the cover of her masculine

pseudonym and her fear of this novel's failure in publication, her strong yet inconspicuous inner desire to overturn the patriarchal dominance of society as well as for the authorship of the narrative were reflected in her design of the title page of the first edition of *Jane Eyre*. In fact, in one footnote giving by the editor of Gaskell's *Life*, the publishing information was revealed as that "it [*Jane Eyre*] was in three volumes, and the title-page ran as follows:--'*Jane Eyre: an Autobiography. Edited by Currer Bell. In Three Volumes. London: Smith, Elder, & Co., Cornhill 1847.*'" (Gaskell 339). It first emerged as an autobiographical writing, with the appearance of "Currer Bell" as the editor instead of the author. Brontë gave up the authority to claim herself as the omniscient author; instead, she bestows this opportunity to Jane Eyre in narrating the story in the first-person narrative, through which the vividness of storytelling and feminist elements are manifested by her own unique narration. How this unique narrative technique—the frequent address of the invisible reader—works in different periods of Jane Eyre life, and how the address of the reader indicate the growing feminist attitude of the heroine will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

READER, I DO NOT NEED YOU TEMPORARILY

In the last chapter, I have discussed the relationship between Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre*, and how Jane Eyre becomes the narrator of her own story. Therefore, since Brontë deliberately conceals herself in the narration and puts Jane Eyre on the stage, when the discussion on the importance of the reader actually starts, I prefer to ignore the existence of the actual authoress Charlotte Brontë and regard Jane Eyre as the autobiographer and writer of her own story. Freeman also suggests that “readers of *Jane Eyre* also understand, once the novel is nearing its end, that Jane’s true history is her own property and that no one else has the right to tell it” (683). In this sense, it is the autobiographer Jane who assigns an invisible reader for herself to show the development in the feminist way of her younger self.

One important point that should not be ignored is that Jane Eyre has already been married for over ten years when she is writing her story. No matter how she endeavors to replay her childhood in the most childish way and narrate it as a story, her language still shows adult features. Joyce Carol Oates argues in her introduction of this novel¹⁰ that “just as these rendered places differ greatly from one another, so Jane differs greatly *in* them; one has the sense of a soul in ceaseless evolution” (xi). Michel Foucault, in his famous “What is an Author” proposes that the “I” in the first-person narrative novel should not be mixed with

¹⁰ This edition of *Jane Eyre* is from Bantam Classic, 1987. Print.

the actual story writer:

It is well known that in a novel narrated in the first person, neither the first person pronoun, the present indicative tense, nor, for that matter, its signs of localization refer directly to the writer, either to the time when he wrote, or to the specific act of writing; rather, they stand for a “second self” whose similarity to the author is never fixed and undergoes considerable alteration within the course of a single book. (1484)¹¹

Karen Chase (1984) has suggested a similar opinion that “the Jane who narrates cannot be identified with the Jane narrated” (76). In this sense, the adult autobiographer Jane stands above the story she is narrating about her younger self, and the story with the first person pronoun “I” develops with the development of the younger Jane. In this process of development, the autobiographer Jane invents the ideal reader as the witness. In this sense, it should be noticed that it is the adult Jane, the autobiographer, who makes this address, since the separated younger Jane in the story is in no sense aware of herself being written about by the older self.

The address of her reader that the adult Jane has applied in narrating the whole story, if analyzed thoroughly, is able to help the actual readers to distinguish how she has intended to make a difference in narrating different periods of her short, unmarried life before the last chapter of this story. Jane has gone through rapid changes: “in quick succession she is governess, disappointed fiancée, penniless wanderer, rural school-teacher, heiress, wife, mother” (Chase 77). Karen Chase poses an argument that emphasizes the opposite side of the traditional definition of this novel as a *Bildungsroman*. She argues that Jane’s so-called development is magnified by the elimination of the characters around her: John Reed’s death, Mrs. Reed’s near death, Georgiana and Eliza’s self-confinement, Bertha’s suicide, Edward

¹¹ Foucault, Michel. “What is an Author?” *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* 2nd Ed. Leitch, Vincent B. New York: Norton, 2010. Print.

Rochester's deformity, and finally St. John Rivers's "returning to his God." Therefore, in this sense, Jane's growth is a "visual illusion" (77-78). It is the disappearance of other characters that creates the illusive growth of Jane Eyre. I disagree with this argument in the denial of Jane's growth. I would suggest that Jane's maturity is in a gradually developed process and there exists one aspect of her development that does signal her real maturity—the increasing intensity of her voice as suggested in her calling of her reader during the narrative. Jane's narrative language, therefore, shows a clear distinction to differentiate her childhood story and adulthood story through differentiating the frequencies of addressing the reader, because she has strived to present a true younger version of herself who is read as separated from her present adult identity.

Freeman discusses the significance of silence and speech in the narrative, and the shift from silence to speech and *vice versa*. She points out that

In *Jane Eyre*, the power of speech is supreme. It enables Jane to take more and more control of her life as the years pass and in the end to tell it to us. The gift of speech—and silence, its counterpart—of uttering words and hearing them spoken, dominates the world of *Jane Eyre* absolutely. (686)

Since silence and speech play an important role in determining Jane's voice, in my argument that follows, I will deepen this significance by combining them with Jane Eyre's frequent address of her reader in the narrative. The silence, in my discussion, includes both her forced and voluntary silence throughout the novel, and speech will at times refer to the conversations she has with an audience in the story. These silence and speech, as the adult Jane has identified when recollecting her past life, determine the necessity of the address of the reader in different periods of her life: when the forced silence oppresses Jane especially in her childhood, her speech is made to a real audience inside the story; however when Jane

grows up and moves forward her life, the voluntary silence she deliberately maintains allows her speech with the invisible ideal reader.

From Chapter One to Chapter Ten in this novel, which creates the main body of the discussion in this part of the thesis, Jane as the narrator addresses the reader only twice. The reason for the infrequency lies in the living situation in Jane's childhood. The speech, if it has to be made by Jane to break the silence forced by people who discriminate her in the house, must be delivered to a real person inside the story, who can either help her escape from the ordeal, or comfort her by being her audience to whom the child Jane tells of her struggles at Gateshead. As I have suggested in the introduction, the real person who is able to offer help to Jane can also be defined as a better reader of Jane as well as her story; those who discriminate and insult her, are actually the bad readers of Jane's characteristic and behaviors. Once the better reader appears, the unobserved silent reader remains off-stage.

The beginning of Chapter One already indicates the lonely and oppressing situation that Jane Eyre is living in. Her first address to her aunt Mrs. Reed demonstrates her long dissatisfaction of being misunderstood and excluded: "What does Bessie say I have done?" (5)¹². By declaring this Jane is actually indicating that Bessie misread her behavior again. Her time in Gateshead is filled with the selfishness, narcissism, discrimination, chastisement, servitude, and lies of the Reed family, to which she is not able to express her aversion, even though she asks the question above, which is her response to be told: "be seated somewhere; and until you can speak pleasantly, remain silent" (5). Obviously, what Jane actually wants to "speak" is anything but pleasant things. Even though Jane is young, her inquiry contains a

¹² I will refer to the Norton Critical Edition of *Jane Eyre*, ed. Richard J. Dunn. New York: Norton, 1971.

sense of sarcasm in which she desires to know what she has done *again* to make people in Gateshead angry, after many times of false reprehension. But she is forced to be quiet because her question is unpleasant. Silence, which appears here for the first time, indicates its importance as a theme in this novel which is related to the address of Jane's reader. It remains an ambivalent object for Jane as a child because she both desires it and repels it simultaneously. Although silence is repelled by Jane when it is forced upon her, at the very beginning of this novel, the silence is actually desired by Jane when she claims that she is glad of not being able to take a walk outside with her "family":

I never like long walks, especially on chilly afternoons: dreadful to me was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie, the nurse, and humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgiana Reed. (5)

Because her question is deemed too unpleasant to be answered, she chooses to cover herself up into complete silence: "I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement" (5). When the speech she makes to inquire her "fault" fails to catch her aunt's attention, she chooses to retire to the voluntary silence, in which she enjoys being with herself. It is only in this window-seat that Jane is able to read her favorite book, Bewick's *History of British Birds*, without being disturbed. Solitariness and silence accompany Jane in this retirement, but "with Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I fear nothing but interruption" (7). However, even this retirement is temporary because she clearly knows that the interruption from her cousin will appear soon. Being excluded in this family, Jane has no right even to touch the books that she enjoys reading, for those belong to "Master Reed" (7).

When John Reed finds out her hiding place, he forces Jane to make a speech: “Say, ‘what do you want, Master Reed?’” (7). This word *master*, starting from this claim, accompanies Jane as well as defines Jane’s identity for almost all her unmarried life, as is displayed in all chapters in this novel, except the last one. In Gateshead, not only John Reed, but also her aunt, Jane’s other two cousins, and even the servants in this house, all act as if they are “masters” over Jane Eyre, who is supposed to be treated equally with John, Eliza, and Georgiana Reed according to the wishes of her uncle, Mr. Reed. The servant’s words clearly define Jane’s identity in this house: “You are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep” (9). In Lowood School, even though there is no definite master who directly control Jane’s life, her aunt Reed has already indirectly acts as her master, and determines Jane’s school life by lying to Mr. Blocklehurst about Jane’s faults. In Thornfield, where the real master of Jane appears, although she escapes from being under the control of this master as his mistress, her identity as a governess defines her duty of following her master’s orders. Finally, in her cousins’ house, St. John Rivers, who maintains an absolute and obstinate mind in everything he pursues, becomes a sort of half-master of Jane. At the time of her life in her cousins’ house, Jane is able to take control of her own life. Nevertheless, she obeys St. John’s requirements of being a teacher in a school that he deliberately opens for her, or learning a new language that he maintains. She even agrees to perform missionary work with him in a foreign country. One possible reason for not being able to marry St. John Rivers is the uncertainty of Edward Rochester’s situation. Therefore, the masters who control Jane’s life before her marriage become the reason that she strives to overturn the patriarchal society she is living in.

Books, for Jane, stand for knowledge and dignity. She only reads them when she finds herself in a completely safe and quiet situation where nobody is able to find her out.

Compared to the lies of Reed family, she seeks knowledge and truth in reading. Therefore, the fact that reading reveals truth also affects the autobiographer Jane, when she involves her reader to perform the act of reading and to find the truth about her life. However, when John Reed claims the ownership of the book that Jane enjoys so much, and throws it towards her head and makes it bleed terribly, Jane's impatience towards John's browbeating is too maximized to be held back. She makes her involuntary and uncontrollable curse to him:

“Wicked and cruel boy! You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!” (8). Jane's voluntary and desired silence allows her to form these three analogies at the time she is learning those terms, and to define them on the behaviors of John Reed.

The childhood memories about being forced into silence and being evil treated are so clear in the adult Jane's mind that she spends almost one third of this story on the descriptions of her childhood life. Her reader is rarely called upon in this period of her life because the forced silence has taken most of her life when she is young. In addition to their ill-treatment of Jane, John Reed, Mrs. Reed, Bessie and Abbot are all trying to define her at the same time—a way to “read” her in a false manner. When Jane retires to the window-seat and holds her favorite book, she never thinks about making troubles to anybody in the house; however, even her good manners are wrongly “read.” The adult Jane, therefore, chooses to replay her childhood life as truly as possible. That means, instead of addressing her reader, Jane usually makes her speeches either in soliloquy to express her strong feelings which cannot be heard

by others, or to a real person who is willing to hear her speeches. The forced silence by her false readers in the house, which traps Jane in solipsism that she actually does not desire, leads her to the necessity of breaking up this silence by addressing the real people. In this sense, the adult Jane wants to make clear for the child version of herself that “my silent reader, I do not need you here in my childhood story temporarily, since you are not able to offer me any help or comfort that I need to support my childish heart.”

The famous red-room episode, which leaves Jane Eyre unforgettable impression even in her life in Thornfield, makes an opportunity, although bitter enough, for the development of child Jane’s heart and courage. When she cries out the curse to John Reed as he abuses her, she is defined as a “mad cat” (9). The punishment from Mrs. Reed is what really scares her: “ ‘Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there.’ Four hands were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs” (9). As a punishment of shouting at her cousin, it “teaches Jane that passion vented leads to imprisonment” (Bodenheimer 390). Being locked in this room is the severest punishment that Mrs. Reed is able to give to a child no more than ten years old. Superstition will haunt this child forever in her later life—and Reed clearly acknowledges this aftermath. Jane reveals her fears of this room:

This room was chill, because it seldom had a fire; it was silent, because remote from the nursery and kitchens; solemn, because it was known to be so seldom entered...Mr. Reed had been dead nine years: it was in this chamber he breathed his last; here he lay in state; hence his coffin was borne by the undertaker’s men; and since that day, a sense of dreary consecration had guarded it from frequent intrusion. (11)

Mrs. Reed seldom walks in this room not only because her husband died in here, but also because she is actually afraid of facing her husband’s reproach of not treating Jane Eyre equally as her own child. She confesses this when she is near death in Chapter Twenty-one:

“Well, I have done you a wrong which I regret now. One was in breaking the promise which I gave my husband to bring you up as my own child” (203). Even though Mrs. Reed admits in her heart that her unequal treatment of Jane is true, she still cannot help breaking the promise with her husband, for in all people eyes, Jane is a dependent orphan, living with her host family, without whom she “would have to go to the poorhouse” (10). Inside the red-room, Jane, instead of addressing her reader, she cries out inwardly what she hopes to let everyone in Gateshead know about the truth:

All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned? Why would I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one’s favor? Eliza, who was headstrong and selfish, was respected. Georgiana, who had a spoiled temper, a very acrid spite, a captious and insolent carriage, was universally indulged...John, no one thwarted, much less punished; though he twisted the necks of the pigeons, killed the little pea-chicks, set the dogs at the sheep, stripped the hothouse vines of their fruit, and broke the buds off the choicest plants in the conservatory: he called his mother “old girl,” too; sometimes reviled her for her dark skin, similar to his own; bluntly disregarded her wishes; not unfrequently tore and spoiled her silk attire; and he was still “her own darling.” I dare commit no fault; I strove to fulfill every duty; and I was termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night. (11-12)

The adult Jane, apparently, is still feeling painful when narrating this part, since she gives so many details, trying to revive her childish thoughts when being locked in the red-room. If the young Jane is not punished in this way, she may not react so severely in mind: she does not deserve this treatment.

Notwithstanding acknowledging that she commits far less faults than her three cousins in this house, Jane is still kept in a high spirit by the superstition that something may befall her. In front of the superstition, she confesses her wrong-doing:

I began to recall what I had heard of dead men, troubled in their graves by the

violation of their last wishes, revisiting the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed; and I thought Mr. Reed's spirit, harassed by the wrongs of his sister's child, might quit its abode—whether in the church vault, or in the unknown world of the departed—and rise before me in this chamber. (13)

Subconsciously, Jane still feels being inferior to the Reed family since she thinks she is the one who will be haunted by her uncle's spirit instead of those who have committed real faults. Suffocated by the fear of the ghost, instead of making inward soliloquies, the young Jane desperately makes audible noise, hoping that her fear can be resolved by breaking the frightening silence forced by her aunt. No matter how desperate the sound that Jane has made to inform others of her fear is, even the servant Abbot terms it as "a dreadful noise" (14). Being forced into silence determines Jane's destiny in Gateshead: her endeavor and hope to be emancipated from the red-room are again suffocated by her aunt's order—"Silence! This violence is all most repulsive" (14).

Even though as Jane has narrated that "the unconsciousness closed the scene" (14), she does learn the lesson from being repeatedly forced into silence. What she has learned is that she needs to break the silence and have a more 'just' audience, whether he/she is willing or unwilling to listen to her. She undoubtedly knows that either murmuring to herself about her terrible situation or talking to an invisible listener could not sufficiently offer her help. Just as Freeman has argued that "Jane is forced to speak, so as to reveal her physical and mental condition—firm speech, in *Jane Eyre*, is always a sign of vigor, and the child's experience is teaching her this principle every day" (688). In this sense, the adult Jane has made a perfect description of the psychological struggle of her younger version. It is argued that "Jane's pilgrimage consists of a series of experiences which are, in one way or another,

variations on the central, red-room motif of enclosure and escape”¹³ since the similar scene also happens in Thornfield where escape is the only way for Jane to get rid of the trap. It is thus from the red-room episode that Jane’s pilgrimage has initiated by breaking the silence.

Following the red-room scene, Jane’s unconsciousness finally brings her first listener within the story, Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary who is called for to attend Jane’s illness. Here is the first time that Jane receives a real audience as a compensation of her adversity. As Karen Chase argues concerning Mr. Lloyd, “Jane experiences a need, a desire, a hope or a fear, and there soon appears a character who embodies that emotion” (71). Mr. Lloyd appears as the special character that embodies Jane’s emotion of desire and of hope: a desire of finding a listener of her story and a hope of being liberated from depression and discrimination. She finally has someone who is willing to care about her thoughts: “I pronounced his name, offering him at the same time my hand: he took it, smiling and saying, ‘We shall do very well by-and-by.’” (15). During Jane’s living in Gateshead, she never receives smiles since she is regarded as a dependent on the family of her “benefactress.” Mr. Lloyd’s smile encourages and assures Jane that he is the person who is able to listen to her story. To say the Mr. Lloyd is merely a listener of Jane’s story may underestimate his role; in fact, Mr. Lloyd can be defined as a better reader of Jane as well as her story compared to the bad readers John Reed, Mrs. Reed and the servants in Gateshead. As Jane pronounces his name, she invites him to justly “read” her adversity. Mr. Lloyd should be, as far as the adult Jane has narrated, the second good reader of her: the first one should be her uncle Mr. Reed, who truly and humanely read the infant Jane and accepted her into his family. When a real and a better

¹³ Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Jane Eyre.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. 341.

reader and story listener appears, a sign of speech also emerges. Jane needs a real audience now after the red-room episode rather than an unobserved reader who is not able to offer her any help.

Jane's resolution of making what she is suffering aboveboard may be reassured by Bessie's song before she actually starts telling her story to Mr. Lloyd. Jane finds "in its melody an indescribable sadness" (17). This strong emotion may be caused by the descriptions of the "orphan child." Five stanzas closing with a clear calling of the "orphan child," the theme of this song may have reminded Jane of her own situation: she is an orphan child who is living dependent upon her so-called benefactress—her aunt Mrs. Reed, together with Reed's family, who have no mercy at all towards this little relative. Therefore, this "orphan child," repeated for five times, long enough to remind Jane of herself owning the same identity as suggested in the song especially when she has been emotionally trampled on, encourages her to tell someone her misery and extricate herself from it.

That it is Mr. Reed's ghost which has made Jane ill is not sufficient enough to persuade Mr. Lloyd what she has suffered in this house. The red-room episode, for Jane, seems to be the last straw for her sufferance: it is this frightening experience that convinces Jane to revolt. Mr. Lloyd's response of her report of the ghost—"Nonsense" (19)—reminds her to tell him what she has endured so far. At this time, the adult Jane appears and stands right before us, trying to convince us the complicated psychological struggles that a child could possibly have at that age:

How much I wished to reply fully to this question! How difficult it was to frame any answer. Children can feel, but they cannot analyze their feelings; and if the analysis is partially effected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words. Fearful, however, of losing this first and only

opportunity of relieving my grief by imparting it, I, after a disturbed pause, contrived to frame a meager, though, as far as it went, true response. (19)

The true feeling of her younger version is fully expressed by the depiction “the only opportunity of relieving my grief by imparting it” (19). There are two important aspects included in this expression. First, Jane has realized that telling Mr. Lloyd is the “only opportunity” that can emancipate her from the current situation. By seizing this singular opportunity, Jane knows that except for her reader, any other people who are willing to hear her speech could possibly manage to get her out of Gateshead. Thus, here the reader is not called upon; he/she, nevertheless, is witnessing everything that is happening to Jane. Second, Jane makes clear that the only way to inform people of her ordeals is by “imparting it,” that is to say, by making speech or by breaking up the silence that the Reed family has forced upon her. Speech, as Freeman argues, as a sign of vigor, revives Jane from the death-like silence. She thus informs Mr. Lloyd: “John Reed knocked me down, and my aunt shut me up in the red-room” (19), trying to convince him how her so-called relatives have trampled on her.

It is hard for an outsider to believe Jane. For Mr. Lloyd, Gateshead appears to be a great accommodation for such a child: “You can’t be silly enough to wish to leave such a splendid place?” (20). However, Jane’s resolute reply convinces him that something miserable certainly has happened on her: “If I had anywhere else to go, I should be glad to leave it” (20). After some exchanges of questions and answers, Mr. Lloyd finally offers Jane the last hope: “Would you like to go to school?” (20). Jane may never be offered an opportunity to leave Gateshead, therefore the only thing she understands now is that “school would be complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, an entrance into new life” (20). Jane successfully seizes the “only opportunity” that could get

her out of Gateshead, despite the fact that other people in this house are glad that she is leaving, as the servant Abbot claims that “Missis was...glad enough to get rid of such a tiresome, ill-conditioned child, who always looked as if she were watching everybody, and scheming plots underhand” (21), Jane is still the happiest in this whole plan because she is the one who would benefit from leaving this house and being separated from her relatives.

Unfortunately, Jane’s new life is not total emancipation from the shadow of Gateshead Hall, for much of Jane’s later life is shadowed by the influence of by her aunt’s deliberate misjudgment of Jane’s character. As stated by Freeman, Jane has been too much defined by everyone in this house, of course subjectively and imprecisely, although no one actually possesses the right to tell Jane’s real identity.¹⁴ Jane has learned two lessons from the red-room episode—making speeches and finding someone for her speeches. The soliloquy in the red-room¹⁵, whether formed into utterance or merely a meditation in her mind, has led her to a significant conversation she has with Mr. Lloyd, the listener of her story with smile and willingness. Having determined to leave Gateshead, Jane already has no fear of confronting Mrs. Reed by pouring out what she has meditated in the forced silence. The reader, even not being called upon directly for being unable to provide actual help, is still invited to witness her development by the adult Jane.

When being forced into corner by witnessing the conversation going on about her

¹⁴ Janet Freeman, “Speech and Silence in *Jane Eyre*.” 684: “Yet, though no one else in the novel possesses the authority to tell Jane’s story truly, it is told again and again. Repeatedly the child hears about how she is perceived by those around her: ‘You are a dependent,’ says John Reed (I, 8); ‘You are less than a servant,’ says Abbot (II, 9); ‘You are a baby after all,’ says the apothecary (III, 19); ‘You have a wicked heart,’ says Mr. Blocklehurst (IV, 28); ‘You are a strange child,’ says Bessie (IV, 33).”

¹⁵ All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a dark deposit in a turbid well. Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned? Why would I never please? Why was it useless to try to win any one’s favor? (12)

“evil” deeds and possible later treatment in the school between Mrs. Reed and Blocklehurst,

Jane’s endurance and patience have reached their limitation:

Speak I must; I had been trodden on severely, and *must* turn: but how? What strength had I to dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence:—“I am not deceitful; if I were, I should say I loved *you*; but I declare I do not love you; I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give to your girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.” (30)

When the power of revenge has been released from the broken yet strong heart of little Jane, it is hard to withhold it, especially encouraged by Mrs. Reed’s “what more have you to say?”

(30), which is uttered in a tone when being confronted by an adult. Jane thus continues:

I’m glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if anyone asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty.

How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the *truth*. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I shall remember how you thrust me back—roughly and violently thrust me back—into the red-room, and locked me up there, to my dying day; though I was in agony; though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, “Have mercy! Have Mercy, aunt Reed!” And that punishment you made me suffer because your wicked boy struck me—knocked me down for nothing. I will tell anybody who asks me questions this exact tale. People think you are a good woman, but you are bad; hard-hearted. *You are deceitful!*” (30)

This outburst achieves its expectation by freezing and frightening Mrs. Reed. Through breaking the forced silence in this way, Jane has mentally and emotionally grown-up and developed, just as Mrs. Reed’s reply suggests—“you are passionate, Jane” (31). In fact, Jane’s passion has been suppressed since she has begun to realize her unequal treatment in this house. John Kucich (1987) has discussed in “Passion Is Repression” that “passionate expression is a mark of estrangement and distance, of self-elaboration in isolation” (41).

Jane’s passionate outburst indicates her future estrangement from her “benefactress” and her

cousins.

Although Jane's outburst of her accusation about Mrs. Reed's evil deeds has emancipated her from the long period of forced silence and depression caused by being locked in the red-room, this emotional turbulence is carried out when "Mrs. Reed and I were left alone" (29). In short, no one except Reed is involved in this conversation. Therefore, if Mrs. Reed keeps a secret what she has done to Jane, no one will know from her mouth; no adult, who prefers to listen to Mrs. Reed's discourse, would be able to believe Jane's statements, at least Mr. Blocklehurst, if he is able to, would choose not to believe Jane's words. Here exists ambivalence, since we have two opposite aspects colliding against each other. On one hand, it is such a pity that Jane carries out this speech in a relatively reclusive place where no one except Mrs. Reed, to whom the speech is delivered, is present to listen to her; on the other hand, if Jane has made such accusation against Mrs. Reed in the presence of Blocklehurst, Jane's desire of leaving Gateshead and going to school may end up in naught since Blocklehurst would unsurprisingly repel such an emotional and uneducated girl. In this sense, Jane has picked up an appropriate timing for her necessary speech.

As a result of Mrs. Reed's imprecise report of Jane's characteristic to Blocklehurst, as well as Jane's timing of the emotional outburst, Jane still receives the insults from Blocklehurst, even though she has made great endeavors not to do anything wrong. Blocklehurst declared that "this girl is—a liar!" (56), punishing her with a decree denying her chance of speech: "Let her stand half an hour longer on that stool, and let no one speak to her during the remainder of the day" (57). The "Reed influence" has affected Jane in Lowood School—she is again forced into silence. This influence also affects the way in which

Blocklehurst reads Jane. Obviously, Blocklehurst belongs to the “bad reader,” because he believes what Mrs. Reed has told him and never tries to find the real Jane, the girl who is actually not a liar. Before this silence forced by Blocklehurst announces itself, Jane has already found Helen Burns to whom she is able to converse. Life in Lowood School, although dull enough for a child who has, more or less, got used to life in Gateshead, where there is no strict order controls her, still offers Jane much value concerning opportunities to make speeches. In this period of her life when Jane is still young, the reader, instead of being directly called upon, stands aside. The Lowood episode is actually a sequence of the Gateshead episode, as argued before, for the influence of Mrs. Reed’s false disclosure of Jane’s characteristic continues to influence her freedom and right to talk. Therefore, since in Gateshead episode, Jane is not in need of the reader temporarily, nor does she need the reader here in this scene, because what Jane really requires is still a real audience who is willing to listen to her story, comforting her in certain ways. Thus, Jane, always searching chances to converse, finds Helen Burns first. She pours out almost every detail of what she has suffered in Gateshead, and Helen “heard me patiently to the end” (49). Helen’s reaction to Jane’s discourse is more like reproach of Jane’s thoughts on her own ordeal than comfort that she has expected to obtain from a listener:

She has been unkind to you, no doubt; because, you see, she dislikes your cast of character, as Miss Scatcherd does mine; but how minutely you remember all she has done and said to you! What a singularly deep impression her justice seems to have made on your heart! No ill-usage so brands its record on my feelings. Would you not be happier if you tried to forget her severity, together with the passionate emotions it excited? (49)

Even though Jane does not make any response to Helen’s speech—not because she does not want to, but because Helen has fallen into her own thoughts after this—Helen’s words has

been engraved in Jane's heart, for in her later life, when Jane again tells her story in Gateshead, her emotions are not aroused as before in her childhood; neither does she tell everyone about Mrs. Reed, as she has promised before.

Fortunately for Jane, every time she is embarrassed and forced into silence, a chance of breaking the silence soon manifests itself. Either Mr. Lloyd, or Helen Burns, or Miss Temple, show the same characteristic towards Jane's speech, just as she suggests her feeling: "I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me" (60). In Lowood School, Miss Temple appears as Jane's comforter as well as her "better reader." Even though Helen Burns also understands what Jane has told about herself, she is still young, and most of her attentions are on herself and Christianity; even the response she gives to Jane's story in Gateshead comes from a Christian's perspective. But Miss Temple, as an adult who is able to view Jane's situation in an objective way, can be defined as the "better reader" of Jane's characteristic and her story. The three audiences—Mr. Lloyd, Helen Burns, and Miss Temple—that she has chosen to tell her story, have faith in Jane and show their willingness to help. By conversing with Helen and Miss Temple, Jane learns the art of speech that is the most important to her—"the power to make others believe her" (Bodenheimer 391), which benefited her more than merely addressing the silent reader.

In addition to the art of speech, Jane does learn something at Lowood School. After the outburst of this fever, Mr. Blocklehurst is deposed, and is taken place by Miss Temple. According to Diane Hoeveler and Lisa Jadwin, the abandon of Blocklehurst has taught Jane that the "patriarchal power can be subverted" (Sussman 63). There are two events that overturn Jane's peaceful life in Lowood. One is Helen's death; the other is Miss Temple's

marriage. The only two people whom she has intimacy with finally leave her. Miss Temple's "friendship and society has been my continual solace...From the day she left I was no longer the same: with her was gone every settled feeling, every association that had made Lowood in some degree a home to me" (71). What Jane has lost is not only the feeling of family, but also the audience to whom she is able to talk without hesitation and embarrassment. Being separated with her real audience becomes the most important reason for her to begin a new life elsewhere: as Adrienne Rich has pointed out—"her separation from these two women enables Jane to move forward into a wider realm of experience" (95).

CHAPTER 4

READER, STAY WITH ME IN THORNFIELD

Jane Eyre's reader is only addressed twice in the narration of her childhood life, in Chapter Nine and Chapter Ten respectively.¹⁶ Her suppressed voice and identity determine the objects of her speech. As argued in the previous chapter, Mr. Lloyd, Helen Burns, and Miss Temple—all of them are real and visible listeners and are able to emancipate Jane from either the prison of a real house or the prison of her own heart. They are also the better readers of Jane's story. During the eight years of settlement at Lowood, Jane's mind has developed with the possibility of decide her own life without being sent away by others to a certain place. It is herself that realizes the necessity of changing a living place instead of staying at Lowood. As her mind develops, she is able to hold the initiative of making speeches and addresses, and therefore is able to take her own voice in control. She would not feel oppressed even under the circumstance of a forced silence. In this sense, as Jane begins to control her own voice, the address of the reader appears more frequently in her adult life, with the highest frequency in her life in Thornfield Hall.

Jane lives her new life in Thornfield with Rochester in a space with hazardous and precarious events due to Rochester's mysteries; nevertheless, the new life still creates an ideal mental space and freedom for her articulation, with him as well as with the reader. Different

¹⁶ Chapter IX: "True, *reader*; and I knew and felt this: and though I am a defective being, with many faults and few redeeming points, yet I never tired of Helen Burns" (66); Chapter X: "In those days, *reader*, this now narrow catalogue of accomplishments would have been held tolerably comprehensive" (74).

from living with Helen and Miss Temple, her life with Rochester is full of emotions and adventures which the child and teenager Jane has never experienced. Mr. Rochester, in fact, can also be categorized into the “bad reader” of Jane, even though he succeeds in reading Jane’s mind once when he disguises himself as a gypsy woman and tells Jane’s fortune. Rochester’s reading of Jane is not able to offer her comfort, let alone help; instead, his reading incarcerates Jane more into the relationship with him. For the reason that the relationship between the hero and the heroine becomes complicated as the story progressed, there will be more chances for the autobiographer Jane to explain and express feelings for that time, because the character Jane and the narrator Jane are separated. As the address of the reader becomes a necessary and inseparable sharing moment in her narrative, the intimacy built between the reader and Jane becomes reinforced.

The adult autobiographer Jane is responsible of both narrating the story and addressing the reader at the intervals of her narrative, and the communications become a feature in her narrative from the beginning of life in Thornfield Hall until the end of the story. In this part, her life in Thornfield, Jane reveals her ability to increase her voice indicated by fifteen times addressing the reader, the highest frequency throughout the novel. Jane’s new life journey starts with the beginning of Chapter Eleven, in which less than two paragraphs appears two times of her reader: “A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader, you must fancy you see a room in the ‘George Inn’ at Millcote...” (79). Jane’s reader is immediately introduced as she just starts her new life. “Reader, though I look comfortably accommodated, I am not very tranquil in my mind” (79)—Shannon has noticed the coexistence of the reader and the present tense, and

suggests that with the present tense, Jane's reader is invited to experience the scene at the same time with her (142). The similar mode of narrative had appeared in Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones*, according to Wayne Booth, when the direct communication with the reader signals an intrusion of the dramatized Fielding. Here in *Jane Eyre*, the dramatized figure that intrudes into the story is not Charlotte Brontë, since she has buried her real self under the ground of the pseudonym "Currer Bell"; it is the dramatized autobiographer Jane who intrudes into the story by the address of the reader. Like what Booth has argued, "If we read straight through all of the seemingly gratuitous appearances by the narrator, leaving out the story of Tom, we discover a running account of growing intimacy between the narrator and the reader" (216).

If we temporarily ignore Jane's childhood story and regard her adulthood life from Chapter Eleven to the end as an entire story, it has been argued that this adulthood part may comprise of an entirely new novel describing how Jane, a poor girl have graduated and been teaching in a small school, finds a job of being a governess in Thornfield, and later finds herself falling in love with her employer and being loved by him. Although struggles exist between the courtship of these two people, they finally reach the moment of getting married after overcoming so many difficulties. However, an insuperable impediment prevent this marriage from going on for the master is declared of owning another woman for many years who has mental disability and is therefore locked up in the attic of Thornfield Hall right above Jane's room. Jane's self-esteem does not allow herself to stay with Rochester as his mistress even though she loves him with all her passion. Thus she leaves Thornfield and Rochester and becomes a vagrant. At the time when she is sure to die from exhaustion and

starvation, Jane is saved by a family of kind people who turns out to be her paternal relatives. During her life with her cousins, Jane is bequeathed twenty thousand pounds from her late uncle John Eyre, and she claims the ownership of one fourths of the bequest. Also, her cousin proposes to her, praising her good qualities as a missionary's wife. Unable to persuade herself to marry her cousin and go with him to India, she is supernaturally called back to Thornfield by Rochester's three calling of her name. When Jane finally returns, she only finds Thornfield is already burned to black ruins. Learning from the inn keeper what has happened to the house during her absence, she returns to Rochester at his another house Ferndean Manor. Jane marries him, and becomes his whole life companion.

The story I have restated above about a young lady's love affairs with her host could be a typical depiction of a plain girl's usual destiny in nineteenth century British sentimental novels, though with slight ramifications. What makes *Jane Eyre* different is the additional part of the story about her childhood life from which Jane's future growth and empowerment are not hard to predict. In my argument, the contrast of either Jane's behaviors or thoughts between childhood and adulthood indicates a new way of interpreting Jane's growing feminist attitude. Therefore, Jane's childhood life should not be separated from her adulthood in spite of the independency and concreteness of the latter.

As Jane enters Thornfield Hall, the future dwelling which signals a new step in her life and later psychological struggles in relationships, the appearance of Jane's invisible reader is so rare in the childhood memory that *we* may easily ignore its existence, is addressed more directly following Jane's step, into every room and every conversation she has with the inmates in this house, even into the every thought in her mind. With the assured

existence of a reader, her narrative practically encourages Jane to move on, even though sometimes what she needs to inform her reader is but plain fact of what she has observed in this house. At times she will speak out to her reader and then apologize: “Sometimes I saw her [Grace Poole]; she would come out of her room with a basin, or a plate, or a tray in her hand, go down to the kitchen, and shortly return, generally (oh, romantic reader, forgive me for telling the plain truth:) bearing a pot of porter” (93-94). In fact, she does not have to apologize, for what she states bears an importance on her later situation in this house—the deliberate separation from obtaining the secret of this house, for Jane clearly acknowledges that she is purposely excluded concerning this topic. Therefore, it forms an impediment for Jane to “read” Rochester whereas he makes every effort to “read” Jane. Right before this address, Jane narrates that “when thus alone I not unfrequently heard Grace Poole’s laugh: the same peal, the same low, slow ha! ha! which, when first heard, had thrilled me” (94). Jane does not directly refer this information to her reader when the first time she hears the laugh. However this time, the “not unfrequently” used when she describes the frequency of the voice indicates the unusualness of the utterance. She also notices “Grace Poole’s” “eccentric murmurs; stranger than her laugh” (94). At this time Jane obviously mistakes Bertha as Grace Poole. The peculiarity exists in the sharp contrast of the seemingly normal person and her unexplainable voices—the strangest part inside the house is brought straightly to the reader.

Speech and silence have played a significant role in the previous chapter concerning Jane’s childhood life in Gateshead and Lowood School in which the forced silence and voluntary speech take most part. Entering into adult life, bearing the concept that too much ventilation leads to terrible results, Jane remains silent most of the time in Thornfield, even in

her first conversation with Edward Rochester, her silence is broken only when he requires.

Jane and Rochester's first acquaintance is taken place when she is on her way to post a letter. Coming from far away, Rochester appears as a rider who looks down at the views before him. This posture, compared with Jane's plain and little figure, especially as a walker, already demonstrate that Rochester's status may seem higher than Jane's. However, whether the horse is really "bewitched" by Jane or not, as Rochester claims, he falls off the horse, which indicates that during their first encounter, Rochester's advantage and pride have been undermined by this girl who is combined with supernatural elements inside her body—the ability to "bewitch" his horse. Obviously, Jane is unconscious of either the male's identity or whether it is she who breaks the pride of the rider. Due to the broken foot, Rochester has to depend on Jane at their very first meeting, before which Jane has never been depended upon because either for Mr. Lloyd, Helen Burns, or Miss Temple, she is already the dependent who seeks help and comfort from them. This exchange of roles already suggests Jane's future life in Thornfield.

Jane's governess life in Thornfield with Rochester may seem as being controlled by the initiative of her master, at least from the beginning when he asks her to join him. In fact, that is because Jane has chosen the voluntary silence, and sometimes directs her address to her reader. Jane does not know who the master is until she is called upon to meet him. During their conversation, Jane is inquired several questions, demanded to play the piano, and required to show him her paintings. It is when Rochester is checking her painting that Jane addresses her reader:

While he is so occupied I will tell you, reader, what they are: and first, I must premise that they are nothing wonderful. The subjects had, indeed, risen vividly

on my mind. As I saw them with the spiritual eye, before I attempted to embody them, they were striking; but my hand would not second my fancy, and in each case it has wrought out but a pale portrait of the thing I had conceived. (107)

She continues to offer detailed explanations of the three pictures in which the reader, instead of Rochester, owns the priority to Jane's secrets.

As I have posed before, Jane prefers the voluntary silence in Thornfield out of the lesson that she has learned in Lowood School from Helen and Miss Temple. Nevertheless, one more important factor for Jane's silence in this house is Rochester. He is the one who urges every conversation, and Jane "indeed, talked comparative little; but I heard him talk with relish. It was his nature to be communicative" (125). Her nature of keeping relatively silent frees her from "painful restraint" (125). Being cordially conversed without giving too many responses, Jane is created a space for herself and her reader; every address indicates that Jane increases her voice, even though inwardly, to express her feelings:

Was Mr. Rochester now ugly in my eyes? No, reader. Gratitude, and many associations, all pleasurable and genial, made his face the object I best liked to see; his presence in a room was more cheering than the brightest fire. Yet I had not forgotten his faults—indeed, I could not, for he brought them frequently before me. He was proud, sardonic, harsh to inferiority of every description. (125)

Jane has noticed Rochester's superiority, yet she is unconscious of her power of undermining his superiority at the very first time of their acquaintance when she makes him fall down the horse. She saves him from falling down in spite of the fact that it may have been her that frightened the horse.

Inside the Thornfield, Jane's power and courage act as Rochester's protector, which is manifested in the second time that Jane saves him from the fire. Her bond with Rochester is strengthened by this accident until she hears from Mrs. Fairfax about the legend of Blanche

Ingram, who is regarded as Rochester's choice for marriage. The following party in Thornfield with all the celebrities as the guests arouses Jane's jealousy and despair. During the uncontrollable complexity of love, Jane's communication with her reader also increases. Like what she does in Gateshead—hiding in the window-seat behind the curtains and being able to observe the outside world without being noticed—she now conceals herself also in the window-seat and keeps silent at a party that Rochester holds in the Hall with all the wealthy celebrities, gazing at her “master's colorless, olive face, square, massive brow, broad and jetty eyebrows, deep eyes, strong features” (149) without being perceived by him. The credence that she displays with the reader is manifested by her address: “I had not intended to love him; the reader knows I had wrought hard to extirpate from my soul the germs of love there detected” (149). She chooses to keep silent in this relationship, but she actually informs reader of everything.

It is during the party and the whole period of the wealthy people's visit in Thornfield that Jane begins to realize her love for Rochester. It is also during this period that Jane's communication with her “reader” reflects her inner world to a great extent: “I have told you, reader, that I had learnt to love Mr. Rochester: I could not unlove him now” (158). “Much too, you will think, reader, to engender jealousy: if a woman in my position could presume to be jealous of a woman in Miss Ingram's” (158). About the role of Jane's ideal reader, Freeman also argues that “only her reader is privy to the contents of what Rochester calls her ‘unpolluted memory’ or has heard the words of the secret voice Rochester calls her ‘inward treasure.’ Only her reader is allowed to know what she is really thinking; and so her reader must be addressed” (699).

Rochester's proposal should properly be regarded as a turning point in Jane's development of feminist attitude, for it is at this proposal when Jane clearly claims herself as being equal with Rochester:

“Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? —a machine without feelings? And can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! —I have as much soul as you, —and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, —as we are!”
(215-216)

Even though this declaration is full of the emotions that she deems as the disappointment of leaving Thornfield, her feminist attitude has matured from hearing him talking “with relish,” to her speaking her true feelings. Obviously Jane never thinks of receiving a proposal from Rochester; his declaration of being equal also reassures Jane of the credibility of his proposal. No matter how excited she is, Jane still keeps a clear mind and a proper distance with Rochester during their courtship, and “sir” instead of “my Edward” is still the preferred address of her master. Subconsciously, Jane escapes being too intimate with Rochester since she still does not get over the laugh and the fire started by “Grace Poole.” Right before the wedding, Jane “had at heart a strange and anxious thought. Something had happened which I could not comprehend” (235). She expresses her anxiety to her reader: “Stay till he comes, reader; and, when I disclose my secret to him, you shall share the confidence” (235).

In the confidence that she tells Rochester, Jane makes her dream into a two-fold story with a preface and a real tale following it. Rochester has already become a little impatient

seen from his expression “now, Jane, that is all” (241). From the tale that Jane tells Rochester, he learns what his wife has done to his “fiancée.” However, the strange thing to him appears to be the fact that Bertha Mason only hurt the veil instead of Jane, since she is the one who sets fire on him before. Jane and Rochester’s wedding does not progress as well as what Jane has expected and Rochester has premeditated. The existence of Rochester’s wife becomes an insurmountable obstacle on the surface; but the real struggle that prevents Jane from being with Rochester any longer is the deception and manipulation he practices on her from the beginning, which prevent Jane from “reading” Rochester thoroughly. With this uncommon behavior of Bertha, now it is proper to introduce more about Rochester’s wife, the “mad woman in the attic,” if using Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s words.

Concerning the role of Bertha Mason, critics tend to view her as a double of Jane Eyre, such as Gilbert and Gubar have suggested in their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1980). They put forward the idea that Bertha’s mad behaviors are actually the reflections of Jane’s inner world and the revenge for Jane’s unequal treatment by male powers: “Bertha, in other words, is Jane’s truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to express ever since her days at Gateshead” (360). However, Karen Chase argues in “Where is Jane Eyre?” that all the dark characters in this novel can be analyzed as a dark twin of Jane; but because they are able to reflect the whole characteristic of Jane (73), they should not be regarded as a real dark double, even Gilbert and Gubar’s Bertha should not be defined as a perfect dark twin of Jane. In fact, according to Chase, Jane does not develop throughout the story, for her superficial growth is seen from the elimination of other characters. Therefore, it is a “visual illusion.” Chase’s point that the

decline of other characters indicates the emancipation of Jane Eyre (78) well interprets my argument of Bertha's function in this novel, as manifested in Bertha's suicide after setting a big fire at Thornfield Hall.

What I argue concerning Bertha's role in this novel opposes many critics' opinion that she is a "mad woman" who occasionally sneaks out and makes ruins. Bertha, to me, is not a mad woman; she is not wholly insane because clearly she acknowledges who is to ruin and who is to protect or to warn in this novel. According to Gilbert and Gubar's argument, what Bertha has done to compensate Jane's loss in childhood is under her unconsciousness.

However, here I would like to convert this unconsciousness into a total consciousness.

Instead of hurting Jane, according to Adrienne Rich, Bertha protects her: "the terrible figure of Bertha has come between Jane and a marriage which was not yet ripe, which would have made her simply the dependent adjunct of Mr. Rochester instead of his equal" (102). In this sense, what Bertha intends to convey to Jane through tearing up the veils is that marrying Rochester is definitely the wrong decision; it would change her into another person, who holds the identity of a mistress but will gradually lose her self-esteem. In fact, what Jane views in the mirror when Sophie finishes dressing her in the morning of their wedding is just another figure rather than a beautiful version of herself: "I saw a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of stranger" (244).

I agree with Gilbert and Gubar's argument that Bertha is the dark double of Jane; what I suggest as the way for Bertha to compensate for Jane's loss is not just through burning Rochester in bed or biting Mr. Mason into bleeding—by hurting the male figures that stand for Jane's obstacle in her growth of feminist attitude. Bertha continuously uses her unique

tool—her queer laugh, the slow “ha ha,” to remind Jane of increasing her own voice inside the Thornfield Hall where Rochester decides everything. In a word, I suggest that as a sign of Bertha’s own suffering from Rochester’s confinement of her, Bertha’s voice serves as a reminder for her dark twin Jane to increase her own female voice and power in order to take over the initiative in her relationship with Rochester.

The increasing frequency of Jane’s address of her reader can be understood as a way to increase her voice, as is reminded by Bertha’s queer laugh, since her voice is now more audible as she has willingly designed. The ideal reader to whom Jane consistently speaks to in her adulthood life stands for a sign of speech. In this sense, Jane gradually makes her voice audible by frequently mentioning the existence of her reader. When the marriage of Jane and Rochester is proved to be impracticable, he asks Jane: “Will you ever forgive me?” (254).

Jane replies passionately to her reader, instead of Rochester:

Reader!—I forgave him at the moment, and on the spot. There was such deep remorse in his eye, such true pity in his tone, such manly energy in his manner; and, besides, there was such unchanged love in his whole look and mien—I forgave him all: yet not in words, not outwardly; only at my heart’s core. (255)

Jane forgives him because she still loves him; yet Rochester’s cruelty to conceal the truth behind Jane’s back is intolerable. Still, another reason for Jane’s unwillingness to express her forgiveness is that, just as what Bertha Mason has done in order to protect Jane from being controlled by Rochester, Jane also feels sympathy for Bertha’s misfortune. After the failure of their marriage, Rochester is always the one who is seeking comfort and understanding, as if he is the only person who has been distressed, when he ejaculates his disgust against his wife:

Oh! My experience has been heavenly, if you only knew it! But I owe you no further explanation. Briggs, Wood, Mason,—I invite you all to come up to the house and visit Mrs. Poole’s patient, and *my wife*! You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing, and judge whether or not I had a right to

break the compact, and seek sympathy with something at least human” (249). Rochester intends to express his own misfortune after being forced to marry Bertha; however, his expression manifests his selfishness to a great extent; it is a heartbroken comment on both Jane Eyre and Bertha’s situation: even though Jane is claimed as an equal with Rochester, the basic standard of her is “at least human,” whereas Bertha should be more sympathetic since from Rochester’s story of this matrimony, she is also forced to accept this bonding. Her madness, is inherited from her parents, therefore not her fault at all. Bertha does not deserve this treatment of being locked in this attic that no one is allowed to visit without showing her identity ever since the day she resides into Thornfield. Grace Poole is still a pathetic figure, less because of her duty of taking care of the mad Bertha since she moves here than for the reason that she is the scapegoat of the so-called Bertha’s fault of being insane. Mrs. Fairfax, Adèle, and other servants all make an illusion for the neighborhood of a kind of normality of this house. In a word, they are all used by Rochester to conceal his action on Bertha.

Jane’s tangled sentiment is indicated to her reader: “I had already gained the door; but, reader, I walked back—walked back as determinedly as I had retreated” (272). The reader is able to feel what Jane has felt: the passionate love for Rochester, the unexpressed indignation of being cheated, the sympathy for other characters who has been involved in this event, the determination of escaping the temptation and leaving Thornfield, and the deep attachment to this house and her master; yet Jane is still resolved to leave no matter how complicated her thoughts are.

The address of the reader not only serves as the beginning of a new chapter of Jane’s life, but also indicates the end of her life in Thornfield. Jane not only “heightens the

immediacy of certain scenes but also marks and foreshadows the structural division of the novel” (Shannon 145). She concludes the end of this part with her wishes to the reader:

Gentle reader, may you never feel what I then felt! May your eyes never shed such stormy, scalding, heart-wrung tears as poured from mine. May you never appeal to Heaven in prayers so hopeless and so agonized as in that hour left my lips; for never may you, like me, dread to be the instrument of evil to what you wholly love. (274)

Leaving Thornfield and Rochester means less a loss than a gain for Jane, for what she loses is an illegal identity of being a mistress if Bertha chooses not to die but keeps living in the attic; but what she gains is the freedom, self-esteem and more space for her growth of the feminist attitude. She may not notice her change in becoming a more powerful woman by increasing her voice, since leaving Thornfield and becoming a vagrant temporarily wear away her passion and consciousness of this change. When being rejected by the servant of the Moor House, she even thinks about death, so negative an idea that a person with so strong a personality like Jane Eyre would not be able to endure this torment. In the next chapter, Jane’s increasing of her voice is fully demonstrated by her frequent address of the reader, since after the unpleasant experience in Thornfield, together with Bertha’s protection and warning by her mysterious laughter, Jane’s female power and emotion are accumulated and waiting for their outburst sometime in the future.

CHAPTER 5

READER, BE THE WITNESS OF MY GROWTH

After the Thornfield episode, Jane gradually empowers herself even being in a struggle of become homeless again. In this episode of her life with her cousins, the thirteen times of the address of the reader signals another climax of Jane's effort to increase voice and to make it audible by her reader. Leaving Thornfield and Rochester is a tough decision for her, and now more than ten years later when she is creating her story and recollecting her life as a beggar and a vagrant with no single property at that time, she is reluctant to offer many details to her reader:

Reader, it is not pleasant to dwell on these details. Some say there is enjoyment in looking back to painful experience past; but at this day I can scarcely bear to review the times to which I allude: the moral degradation, blent with the physical suffering, form too distressing a recollection ever to be willingly dwelt on...Do not ask me, *reader*, to give a minute account of that day. (280)

Here the feature of her "autobiographical conversation"—the present tense used in the speech with the reader highlights the adult Jane's feelings when she is narrating the story. The present tense here is not used to show the freshness of the story but to show the adult Jane's unwillingness to reveal her past ordeals. The whole story is written by a mature woman who possesses high self-esteem and only draws the depiction of those details that could reflect her strong characteristics and belief, especially in adulthood episode. The adult Jane is in a heightened ambivalence as a writer of her story in this period. Neither does she want to overthrow the traditional views of marriage, monogamy and disinclination to being a mistress,

nor does she like the vagrancy after her seemingly orthodox choice of leaving Thornfield.

In Moor House with her cousins, Jane meets her familial “readers”-- her cousins St. John Rivers, Mary and Diana. From the beginning when Jane is in recovery, Jane’s cousins are trying to “read” her from her appearance:

“She is not an uneducated person, I should think, by her manner of speaking; her accent was quite pure; and the clothes she took off, though splashed and wet, were little worn and fine.”

“She has a peculiar face; fleshless and haggard as it is, I rather like it; and when in good health and animated, I can fancy her physiognomy would be agreeable.”
(289)

Diana and Mary are “better readers” because they obtain the correct information from their reading Jane’s physiognomy. However, as Jane’s life in Moor House goes on, St. John’s reading of Jane becomes an uncomfortable penetration for her. She dissolves her present feelings mostly in her addresses of her invisible reader because St. John Rivers is not communicable, even though he is one of the few people with whom she can converse. The first address of her reader inside the Moor House is carried out after the description of St.

John Rivers:

This is a gentle delineation, is it not, *reader*? Yet he whom it describes scarcely impressed one with the idea of a gentle, a yielding, an impressible, or even of a placid nature. Quiescent as he now sat, there was something about his nostril, his mouth, his brow, which, to my perceptions, indicated elements within either restless, or hard, or eager. (294)

Besides Jane’s calling of her reader of viewing the appearance of St. John, her subconscious of defining an ideal male figure manifests itself above in using the words “gentle,” “yielding,” “impressible” and “placid.” This is the first time that Jane openly expresses the standard of what a male should be like, which forms a sharp contrast with all the male figures she has encountered so far, even for Rochester, Jane negates him being “ugly” (125) no more after

she falls in love with him. He is neither a yielding and placid figure, which could be seen from their first formal meeting inside the Thornfield Hall.

Her identity is disclosed to St. John because of her own handwriting that she carelessly signs on one of her paintings. He informs her that her uncle John Eyre has chosen her as the heiress and leaves her twenty thousand pounds: “Here was a new card turned up! It is a fine thing, reader, to be lifted in a moment from indigence to wealth—a very fine thing; but not a matter one can comprehend, or consequently enjoy, all at once” (325). Through the shift from past tense to present tense with the address of the reader, Jane tries to accentuate that even ten years later, from the perspective of a rich woman, she still clearly remembers her thoughts at that time.

In her life in Moor House with her cousins, Jane has deliberately made herself heard, with the only exception that she does not make her real name known by faking it into “Jane Elliott.” She expresses strong antipathy of what Hannah, the servant, has regarded of her during their beginning acquaintances:

“But I do think hardly of you,” I said; “and I’ll tell you why—not so much because you refused to give me shelter, or regarded me as an imposter, as because you just now made it a species of reproach that I had no ‘brass,’ and no house. Some of the best people that ever lived have been as destitute as I am; and if you are a Christian, you ought not to consider poverty a crime.”
(291-292)

Jane has learned to pour out her feeling of dissatisfaction to the person who causes this feeling instead of making monologues to herself, as Jane the child did. This straight expression wins Jane apology, trust, and respect that the child Jane has never experienced. In fact, in the narration about Jane Eyre’s life in Thornfield, the addresses of her reader are really scattered since Jane has not yet fully realized her developing female power. Whereas

Jane's life in Thornfield is free from the constraints of moral duties, and she is gradually aware of her equality with the inmates in Moor House and the necessity of insisting her own principles by speaking it out.

Following the argument above, Jane's address of the reader appears in a cluster when the communications between Jane and St. John Rivers begins to grow. St. John is a person with a stubborn mind and heart which will never be broken by any of the decision made by others. It is unlucky for St. John that Jane is also such a person, with a strong mind, especially under this circumstance that she just starts realizing her inner power of overturning male manipulation after the lesson she has learned in Thornfield. Jane is already able to express her opinion directly to her reader in a much persuasive and manly tone: "Now, I did not like this, reader" (334). Jane does not avoid talking about Rivers' unpleasant characteristic in a scolding tone: "St. John was a good man; but I began to feel he had spoken truth of himself when he said he was hard and cold. The humanities and amenities of life had no attraction for him—its peaceful enjoyments no charm" (334). In fact, no matter how tenacious St. John appears to be, Jane acts more firmly, as demonstrated by the decision of sharing the bequest from their uncle.

Having occupied herself a position as a school teacher offered by St. John for some time, and later being left twenty thousand pounds, it seems that Jane has fully developed her life into a comfortable one. However, no one except her reader is able to have the access to her inner thought: "Perhaps you think I had forgotten Mr. Rochester, reader, amidst these changes of place and fortune. Not for a moment. His idea was still with me; because it was not a vapor sunshine could disperse; nor a sand-traced effigy storms could wash away" (340).

After a period of careful study and “reading” of Jane’s behaviors and speeches she has made, St. John Rivers chooses her as the best marriage choice of being a missionary’s wife, and persuades her with not only his strong wishes but also the orders from the God: “You cannot—you ought not. Do you think God will be satisfied with half an oblation? Will he accept a mutilated sacrifice? It is the cause of God I advocate: it is under His standard I enlist you” (346). However, his stubbornness and misuse of God’s order are overshadowed by Jane’s sharp reply: “Oh! I will give my heart to God. You do not want it” (346). She explains to her reader that: “I will not swear, reader, that there was not something of repressed sarcasm both in the tone in which I uttered this sentence, and in the feeling that accompanied it” (346). Therefore, as the address of the reader appears more frequently, Jane’s tone and female voice become more sharp and sarcastic against the male voice who intends to control hers.

Being resolute on the idea that Jane is qualified to be a missionary’s wife, Rivers tenaciously asks her to get married and go to India with him, whatever her idea is. “When I go to India, Jane, will I leave you? What! Do you not go to India?” “And you will not marry me? You adhere to that resolution” (351). Rivers’ reiteration of his intention has become so annoying that Jane discloses her true feelings: “Reader, do you know, as I do, what terror those cold people can put into the ice of their questions? How much of the fall of the avalanche is in their anger? Of the breaking up of the frozen sea in their displeasure?” (351). Her repulsive responses are defined as “violent, unfeminine, and untrue” (351) by St. John, which is exactly what Jane has designed to reply in a relatively manly manner in order to conceal her femininity, since not only her voice has been increased, her thinking has also been diverted to a stronger mode.

The supernatural element has played an important role in the crucial moment in Jane Eyre's life—in causing fear of her uncle's ghost which leads to her unconsciousness, and in helping her make determination to avoid temptation of Rochester and leave Thornfield. Here, in Jane Eyre's psychological struggle of whether it is the right thing to marry St. John and go to India with him, the supernatural functions as a guidance of Jane's next move. Rochester's calling of her name three times finally brings her back to Thornfield. In her life in Moor House, Jane never forgets the existence of Rochester. She plans a short absence during which she will revisit Thornfield, since her letters sent there before never give any replies.

Approaching Thornfield, Jane makes a little digression before straightly describing it: "Hear an illustration, Reader" (361). Her complex feelings, from the exhilaration of beholding it to the consternation of finding it ruined, are vividly embodied in this illustration she asks her reader to hear. She describes her encounter with Thornfield as "a lover finds his mistress asleep on a mossy bank; he wishes to catch a glimpse of her fair face without waking her," and instead of beholding her beautiful face, the lover finds the mistress stone dead (361). From this illustration, her reader is brought to the scene of the ruined Thornfield, and shares her feeling of total despair.

In this way, Jane finishes her life in Moor House with her sweet sister cousins and her demanding brother cousin St. John Rivers. No matter how pushing and hard that he has insisted in demanding Jane to go on the missionary life as his wife, Jane never allows herself to subdue to her principles. When Jane leaves Thornfield without informing Rochester her intention, Jane's move is the most difficult, especially when she hears her master walking back and forth inside his room; whereas this time when she decides to leave Moor House,

even for a short absence, her growing female dignity allows not even a second of hesitation.

If we describes Jane's escaping from Thornfield is to get herself out of temptation, her fleeing from the Moor House is to free herself from restraints which stands for an unappeased male enforcement. In this sense, after one year's strengthening of her female determination by living with St. John Rivers, Jane finally finds herself ready to go back to Rochester.

CHAPTER 6

“READER, I MARRIED HIM”

The title of this chapter already indicates how the relationship between Jane and Rochester is moving forward, as well as the dominating role in this marriage by her strongest address of her reader throughout the novel. But before their marriage, Jane has gone through a difficult time in searching out what has happened to Thornfield during her one-year absence. After being exposed to the ruin of Thornfield, Jane inquires the cause of this disaster, only to be told a version of her own story, with a slight but serious difference about defining what kind of person Jane is.

“There was a young lady, a governess at the Hall, that Mr. Rochester fell in—”

“But the fire,” I suggested.

“I’m coming to that, ma’am—that Mr. Edward fell in love with. The servants say they never saw anybody so much in love as he was: he was after her continually. They used to watch him—servants will, you know ma’am—and he set store on her past everything: for all, nobody but him thought her so very handsome. She was a little small thing, they say, almost like a child. I never saw her myself; but I’ve heard Leah, the housemaid, tell of her. Leah liked her well enough. Mr. Rochester was about forty; and this governess not twenty; and you see, when gentlemen of his age fall in love with girls, they are often like as if they were bewitched; well, he would marry her.”

“You shall tell me this part of the story another time.” I said. (363-364)

Apparently, Jane does not like her story to be told by another, especially by someone who has never met her and known her before, for the reason that from this person’s perspective, Jane is a witch who uses her magic to make everyone in Thornfield love her, just as the impression she leaves on Rochester when they first meet that Jane has the ability to bewitch his horse.

For Jane, her power is not magic, neither is it witchcraft; instead, it is her potential growing female power over patriarchal dominance that gives the illusion of performing the witchcraft.

The another important reason for Jane's impatience and unwillingness to listen to her own story being told is that the inn keeper's narration only stands for a part of Jane's life with an imprecise judgment of the relationship between she and Rochester; after this one-year self-rejuvenation and psychological development, when she comes back to Thornfield with a much stronger heart which just turns over St. John's persistent demand, she hopes that her past story should be left behind as a history that will never be mentioned any more in whatever kind of narrative. This argument about Jane's repulsion of her past story also best reveals the separation of Jane as narrating and Jane as narrated because as the whole narrative being made, the narrator Jane is able to include what the younger self was not willing to tell.

The reader is still with Jane Eyre as she enters the last period of her life with Rochester; but her voice when calling her reader has gradually changed to a more powerful sense, as manifested in her address: "Reader, do you think I feared him in his blind ferocity?—if you do, you little know me" (367). As she develops, Jane hopes that her reader develops with her too, in a way that all the subtle feelings that she is holding toward Rochester should be completely understood. In this sense, her reader would be able to fit more to Prince's definition of the "ideal reader" that he/she is capable of understanding the subtle feelings of the narrator. Throughout the novel, from her childhood to adulthood, Jane uses her communication with her reader as a control of her emotions. In Jane and Rochester's meeting under this circumstance that they have been apart for a year, staring at Rochester without being seen by him, Jane does not run toward him, showing her love at the very first

sight at him; instead, she stands still, addressing her reader that “I should dare to drop a kiss on that brow of rock, and on those lips so sternly sealed beneath it: but not yet. I would not accost him yet” (367). She contains her feelings because she needs a better opportunity to state what has happened to her during this year. She has been in self-control since her first acquaintance with Rochester; now she chooses not to lose this good quality which also stands for her female power when being presented in front of a man who used to be more “masculine” than her now.

The supernatural calling of her name three times is proved to be from Rochester’s voice as he tells Jane that he actually made the claim. Jane’s reaction is less a feeling of exhilaration at such a coincidence than a plain statement to her reader, revealing another control of her feeling:

Reader, it was on Monday night—near midnight—that I too had received the mysterious summons: those were the very words by which I replied to it. I listened to Mr. Rochester’s narrative; but made no disclosure in return. The coincidence struck me as too awful and inexplicable to be communicated or discussed. If I told anything, my tale would be such as must necessarily make a profound impression on the mind of my hearer: and that mind, yet from its sufferings too prone to gloom, needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural. I kept these things, then, and pondered them in my heart. (381)

In fact, the supernatural power has affected Jane since her childhood in the red-room scene; therefore, the result of her pondering in her heart is to choose to say no more on this supernatural coincidence is a self-protection that Jane needs for herself. The supernatural power which leads to this coincidence may convince and remind Jane that the ghost that she has seen of her uncle in the red-room might be real.

This novel is not simply a depiction of the heroine’s complicated and difficult life. Whenever Jane is standing at a crossroad of her life, especially in adulthood, her reader is

being there for her, as a sign of speech to break the silence or to control Jane's voice to other. Her gradually increasing voice as the story progresses accompanied by the overturning of the forced silence indicates that her determination and feminist attitude have become stronger. In her childhood in Gateshead and Lowood School, Jane is accustomed to be browbeaten. Even though she tries to resist the oppression from both her aunt's family and Blocklehurst, she fails because she is forbidden to talk. Her outbursts of emotions in Gateshead—to John Reed after he throws the book at her head and to her aunt exposing that she is the real liar—only lead her to a more terrible silence. As a young girl who is always mocked and trampled on by others, her story reveals that what she really needed was a real person who can offer real help and to whom she is able to simply express her feelings without thinking about the aftermath of her emotional speeches. In her life in Thornfield and in Moor House, Jane develops into a stronger woman with resolute belief and unbreakable heart. Her reader, while being called upon, witnesses her growing maturity. Jane's strongest female power is embodied in the first address of the last chapter: "READER, I married him" (382), as I have suggested in the beginning. She declares this marriage from a quasi-male perspective, which is also a realistic embodiment of her former view of Thornfield Hall as the dead lover. As a matter of fact, this address has been noticed most by critics as an ultimate and climax manifestation of Jane's empowered manner of speaking, and Patricia Beer even wrote a book titled *Reader: I Married Him* (1974) to analyze, using Beer's own words, "the cause of female emancipation" (ix). Therefore, I refer to this claim as the title of this chapter of my thesis to show that this claim bears great importance. As suggested in my argument concerning more on the important role of that the reader plays in this novel, this address, functions as the same role in

the beginning of Chapter Eleven, signals Jane's new period of life, only with slight difference that the reader actually appears at the very beginning of the last chapter. It seems that Jane is willing to make her voice as audible as possible when announcing this important decision in her life that she marries him instead of being married by him.

This novel does not end with a closure of her recollection. Because in the beginning of the last chapter when her marital status is claimed, Jane literally brings narrated self back to the current narrator self. Jane ends her past story with a brief conclusion: "My tale draws to its close: one word respecting my experience of married life, and one brief glance at the fortunes of those whose names have most frequently recurred in this narrative, and I have done" (383), and brings her reader to the current scene of her married life. She informs her reader that "I have now been married ten years" (383). From her strong voice which describes the present life, Jane's dominating female power is revealed by her shift from calling her husband Mr. Rochester or "sir" to "my Edward." She describes her life as "no woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am" (384) and "All my confidence is bestowed on him, all his confidence is devoted to me" (384), "I was then his vision... He saw nature—he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town..." (384), which indicate that she is now standing in an equal, even higher place than her husband. Rochester may never know that his wife has created such a work, recording her childhood and their love story since it should not be read by him because so many secrets she has chosen to share with her reader instead of with himself.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Since the story is created as a recollection of Jane Eyre's past life experience after she has been married for ten years, and the Jane that narrates and the Jane that is narrated are separated, then what has happened to Jane during this ten-year blank when she chooses not to record her past life? The conjectures can be made in two ways. First, as Jane has suggested for herself, ever since she has married Rochester who has been impaired during the fire, she has devoted herself as a full-time companion and partner of her husband because he does everything through her help. Jane also reveals after she closes her narration of her earlier story that her husband is able to vaguely behold things that are present before his eyes. In this sense, Jane may consider create her autobiography when Rochester is in gradual convalescence.

Compare to the first conjecture that results from objective factor, the other conjecture may be demonstrated by the subjective reason that reflects Jane's inner world. The adult Jane appears when using the present tense during several intervals of her narrative, either directly or indirectly talks to her reader, about her present feeling when actually writing her story down as an autobiographer. As suggested in the arguments which revealing young Jane's situation after leaving Thornfield and Rochester, when directly addressing her reader, Jane is reluctant to dwell on the details about her vagrancy because her pride and dignity would not

allow her to display the disgraceful part of her life, notwithstanding the fact that the disgrace is the result of Jane's voluntary disowning her chance to be with Rochester. What I intend to suggest here about the ten-year blank is that Jane has chosen to stay in voluntary silence for ten years, during which period she has gone through difficult time of denying her past experience. After she has given mature consideration to all aspects of her past and present life, she is finally able and willing to write about it, either as a mere record or as a revenge of the female figures who has been negatively involved in her story, albeit with reluctance of revealing the intolerable details.

Whatever the possible reason for the ten-year blank of Jane Eyre's life or narrative is, or if we convert the question to "what the possible reason for Jane Eyre's not addressing her reader is," her reader functions in great significance as a reflection of Jane's growing feminist power by gradually increasing her voice during the address. Here we need to come back to the issue concerning the relationship between Jane Eyre and Charlotte Brontë, the actual author of the whole fictitious story. Earl A. Knies points out in "The 'I' of Jane Eyre" (1966) that "Jane herself does not create Mrs. Reed, or Lowood, or Rochester's past, or St. John Rivers and his sisters; she perceives and reacts to them, but she does not dominate them. It is Charlotte Brontë who shows that Jane's decisions are the right ones through the patterns of the novel" (555). Not only are the Jane that narrates and the Jane that is narrated are separated, the autobiographer Jane is also separated with the actual author of this autobiography. Therefore, stepping outside of the story itself, finally we need to return to the question: what is Charlotte Brontë's readership? In fact, Brontë's readership may not be hard to predict. When she first started creating poetry, she demanded reader's response, either on the poetry

itself, or on the appropriateness of her becoming a woman writer; therefore she wrote to Robert Southey. She received praise of her work, as well as the negative attitude toward her being involved in literary writing as a young woman. Brontë was not discouraged by this; she continued to send her work to William Wordsworth for a mere literary criticism, not requiring any comment on her role in the literature career because she had determined to be a woman writer, whatsoever the secular bias is concerning a female being a writer. As to the creation of *Jane Eyre*, William Makepeace Thackeray was the most welcomed literary person to read this novel. In this sense, Charlotte Brontë's intended readership must have been male-centered, especially when she chose sex-confusing "Currer Bell" as the pseudonym to conceal her real identity as a woman, which might seem in ambivalence with her decision to be a female writer. However, subconsciously her desire of a permanent reader with an attitude of sharing and acquiescence of what she has narrated still haunted her, thus the story is written in the first-person narrative. When this story was written as a model of women struggle and emancipation with the result of the triumph on the women's side, Charlotte Brontë might have predicted that in the long run, the theme of revolted and overturned patriarchal society in this novel would have a great impact on people and critics' minds after the fever and popularity it had already aroused. The perfect combination between the reader and the double-identity of Jane Eyre—the Jane who narrates and the Jane who is narrated, has appropriately made up for the discord between Charlotte Brontë and the actual readers with divergent tastes in the real world. Therefore, on the one hand, through the address of the reader, Brontë magnified the voice of Jane without informing Rochester that Jane's identity was an autobiographer; on the other hand, she had also expected that in the near future when

her identity of being a female writer was disclosed to the public, her own voice was still as powerful and persuasive as the voice of “Currer Bell,” possessing the competency that was able to arouse interest and excitement in Thackeray, the literary giant living in her own life period.

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