

Disciplinary Control in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* การควบคุมทางวินัยในวรรณกรรมเรื่อง *Villette* ของ Charlotte Brontë

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Abstract

If ever there were a novel filled with spying gazes and significant glances, it is *Villette*. These silent gazes and glances are significant elements of disciplinary control in this novel. According to Foucault (1980) in *The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, “There is not one but many silences, and they are an integral part of strategies that underlie and permeate discourses” (p. 27). If we read *Villette* in this way – paying attention to the silences as well as what is said – the narrative that emerges from the surface bildungsroman is very different from an interpretation widely received of Lucy Snowe, to whom M. Paul Emmanuel, a teacher at an adjoining boys’ academy, demonstrates his coercive power, as M. Paul says, “you want so much checking, regulating, and keeping down” (Brontë, 2012, p. 433). Lucy, the novel’s narrator and a teacher at Madame Beck’s pensionnat for girls, is oppressed by M. Paul’s monitoring and control in this surface narrative. Various critics have sensibly commented on how men have oppressed Lucy.¹ While the surface tale follows M. Paul’s disciplinary control of Lucy and the ladies at the pensionnat, there is another narrative that tells of discipline outside gender control – school – that subjects Lucy to a range of societal norms, rules, and regulations. Lucy is also one of the authoritative people who discipline her students at the pensionnat and, probably, later at her own school.

Keywords: Michel Foucault, Social discipline, Charlotte Brontë’s *Villette*, Gazes and glances, Disciplinary Control

¹ See, for example, Kate Ferguson Ellis (2012)’s view in “Can You Forgive Her? The Gothic Heroine and Her Critics,” (p. 458) and Diana Wallace (2009)’s opinion “‘The Haunting Idea’: Female Gothic Metaphors and Feminist Theory” (p. 29).

บทคัดย่อ

หากเคยมีนวนิยายที่เต็มไปด้วยการสอดแนมและการมองอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญ นั่นคือ *Villette* การจ้องและการมองอย่างเงิบ ๆ เหล่านี้เป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญของการควบคุมทางวินัยในนวนิยายเรื่องนี้ สอดคล้องกับ Foucault (1980) ในหนังสือเรื่อง *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1* ที่กล่าวว่า “ไม่มีความเงิบเพียงอย่างเดียว แต่มีมากมาย และความเงิบเหล่านี้เป็นส่วนสำคัญของกลยุทธ์ที่อยู่แทรกซึมอยู่ในวาทกรรม” (หน้า 27) หากเราอ่าน *Villette* ด้วยวิธีนี้ โดยให้ความสนใจกับความเงิบ พอ ๆ กับสิ่งที่ถูกพูด เรื่องเล่าที่เผยออกมาจาก bildungsroman นั้นแตกต่างอย่างมากจากการตีความ Lucy Snowe ที่มีอย่างกว้างขวาง ซึ่ง M. Paul Emmanuel อาจารย์สอนที่โรงเรียนชายล้วนที่อยู่ติดกันแสดงให้เห็นถึงพลังบีบบังคับของเขา ดังที่ M. Paul กล่าวว่า “คุณต้องการการตรวจสอบ การควบคุม และการควบคุมอย่างมาก” (Brontë, 2012, หน้า 433) ในพื้นผิวเรื่องเล่าเรื่องนี้ Lucy ผู้บรรยายนวนิยายเรื่องนี้ซึ่งเป็นครูที่โรงเรียนหญิงของ Madame Beck ถูกกดขี่โดยการติดตามและควบคุมของ M. Paul นักวิจารณ์หลายคนแสดงความคิดเห็นอย่างสมเหตุสมผลว่าผู้ชายกดขี่ Lucy อย่างไร ในขณะที่พื้นผิวเรื่องเล่ากล่าวถึงการควบคุมทางวินัยของ M. Paul ที่มีต่อ Lucy และนักเรียนหญิงที่โรงเรียนนี้ ก็มีอีกเรื่องเล่าหนึ่งที่พูดถึงวินัยนอกเหนือจากการควบคุมทางเพศซึ่งก็คือโรงเรียน ที่กำหนดให้ Lucy ต้องอยู่ภายใต้บรรทัดฐาน กฎ และระเบียบทางสังคมที่หลากหลาย Lucy ยังเป็นหนึ่งในผู้มีอำนาจที่ฝึกวินัยแก่นักเรียนของเธอในโรงเรียนนี้และอาจรวมถึงที่โรงเรียนของเธอเองในเวลาต่อมาด้วย

คำสำคัญ: มิเชล ฟูโกต์, วินัยทางสังคม, วรรณกรรมเรื่อง *Villette* ของ Charlotte Brontë, การสอดแนมและการมอง, การควบคุม

Introduction

Brontë's novel *Villette* is a life narrative of Lucy Snowe, a young, educated Englishwoman. She is orphaned, and after briefly working as a nursing companion, she starts on a journey to the Continent. She travels to Kingdom of Labassecour, where she finds a place to live and work in the town of Villette. She is employed as a nursery governess for three children of the proprietress of a large girls' school. Lucy has been promoted to English instructor since Madame Beck is impressed with her knowledge of the English language. Lucy's childhood friend, Dr. John Graham Bretton, is also working in Villette, but he does not recognize her. During this time, Lucy meets Ginevra Fanshawe, a student at Madame Beck's, and discovers that Dr. John is one of Ginevra's suitors. Lucy has romantic feelings for him. Meanwhile, M. Paul, a bossy and demanding professor,

monitors Lucy and advises her on proper female behavior. Lucy's childhood friend Paulina Home (Polly) and her father now live in Vilette. Dr. John has now turned his feelings toward Paulina who also has feelings for him. During the time Lucy is working at Madame Beck's, a ghostly nun visits Lucy. M. Paul and Lucy become excellent friends. M. Paul determines he must travel to Guadalupe. Dr. John and Polly get married. M. Paul and Lucy fall in love. Before he goes, he has rented a house for her to set up a new school, allowing her to be self-sufficient while he is away in Guadalupe. Lucy discovers that the phantom nun was actually Count De Hemal in disguise on the night Ginevra marries Count De Hemal. Lucy leaves Madame Beck's school and thrives on her own while M. Paul is away. The novel's ending is not clear; nevertheless, it is implied that M. Paul dies in a shipwreck while returning home, and Lucy lives by herself.

The disciplinary power in Charlotte Brontë's *Vilette* can be explained through Michel Foucault's notions of nineteenth-century social discipline. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979), traces the development of disciplinary control. Discipline, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, shifted from punishment by a visible authority, that subjected the body to torture, to operations of an anonymous state bureaucracy with its site in several disciplinary institutions. For Foucault, the mechanisms of power "frame the everyday lives of individual" (p. 77). Punishment, according to Foucault, becomes concealed and not visible, and its site is the mind instead of the body. Brontë's *Vilette* reveals its wider cultural and historical parallel in the development of social discipline and replicates this larger historical process in the "personal history" of Lucy Snowe.

Literature Review

Miller (1987) employs Foucault's theories in *The Novel and the Police* to argue for the Victorian novel's entire entanglement with disciplinary measures. Miller argues for his "melodramatic" title that "This work is not on the police," but on "less visible, less visibly violent modes of social control," on the subject who internalizes and becomes "habituated to psychic displacements, evacuations, reinvestments" (Miller, 1987, pp. vii and xiii). He contends that the police in nineteenth-century novels are invisible not because they are not present, but because the novels systematically absorb the police's role into ordinary activities and then represses the

evidence of such operation. Miller traces the specific ways in which the culture's "policing function" infiltrates the lines of fiction, using the novel to subtly inculcate our conceptions of home, family, etc. The novel's appearance of subversion, in Miller's opinion, is the most potent and misleading weapon it employs as a social discipline enforcer. While Miller analyzes culture's policing function in the novels by Dickens, Trollope, and Collins, my article explores how this function works in Brontë's novel.

Boone (1992) investigates how widespread and self-regulating the Foucauldian economy of being watched and being spied-on is, and how profoundly it infiltrates thematic and textual functions of nineteenth-century fictions (p. 21). Brontë's novel provides a vehicle for us to witness the continuities and discontinuities between mechanisms of societal surveillance and the eroticized gaze as Brontë's novel "forms a stage upon which we can observe Foucauldian theory (en)countering its rejected other, psychoanalytic theory, an encounter mediated [...] by feminist interrogations of sexual difference" (p. 23). Boone counters the assumption that "novels are inevitably the victims of ideological representation," and responds to "more general feminist theories of narrative – such as Teresa de Lauretis' – that assume an impasse between the dynamics of narrative desire and the representation of female desire in fiction" (p. 23). Boone elucidates Brontë's picture of what Foucault would term a carceral society. He then tracks the manipulations by which Brontë bestows to Lucy a shroud of willed invisibility, allowing Lucy to negotiate an erotic in her dual roles as actress and narrator. Boone contends that, in the end, autoerotic quest is dependent on Lucy's control of the gaze (p. 22). Instead of focusing on Lucy's erotic gaze, my article examines Lucy's disciplinary gaze as she is one of the authoritative people who culturally "police" the students.

Palmer (2006) studies the eighteenth and nineteenth century rise of magic lantern entertainment and Foucault's ideas of discipline and punishment in relation to Brontë's *Villette*. Palmer (2006) contends that "Because *Villette*'s ocular narrative strategy allegorizes visual relationships of surveillance and power, it illustrates particularly ably how a novel can mediate between the discursive and visual dimensions of textuality and play into the arena of spectacular entertainment" (p. 33). Lucy Snowe, like a magic-lantern showman, projects her characters one by one onto the novel's backdrop for her audience to view as she focuses on each (Palmer, 2006,

p. 33). *Villette* locates itself at precisely that point where visual and written discourse intersect, where visibility meets concealment, and presence meets absence, by presenting many aspects of lantern show (Palmer, 2006, p. 36). Palmer (2006) contends that *Villette* has the potential to undercut conventional regulatory principles through its dispersed, elusive, and perplexing approaches that challenge ocular validity (p. 38). While Palmer mentions Foucault's notion of discipline and punishment, her analysis of Lucy as a magic-lantern showman only presents how Lucy projects her characters for her audience. My article, however, focuses on Lucy's disciplinary control.

Inglis (2010) takes a historicist approach to re-contextualizing Brontë's visionary description of optical technology and perception within the context of the mid-century rise of ophthalmology. The concept of the eye as an ophthalmoscopic organ that medical practitioners may look into as well as gaze at became possible only after Hermann von Helmholtz invented the ophthalmoscope in 1850. As a result, *Villette* was among the earliest literary responses to the suddenly visible live retina. The image of scopical conflict and discipline in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* is re-examined in the light of the 1850s eye reconfiguration. Inglis contends that, given the novel's emphasis on a perceptible, legible eye, scholars' critical emphasis on surveillance as a disciplinary paradigm in *Villette* is overdone. Visual exchanges are characterized using references to a violent lexicon created, in part, from the unique terminology of ophthalmology, rather than the disembodied abstractions of panopticism. The prevalence of ophthalmology suggests a therapeutic narrative in which diagnosis is followed by surgical intervention and, finally, sight restoration. M. Paul Emanuel is, thus, the primary symbol of this visual practice: a cruel autocratic ophthalmologist who causes agony and provides palliation. Instead of analyzing the individual male eyes of M. Paul, my argument differs from Inglis's as it focuses more on the structural/systematic disciplinary eyes.

Unlike Inglis's argument, my study agrees with Miller's, Boone's, and Palmer's in the aspect of surveillance as social disciplinary control. I use Foucault's theory to study social discipline further in *Villette*. I read *Villette* not only as M. Paul's disciplinary control but also as Lucy's disciplinary control. Lucy internalizes school principles, starting from "being disciplined" by Madame Beck and M. Paul to "discipline" others. I will analyze how disciplinary control works

on Lucy and how Lucy utilizes disciplinary control on others, as well as how profoundly it infiltrates *Villette*'s thematic and textual functions.

Methodology

I employ Foucault's theories of social discipline to show *Villette*'s entanglement with disciplinary control. *Villette* has a cultural and historical implications in the development of those disciplinary devices throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries detailed by Foucault (1979) in *Discipline and Punish*. I find it beneficial to reference Jeremy Bentham's concept of the panopticon, an architectural building consisting of a courtyard surrounded by individual cells and looked over by an observer in a control tower. The essential aspect was that prisoners could not see one another or know whether they were being watched from the central tower, but they would act as if they were under overt surveillance. One of Foucault's primary emblems of the newly emerging disciplined society is the Panopticon, or central watchtower: "He is seen, but does not see; he is the object of information, never a subject in communication" (Foucault, 1979, p. 200). For Foucault (1979), the model of new disciplinary technologies is the panopticon: "a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men... the diagram of a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form... which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons" (p. 205). In Foucault's panopticon, the physicality of the point of view in connection to its object of surveillance takes on a more metaphorical significance. My study focuses on both the literal and metaphorical aspects of the notion. Not only M. Paul and Madame Beck use the panopticon to discipline Lucy and other pupils, but Lucy also uses panoptical position to discipline Ginevra and others. The observation of Lucy by M. Paul and Madame Beck at the pensionnat becomes the disciplining of the pupils by Lucy in the pensionnat and, probably, in her own school. While Lucy's experiences in the two roles appear to be completely different, a number of remarkable similarities link Lucy's authoritative standing as a teacher and subsequently as the owner of the school with those of M. Paul and Madame Beck in disciplining and order.

Results and Discussion

I. Paul, Lucy, and the Pupils

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1979) argues that the regulatory concepts of the modern prison were quickly adopted by a wide range of early nineteenth-century social institutions, including schools. Indeed, M. Paul is disciplining Lucy and other ladies at the pensionnat.

In *Villette*, the concept of panopticon operates on many levels, from the Catholic Church's supervisory agency to the school's authoritative agency, and from the school to the students. M. Paul and Lucy, the school's authoritative agency, are "under the surveillance of a sleepless eye" of the Catholic Church (Brontë, 2012, p. 503). Despite being a Protestant, Lucy visits the Catholic Church to make a confession because:

"My days and nights were grown intolerable; a cruel sense of desolation pained my mind: a feeling that would make its way rush out, or kill me – like [...] the current which passes through the heart, and which, if aneurism or any other morbid cause obstructs its natural channels, seeks abnormal outlet. I wanted companionship, I wanted friendship, I wanted counsel. I could find none of these in closet, or chamber, so I went and sought them in church and confessional" (Brontë, 2012, p. 219).

This vulnerability and the attempt to seek for companion drive Lucy to the Church, making the panopticon notion simpler to operate with because she is eager to confess to the priest whom she does not see. Although it is obvious that the priest is in his panoptic vantage point at the confessional booth, Lucy romanticizes the institution of power by letting the priest see the secret of her heart. This invisible authority is not limited to the seeming secrecy of the confessional booth, as Lucy subsequently learns through Dr. John that her "good father" from the Church "had esteemed it a Christian duty to watch when you quitted the church, and so to manage as not to lose sight of you, till you should have reached home [...] it might have been his resolve to learn the locality of your home" (Brontë, 2012, p. 218-219). Père Silas seeks for information about Lucy's identity and residence even outside of the Church. The scope of observation conducted in the name of Christian obligation is limitless.

The foreign city of Villette is a society in which monitoring is pervasive and unavoidable. M. Paul's panoptical vantage point in a peaceful chamber overlooking the pensionnat garden grants him complete control and omniscience. M. Paul examines the conduct of all ladies at the pensionnat, including St. Pierre the Parisienne and Madame Beck, in the garden through his "yonder... magic lattice" (Brontë, 2012, p. 454). M. Paul has perverted manner of consolidating and displaying his superior capabilities. When M. Paul is not busy probing into someone else's secret, he reveals his panoptical position to ensure that people spied-upon know that the spying eye has penetrated their inmost secrets. While walking with Lucy in the school's garden, M. Paul boasts that he "watch[es] [her] and others pretty closely, pretty constantly, nearer and oftener than [she] or they think" (Brontë, 2012, p. 433). M. Paul gestures to a window overlooking the garden and makes a confession that is both manipulative and indicative of his "post of observation":

[A lattice in one of the college boarding-houses] is a room I hired, nominally for a study – virtually for a post of observation. There I sit and read for hours together: it is my way – my taste. My book is this garden; its contents are human nature – female human nature. I know you all by heart (Brontë, 2012, p. 433).

M. Paul's "post of observation" strongly evokes Foucault's notion of Panopticon. People in the pensionnat are constantly monitored by M. Paul. They must act nicely and follow the rules since they are aware that they are being watched. We will see that M. Paul's "position of observation" is just one of the numerous shapes the Panopticon takes in *Villette*.

M. Paul's possession of the key to a concealed door illustrates the circulation of power in the disciplinary society. M. Paul may "come and go at pleasure" (Brontë, 2012, p. 455), so he mocks Lucy by saying, "the garden itself is open to me" (Brontë, 2012, p. 455). M. Paul's finest moments of private enjoyment appear to include invading the privacy of others. M. Paul's disciplinary interference extends to Lucy's personal space, where she stores the letters. M. Paul enters the room when Lucy is not present, then "occupied [her] chair" and "held [her] desk open [...] to view amongst [her] papers" (Brontë, 2012, p. 408). M. Paul asserts his authority over Lucy by adding, "You want so much checking, controlling, and keeping down" (Brontë, 2012, p. 433).

Villette embodies the earmarks of Foucault's modern disciplinary society in this circuit of monitoring and voyeuristic enjoyment.

For M. Paul, knowledge is frequently a source of power and control. M. Paul indicates that he has “knowledge” about people in the pensionnat to demonstrate his greater power: “I know you by heart. Ah! I know you well” (Brontë, 2012, p. 433). Knowledge is a source of control as well as a source of power. M. Paul chooses to limit Lucy's reading by censoring some pages he sees inappropriate and tries to prevent her from observing uncovered female anatomy in the museum episode. M. Paul's use and control of Lucy's knowledge demonstrates his exercise of disciplinary power.

Lucy, while being plagued by M. Paul's constant surveillance, does not shy away from employing its tactics when they work on her behalf to discipline her students. Lucy, who is as sharply and quietly attentive as M. Paul, is a consummate spy. A pivotal moment happens in her first English lesson at the pensionnat, when Madame Beck assigns her to teach English to kids who “always throw over timid teachers” (Brontë, 2012, p. 89). Lucy observes the students at first in order to discipline them afterwards: “The first glance informed me that many of the pupils were more than girls – quite young women; I knew that some of them were of noble family (as nobility goes in Labassecour), and I was well convinced that not one amongst them was ignorant of my position in madame's household” (Brontë, 2012, p. 90). Lucy observes Dolores to determine how to discipline her when the scenario in class becomes increasingly chaotic. Lucy “looked” at Dolores attentively: “Dolores had a pale face, hair like night, broad strong eyebrows, decided features, and a dark, mutinous sinister eye” (Brontë, 2012, p. 92). From Lucy's observation of Dolores's “mutinous sinister eye,” Lucy is aware of how vicious Dolores can be, so Lucy observes further. Lucy “noted” (Brontë, 2012, p. 92) that Dolores is sitting close by a little door. Lucy's observation of Dolores's sitting position makes Lucy aware that the door “opened into a small closet where books were kept (Brontë, 2012, p. 92). When Dolores is “standing up for the purpose of conducting her clamor with freer energies,” By “measur[ing]” Dolores stature and “calculate[ing]” her strength, Lucy observes that she “might manage her” (Brontë, 2012, p. 92). Measurements and bodily discipline resonate with physiognomy and phrenology as the social attempt to control wayward bodies.

After observing how to control this wayward pupil, Lucy “slightly pushed the door [...], and with sharpness, I had turned on her. In another instant she occupied the closet, the door was shut, and the key in my pocket” (Brontë, 2012, p. 92). Lucy can manage Dolores with this key, and the rest of the lesson “passed in order and industry” (Brontë, 2012, p. 92). Whereas M. Paul observes others and possesses the key to a concealed door, Lucy observes others and owns the key to this little closet. Again, both the observation and the key give M. Paul and Lucy authority over others. Lucy is like M. Paul: She also Loves to control.

II. Ginevra under Lucy’s Disciplinary Eyes

Lucy not only disciplines her students, but also Ginevra Fanshawe, whom she met on the ship on the way to Villette. Lucy’s surveillance and disciplinary control exemplify the characteristics of modern disciplinary society as defined by Foucault (1979) in *Discipline and Punish*. Emerging in the early nineteenth century, such a society maintained its authority not by sovereign control but by making all of its citizens agents of surveillance and regulation: we police each other by internalizing the law and becoming our own policing agent (Foucault, 1979, p. 201-203).

During a sea-voyage to Villette, Lucy observes everyone around her, but her main target is Ginevra:

Many a time since have I noticed, in persons of Ginevra Fanshawe’s light, careless temperament, and fair, fragile style of beauty, an entire incapacity to endure: they seem to sour in adversity, like small-beer in thunder (Brontë, 2012, p. 64).

Lucy’s power, here, is shown in becoming a policing agent to police Ginevra through observation, and to control Ginevra later. With Ginevra’s impatience and worry, Lucy eventually takes on the role of policing agent, asking Ginevra to “hold her tongue” to regulate Ginevra’s “teasing peevishness” (Brontë, 2012, p. 64). Lucy seems to be pleased with the outcome of her disciplinary control: “The rebuff did her good, and it was observable that she liked me no worse for it” (Brontë, 2012, p. 64). Ginevra has been enforced discipline in speaking by Lucy.

A few days after her arrival, Lucy runs across Ginevra again as a flourishing pupil of Madame Beck's. Lucy disciplines Ginevra to fulfill her own task. At first, Ginevra, who despises needlework, begs Lucy to assist her in mending her clothing, which requires frequent repair. Lucy first assists. But, after weeks of cooperation that threatened to turn into an insufferable bore, Lucy finally instructed Ginevra to take care of her own cloth that she "must make up her mind to mend her own garments" (Brontë, 2012, p. 98). Ginevra is, therefore, disciplined to do her own task.

Lucy's discipline is discovered to be regulating Ginevra's conduct. Ginevra comes to Lucy's chamber one evening before leaving for a great party to show off her splendor. Ginevra is in good spirits and is about to kiss Lucy who is in the position of her teacher at the pensionnat. Lucy tells Ginevra: "Steady! Let us remain steadfast, realize what we are about, and find the meaning of our magnificence" (Brontë, 2012, p. 101-102). Lucy holds her off at arm's length. Ginevra's inappropriate behavior is, therefore, restrained by Lucy's discipline.

Ginevra has been subjected to disciplinary control of her desires as a result of Lucy's moral "preaching." Following Ginevra's revelation that M. Isidore is the benefactor who provides her the expensive parure, flowers, and gloves; Lucy shows her displeasure and tells her, "I believe you are doing very wrong – seriously wrong" (Brontë, 2012, p. 104). Especially after Ginevra declares her determination not to marry M. Isidore, Lucy reprimands Ginevra: "this language is more nonsense and coquetry. There is nothing great about you" (Brontë, 2012, p. 104) because Ginevra is benefitting from man to whom she feels utter indifference. Lucy denounces it as "wretched business of the presents" (Brontë, 2012, p. 105), and looks down on Ginevra by saying that "sixpence I would not give to purchase your body and soul" (Brontë, 2012, p. 170). Lucy uses silence to further manage Ginevra's yearning. When Ginevra tells Lucy about her desire: "My present business is to enjoy youth, and not to think of fettering myself, by promise or vow, to this man or that... Le Colonel Alfred de Hemal suits me better. Va pour les beaux fats et les jolis fripons! Vive les joies et les plaisirs!²" (Brontë, 2012, p. 106) and looks for an answer, Lucy gives no reply. When Ginevra continues to show her love for Alfred, she says, "J' aime mon beau

² Go for the beautiful fobs and the pretty rascals. Long live joys and pleasures! (Brontë, 2012, p. 590),

colonel [...] Je n' aimerais jamais son rival. Je ne serai femme de bourgeois, moi³” (Brontë, 2012, p. 106), Lucy restrains Ginevra's yearning by indicating that Ginevra should leave Lucy's chamber: “it was imperatively necessary my apartment should be relieved of the honour of her presence” (Brontë, 2012, p. 106), so Ginevra goes away.

During the school performance, Lucy notices Ginevra, who has to flirt with two suitors:

I observed [...] it presently became evident she was acting *at* someone; and I followed her eye, her smile, her gesture, and ere long discovered that she had at least singled out a handsome and distinguished aim for her shafts; full in the path of those arrows – taller than other spectators, and therefore, more sure to receive them – stood, in attitude quite but intent, a well-known form – that of Dr John⁴ (Brontë, 2012, p. 163).

A quiet nook is another panoptical position where Lucy is unnoticed, but she can see other people. Here, Lucy observes Ginevra from her panoptical viewpoint once more:

Such scenes were her triumphs – she was the child of pleasure. Work or suffering found her listless and dejected, powerless and repining; but gaiety expanded her butterfly's wings, lit up their gold-dust and bright spots, made her flash like a gem, and flush like a flower. At all ordinary diet and plain beverage she would pout; but she fed on creams and ices like a humming bird on honey-paste (Brontë, 2012, p. 165).

Soon after, Lucy observes Ginevra to discipline her desire. Ginevra asks Lucy, “What would you give to be ME?” Lucy responds, “Not a bad sixpence [...] You are but a poor creature” (Brontë, 2012, p. 169). Ginevra's attractiveness is noted by Lucy, who describes her as “the belle, the fairest and the gayest present” and “very lovely she looked, very gracefully she danced, very joyously she smiled” (Brontë, 2012, p. 165). Yet, when Ginevra asks Lucy, “How do I look – how do I look to-night?” Lucy responds indifferently: “As usual [...] preposterously vain” (Brontë, 2012,

³ I love my handsome colonel... I will never love his rival. I will never be a bourgeois wife, not me! (Brontë, 2012, p. 590).

⁴ In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault (1973) analyzes the new power of the nineteenth-century medical institution. Dr. John is one of the text's symbolic agents of disciplinary inspection illustrating the new authority of the nineteenth-century medical institution because he is a physician with an unwavering confidence in his capacity to pierce to the deepest truths of all his patients, including Lucy.

p. 168). Although Lucy observes Ginevra's beauty, Lucy's disciplinary control of Ginevra's yearning is in her expression of indifference towards Ginevra's beauty.

Ginevra is also disciplined by Lucy's order. When it is time for Ginevra to go to her practice but she is still talking about Dr. John and Alfred, Lucy tells her, "Come, we will have an end of this. Go away to your practicing", and "March!" (Brontë, 2012, p. 281). Ginevra does as she is told and goes to class.

Although Lucy's disciplinary control over Ginevra appears overt, another technique is more hidden, as seen by Lucy's compassion at breakfast:

This allowance being more than I needed, I gave half to Ginevra; Never varying in my preference, through many others used to covet the superfluity; and she in return would sometimes give me a portion of her coffee [...] I don't know why I choose to give my bread rather to Ginevra than to another; nor why, if two had to share the convenience of one drinking-vessel. [...] I always contrived that she should be my convive, and rather liked to let her take the lion's share, whether of the white beer, the sweet wine, or the new milk: so, it was, however, and she knew it; and, therefore, while we wrangle daily, we were never alienated. (Brontë, 2012, p. 277).

Although Lucy informs the reader that she has no idea why she chooses to offer her bread to Ginevra rather than another, Lucy understands that it is her generosity that binds them together, even if they dispute daily. Lucy, I would assume, knows that Ginevra feels more intimate after receiving Lucy's care, and Ginevra visits Lucy frequently. Through this increase of intimacy, it is easier for Lucy to discipline Ginevra. There are some differences between Lucy's control as a teacher and as Ginevra's friend. In Lucy's authoritative role as a teacher, Lucy directly controls Ginevra through command, moral preaching, denouncement, silence, and panoptical observation, as explained earlier. However, the power relations between Lucy and Ginevra are more complicated as Lucy is also Ginevra's friend. As a friend, Lucy subtly controls Ginevra through friendship, generosity, intimacy, and care. From this instance, Foucault's ideas about discipline can be considered in a more benevolent light as Lucy has kindness and intimacy in her surveillance.

III. Lucy and Her Own School

“Is it surprising,” Foucault (1979) asked, that “prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prison?” (p. 228). I would like to return to the scenes at Madame Beck’s pensionnat to examine how Madame Beck employs disciplinary control in her school before following this line of investigation for Lucy and her own school. Madame Beck’s pensionnat appears to be a microcosm of the state itself; Madame Beck is in charge of the mechanisms by which the broader social order maintains its authority. “Surveillance” and “espionage” are her watchwords (Brontë, 2012, p. 82). Lucy Snowe observes Madame Beck’s Pensionnat de Demoiselles from the moment she arrives, first as a governess and subsequently as a teacher. Madame Beck “had been plotting and counterplotting, spying and receiving the reports of spies all day” (Brontë, 2012, p. 83). As Madame Beck rules by espionage, “she has her staff of spies: she perfectly knew the quality of the tools she used, and [...] she would not scruple to handle the dirtiest for a dirty occasion” (Brontë, 2012, p. 84). Madame Beck’s power represents the state’s, minister’s, and police’s power as Lucy believes Madame Beck “ought to have swayed a nation: she should have been the leader of a turbulent legislative assembly [...]. She could have comprised the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police” (Brontë, 2012, p. 85). Madame Beck is, thus, the emblem of authority.

Madame Beck visits Lucy frequently in the evening, and she “move[s] away on her ‘soulers de silence⁵,’ and glide[s] ghost-like through the house, watching and spying everywhere, peering through every key-hole, listening behind every door” (Brontë, 2012, p. 83). Madame Beck’s unseen monitoring invokes Bentham’s Panopticon paradigm once more. Her “ghost-like” monitoring implies that she is snooping everywhere yet is invisible to everyone. Her presence is concealed because she is “behind” every door and gazing through every “key-hole.” Madame Beck secretly observes Lucy’s instruction by “listen[ing] at the nursery door when [Lucy] had shut in with the children,” “follow[ing] [Lucy] at a cautious distance when [Lucy] walked out with [the children],” and “stealing within ear-shot whenever the trees of park or boulevard afforded a sufficient screen” (Brontë, 2012, p. 87). During the time Lucy is teaching her first English class, Madame Beck “had been listening and peeping through a spy-hole the whole time” (Brontë,

⁵ shoes of silence (Brontë, 2012, p. 558).

2012, p. 93). Madame Beck maintains “a cautious distance” even outside. Her panoptical settings are park or boulevard trees that provide “a sufficient screen.” Nothing can escape her vigilant gaze. Nobody can avoid being watched at the pensionnat.

Beset as Lucy is by Madame Beck’s constant scrutiny, Lucy does not completely dislike Madame Beck. For Lucy, Madame Beck is “very great,” “very capable,” “wise, firm, faithless, secret, crafty, passionless, watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate – withal perfectly decorous – what more could be desired?” (Brontë, 2012, p. 85). Lucy admires not only Madame Beck’s qualities, which supports her absolute authority in administering the school, but also Madame Beck’s system. Lucy tries to justify that Madame Beck’s system is not horrible:

Nothing could be better than all her arrangements for the physical well-being of her scholars. No minds were over-tasked; the lessons were well distributed and made incomparably easy to the learner; the food was abundant and good: neither pale nor puny faces were anywhere to be seen in the Rue Fossette. She never grudged a holiday; she allowed plenty of time for sleeping, dressing, washing, eating; her method in all these matters was easy, liberal, salutary, and rational: many an austere English school mistress would do vastly well to imitate it” (Brontë, 2012, p. 84).

Lucy appreciates Madame Beck’s approach, which provides adequate flexibility and quality of life while maintaining order. This approach, according to Lucy, is a suitable model for an English school teacher to follow. Lucy spends time observing Madame Beck’s system from the panoptic vantage point of her nursery watch-tower. These observations made by Lucy, I believe, are part of Lucy’s strategy to implement it in her own school later. It might be worth noting the reflexiveness of surveillance that each system of surveillance is interrelated. Madame Beck is also a target of Lucy’s surveillance. The potential for volatility and interchangeability of this surveillance of surveillance between Lucy and Madame Beck is a feature of Foucault’s disciplinary society.

Lucy and Madame Beck not only basically observes each other without being noticed by the other, but Lucy is also learning from Madame Beck that Lucy later employs herself. At the end of the novel, Lucy, after being monitored by Madame Beck and M. Paul, becomes the

administrator of her own school, much like Madame Beck. Lucy's school is comparable to Madame Beck's in that by taking over the home next door, her externat becomes a pensionnat. Lucy considers Madame Beck's establishment even before starting her own school:

House – rent, in a prudently chosen situation, need not be high. When I shall have saved one thousand francs, I will take a tenement with one large room, and two or three smaller ones, furnish the first with a few benches and desks, a black tableau, an estrade for myself; upon it a chair and table, with a sponge and some white chalks; begin with taking day – pupils, and so work my way upwards. Madame Beck's commencement was – as I have often heard her say – from no higher starting point, and where is she now?" (Brontë, 2012, p. 430).

As Lucy compares her initial steps in the institution to those of Madame Beck, she strives to reach the position in which Madame Beck is: having "the establishment under her supervision" (Brontë, 2012, p. 430). With Madame Beck's example in mind, Lucy may become a police agent at her school. The disciplinary system is not necessarily viewed in a negative light. Madame Beck's surveillance of pupil and Lucy's surveillance of Madame Beck help us look at Foucault's ideas in a new light as Lucy learns from Madame Beck as a good model of how to take care of physical and mental well-being of her students, allow appropriate freedom and time, use liberal and rational method, and to be prudent and ambitious. Lucy does not say much about how she runs her school. Brontë and Lucy leaves us to imagine whether Lucy employs surveillance in her disciplinary supervision of her school or not.

IV. Brontë, Lucy, and Writing

Nowhere is disciplinary control felt more intensely or implemented more successfully than in the pensionnat - a boarding school that combines regulatory school aspects with a sense of home and community. *Villette's* panopticon is different from Bentham's panopticon as the disciplinary control in *Villette* is achieved through the combination of discipline and kindness. Lucy, having acquired and internalized discipline, now talks from her comfortable position as a writer and observer in the story. Her panoptical position as the lead character and sole narrator

grants her complete power and omniscience. Lucy's disciplinary gaze is on all characters: she monitors, regulates, and assigns positions in the prison that is her novel, inside which her characters (and herself) are bound.

The result of the panoptical effect in the narrative is that the central observer becomes the target of inspection. In this case, Lucy is not only observed by Madame Beck and M. Paul, but also by the readers. Rabinow (1984) suggests, "those who occupy the central position in the panopticon are themselves thoroughly enmeshed in a localization and ordering of their own behavior" (p. 19). The novel is Lucy's panoptic prison: she is both the prison guard, surveying her characters (including her younger self), and the prisoner of her own story, entrapped by her own construction, enmeshed in her own web of words, that network of observations which catches everybody, including herself, incarcerated within the walls (the covers) of her own book, without which she would and could not exist. As a result, she can have no other existence but that of a prisoner; her own existence is captivity at the exact moment she feels herself to be most liberated - as an independent woman who creates her own school. We, the readers, are spying on Lucy's private life from our privileged positions as reader-observers. Yet we only have our higher vantage point because of Lucy, whose discoveries and reticence as first-person narrator are governed by Brontë.

The reader sees Lucy, but Brontë also observes the reader, and vice versa. Our scope of knowledge is controlled. According to Terry Eagleton (1977), reading and experiencing a book is part of one's cultural formation: "Literature is a dominant ideological formation" (p. 52). The Victorian novel was not only a tool for this process but it was one of the period's major institutions, as influential as any of the more visible governmental organizations that wielded power and control over its people as Miller (1987)'s argument shows that the nineteenth-century novel's delinquency make it a potential pawn of "social order whose totalizing power circulates all the more easily for being pulverized," and blend into the daily life (p. xiii). Our privileged position outside and above the text is also the confinement place of our incarceration inside an even larger system of textual restrictions. The novel as a genre is dependent on and characterized by the totalizing effects of such reversible loops of confinement and circumscription. The book frames the reader in such a way that agreement with its ideological foundations is demanded. If

every novel can work as a panopticon, *Villette* is a kind of panopticon that both reveals and conceals itself as a panopticon, blending strict control with a sense of care and intimacy. This kind of panopticon makes the reader willingly accepts its cultural values. *Villette*'s enormous success demonstrates that its readers freely embrace its value system of discipline.

If Madame Beck and M. Paul socially discipline Lucy, the reader is also socially disciplined by being inscribed as a member of a middle class that instills the values of a disciplinary social order. The relationship between Lucy, Brontë, and the reader is explained by Foucault's concept of power. Power is not a hierarchical force used by those at the top to subjugate those at the bottom, but rather "it traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse" (Miller 1987, as cited in Rabinow, 1984, p. 61).

Conclusion

If Madame Beck and M. Paul are Lucy's "disciplinary police," and Lucy is her pupils' "Police," then Brontë is that of her readers: her book, as a novel and as an institution, reinscribes and enriches existing processes of policing and regulating. The disciplining of Lucy's personal history is therefore also the tale of Brontë's, her readers', the novel's and pensionnat's radical connection with processes of cultural development and social control. The embodiment of Foucault's depiction of the century's new model of the police is found not only in M. Paul and Madame Beck, but also in Lucy, Brontë, and the readers. We are all disciplinary control agents. Neither Lucy nor ourselves will ever be able to completely escape society's norms of internationalization of its maxims.

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