

A Veiled Love in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

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Abstract

The particular structure and organization of *Jane Eyre* surely constitute only some of the traits that favor survival of this great classic for all these centuries. They represent the hallmark of *Jane Eyre*, through which Charlotte Brontë has spoken to a large number of readers, using different cultural, geographical and historical interrelations in unexpected ways and forms, but always suggestive and successful. This paper aims at highlighting some of the different occultation strategies brought into play by the two emblematic, magnetic and fascinating protagonists, who sit at the loving table in *Jane Eyre*. The ability to conceal and unveil, to allow the feeling of love to be subtended and misunderstood is certainly one of the building blocks of the soul of a classic like *Jane Eyre*. It offers the possibility of maturing an interior path of redemption, of knowledge and affirmation of the self, within a delicate system, in balance between drives and reason. The continuous game of parts, between presence and absence, between what is shown and what one actually is, remains mysterious, elusive, and in perpetual becoming. Hiding love thus represents a gateway to the complexity of reality and at the same time allows us to experience other fascinations and sensations that would otherwise remain only, totally ‘ideal’.

Keywords: Jane Eyre, Victorian Society, Love, Passion, Veils, Curtains.

Introduction

Entering into the novel *Jane Eyre* implies delving into a plurality of worlds, of ‘implicit explanations’, of whispers and screams. The draperies of damask, velvety reds, vivid flames and silent corridors are transformed into endless moors swept by the wind and scattered by silent rocks covered with barren moss (Bamber, 1987; Weele, 2004). Under this aspect of extraordinary vividness and tormented magnetism, the multitude of afterlives (Soccio & Saggini, 2018), including the transmedial ones of the Victorian era, which have come down to the present day, have been able to well-interpret, thanks to the careful use of gradients, the mystical and deep tonality. This is often accompanied by evocative and effective cinematographic sets, with saturated and shadowy colors of the implicit characters of the protagonists (Clarke, 2000). Even the invention of parallel texts has shed new lights on the shadows and opened hermeneutical glimpses of lives, actions and choices made within the microcosm *Jane Eyre*. The parallel texts have also underlined the great grasp of the semantic density of the text, and the extent to which its stratification has contributed to the contemporary collective imagination (Politi, 1982; Shuttleworth, 2007; Thomas & Berninger, 2007)

Each drawn curtain, epitomatic of the Victorian world, and each windy path reveal a layer of the world that is ever deeper towards the most intimate interior of the protagonists (Bamber, 1987; Weele, 2004). Although systematized by the Victorian horizon in which they live, women who see marriage as the pivotal institution of society, they courageously engage in a hard battle doomed to change forever their destinies, as well as the fate of the novel (Holtzman, 1982; Phegley, 2012). After all, the action of concealing is a constituent of a gothic romance dimension to which *Jane Eyre* adheres. Mystery and phantasmagoria chase each other, and the liminal figure itself between the ghost and the human being of Bertha Mason hidden from the view of society becomes, so to speak, its emblem (Gilbert & Gubar, 2000). Certainly, this is not a new expedient; hiding

love and subsequently revealing it has been an integral part of the narrative mechanism since its inception. The gaze can stretch as far as Raimbaut d'Aurenga, when it comes to hiding the feeling of love, while he sings to us of a filter and an adulterous passion, proverbially hidden from the eyes:

Car ieu begui de la amor
Ja us dei amar a celada (d'Aurenga)

Passion flares up high, it is palpable, and yet its sparks are visible only at times, immediately hidden by perplexity and lacunose thoughts. In *Jane Eyre*, the half-sentences, the often contradictory behaviors, and the completely personal expedients of the protagonists reach the reader by means of the proxemic representation, the body postures and the disguises (Lejeune, 1986). These reach the inner thoughts of a transparent mind like that of Jane, which is a partial and privileged viewpoint, directly attributable to what the author herself defines “not to be a regular autobiography” (Brontë, 1997, p. 93).

These forms of sentiment concealment are a constituent part of the text and pervade it extensively. Tracing its streams in the narration, and attempting an analysis of its motivations and methods are further keys to understanding. These are added to the thousands of others which allow to approach a classic that once again has something to tell us about ourselves and the world around us. Keeping alive the lesson of Marroni (2013) who from the pages of *Come Leggere Jane Eyre* underlines the “*regola ineludibile della 'precarietà' di chi assume il ruolo di decodificatore*”. The present work aims at highlighting some of the different occultation strategies brought into play by the two emblematic, magnetic and fascinating protagonists, who sit at the loving table in *Jane Eyre*.

Departures and Returns Edward vs. Jane

“Must I move, sir?” I asked.”Must I leave Thornfield?”
“I believe you must Jane. I am sorry, Janet, but I believe indeed you must”.[...]
“Then you are going to be married, sir?”
“Ex-act-ly – pre-cy-se-ly: with your usual acuteness, you have hit the nail straight on the head” (Brontë, 1997, p. 276).

In this way, a mocking and enigmatic Edward Fairfax Rochester answers to a grieving and tormented Jane in the garden of Thornfield Hall. Edward seems to almost make fun of her, in a continuous retort, with a perverse and mocking attitude. Indeed, only a few minutes later, the mockery will give way to the decisive turning point in the narrative plot. Returning to the song from Raimbaut d'Auberga and of the courtly opera, with its aestheticizing and formalized artistic expression of love (Zink, 2015), the action of concealing the feelings for Edward takes on the connotations of a true role-playing game. Tracing the model of the *fin' amor*, Edward is suspended within the awareness that if he had yielded to the desire in a reckless way as he did years before, the sentimental dream would soon evaporate into the hottest disappointment:

[...] Yet for a long time, I treated you distantly, and sought your company rarely. I was an intellectual epicure, and wished to prolong the gratification of making this novel and piquant acquaintance: besides I was for a while troubled with a haunting fear that if I handled the flower freely its bloom would fade- the sweet charm of freshness would leave it” (Brontë, 1997, p. 347).

Edward tries to prolong his love torment by hiding it behind an alternation of presence/absence, which turns out to be a devastating trigger for Jane's emotional balance. Moreover, this play of movement is fully permitted by the male, aristocratic condition of Edward, which as Marroni (2011, pg. 95) says: [...] “*fa del movimento la sua vocazione: nell'ambiente*

provinciale di Thornfield l'uomo introduce un cosmopolitismo che, rinviando ad altri mondi e alludendo ad altre storie, colora la sua vita di un'aura di mistero e di fascino a cui Jane non saprà sottrarsi”.

In the full principle of alternation, it is no coincidence that the physical distance that Edward affixes is immediately consequent to a moment of great mental intimacy between the two protagonists (da Sousa Correa, 2000). During this event, Jane awakened by sinister noises will save the master of Thornfield Hall from certain death by overturning a pitcher of cold water on his bed just before he burns alive due to his wife's fire. The following day Jane's discovery that her master has left for Millcote will be very bitter, so much so as to throw her into an emotional disorder. Such emotional turbulence triggers an inner monologue that pushes her to reflect on herself, on changing relationships, and to invest intimate efforts to reestablish order and systematization in her feelings.

At that moment, she certainly cannot imagine that the tenor of her master's feelings is also changing, and that Edward himself proposes to carry out an occult project in which he will involve, in spite of himself, the statuesque and careerist Blanche Ingram. The project is aimed at evoking in the young Jane experiences of acute torments of jealousy, which are completely new to her:

A week passed, and no news arrived of Mr. Rochester: ten days, and still he did not come. Mrs. Fairfax said she should not be surprised if he were to go straight from the Leas to London, and thence to the Continent, and not show his face again at Thornfield for a year to come; he had not unfrequently quitted it in a manner quite as abrupt and unexpected. When I heard this, I was beginning to feel a strange chill and failing at the heart. I was actually permitting myself to experience a sickening sense of disappointment; but rallying my wits, and recollecting my principles, I at once called my sensations to order;...” (Brontë, 1997, p. 181).

Always within the alternation of proximity/distance, presence/absence, the moment of departure, when it does not happen abruptly and severely, but it is preceded by a farewell, becomes a special opportunity for Edward to fully experience the melancholy of a repressed desire (da Sousa Correa, 2000). This feeling, however, is immediately hidden by the apparent contradiction that once again aims to recall, on the one hand, that concept of libertarian equalitarianism and that manifestation of the self to which Jane herself aspires. On the other hand, it aims to feed the magnetism and enigmaticity of an aristocratic master who wants to be considered egalitarian, but who actually, to put it in Marroni's words (2011, pg. 96) “*senza mai discostarsi da un egocentrismo di impronta byroniana fa del mistero la sua arma migliore*”:

Good-night, then, sir,” said I, departing.

He seemed surprised—very inconsistently so, as he had just told me to go.

“What!” he exclaimed, “are you quitting me already, and in that way?”

“You said I might go, sir” (Brontë, 1997, p. 167).

Furthermore, on that same occasion, Edward does not fail to seize the possibility of making a totally asymmetrical and arbitrary pact with Jane. At first, the young woman cannot help but decline it, but actually it ends up taking on the dual function of concealing the real feelings of the master towards her and at the same time binds her to him even more, in a continuous spiral of social obligation-gratitude-mysterious fascination, and finally of love:

“But not without taking leave; not without a word or two of acknowledgment and goodwill: not, in short, in that brief, dry fashion. Why, you have saved my life!—snatched me from a horrible and excruciating death! And you walk past me as if we were mutual strangers! At least shake hands.”

He held out his hand; I gave him mine: he took it first in one, then in both his own.

“You have saved my life: I have a pleasure in owing you so immense a debt. I cannot say more. Nothing else that has being would have been tolerable to me in the character of creditor for such an obligation: but you: it is different;—I feel your benefits no burden, Jane.”

He paused; gazed at me: words almost visible trembled on his lips,—but his voice was checked.

“Good-night again, sir. There is no debt, benefit, burden, obligation, in the case.” (Brontë, 1997, pp. 167-168).

The sudden absence of Edward deprived of any form of farewell and the homologous moment of Jane’s heartbreaking departure from Thornfield in the aftermath of the missed marriage appear of opposite sign but equally clear and decisive. In this context, it is necessary to underline how the two protagonists employ a different method of dissimulation on the stage of concealment of their feelings, which however peek through the folds of spoken and unspoken words, inevitably giving a trace of themselves (Shapiro, 1968).

Faced with Edward’s repeated departures from Thornfield hall, Jane necessarily remains helpless. Hers is an irremediably subordinate position; she has no awareness of what is happening to her by virtue of a lack of knowledge of herself, of the male world, and more generally, of the universe of sentiments. She has only her internal system of precepts that have guided her up to that moment and to which she painfully chooses to appeal to systematize the turmoil of her soul (Politi, 1982; Godfrey, 2005). She comes to think of running away from Thornfield [...] “bur ever and anon, vague suggestions kept wandering across my brain of reasons why I should quit Thorfield; and I kept involuntarily framing advertisements and pondering conjectures about new situations [...]” (Brontë, 1997, p. 182). She does not suspect that she will be forced to actually do it, and in the same way, she is now undergoing and exercising a forceful action that for the moment is only granted to Edward so, hiding becomes a priority. The call for an internal order comes peremptory and in a form of escalation that will see its culmination later, when the figure and the role played by Bertha Mason emerges. Jane will have to carry out the most striking act of repression and concealment of her love for Edward that will coincide with the masking of her identity at March End, where she will be Jane Elliot for everyone (Dupras, 1998).

Furthermore, observing Jane’s departure for Gatheshed, for the last farewell to aunt Reed and to her hearth denied many years earlier (Marroni, 2011), Edward finds himself in a marginal condition for the first time. This condition turns out to be epitomatic of the degree of maturation of Edward’s sentiment of love, and speculatively of Jane’s vocation to autonomy and freedom. Edward’s attempt to regain power and social control over the beloved young governess will take place in two ways: first by refusing the wage she is legitimately entitled to for her work:

I declined accepting more than was my due. He scowled at first; then, as if recollecting something, he said—

“Right, right! Better not give you all now: you would, perhaps, stay away three months if you had fifty pounds. There are ten; is it not plenty?”

“Yes, sir, but now you owe me five.”

“Come back for it, then; I am your banker for forty pounds.” (Brontë, 1997, p. 249).

Second, by making her promise to contact him in case of any job announcements, in view of his marriage to Miss Ingram and of the departure of little Adèle to boarding school. Jane can only remain entangled once again in the providentially meshes strained of social gratitude, which conceal quite other Edward’s feelings, to whom ironically, all that remains is to say satisfied: “Very well! Very Well! I'll pledge my word on it.” (Brontë, 1997, p. 249).

Once again, he will have to disagree on the formularity of the greetings that are due to friends who leave for a long journey, considering it cold and impersonal. Here too, the enigmatic

nature of his expressions that well conceal the extent of his feelings is again proposed. This surprisingly triggers Jane's need to be explicit, coming up to pronouncing a derivative of heart that is not yet openly a love sentiment, but that such will become very soon:

“And how do people perform that ceremony of parting, Jane? Teach me; I'm not quite up to it.”

“They say, Farewell, or any other form they prefer.”

“Then say it.”

“Farewell, Mr. Rochester, for the present.”

“What must I say?”

“The same, if you like, sir.”

“Farewell, Miss Eyre, for the present; is that all?”

“Yes.”

“It seems stingy, to my notions, and dry, and unfriendly. I should like something else: a little addition to the rite. If one shook hands, for instance; but no—that would not content me either. So you'll do no more than say Farewell, Jane?”

“It is enough, sir: as much good-will may be conveyed in one *hearty* word as in many.” (Brontë, 1997, p. 149).

Edward can afford to be unsettling and brusque, and to make use of a high degree of mocking enigmaticity with which he masks his feelings by inscribing his mood swings. His authority is exercised within his age superiority, the experiences gained through his travels and contacts with different cultures and worlds, which openly support him:

“Then, in the first place, do you agree with me that I have to be a little masterful, abrupt; perhaps exacting, sometimes on the grounds I stated; namely, that I am old enough to be your father, and that I have battled through a varied experience with many men of many nations, and roamed over half the globe, while you have lived quietly with one set of people in one house? (Brontë, 1997, p. 149).

This type of statement only implicitly authorizes Edward's concealment actions and frees him so that he can be inconsistent in his behavior and statements. He appears unfriendly and glacial, but also fascinating in Jane's eyes, so much so that she herself will say “Beside, the eccentricity of the proceeding was piquant: I felt interested to see how he would go on” (Brontë, 1997, p. 135). It should be noted that the adjective ‘piquant’ will then be used by Edward himself later, when the time comes for Jane to exert that all-female influence on him, but which already has the flavor of an aspiration to equality and independence (Godfrey, 2005). Indeed, immediately after the trip to Millcote, the dissymmetry of the relationship begins to change, and despotism and prevarication manifest themselves in all their power just before the game of role-playing changes; and now, it is Jane's turn:

He chuckled; he rubbed his hands. “Oh, it is rich to see and hear her!” he exclaimed. “Is she original? Is she piquant? I would not exchange this one little English girl for the Grand Turk's whole seraglio, gazelle-eyes, houri forms, and all!”

The Eastern allusion bit me again. “I'll not stand you an inch in the stead of a seraglio,” I said; “so don't consider me an equivalent for one. If you have a fancy for anything in that line, away with you, sir, to the bazaars of Stamboul without delay, and lay out in extensive slave-purchases some of that spare cash you seem at a loss to spend satisfactorily here” (Brontë, 1997, p. 296).

Culture and self-affirmation: Jane vs. Jane

Entering the folds, under the burning embers of the soul of a little girl who resists the cage of Gateshead and the hardness of Lowood, and with the passion of an adult soul eager to love, Jane faces, once she has landed in Thornfield, a reflective path that will push her to fulfill an extremely complex parable of life (Gao, 2013). Revealing herself to herself, then hiding and ultimately repressing her feelings, and then again manifesting them loudly but perfectly inscribed within the Victorian axiom woman-marriage (Pell, 1977). Here is the pilgrim's journey by John Bunyan 1678 (Marroni, 2011): "He may be stern; he may be exacting; he may be ambitious yet; but his is the sternness of the warrior Greatheart, who guards his pilgrim convoy from the onslaught of Apollyon" (Brontë, 1997, p. 498).

For Jane the parable follows with a more marked but similarly sinusoidal trend to that of Edward, with different expedients, motivations and outcomes. After all, the rhetorical use of autobiography allows us to providentially take a partial, relative, and no less truthful and authentic point of view, and precisely for this reason absolutely privileged of Jane's inner imagination (Lejeune, 1986). If for Edward it is necessary to rely only on his direct speech, and so to speak to his 'social verbalization', for Jane the reader is faced with an interesting pluralism of voices, in which the identification with Charlotte Brontë is not lacking, within the triangulation of internal-thought, expressed-word, and authorial reflection (London, 1991). In this regard, "What operates subconsciously in Jane, her dreams, visions, use of imagery, etc. is being consciously manipulated by her creator. If the reader confuses Charlotte Brontë's voice with Jane's, he or she does not rise to the writer's level of awareness or appreciate her use of her material" (Imlay, 1989, pg. 11).

This plural tale full of restlessness, hiding, lacerations and re-compositions along the road that leads her to the sublimation of the Victorian archetype allows our heroine to arrive at her subversive and problematizing vision of the condition of woman, wife and mother (Phegley, 2012). This condition is fully enrolled within the Victorian riverbed, dictated by the enigmatic statement 'reader, I married him', which refers to a systematized and normalizing image. Although a clear contradiction is explicit between the Gaskell vision of Brontian life (Marroni, 2013), which gives back a Charlotte Brontë in the midst of a pious self-denial towards her family context and the revolutionary importance of Jane Eyre, it is necessary to invariably start from the fact that this dyscrasia is already inherent within the Victorian society *tout court*. Furthermore, this models its connotations, managing to offer us a mirror of the dimidiated condition of English woman life at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Holzman, 1982). Marroni (2013, pg. 16). admirably underlines that "*sul piano dell'ufficialità sociale [...] è necessario che una donna sappia portare con disinvoltura la maschera imposta dalla norma. Questo le consentirà di evitare la stigmatizzazione e la condanna da parte dell'opinione pubblica, salvo poi vivere interiormente una condizione nient'affatto facile, covare cioè sotto la cenere il fuoco di una rivolta*" [...]. Therefore, the fire of rebellion is providentially hidden thanks to strategies of systematization of the drives.

Hiding passions becomes the practice to which women behavior tends, on which we would say, it specializes, through a series of different gradients and expressions, as well as outcomes (da Sousa Correa, 2000). Love, *passion par excellence*, in *Jane Eyre* represents the pulsating engine of the entire experiential parable, a polarizing element of all the lines of tension that pervade her life and frame the entire narrative plot. Love is denied, with rejection and exclusion from the family warmth of Gateshead; love is hidden, violent and pure at Thornfield, is accompanied by the emergence of the deepest and most destructive feelings, is hatched, rational and ambitious at Marsh End, with a marriage proposal in which only necessity and status harbor, and there is no room for sentiment (Pell, 1977). Hiding love, therefore, becomes for the Victorian woman not only a defensive, social strategy but also an escaping route, particularly for a liminal and uncomfortable figure like that of the nineteenth-century housekeeper. In it, we find social, financial and gender lines of tension that point the finger toward the idiosyncrasies of the Victorian vision of women, to bring about the emergence of a new bourgeois class diametrically opposed to the aristocracy,

which progressively conquers its place in the world (Burkhart, 1961). After all, Jane's cultural superiority that made her school and work career at Lowood a reason for independence allows her to communicate easily with Edward, and to place herself immediately on an equal communicative level (Gao, 2013). Marroni (2013, pg. 19). emphasizes that: "*l'inferiorità sociale [della figura dell'istitutrice] è controbilanciata da una superiorità culturale che, nel contesto della borghesia industriale, si somma alla superiorità spirituale*". The feeling of love will do the rest, and this form of possible dialogue opens to an exchange of thoughts and sensations of which Jane is not fully aware yet. However, this leads us to consider how her falling in love with Edward and her fascination for him cannot be verbalized, not even mentally, through an internal monologue with herself, hiding behind shared gazes and an awareness of a nascent mental harmony:

'And so may you,' I thought. My eye met his as the idea crossed my mind: he seemed to read the glance, answering as if its import had been spoken as well as imagined - 'Yes, yes, you are right,' said he; 'I have plenty of faults of my own: I know it, and I don't wish to palliate them, I assure you. God wot I need not be too severe about others; I have a past existence, a series of deeds, a colour of life to contemplate within my own breast, which might well call my sneers and censures from my neighbours to myself.' (Brontë, 1997, p. 150).

Hidden from itself, love takes shape in progressively more evident external signs; "My body health improved; I gathered flesh and straight" (Brontë, 1997, p. 163). "I well remembered all; language, glance, and tone seemed at the moment vividly renewed. I was now in the schoolroom; Adèle was drawing; I bent over her and directed her pencil. She looked up with a sort of start. 'Qu' avez-vous, mademoiselle?' said she. 'Vos doigts tremblent comme la feuille, et vos joues sont rouges: mais, rouges comme des cerises!'" (Brontë, 1997, p. 175).

The paroxysmal *crescendo* will trigger the inner conflict between judgment and falling in love, in which "*la protagonista di affida alla ragione, non solo per porre un freno alla sua passione altrimenti scatenata, ma anche per darsi una linea di condotta che sia espressione della sua volontà di affermazione*" (Marroni, 2011, pg. 97). Subsequently, the role and cultural stature, together with the will to affirmation, allow Jane to reply point by point to Edward (Gao, 2013; Pell, 1977). Jane begins with an energetic action of verbal shielding and concealment of her feelings up to the most irreducible laconism, even in front of an *en travesti* Edward. He does not give up to gaining once more, and there is no further need to move from mystery and mystification into the role of the strange sibyl who conveniently dispenses complacent divinations to the young ladies at Thornfield Hall:

'Well, and you want your fortune told?' she said, in a voice as decided as her glance, as harsh as her features. 'I don't care about it, mother; you may please yourself: but I ought to warn you, I have no faith.' 'It's like your impudence to say so: I expected it of you; I heard it in your step as you crossed the threshold.' 'Did you? You've a quick ear'" (Brontë, 1997, p. 218).

Another, different strategy put in place by Jane is represented by the silent observation in the role of a painful but inflexible spectator, a position imposed on her by Edward himself. Indeed, as soon as she can, Jane prefers to hide her moral and loving suffering, as well as her social exclusion, in the shadow of a thick curtain:

'Why, I suppose you have a governess for her: I saw a person with her just now—is she gone? Oh, no! There she is still, behind the window-curtain. You pay her, of course; I should think it quite as expensive,—more so; for you have them both to keep in addition.' I feared—or should I say, hoped?—the allusion to me would make Mr. Rochester glance

my way; and I involuntarily shrank farther into the shade: but he never turned his eyes” (Brontë, 1997, p. 196).

The concealment of feelings, for Jane, will coincide in extreme *rättio* with the hiding of her own identity at March End. The need to hide her recent past, her passion and the pain caused by the memory of her missed marriage does nothing but change into blush and embarrassment, until the birth of a new Jane Elliot, who overlaps and temporarily conceals Jane Eyre:

‘I am near nineteen: but I am not married. No.’ I felt a burning glow mount to my face; for bitter and agitating recollections were awakened by the allusion to marriage. They all saw the embarrassment and the emotion. Diana and Mary relieved me by turning their eyes elsewhere than to my crimsoned visage; but the colder and sterner brother continued to gaze, till the trouble he had excited forced out tears as well as colour. [...] ‘The name of the place where, and of the person with whom I lived, is my secret,’ I replied concisely” (Brontë, 1997, p. 382).

Conclusion

Jane’s life is studded with concealment and reappearances, right from the very beginning, ever since she was a child, having to hide from her aggressive, brutal cousin in order to avoid from being beaten up. Continuing with her poor life at Lowood, where her only consolation is her little friend who died, becoming an Angel who watched over her and so hiding from Jane’s eyes. Jane reappears as a well-educated, young-lady at Thornfield Hall, where she is forced to hide all her love for Edward and her longing for love herself and for a happy passionate life. Jane’s figure is so well structured and embodied that she must hide her entire self and become Jane Eliot, in order to survive, as if Jane Eyre were incapable of a life of her own.

The most overwhelming mood evoked by Jane is her dense, profound external and internal loneliness. External solitude that starts from the loss of her parents, then that of her little friend at Lowood, ending with the loss of her only love, Edward. The external solitude forges her internal solitude that embraces Jane’s obscure world and that makes her proud and unreachable, almost a celestial creature. She grows up alone; she becomes an adolescent alone; she becomes a woman alone; she studies alone; she learns alone; she works alone; she lives alone; she even loves alone. All of her life is pervaded with the absence of any familial figures, let alone by loving figures, having lost any kind of affections she had ever known. Only at the very end of the narration, after a struggled maturation, Jane is capable of interrupting the swinging alternating scenes of concealment and reappearance that have permeated her reality and her own self, and can finally overtly present herself and her deep, endless love for Edward.

The ability to conceal and unveil, to allow the feeling of love to be subtended and misunderstood is certainly one of the building blocks of the soul of a classic like *Jane Eyre*. It offers the possibility of maturing an interior path of redemption, of knowledge and affirmation of the self, within a delicate system, in balance between drives and reason. The continuous game of parts, between presence and absence, between what is shown and what one actually is, remains mysterious, elusive, in perpetual becoming. Hiding love thus represents a gateway to the complexity of reality, and at the same time allows us to experience other fascinations and sensations that would otherwise remain only, totally ‘ideal’. Going through the tortuous meanders of the human soul, through the examples just mentioned, the color palette used by Charlotte Brontë appears very rich in shades, changing shapes, subtle veils capable of concealing what no distracted eye is able to see, but which only the heart is capable of feeling.

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