

A Study of Sexuality in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*: Lucy Snowe's Two Masters

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Merryn Williams points out that the heroines of Charlotte Brontë's novels seek "masters" whom they willingly obey:

While Charlotte did not want a woman to become a Mina Laury [a slavish mistress heroine in Charlotte's juvenilia], she still felt that the man-woman relationship was enormously important. And it was not quite an equal relationship, for all her heroines want not just a husband but a 'master.' First found in the Anglian stories, this is a key word in all her novels. Her women normally call their lovers or husbands 'master,' 'sir,' 'monsieur.' [...] It is worth remembering Mrs. Gaskell's comment that Charlotte 'would never have been happy but with an exacting, rigid, law-giving, passionate man.' (Williams 92-3)

Charlotte's last masterpiece *Villette* is not an exception, but this novel is distinguished from her other novels because there are two masters in *Villette*: John Graham Bretton and Paul Emanuel. William Makepeace Thackeray wrote his friend as follows: "*Villette* is rather vulgar—I don't make my *good* women ready to fall in love with two men at once" (Thackerey 198). He criticized the heroine, Lucy Snowe for her fickleness, but in fact, we can see Lucy's mental growth in the transition of her master, from Graham to Paul. John Maynard, the pioneer in the study of sexuality in Charlotte's novels and real life, positions such growth as "the development from romantic feeling to sexual passion" and says that it is the "repeated theme" in her novels (Maynard 214). Moreover, he explains that sexuality plays an important role in Lucy's

formation of personality:

Lucy's emergence from the frozen, unpleasant girl of the opening to possession of her humanity is presented as essentially one of sexual growth. And sexual growth itself is seen as ramifying in every aspect of her personality, feelings, attitude toward her body, communication with others, maturity, and self-reliance. Accepting her sexual feelings, Lucy accepts every other aspect of her life as a human. (Maynard 211)

It is interesting that Maynard compares romantic feeling with sexual passion because romance is in opposition to sexuality in the 19th century. David Notter sketches out the history of "romantic love." The origin of romantic love is courtly love in the 12th to 16th century. Courtly love shaded into "amour passion" in 17th-century France. These forms of love were sensual and had no relation to matrimony at this point. However, romantic love which appeared in the 19th century is completely different from courtly love or amour passion in that romantic love excluded sensuality from a male-female relationship and emphasised the sexual purity, especially woman's innocence. Romantic love is one of the ideas which caused the social tendency to confine women in the wrong image as a "pure angel." Anthony Giddens, however, suggests another side of romantic love:

The rise of romantic love provides a case-study of the origin of the pure relationship. Ideals of romantic love have long affected the aspirations of women more than those of men, although of course men have not been uninfluenced by them. The ethos of romantic love has had a double impact upon women's situation. On one hand it has helped to put women 'in their place'—the home. On the other hand, however, romantic love can be seen as an active, and radical, engagement with the 'maleness' of modern society. Romantic love presumes that a durable emotional tie can be established with the

other on the basis of qualities intrinsic to that tie itself. It is harbinger of the pure relationship, although it also stands in tension with it. (Giddens 2)

Romantic love discards sexuality, and consequently exaggerates an “emotional tie.” Charlotte makes much of not only sexual fulfilment but also the spiritual link. For example, let us now recall the climax scene in *Jane Eyre*:

My heart beat fast and thick; I heard its throb. Suddenly it stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities. The feeling was not like an electric shock; but it was quite as sharp, as strange, as startling: it acted on my senses as if their utmost activity hitherto had been but torpor; from which they were now summoned, and forced to wake. They rose expectant: eye and ear waited, while the flesh quivered on my bones.

“What have you heard? What do you see?” asked St. John. I saw nothing; but I heard a voice somewhere cry, “Jane! Jane! Jane!” nothing more.

“O God! what is it?” I gasped.

I might have said, “where is it?” for it did not seem in the room—nor in the house—nor in the garden: it did not come out of the air—nor from under the earth—nor from overhead. I had heard it—where; or whence, forever impossible to know! and it was the voice of a human being—a known, loved, wellremembered voice—that of Edward Fairfax Rochester; and it spoke in pain and woe—wildly, eerily, urgently. (*Jane Eyre* 466–7)

Such transcendental interaction shows the spiritual connection between Jane and Mr. Rochester. Every couple in Charlotte’s novels needs to balance sexuality and spirituality.

This essay will analyse Lucy Snowe’s relationship to her masters

from the viewpoint of conflict between romantic love and sexuality. Firstly, we will compare Graham and Paul to show how Lucy awakes from the illusion of romantic love to sexual reality in sections one and two. Next, we will focus on Lucy's ambiguous attitude toward sexual relation to Paul in the third section. Ultimately we can clarify Charlotte's view of sexuality by this argument.

I

Charlotte indicates that Graham is a typical romantic hero through his relation to Ginevra Fanshawe, and his romantic love is depicted as a foolish illusion. In the early part of the story, Graham devotes himself to Ginevra, a beautiful flippant girl who is Lucy's friend, but she "[feels] so very cold to" (100) him. She confides to Lucy:

"[T]he man is too romantic and devoted, and he expects something more of me than I find it convenient to be. He thinks I am perfect: furnished with all sorts of sterling qualities and solid virtues, such as I never had, nor intend to have. Now, one can't help, in his presence, rather trying to justify his good opinion; and it does so tire one to be goody, and to talk sense,—for he really thinks I am sensible. I am far more at my ease with you, old lady—you, you dear crosspatch—who take me at my lowest, and know me to be coquettish, and ignorant, and flirting, and fickle, and silly, and selfish, and all the other sweet things you and I have agreed to be a part of my character." (100)

As we have discussed before, romantic love discards sexuality. Under this concept, Graham rejects woman's sexuality. He idealizes woman as a "pure angel" (224) and does not to see what they really are.

Nevertheless, Lucy is fascinated by him and his romantic love. She feels both fascination and danger in romantic love. When she sees the portrait of Graham, she thinks that "[a]ny romantic little school-girl might almost have loved it in its frame" while she is also perplexed with

the question “[h]ow it [is] that what charmed so much, could at the same time so keenly pain” (191). Although she knows that Graham forces woman to be the unrealistic pure angel, she cannot help but feel attraction to him. While she teases and criticises his illusional romantic love, she herself is obsessed with this illusion.

She is attracted by a purely spiritual relation of romantic love. Lucy makes up an exaggerated ideal of romantic love. Her illusion of romantic love morbidly grows when she spends a solitary summer vacation at the dormitory:

By True Love was Ginevra followed: never could she be alone. Was she insensible to this presence? It seemed to me impossible: I could not realize such deadness. I imagined her grateful in secret, loving now with reserve; but purposing one day to show how much she loved: I pictured her faithful hero half conscious of her coy fondness, and comforted by that consciousness: I conceived an electric chord of sympathy between them, a fine chain of mutual understanding, sustaining union through a separation of a hundred leagues—carrying, across mound and hollow, communication by prayer and wish. Ginevra gradually became with me a sort of heroine. (175)

Because Lucy knows Ginevra is a “coquettish, and ignorant, [. . .] and silly and selfish” (100) girl, Lucy ought to notice the preposterousness of this illusion. However, “an electric chord of sympathy [. . .], a fine chain of mutual understanding, sustaining union through a separation of a hundred leagues—carrying, across mound and hollow, communication by prayer and wish” is very attractive for her, and she is so eager to find it in Graham that she loses the clear judgment.

Some critics estimate romantic love’s positive influences on a male-female relationship, but romantic love promoted sex-role discrimination in terms of its connection with patriarchy. David Notter explains that romantic love produced the ideology of “sacred home” (Notter 3–4). A couple which is tied with the unsexual, spiritual bond of romantic

love accomplishes their love as a marriage. They make up the morally and sexually pure home, and it becomes a kind of sanctuary from the immoral, dangerous outside society. Also, 19th-century people believed that purity was woman's virtue, so women shouldered the role of guardian of the home as a sanctuary. "Romantic love ideology" is the sociological technical term which explains such a relativity of romantic love and the development of family system in modern society. This ideology confined women in the home under the name of "the angel in the house" and encouraged them to serve their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons.

Charlotte represents the Bretton's house as a "sacred home." All women in this house find pleasure in serving and satisfying Graham. Little Polly assembles special meals and confectionery for him. Mrs. Bretton willingly surrenders her easy chair to her son as soon as he comes back home and allows him to possess "himself irreverently of the abdicated throne" (195). As Mrs. Bretton says to Lucy, "I can assure you my son is master and must be obeyed," strong patriarchy rules here. Lucy also "[has] learned how severe for [her] [is] the pain of crossing, or grieving or disappointing him" and becomes "quite powerless to deny [herself] the delight of indulging his mood, and being pliant to his will" (214-5). Thus, romantic love ideology is used for reinforcing the patriarchal structure. Graham is Lucy's master because he is not only a romantic hero but also a patriarch.

Lucy obeys Graham and tries to become his ideal pure angel, therefore her sexuality is repressed. To clarify this, we will see the scene of the theatre. Lucy and Graham go to the theatre and see the performance of the great actress whom Lucy calls Vashti. Maynard states that she is "a kind of demon of unleashed female sexual energy, cognate to Bertha" (Maynard 180). Her performance awakes Lucy's sexuality from the state of deadly suppression.

The strong magnetism of genius drew my heart out of its wonted orbit; the sunflower turned from the south to a fierce light, not solar

—a rushing, red, cometary light—hot on vision and to sensation. I had seen acting before, but never anything like this: never anything which astonished Hope and hushed Desire; which outstripped Impulse and paled Conception; which, instead of merely irritating imagination with the thought of what *might* be done, at the same time fevering the nerves because it was *not* done, disclosed power like a deep, swollen winter river, thundering in cataract, and bearing the soul, like a leaf, on the steep and steelly sweep of its descent. (287–8)

This passage is filled with Charlotte's favourite symbols of sexuality like "red" or "cataract." Lucy's frozen river of passion is melted by Vashti and starts to flow. Just then, during the performance, the fire breaks out at the theatre. We cannot read this without thinking of the pyromania of Bertha, who embodies the heroine's sexual side in *Jane Eyre*. This fire at the theatre symbolises Lucy's awakening sexual instinct.

When he notices the fire, Graham orders Lucy to sit still. That is, he forbids Lucy to respond to her sexual instinct. He tries to repress her sexuality. Lucy tells us as follows:

Yes, thus adjured, I think I would have sat still under a rocking crag: but, indeed, to sit still in actual circumstances was my instinct; and at the price of my very life, I would not have moved to give him trouble, thwart his will, or make demands on his attention. (290)

Here, romantic love ideology conditions her to repress her own sexuality. Her words "at the price of my very life" are not merely a figurative phrase. As Maynard suggests, Charlotte sees sexuality as "a quality of entire self and body" rather than "a simple genital appetite" (Maynard 212). "Entire self" is the state of mind which is independent and fulfils her need. For Charlotte, spirituality is essential to develop the self, but sexuality is also a vital element. They should be totally balanced, so only a spiritual, bodiless angel cannot compose an entire

self. The legendary nun who was buried alive and young-dead Justine Marie are the symbols of repressed sexuality in *Villette*. A woman who is denied her sexuality is represented with the image of death. Although the spiritual bond of romantic love is important for Lucy, romantic love ideology drives her into destruction, because the romantic hero as a patriarchal master puts women into the frame of pure angel and forces them to be conditioned by it. Lucy must throw off the illusion of romantic love to get the “entire self and body.”

II

Lucy's other master, Paul Emanuel, is the opposite type of character to Graham. Lucy compares gentle and good-looking Graham with dark, irritable, passionate Paul. She says they are as different “as the fruit of Hesperides might be unlike the sloe in the wild thicket; as the high-couraged but tractable Arabian is unlike the rude and stubborn ‘sheltie’” (229). Maynard comments on this metaphorical comparison that Lucy might like the sloe and the sheltie better than the fruit of Hesperides and Arabian horse (Maynard 195). This indication is very interesting, because it means that Lucy comes to prefer the real sloe to the golden apple which never existed except in the legend. That is, this description suggests that Lucy is on the point of getting rid of the illusion of romantic love.

The difference of Graham and Paul is clearly shown in their view of woman's sexuality. In Chapter 14, Lucy sees the picture of voluptuous Cleopatra in the gallery. While Victorians made up the ideal of a spiritual angel-like woman, they also had the notion that a woman was a devilish fallen creature. Women of this time were polarized into spiritual side and sensual side. This picture of Cleopatra is the representation of the woman as a sensual being. Lucy hears the opinion about this picture from both Graham and Paul. When Graham gazes at it, “his mouth [looks] fastidious, his eyes cool” (229) and he says, “ ‘le voluptueux’ is little to my liking” (230). It is a natural response of a romantic hero who rejects woman's sexuality and admires purity. On

the other hand, Paul says she is “not a woman [he] would want as a wife, a daughter, or a sister” but he finds “a superb woman—a figure of an empress, the form of Juno” (228) in it. He hates the woman image which is excessively emphasises the sensual side, but never shows the cold reaction on woman’s sexuality. He can see the sexual reality in women, instead of the pure angel or the sensual devil.

Paul is the only person who perceives Lucy’s sexuality. He calls Lucy a “coquette” and says “Your soul is on fire, lightning in your eyes” (352), whereas other people see her as “a creature inoffensive as a shadow” (370). He worries that her sexuality spurts recklessly, and tells Lucy, “You want so much checking, regulating, and keeping down” (402). As far as these words suggest, Paul seems to be a tyrannic patriarchal master. However, Charlotte does not shape him so simply. Elaine Showalter makes clear explanation about this matter. She comments on “the appeal of the rough lover” that “the brutal brute flattered the heroine’s spirit by treating her as an equal rather than as a sensitive, fragile fool who must be sheltered and protected” (Showalter 143). Paul tries to keep down Lucy because he can find power in her. Romantic love ideology makes a man and a woman into a master and a servant, but the relationship which is based on sexual reality is equal. In such a relation with Paul, Lucy gradually liberates her own sexuality and awakes from the illusion of romantic love. Charlotte depicts Lucy’s sexual liberation with the images of food and dress.

Firstly, food and appetite are connected with sexuality in *Villette*. For example, the picture of Cleopatra which is mentioned before is described as follows:

It represented a woman, considerably larger, I thought, than the life. I calculated that this lady, put into a scale of magnitude, suitable for the reception of a commodity of bulk, would infallibly turn from fourteen to sixteen stone. She was, indeed, extremely well fed: very much butcher’s meat—to say nothing of bread, vegetables, and liquids—must she have consumed to attain that breadth and height,

that wealth of muscle, that affluence of flesh. She lay half-reclined on a couch: why, it would be difficult to say; broad daylight blazed round her; she appeared in hearty health, strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks; [...] She had no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa. She ought likewise to have worn decent garments; a gown covering her properly, which was not the case: out of abundance of material—seven-and-twenty yards, I should say, of drapery—she managed to make inefficient raiment. (223)

Abundance of food and corpulency in this passage suggests the excessive sensuality. Lucy does not need such a feast. She wants the metaphorical food which is good for her.

In the convent-like school, Lucy's sexuality is released only in the imaginative world. However, she calls these dreams and fancy as "a mess of that manna [...]" which, indeed, at first melts on lips with an unspeakable and preternatural sweetness, but which, in the end, our souls fully surely loath" and she "[longs] deliriously for the natural and earth-grown food" (266). This "natural and earth-grown food" means the sexuality which is rooted in reality. She needs the simple, fresh food of sexual reality, not an over-sensual feast nor sweet but poisonous imagination.

At first, Lucy tries to find this food of sexual reality in the interaction with Graham. When she receives the letter from him for the first time, she compares it to a wholesome food of the forest:

I held in my hand a morsel of real solid joy:[...] It was neither sweet hail nor small coriander-seed—neither slight wafer, nor luscious honey, I had lighted on; it was the wild, savoury mess of the hunter, nourishing and salubrious meat, forest-fed or desert-reared, fresh, healthful, and life-sustaining. (266)

However, Graham's attention shifts to the beautiful angel-like girl, Paulina and he drops off his correspondence with Lucy. She waits the

letter like “animals kept in cages, and so scantily fed as to be always upon the verge of famine, awaits their food” (298), and rereads the letters which she has received again and again:

In the very extremity of want, I had recourse again, and yet again, to the little packet in the case—the five letters. How splendid that month seemed whose skies had beheld the rising of these five stars! It was always at night I visited them, and not daring to ask every evening for a candle in the kitchen, I bought a wax taper and matches to light it, and at the study-hour stole up to the dormitory and feasted on my crust from the Barmecide’s loaf. It did not nourish me: I pined on it, and got as thin as a shadow: otherwise I was not ill. (297)

Barmicide is the character in the *Arabian Nights* who entertains his guest with empty dishes. Lucy calls Graham’s letters “the Barmicide loaf” because she realises that sexual reality which she has imagined that she can find in the relation with Graham is only a sham.

It is considerable that Lucy clings onto letters in the interaction with Graham. According to David Notter, romantic love is sustained by the ritual acts, and writing, reading or exchanging letters is one of the important ceremonies (Notter 29). Based on this fact, Lucy’s burial of the letters is very meaningful. Lucy gives up the love for Graham and she buries the letters under the old pear tree in the school garden. This act suggests that Lucy seals her yearning for romantic love and begins to look for something more solid and substantial than an empty Barmicide feast.

Hunger implies sexual desire, and food suggests its fulfilment. The romantic love interaction with Graham which lacks sexual reality leads Lucy to the fatal starving. The relation with Paul is quite different from this. It is notable that Lucy and Paul often share the food and the meals. These images of food suggest their satisfying relationship. Lucy’s appetite once “needed no more than the tiny messes served for the

invalid" (42) recovers when she meets Paul, as she is laughed by him that "Petite gourmande [Little glutton]" (394) Paul always supplies plentiful foods for her. On the school festival day, Paul gives much food for Lucy, who is confined in the attic in order to learn the part which she understudies in the school play:

In a moment my throne was abdicated, the attic evacuated; an inverse repetition of the impetus which had brought me up into the attic, instantly took me down—down—down to the very kitchen. I thought I should have gone to the cellar. The cook was imperatively ordered to produce food, and I, as imperatively, was commanded to eat. To my great joy this food was limited to coffee and cake: I had feared wine and sweets, which I did not like. How he guessed that I should like a petit pâté à la crème I cannot tell; but he went out and procured me one from some quarter. With considerable willingness I ate and drank, keeping the petit pâté till the last, as a *bonne bouche*. M. Paul superintended my repast, and almost forced upon me more than I could swallow. (151)

He gives Lucy what fits for her. "Wine and sweets" connotes the romantic love dream what she defines "at first melts on lips with an unspeakable and preternatural sweetness, but which, in the end, our souls fully surely loath"(266). She dislikes it and Paul can provide the replacement for such a sweet empty dream.

The fruit is the most significant symbolical food. The climax scene at Faubourg Clotilde, they share the dinner:

Our meal was simple: the chocolate, the rolls, the plate of fresh summer fruit, cherries and strawberries bedded in green leaves formed the whole: but it was what we both liked better than a feast, and I took a delight inexpressible in tending M. Paul. (151)

This "plate of fresh summer fruit, cherries and strawberries bedded in

green leaves” reminds us “natural and earth-grown food” (266) which she craves instead of poisonous imagination. Moreover, “it [is] what [they] [like] better than a feast,” so these fruits suggest that their relation is free from sensuality which is implied by feast. What they share is neither empty dream nor excessive sensuality. Also, fruit has the image of fullness. Table at Faubourg Clotilde declares that Lucy achieves sexual reality and the full spirit based on it.

Secondly, images of Lucy’s dress suggest that acceptance of sexual feeling and its fulfilment brings mental growth to Lucy. In the early part of the story, she buys the dress of gray crape for the school festival. Surrounded by girls in white dresses, she feels herself “to be a mere shadowy spot on the field of light” (145). Also, crape is associated with death because it is the material for mourning. This dress is the symbol of Lucy’s deadly suppressed sexuality. She contents herself with such a situation as she says “in this same gown of shadow, I felt at home and at ease” (145). The other time when she goes to the theatre with Graham, she thinks “[t]he present was no occasion of showy array; my dun-mist crape would suffice” (284). As long as she is with Graham who would not accept woman’s sexuality and selfhood, she never wants to emerge from her shadowy life.

Moreover, Mrs. Bretton forces Lucy to wear the pink dress nevertheless she is averse to do it. Pink is the colour which implies woman’s sexuality, and Lucy rejects to put on this because she does not accept her own sexuality. She is afraid of deviating from Graham’s criterion of ideal woman, so she worries about his estimation. However, Graham “[takes] no further notice of [her] dress than [is] conveyed in a kind smile and satisfied nod” (232) because he does not recognise sexuality in Lucy.

In comparison to Graham, Paul blames her for having worn a “scarlet dress” (370) and deplores that her costume has become florid. The argument over costume here, depicted comically and lively, gives a glimpse of the character of their relation. After the quarrel, Lucy says to herself:

“Well done, Lucy Snowe!” cried I to myself; “you have come in for a pretty lecture—brought on yourself a ‘rude savant,’ and all through your wicked fondness for worldly vanities! Who would have thought it? You deemed yourself a melancholy sober-sides enough! Miss. Fanshawe there regards you as a second Diogenes. [...] Dr. John Bretton knows you only as ‘quiet Lucy’—‘a creature inoffensive as a shadow;’ he has said, and you have heard him say it: ‘Lucy’s disadvantages spring from over-gravity in tastes and manner—want of colour in character and costume.’ Such are your own and your friends’ impressions; and behold! there starts up a little man, differing diametrically from all these, roundly charging you with being too airy and cheery—too volatile and versatile—too flowery and coloury. This harsh little man—this pitiless censor—gathers up all your poor scattered sins of vanity, your luckless chiffon of rose-colour, your small fringe of a wreath, your small scrap of ribbon, your silly bit of lace, and calls you to account for the lot, and for each item. You are well habituated to be passed by as a shadow in Life’s sunshine: it is a new thing to see one testily lifting his hand to screen his eyes, because you tease him with an obtrusive ray.” (370–1)

As Showalter’s opinion which we have mentioned before, Paul’s condemnation and coercion is the evidence of his recognition of Lucy’s sexuality. Lucy is glad to be treated not as a shadow. It means that her psychological state achieves the sexual awakening. Lucy feels that Paul recognises her sexuality and this experience enables her to accept her own sexuality. Then she puts on the new pink dress for the excursion which Paul has planned. She chooses this dress by her own will, in contrast to the dress of Mrs. Bretton’s choice, which she wears being “influenced by another’s will, unconsulted, unpersuaded, quietly over-ruled” (232). This new pink dress symbolises Lucy’s sexual autonomy and declares that she is no longer “a mere shadowy spot” (145).

III

We have seen Lucy's awakening from romantic love to sexual reality, but strangely, she fears and tries to avoid the sexual attachment with Paul. The strangest scene is the evening of the excursion day which Lucy puts on the new pink dress. Lucy is alone in the school room and sees Paul, who is looking for her. She is suddenly caught by inconsequent terror and hides from him. Maynard connects Paul's passionate impulsive nature with his sexual vigour (Maynard 195), and the depictions of his impetuous act as "[h]e [turns] so suddenly, he [strides] so fast, he [looks] so strange" and "the shrubs crush and the gravels crunch to his advance" (426) show Paul's strong sexual instinct. Charlotte does not tell us the reason of this fear, but considering the theme of conflict between passion and reason which is seen in all Charlotte's novels from her juvenilia to masterpieces, it is easy to suppose that the origin of this fear is the dread of loss of self caused by indulging herself into passion. Sexuality is indeed the indispensable element for the achievement of "entire self and body" (Maynard 212), but sexual involvement also threatens woman's independent self. Slavish mistresses in Charlotte's juvenilia "Anglian Story" like Mina Lawley and Caroline Vernon describe such a woman's situation.

Since Lucy has the fear of sexuality, she makes a point of the opposite of sexuality, the spiritual connection of romantic love. Even after she has established the satisfying relation with Paul, she does not give up the yearning for Graham and romantic love:

I believe in that goodly mansion, his heart, he kept one little place under the sky-lights where Lucy might have entertainment, if she chose to call. It was not so handsome as the chambers where he lodged his male friends; it was not like the hall where he accommodated his philanthropy, or the library where he treasured his science, still less did it resemble the pavilion where his marriage feast was splendidly spread; yet, gradually, by long and equal

kindness, he proved to me that he kept one little closet, over the door of which was written “Lucy’s Room.” I kept a place for him, too — a place of which I never took the measure, either by rule or compass: I think it was like the tent of Peri-Banou. All my life long I carried it folded in the hollow of my hand yet, released from that hold and constriction, I know not but its innate capacity for expanse might have magnified it into a tabernacle for a host. (505)

However, now she accepts her own sexuality and develops the relation which is based on sexual reality with Paul, so she is mature enough to judge that romantic love is only an illusion. When she is asked by Paulina whether she admires Graham or not, she answers:

“I’ll tell you what I do, Paulina,” was once my answer to her many questions. “*I never see him.* I looked at him twice or thrice about a year ago, before he recognised me, and then I shut my eyes; and if he were to cross their balls twelve times between each day’s sunset and sunrise, except from memory, I should hardly know what shape had gone by.” “Lucy, what do you mean?” said she, under her breath. “I mean that I value vision, and dread being struck stone blind.” (470)

The spiritual bond of romantic love is ideal and she respects it, but she no longer commits the error of longing for real sexual fulfilment in the visionary love. She can totally curb her feeling and balance sexual passion and reason.

Such balance between sexuality and spirituality is shown in her correspondence with Paul. During the three years which Paul has been in Guadeloupe, Lucy exchanges letters with him. As we have mentioned in the second section, correspondence is the typical ritual act in romantic love relations, but here the correspondence is beyond the mere ritual act:

By every vessel he wrote; he wrote as he gave and as he loved, in

full-handed, full-hearted plenitude. He wrote because he liked to write; he did not abridge, because he cared not to abridge. He sat down, he took pen and paper, because he loved Lucy and had much to say to her; because he was faithful and thoughtful, because he was tender and true. There was no sham and no cheat, and no hollow unreal in him. Apology never dropped her slippery oil on his lips—never proffered, by his pen, her coward feints and paltry nullities: he would give neither a stone, nor an excuse—neither a scorpion; nor a disappointment; his letters were real food that nourished, living water that refreshed. (544)

In contrast to Graham's letters which are an empty Barmicide feast, she says Paul's letters are "real food nourished, living water that refreshed," that is, wholesome sexual fulfilment. She finds it even in the romantic act, correspondence and she gains both sexual and spiritual satisfaction.

Additionally, Maynard interprets that Paul is, different from Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, not a master who threatens a heroine's independence (Maynard 208). When Paul hears Lucy's plan for managing school, he is taken by it and "[makes][her] repeat it more than once" (488). Further, he presents a school-house for Lucy before he leaves and encourages her independence. Regarding this matter, feminist critics like Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar comment that Paul must be drowned to keep Lucy's mental and economical independence, and they conclude that sexual relations and independence cannot be compatible (Gilbert and Gubar 438). However, Lucy says us "I thought I loved him when he went away; I love him now in another degree; he is more my own" (545). She keeps her passion for Paul during her successful days as a schoolmistress. She can balance between amatory feeling and independent self.

Yet, one question is left. Why must Paul die? This question tells us that sexual fear is rooted in deeper than the problem of loss of independent self. The most classic and popular interpretation is that love between Lucy and Paul is an incestuous one, so there is no

fulfilment besides death. Or, as Showalter has pointed, we can see the origin of this fear in “repugnance for the actual process of intercourse and childbirth” (Showalter 191). In any case, Paul’s death seems to represent ambiguous fear of sexuality. Charlotte does not analyse the cause and substance of this fear. Maybe even she cannot catch it. However, what is important is not the analysis but the representation of this fear. Charlotte represents woman’s sexual reality by depicting not only the sexual fulfilment but the instinctive dread of it.

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