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PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM LETRAS/INGLÊS E LITERATURA CORRESPONDENTE

A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF ZEFFIRELLI'S AND STEVENSON'S *JANE EYRE*

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ABSTRACT

RE-CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL PAST:
CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *JANE EYRE* ADAPTATION TO FILM

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Advisor: Dr. José Gatti

The present study aims at analyzing two filmic adaptations from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847): the 1944 filmic adaptation, directed by Robert Stevenson, and the 1996 adaptation directed by Franco Zeffirelli, focusing on how literary elements are adapted in the film's narrative, thus re-constructing a determined historical period. Although the scope of this project is not the process of adaptation *per se*, some concepts and methods from adaptation theory are necessary in order to arrive at a critical view of what has happened in the process of transposition from a nineteenth-century novel, *Jane Eyre*, to two filmic versions with a gap of almost fifty years between both.

Número de páginas: 80

Número de palavras: 18.645

RESUMO

RE-CONSTRUCTING A NATIONAL PAST:
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O objetivo do presente estudo é analisar duas versões cinematográficas do romance *Jane Eyre*, de Charlotte Brontë (1847): a adaptação de 1944, dirigida por Robert Stevenson, e a adaptação de 1996 dirigida por Franco Zeffirelli, focando na maneira como os elementos literários são manipulados para construir a narrativa do filme, desta forma reconstruindo um determinado período histórico. Embora o escopo deste projeto não compreenda o processo de adaptação *per se*, alguns conceitos e métodos dentro das teorias de adaptação são necessários para que se possa chegar a uma visão crítica do processo de transposição de um romance do século dezenove, *Jane Eyre*, para duas versões cinematográficas produzidas com cinqüenta anos de diferença entre ambas.

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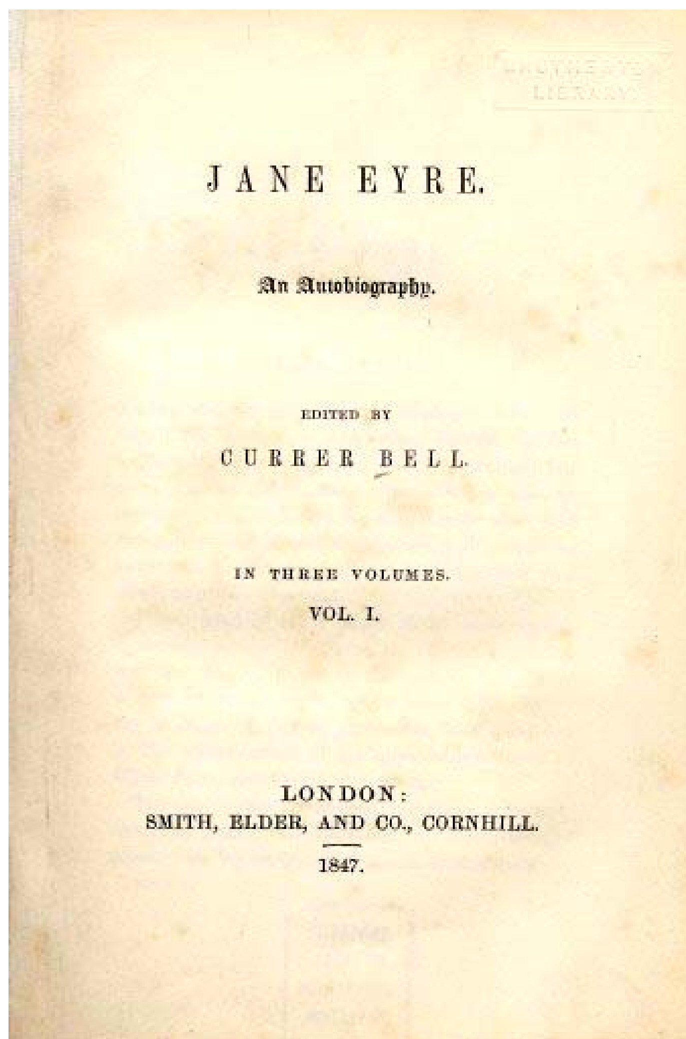
INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER



JANE EYRE.

An Autobiography.

EDITED BY

CURRER BELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., CORNHILL.

1847.

> What matters […] in the historical novel is not the retelling of great historical events, but the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events. What matters is that we should re-experience the social and human motives which led men to think, feel and act just as they did in historical reality.
>
> Georg Lukács (qtd. in Grindon 6)

In the analysis of historical fiction films, it is essential to observe and understand the mechanisms through which History is displayed and what they intend to convey to the viewer. Historical representation aims at demonstrating the causal agents, or the cause, of a specific social change. Film, as a visual experience, allows for this representation to take place in a number of ways, such as characterization, setting, plot, development of actions, etc. In a novel, a single (yet complex) individual may absorb, represent, and synthesize a range of collective conflicts (such as economical, financial, class-related and religious) which took place in a given period and which are shown as causal elements for change in society.

The British nineteenth-century novel *Jane Eyre,* written by Charlotte Brontë, focuses on the story of a mature woman looking back and commenting on events that happened to a young Jane and on how she reacted to the cruelty of the Victorian society; the religious precepts which surrounded people's lives, the subservience of women, the severe educational system, diseases, class conflicts, and so forth. A great deal of researches dealing with the issues aforementioned has been carried out[1]. The scope of this study, from a critical perspective, is the filmic analysis, although the novel functions as a counterpoint for my investigation.

In this Introduction I present the theoretical concepts and terminology regarding historical narratives as proposed by Hayden White, and to apply such concepts to the films under analysis in the specific chapters where the interpretations are made. Also in these introductory pages, I propose a reflection on the adaptation process through which the films underwent, as well as a discussion on the implications of the historical fiction

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[1] Many researches worldwide, regarding literary criticism, ranging from psychological, feminist, new historicist approaches and many others, were carried out. Among these studies, I decided to mention an unpublished Master thesis by Noélia Borges de Araújo, *Rethinking Female Archetypal Images in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre at the Turn of the Century,* UFSC, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. José Roberto O'Shea.

film genre. Chapter I and Chapter II focus on the analysis of the development of narrative in the films object of this research—one directed by Robert Stevenson and the other by Franco Zeffirelli respectively—regarding the historical approach. In order to reach my conclusions, I analyze the filmic elements employed by the filmmakers to reproduce history (specially setting and mise-en-scene). For this purpose, the groundworks for this analysis are the books *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* by Robert Rosenstone for concepts on historical fiction films; *Film Art: An Introduction* by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson for a deep analysis of film elements, such as lighting, editing and cinematography; *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination of the Nineteenth Century,* by Hayden White for a theory of "historical work", among other books and articles relevant to the discussion.

The first adaptation of *Jane Eyre* to the screen came out of Italy in 1910; a silent black and white film, directed by Mario Caserini, starring Marie Eline as Jane and Frank Hall Crane as Mr. Rochester, and the most recent version is a 1996 production directed by Franco Zeffirelli, starring Charlotte Gainsbourg as Jane and William Hurt as Mr. Rochester. Meanwhile, numerous other versions, and stage plays, including a musical, were produced[2].

The present study aims at analyzing two filmic adaptations from Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847): the 1944 filmic adaptation, directed by Robert Stevenson, and the 1996 filmic adaptation directed by Franco Zeffirelli, focusing on

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[2] In 1914, in the USA, director Frank Hall Crane produced a short silent version with Ethel Grandin as Jane, and Irving Cumming as Mr. Rochester; also in 1914, in the U.S.A., director Martin Faust produced a full-length silent version, starring Lisbeth Blackstone as Jane and John Charles as Mr. Rochester; in 1921, director Hugo Ballin presented his silent version with Mable Ballin as Jane, and Norman Trevorar as Mr. Rochester; in 1934, featuring Virginia Bruce as Jane, and Colin Clive as Mr. Rochester; with Beryl Mercer and David Torrence; in 1944, from America, featuring Joan Fontaine as Jane, and Orson Welles as Mr. Rochester, with Margaret O'Brien, Peggy Ann Garner, John Sutton, Elizabeth Taylor and Agnes Moorehead; in 1971, there appeared a lush color version, featuring Susannah York as Jane, and George C. Scott as Mr. Rochester; in 1983, there was a version featuring Zelah Clarke as Jane, and Timothy Dalton as Mr. Rochester; among others not mentioned here.

how literary elements are adapted in the film's narrative, thus re-constructing a determined historical period. The scope of this project does not include the analysis of the novel, but an analysis of the films using some concepts and methods from adaptation theory that are necessary in order to arrive at a critical view of what has happened in the process of transposition from a nineteenth-century novel, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, to two filmic versions with a gap of almost fifty years.

Specifically, adaptation theory is used in this investigation as a way to verify how the directors apply cinematic codes in order to create a particular version of the text and how they (the directors of the filmic adaptations) explore issues of epoch in ways that reproduce the criticism presented in the novel, while considering historical issues in the context of their production.

Brian McFarlane, in the preface of his book *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation,* states that the process of adaptation from novel to film is not a process of "evaluation" but a process of establishing the "kind" of relation that a film possibly bears to the novel (8-9). The adaptation from a nineteenth-century novel can take place in different periods and can be inserted in different historical realities.

According to Brian McFarlane, since cinema began to be viewed as a "narrative entertainment" (6), it started to appropriate the narrative fiction of novels in the hope that this already pre-established medium might give the popularity and respectability to film. DeWitt Bodeen's argument ensures this point: "Adapting literary works to film is, without a doubt, a creative undertaking; but the task requires a kind of selective interpretation, along with the ability to recreate and sustain an established mood" (qtd. in McFarlane 7). Thus, it is not surprising that filmmakers have chosen to appropriate the prestige and respect of the nineteenth-century novel.

McFarlane, in the section entitled "On being faithful", argues that the allusion of

“fidelity” as a criterion for judging adaptations is “pervasive” (8), since it tends to lead to a devaluation of one media in detriment of the other. And he goes on debating that it is a hard task to determine the “spirit” or “essence” of a work, since “any given film version is able only to aim at reproducing the film-maker’s reading of the original and to hope that it will coincide with that of many other readers/viewers” (9). Therefore, the suggestion of keeping the “essence” of a novel to ensure a successful adaptation is a problematic issue. Fidelity, thus, should not be a desirable goal in the adaptation of literary works: “There are many kinds of relations which may exist between film and literature, and fidelity is only one—and rarely the most exciting” (11).

Concerning the process of adaptation, McFarlane’s arguments converge with Robert Stam’s in his article “Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation”. Stam’s aim is to “move beyond a moralistic approach to propose specific strategies for the analysis of adaptations” (54). According to Stam, films consolidate our previous expectations and readings about characters, plot and setting. The “cinematization” itself is an automatic difference between film and novel due to the change of medium. Another issue raised by Stam is the actual cost and modes of production: while novels are almost unaffected by budgets and so forth, films are constrained by material and financial features.

Stam asserts that “there is no such transferable core: a single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can generate a plethora of possible readings, including even readings of the narrative itself” (57), therefore attesting that the text is an open structure. McFarlane also puts the narrative as a “chief transferable element” (12). McFarlane's assumption is that mainstream cinematic narrative owes much to the nineteenth-century novel, yet both narrative media must be approached differently.

The source novel is then, according to McFarlane—to draw upon the notion of

intertextual relations—one part of the *context* of an adaptation. Stam, as stated earlier, argues that a text is an open structure that can be "re-worked" in an infinite context; for him, texts are within a chain of infinite intertexts, subject to permutations of interpretation as well. He also draws upon the Bakhtinian concept of "translinguistics", which places the author as holding an infinite number of preexisting texts. James Naremore, in the introduction of his book *Film Adaptation*, also addresses Bakhtin, specifically in regard to the concept of "dialogism" as a "metaphor of intertextuality" (12). The concepts of dialogism and intertextuality are resources for theorists to move away from the discussions on "fidelity versus infidelity" when analyzing the relation between film and literature, because the concept of "dialogics" puts a single film in connection with multiple prior texts.

In his essay, Robert Stam, citing Gérard Genette, presents the term transtextuality. Genette uses the term as referring to "all that [...] puts one text in relation, whether manifest or hidden, with other texts", in other words, he is referring to Bakhtin's dialogism (65).[3]

McFarlane recalls the three broad categories proposed by Geoffrey Wagner considering adaptations, to help us move on from the idea of hegemony of fidelity. Wagner's three categories are: transposition, an adapted text that has undergone the minimum of apparent interference; commentary, the adaptation that reflects a different intention from the novel; and analogy, an adaptation that constitutes a different work of art.

Other critics have proposed similar ways of considering different types of

[3] Genette proposes five types of transtextuality: intertextuality, a kind of quotation, allusion, the relation of one text with previous existent texts; paratextuality, the relation between a text and its paratext, such as titles, headings, prefaces, etc; metatextuality, a commentary of one text on another text; architextuality, a text as part of a genre; and hypertextuality, a relation between a text an a preceding hypotext, a text on which it is based but which it transforms, for example, parody, translation, etc. (65-66).

adaptation. Dudley Andrew argues that an adaptation is "the appropriation of meaning from a prior text" (which comes to terms with concepts of dialogism and intertextuality) and establishes three modes of relation between films and texts: borrowing (the employment of the material, idea or form of an earlier text), intersection (preservation of the original text with minimum of interference) and fidelity of transformation (reproduction of something that is essential about the original text) (*Adaptation* 29-30). Still according to Andrew, modern cinema is increasingly interested in the process of intersection, which insists that the analyst should attend to "the specificity of the original within the specificity of the cinema" (31).

As I will detail later, in the case of both *Jane Eyre* 1944 and 1996 filmic versions, the adaptations underwent a process of intersection since the films preserve many aspects of the original text, although in a cinematized way. For instance, in the opening scene in Robert Stevenson's version, the initial credits are displayed in the format of a book, perhaps denoting that the director has the intention to preserve, at a certain level, the original text. The same happens in other scenes: when Jane presents her feelings and digressions in a voice-over narration, there is a book in the frame and Jane reads the excerpts on the book. It is interesting to note that the book only is opened or shown in the parts where Jane is a voice-over narrator, making considerations and observations about events and people, and giving voice to her feelings (*Jane Eyre*, 1944, dir. Robert Stevenson). In Franco Zeffirelli's version, there is also the use of voice-over narration to present the events that Jane experienced in her life, and Zeffirelli himself asserts, in an extra-feature on the DVD, his intention to be "faithful" to the novel.

The differences and limitations of each medium (novel and film) are also points of discussion in the article by George Bluestone. According to him, novel and film are different in the sense that one deals with "the concept of mental image", while the other

deals with "the perception of the visual image". Both media represent "different ways of seeing" (1). The intentions of the novelist and the director, therefore, converge because both of them want to "make you [reader/viewer] see" (1). At this point, Bluestone reflects upon the role of the audience, the "you", that is another concern that can be taken into account in the process of adaptation (2).

Bluestone also comments on the historical film-literature relationship, pointing out the industry's appraisal of this strong relation and presenting statistical numbers, among other data, to explain the high percentage of "filmed novels which have been financially and artistically successful" (4). Concerning the issue of fidelity, more specifically the changes an adaptation may undergo during the process (recalling McFarlane's and Stam's concerns), Bluestone's argument is that "changes are *inevitable* the moment one abandons the linguistic for the visual medium" (5). In addition, Bluestone demonstrates that "the end products of novel and film represent different aesthetic genera, as different from each other as ballet is from architecture" (5).

Concerning the analysis of elements that can be transferred from one medium to another, according to McFarlane, the narrative is "a chief transferable element" (12). Sarah Kozloff asserts that first-person voice-over narration, as in the case of most of *Jane Eyre* filmic versions, "can greatly affect viewer's experience of the text by 'naturalizing' the source of the narrative, by increasing identification with the characters, by prompting nostalgia, and by stressing the individuality and subjectivity of perception and storytelling" (41).

In order to draw on a precise terminology, Kozloff presents Gérard Genette's narrative levels. Genette makes a distinction between two broad types of narrators: the "homodiegetic" narrators, who are characters in the story, and the "heterodiegetic" narrators, who are not characters in the story world. In a general sense, this distinction

regards first-person narrators and third-person narrators (42). In addition, Genette distinguishes between narrators of first level, "extradiegetic" narrators (framing/primary story); embedded narrators or "intradiegetic" narrators (embedded stories); and doubly embedded narrators or "metadiegetic" narrators.

As stated above, Kozloff points out that first-person voice-over narration stresses individuality. The sense of individuality seems to fit the conception of narrative in the Hollywood classical cinema, since, according to Bordwell, the narrative in this style "depends on the assumption that the action will spring primarily from individual characters as causal agents", and the narrative "invariably centers on personal psychological causes: decisions, choices, and traits of character" (*Film Art: An Introduction* 108). The narrative, in both films, follows a formula, which follows the tradition of well-made plays of the nineteenth century: Exposition, Conflict, Complication, Crisis, and Denouement ("The Hollywood Classical Style" 17).

In *Jane Eyre* (1944 and 1996 versions), the narrative centers primarily on the individual development of Jane, on her choices to be free, and to fight against the constraints of the Victorian society in the name of her desire to reach happiness. All events are connected to this central desire, which is also a characteristic of the Hollywood style, as pointed out by Bordwell: "Often an important trait that functions to get the narrative moving is a desire. The character wants something." (108).

Still according to Bordwell, "most classical narrative films display a strong degree of closure at the end. Leaving no loose ends unresolved, these films seek to complete their causal chains with a final effect." (*Film Art* 110). Jane reaches the happiness at the end and the viewer knows exactly what happened with all the characters: her cruel aunt Mrs. Reed has a stroke and dies, Bertha Manson dies as well, Jane and Rochester get married and have a child. The moral message is clear at the end:

the cruel people that scrutinized Jane all her life are punished; the battle good versus evil ends, and the good wins as Jane finally has some peace. Even Rochester reaches happiness after being punished for all his bad actions.

Through the individual story of Jane Eyre, a portrayal of a historical period is presented; the critique of the Victorian society is addressed in a way that positions Jane as a victim of the system, as can be noticed right in the opening scene (Robert Stevenson's version) where the adult Jane is reading the book (voice-over narration) presenting an overview of how the things were in that period:

> My name is Jane… I was born in 1820, a harsh time of change in England. Money and positions seemed all that mattered. Charity was a cold and disagreeable word. Religion too often wore a mask of bigotry and cruelty. There was no proper place for the poor and or the unfortunate. I had no father or mother, brother or sister. As a child I lived with my aunt, Mrs. Reed of Gateshead Hall. I do not remember that she ever spoke one kind word to me.
>
> *Jane Eyre*, directed by Robert Stevenson

In the 1996's adaptation of the novel, there is the same exposition in the beginning of the film, with the difference that in this version there is no book, but a drawing of Gateshead Hall, which increasingly becomes vivid as Jane narrates, as if it were coming from the past to be relived. The same process happens in the end of the film, when Jane and Rochester, in a deep focus shot, are walking in a huge yard, and while Jane is narrating what happened to their lives (closing thus the narrative) the scene slowly becomes a drawing.

Robert Rosenstone analyses how films work as history, and what can be learned "from watching history on the screen" (*Visions of the Past* 4). He also analyses the question of how images carry ideas and information differently from the written word. According to him, there are two main forms of displaying history on the screen, among a variety of ways through which this process can happen: history as drama and history as documentary, being history as drama the most common kind of historical film (50-

51).

He argues that only postmodern film "utilizes the unique capabilities of the media to create multiple meanings", not attempting "to recreate the past realistically" but instead, "raising questions about the very evidence on which our knowledge of the past depends, creatively interacting with its traces" (12). As he puts, these films "offer a new relationship to the world of the past", unlike standard historical films that "began to seem too much like the standard written history, which, in its conventions of realism, incorporates the aesthetic values of the nineteenth-century novel" (11-12). Standard historical films show history in a personalized way, "emotionalizing the past, and delivering it to a new audience", thus not using "the capabilities of the medium to their fullest" (11-12).

Rosenstone recalls Siegfried Kracauer's discussion, presenting his negative response to the attempt of putting history onto film, asserting that it was fake and unconvincing to put modern actors in period costumes (25). On the other hand, he cites R.J. Raack, a historian who affirmed the film to be the "more appropriate medium for history than the written word" because film, in its multidimensional characteristic and its "ability to juxtapose images and sounds", could "recover all the past's liveliness" (26), without denigrating the power of the written word.

Rosenstone also explains that written language and visual language create "versions of reality" and that "each medium has its own kind of necessarily fictive elements" (36-37). Thus, a film can create some facts about individuals, or even fictive individuals, without violating history, as they preserve the larger meaning of it. According to him "history is never a mirror but a construction" (49). He goes on defining what he calls "cinematic realism" as a

> […] realism made up of certain kinds of shots in certain kinds of sequences seamlessly edited together and underscored by a sound track to give the

> viewer a sense that nothing (rather than everything) is being manipulated to create a world on screen in which we can all feel at home. (54)

Still concerning the issue of displaying history on the screen, Leger Grindon, in his book *Shadows on the Past: Studies in the Historical Fiction Film,* asserts that "[t]he historical film strives to expand its characters into a portrait of a people to synthesize the individual and collective causes operating in history" (6). He also states that personal and social factors portray the historical cause and that "[t]he spectacle emphasizes the extrapersonal forces (social, economic, geographic, and so forth) bearing on the historical drama" (15). Grindon aims at examining the conventions "that shape historical fiction on the screen and probes into the nature of its influence on Western culture" (2), and he observes that the use of narrative to shape historical data constitutes history as an "address to the present" (1).

According to Grindon, cinema "associates past events with contemporary issues that it seeks to explain, justify, or exalt" (1). Pierre Sorlin explains this relationship between past and present in historical fiction films: "History is no more than a useful device to speak of the present time" (qtd. in Grindon 1). Grindon emphasizes that historical fiction films often address the present; in other words, what happens in the historical fiction films is a "displacement of the present to the past", that can be seen as "an appeal to authority, a veiling of intention, an escape into nostalgia, and a search for origins" (2-3).

The appeal to authority, he proceeds, presents history as being "the truth", process displayed in films with period detail and with old-fashioned/elegant manners or habits that are believed to be the correct way of behaving. When a film attempts at veiling an intention, it seeks to hide "controversial positions", in order to avoid censorship or resistance. The desire to return to the past as a way of criticizing the present may imply an escape into nostalgia, in other words, this desire imply an over valorization of the

past as unique, dreaming, and containing values that supposedly are not encountered in society any more. And the search for origins, in Grindon's words, “seeks to discover the foundation of a civilization's achievement and calls for a reaffirmation of the strengths of its forebears” (3). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that, as Grindon states, in historical fictional films there is a “displacement of the present to the past”, and in the case of both *Jane Eyre*’s versions under analysis, what takes place is less a critique of the past than an exultation of the heroine, represented by the strong Jane Eyre, overcoming all obstacles to live in happiness.

The role of being a heroine implies in being the agent of change in society. The personal evolution of Jane Eyre is accompanied by a generalized evolution in the consciousness of society, and the films under analysis “[...] express historical cause in the comprehensive gestalt of the screen spectacle as well as in the characters and incidents of the plot” (Grindon, 6). The central theme of *Jane Eyre*, which is the struggle for surviving in a society where prejudice against women is evident, where strict religious rules govern people's lives and where the cruelty is everywhere, expresses the relationship between individual and society. The tension is divided between personal goals and “the needs of the community for cooperative action and mutual responsibility”; this tension is an important aspect to be observed and, which according to Grindon, places the historical fiction film as a genre in addition to other kinds of relations, such as the convergence of private and public needs. Thus, the romance would be a kind of personal experience and the spectacle, the experience of a public life, both forming the total sphere of the historical fiction (Grindon, 9-10).

The spectacle, still following Grindon's propositions, “[...] emphasizes the extrapersonal forces (social, economic, geographic, and so forth) bearing on the historical drama”. These extrapersonal forces acting upon the actions in *Jane Eyre* are

most evident in the social and economic milieu. Public health, women's role, religious influence, Victorian ideals, difference of ages in marriage, treatment of employees, and so forth form the so-called spectacle (15).

The spectacle is shaped by period setting and architecture while the romance is shaped by the plot and characters. This relation—between individual and collective forces—serves to explain history. The chief archetypes of romance are the lovers and their ultimate goal is marriage as a way of rewarding the heroine for overcoming the obstacles imposed on her. Concerning the status of Jane Eyre as a governess and the rich older man Mr. Rochester, their union can be read as a way of unifying different social classes and as a compensation for her struggle. Grindon asserts that the climax of the romance is the marriage, the union of opposing forces: "The fate of the lovers points to the historical attitude of the film; happy marriage signifying the alliance of social groups or the reconciliation of conflicting forces [...]" (10-11). Grindon goes on arguing that "[...] ceremonies, such as the ball and the wedding, act as social rituals bridging the gap between the privacy of romance and the display of public approval" (16).

From the discussion on history presented above, it becomes necessary to permeate this investigation with a theory regarding historical writings. For this purpose, I proceed presenting concepts proposed by Hayden White in his book *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination of the Nineteenth Century,* where he sets forth the methodology and terminology in which he analyzed some classics of the nineteenth-century European historical thought in order to consider them as representing the historical reflection of a period. White proposes a systematized and formal theory of the historical work, and in this theory he regards the historical work as being "a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse"; a historian takes events that have happened and makes a story out of them. According to White, three elements are combined and necessary to

present History: an amount of “data”, theory applied to explain these data, and a “narrative structure”, a chain of events that possibly have happened in the past. These historical works, he argues, present a “deep structural content which is generally poetic, and specifically linguistic [...]”, and which has to do with the “metahistorical” element, presented in all historical works, that is, an account of how the explanation of history should be taken (ix).

White suggests that theoretical concepts, which are explicitly used in historical writings to convey the aspect of “explanation” to narratives, belong to the “surface” or “manifest level” of the text. So, he proposes three types of strategies that can be used to give this effect of explanation and for each of these three strategies, there are four types of forms from which the historian can choose; these strategies comprise the “explanation by formal argument”, “the explanation by emplotment”, and “the explanation by ideological implications” (x).

The explanation by argument consists of the historian's view of what history ought to be and the four types of argument are formalist, organicist, mechanistic, and contextualist. The formalist argument refers to the identification of objects by classifying, labeling and/or categorizing; the organicist argument views the individual as part of the whole, more than the sum of the parts; the mechanistic consist of finding laws that govern the operations of human activities, and the contextualist argument regards events explained by their relationships to similar events (11-21). The explanation by emplotment infers that every story will be emplotted in some way and the four types of emplotment are: romance, drama of self-identification, including a hero's triumph over evil; satire, the opposite of romance, people are captives in the world until they die; comedy, harmony between the natural and the social, and tragedy, a hero, through a fall or test, learns through resignation to work within the limitations of

the world (7-10). The explanation by ideological implications reflects ethics and assumptions the historian has about life, how past events affect the present. The four types of this argument are the conservative, history evolves, there is a hope for utopia, but change occurs slowly as part of the natural rhythm; liberal, in which the progression of social history is the result of changes in law and government; radical, utopia is imminent and must be effected by revolutionary means, and anarchist, the state is corrupt and therefore it must be destroyed and a new community must be started (22-28).

Still according to White, the historian performs the act of writing history by writing within a particular trope; "[Tropes] are especially useful for understanding the operations by which the contents of experience which resist description in unambiguous prose representations can be prefiguratively grasped and prepared for conscious apprehension" (34). The four deep poetic structures are the Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, and Irony. Metaphor means "transfer", one phenomenon is compared or contrasted to another in the manner of analogy or simile; Synecdoche is the use of a part of something to symbolize the quality of the whole; Metonymy is the substitution of the name of a thing for the whole, and Irony refers to the literal meaning that makes no sense figuratively (34-38).

Therefore, as early stated, this study aims at analyzing two filmic versions of the nineteenth-century novel *Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë—one directed by Robert Stevenson (1944) and the other by Franco Zeffirelli (1996). This investigation seeks to explore how history is presented through the films and how the directors chose to represent the historical data (Victorian period) through the individual story of the protagonist. Moreover, this investigation presents the different ways through which the filmmakers decided to portray the novel: Stevenson using the Gothic, and Zeffirelli

using the romantic plot as the basic core of his adaptation. The analysis provided in the following Chapters shall contribute to enhance the studies on the interface between literature and film as well on the interface between history and film.

CHAPTER I

Robert Stevenson's Gothic *Jane Eyre*

In order to enhance the analysis of this filmic version, I shall consider important readings, such as "The Hollywood Classical Style, 1917-60", by David Bordwell[4] and *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* by Thomas Schatz, regarding the studio system for production and distribution of films. I analyze the film language—editing, cinematography, mise-en-scene, etc—applying Bordwell *et al*'s terminology and concepts for such analysis from his book *Film Art: An Introduction.*

Jane Eyre, a 1944 adaptation made by Twentieth-Century Fox, was directed by Robert Stevenson and produced by William Goetz, Kenneth Macgowan, David O. Selznick[5] and Orson Welles (although uncredited). Stevenson, an English film writer and filmmaker directed several films for The Walt Disney Company in the 1960's and 1970's. He is best remembered as the director of the musical *Mary Poppins* (1964), for which Julie Andrews won the Academy Award for Best Actress and Stevenson was nominated as Best Director.

The screenplay was signed by John Houseman[6], Aldous Huxley[7], Henry Koster[8] and Robert Stevenson from the novel by Charlotte Brontë; the cinematography by

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[1] I approached briefly some considerations of Bordwell *et al* (*Film Art: An Introduction*) for the classical Hollywood style in the Introduction. This text is a chapter from the book *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson.

[5] David O. Selznick was an influential producer during the "Golden Age" of Hollywood studio system. He produced the epic *Gone with the Wind* (1939), which earned the Oscar for Best Picture, and *Rebecca* (1940) which also earned the Oscar for Best Picture.

[3] John Houseman was an influential theater producer and director, who, together with Orson Welles, founded the Mercury Theater, best represented by the radio adaptation of H.G. Wells' *The War of the World.*

[4] Aldous Huxley was an English writer, best known for novels on the dehumanizing aspects of scientific progress, as the worldwide famous *Brave New World,* first published in 1932.

[5] Koster was a German filmmaker, who directed some costume dramas including *Désirée* (1954) with Marlon Brando, *The Virgin Queen* (1955) with Bette Davis, and *The Naked Maja* (1958) with Ava Gardner, among other important films.

George Barnes[9], and the music score was by Bernard Herrmann[10]. The film starred Joan Fontaine as Jane Eyre, and Orson Welles as Mr. Rochester and Peggy Ann Garner as the young Jane.

Orson Welles, besides acting in the film, was also one of the producers, working, among other things, in the creation of settings, in some screenplay alterations, and in the cast production. Referring to this role of producer, Orson Welles, in the book *This is Orson Welles* (a book of interviews coupled with an amount of autobiographical data), tells Peter Bogdanovich[11] that he created some scenes, as part of the duties this position required, and that he collaborated but he did not actually directed the film together with Robert Stevenson. When questioned why he did not accepted to be credited, Welles answered that, in his opinion, an actor should not be a producer unless he can also direct a film (Welles and Bogdanovich 175). Thus the film is more a "committee" work rather than a product of one man (see Schatz 331), and the active participation of Welles in the production is in no way surprising due to the fact that the film is a product of the Studio System, a period ranging from 1920 up to early 1950, and which was the dominant mode of film production and distribution in Hollywood. As André Bazin notes, as a critique to his fellows at *Cahiers du cinéma*[12], the American cinema could not be formed by individualized creators, each one armed with personal experiences and different points of view[13]. He observes:

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[6] George Barnes won the Academy Award in 1940 for his work on *Rebecca*, directed by Alfred Hitchcock.

[7] Bernard Herrmann was an Academy Award-winning composer. He was the composer in the original radio broadcast of Orson Welles' *The War of the Worlds,* and worked with Welles in many other movies, writing the scores for *Citizen Kane* (1941) and *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942). He is particularly known for scores created for Hitchcock's films, most famously for *Psycho*.

[8] Peter Bogdanovich is an American film director who had a life-long relationship with Welles; he is best known for *The Last Picture Show* (1971), which received eight Oscar nominations, and for the adaptation of Henry James's *Daisy Miller* (1974).

[9]*Cahiers du cinéma* is a French film magazine founded by Andre Bazin, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze and Joseph-Marie Lo Duca, in 1951. An article written by François Truffaut reevaluated Hollywood films and some directors and formed the basis for the *auteur theory.*

[10] The *auteur theory* was a movement beginning in 1950, which saw the director of a film as the primary author, and that the film was a reproduction of the director's views and a reflection of his

> What makes Hollywood so much better than anything else in the world is not only the quality of certain directors, but also the vitality and, in a certain sense, the excellence of a tradition... The American cinema is a classical art, but why not then admire in it what is most admirable, i.e., not only the talent of this or that filmmaker, but the genius of the system, the richness of its ever-vigorous tradition, and its fertility when it comes into contact with new elements. (qtd. in Bordwell, “The Classical Hollywood Style” 4)

The Studio System was a type of “cartel” of movie factories, commanded by the studio bosses, some studio production executives and major independent producers[14], and it was an integrated system in which “[...] major studio powers not only produced and distributed movies, but also ran their own theater chains” (Schatz 4). The filmmaker was an employee in the assembly-line production process and the films were deprived from personal style; each studio developed a way of producing films, a style, as well as story formulas and fixed “stars”. Schatz reaches the conclusion that the studio era and the classical Hollywood refer to the same “industrial and historical phenomenon”, considering the classical Hollywood as a period “when various social, industrial, technological, economic, and aesthetic forces struck a delicate balance”, and this balance according to him, was stable providing thus “a consistent system of production and consumption, a set of formalized practices and constraints”, proposing “a standard way of telling stories, from camera work and cutting to plot structure and thematics” (8-9).

According to Bordwell, the classical Hollywood style comprehends a period between 1917 and 1960, which was “a distinct and homogeneous style [that] dominated American studio filmmaking”; Bordwell identifies “levels of generality”, that is,

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personal creativity. Andrew Sarris was one of the leading proponents of this criticism (“Genius” 5-6). Thomas Schatz argues that, referring to the studio system and individual creation, “[t]he quality and artistry of all these films were the product not simply of individual human expression, but of a melding of institutional forces. In each case, the 'style' of a writer, director, star [...] fused with the studio production operations and management structure, its resources and talent pool, its narrative traditions and market strategy”, and that “any individual's style was no more than an inflection on an established studio style” (6).

[11] Schatz cites the following “bosses”: Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg at MGM, Jack Warner and Hal Wallis at Warner and Bros,. Darryl Zanuck at 20th Century-Fox, and independent producers like David O'Selznick and Sam Goldwyn (7).

“integral and limited stylistic conventions” through which American filmmakers adhered to a certain level, and which the term “classical”, in the sense of following classical traditions such as ideals of balance, proportion, unity and moderation, seems to be well-applied (“The Classical Hollywood Style” 3-4). Thus, the classical style is characterized by a set of aesthetic norms which entangles individual creation in order to establish a kind of stability and coherence. Of course this aesthetic system has alternatives and limitations, and it operates through a dynamic interaction, therefore the notions of “paradigm” and “functional equivalents”[15] allow the filmmaker to make choices, although in a limited way. For instance, the flashback in a classical film is usually marked by dissolves, close-up of faces, voice-over narration[16], etc (4-5).

The three levels of generality, mentioned above, refers to “devices”, “systems”, and “relation of systems”; the devices are “many isolated technical elements” such as “three-point lighting, continuity editing, 'movie music', centered framings, dissolves, etc”. The systems refer to the way the technical elements are manipulated to express a certain function in the narrative

In *Jane Eyre,* for instance, the development of Jane is shown in a Pupil's Record book and this device is employed to convey the passage of time at Lowood Institution. In this book it is possible to have access to Jane's admission at Lowood, April 18th 1829, and she is referred to as having a bad character and appearance. As the pages are turned we can witness her development/growing at school until the book shows the year of 1838, when her character is considered good and her grades are excellent (she is then invited to work as a teacher at the Institution, but at this point Jane is prepared to leave Lowood). The relation of systems refers to the interaction among systems, for instance, the interaction among narrative logic, time and space, although not playing equal roles,

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[12]Bordwell defines a paradigm as “[a] set of elements which can, according to rules, substitute for one another” (5).

[13]Jane's voice-over narration will be discussed later.

as space and time are often "vehicles for narrative causality" ("The Classical Hollywood Style" 6).

Jane Eyre is a mainstream Hollywood film since it is marked by elements linked to a style that includes cause and effect chain of action (narrative logic, space and time), lighting devices (i.e., three-point lighting, although I will present some variations), sound ("movie music"), continuity editing (cuts and camera movements are not easily noticeable by the viewers), closure, and visual elements such as the use of the 180-degree rule, shot-reverse-shot sequences, close-up of faces, etc. Each sequence presents a distinct segment of space, time, and narrative action. Three locales, or settings, underlie the action in the film: (1) Gateshead Hall, (2) Lowood Institution and (3) Thornfield Hall. Within these locales, subdividing, it is possible to identify the major sequences: Opening Scene, Jane's sad life at Gateshead Hall, Jane at Lowood Institution, Jane leaves Lowood towards Thornfield, The meeting with Mr. Rochester, Jane's life with Adele at Thornfield, Mr. Rochester comes back, The love between Jane and Edward, The frustrated wedding, Jane returns to Gateshead Hall, Jane goes back to Thornfield and the Final Scene. The sequences function to advance the action, and thus the story progresses in a step-by-step chain of cause and effect. These major scenes can still be divided into smaller parts.

The cause and effect chain in *Jane Eyre* is represented by the motivation of the character to achieve independence, at a certain level, and to reach happiness. The young Jane (Peggy Ann Garner) is first presented at Gateshead Hall, where she suffered under the tutorship of her aunt, Mrs. Reed (Agnes Moorehead) and where she has contact with Bessie (Sara Allgood), the first kind person Jane encounters in her life. In this scene, Mrs. Reed is discussing the possibility of Jane to go to Lowood Institution, headed by the rigid Mr. Brocklehurst (Henry Daniell). Jane is then sent to this Institution and there

she meets Helen Burns, an important figure in the plot, since it is only after her death that Jane decides to improve her skills in order to leave Lowood. Helen's death motivates Jane, therefore her importance in the narrative is essential as she serves as a driving force. At Lowood, Jane is under the care of Mr. Brocklehurst and Mrs. Scatcherd (Eily Malyon), and she suffers several physical and psychological punishments, living in a disagreeable and cold place. There she also has contact with Dr. Rives (John Sutton), the first male character that is kind and worries about Jane. Jane then leaves Lowood after ten years of cruelty and moves to the other setting, Thornfield Hall, an obscure, mystical and dark place, although she may think the opposite since she was leaving a terrible place and hoped to have some good moments at this place. When she meets Mrs. Fairfax (Edith Barrett) she is informed that she is supposed to look after a little French girl, named Adele Varens (Margaret O'Brien), who is Mr. Rochester's ward. Then Jane seems to have found some peace and cheer and Jane finally meets Mr. Rochester; the romance plot starts to be shaped. After some time, Jane is completely in love with Mr. Rochester, but she only shows it after a party host by him, where the beautiful Blanche Ingram (Hillary Brooke) is present and Jane feels deeply hurt and jealous. The couple, Jane and Edward, finally decides to get married. However, in the wedding Jane discovers that Mr. Rochester was already married and the woman in the attic, that many times she heard the laughs, was Bertha Mason, Rochester's first wife. After this event, Jane decides to leave and goes back to Gateshead Hall, where her aunt is ill and in need of her help. But Jane's mind is at Thornfield and after a storm, when she listens to Mr. Rochester calling her (in a supernatural way, she hears his voice blowing with the wind), she goes back there and is surprised to see the castle in ruins, as Bertha Mason put fire on the place and killed herself. Rochester is blind, due to the accident, but even so they stay together and

happy. By the end of the film, the plot reaches complete closure, meaning that all the conflicts and lines of action are resolved.

Emblematic Scenes

Hollywood classical films embrace highly economic narrative that is basically determined by the cause and effect chain. The immediate understanding of an individual character, who is a causal agent and who has a specific goal or desire is plunged to us in the opening of a film, and what proceeds is the chain of actions resulting from this character's desire to reach the ultimate goal, since the narrative centers on the individual's traits, desires and choices. As Bordwell points out,

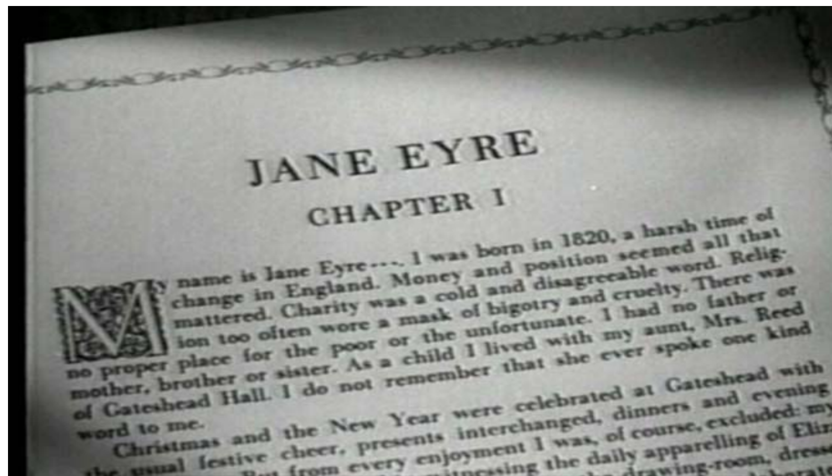
> [t]he mere sequence of events will not make a plot. Emphasis must be laid upon causality and the action and reaction of human will. Here in brief is the premise of Hollywood story construction: causality, consequence, psychological motivations, the drive toward overcoming obstacles and achieving goals. Character-centered -- i.e., personal or psychological -- causality is the armature of the classical story. ("The Classical Hollywood Style" 13)

The films starts with a book being opened and the credits are shown in the book, perhaps denoting that the director has the intention to preserve at a certain level the original text, as I observed in the Introductory Chapter. The soundtrack is the theme song of the film, composed by Bernard Herrmann, which is a sad tune played with violins in high pitch tones, and that progresses until it reaches a peak, raising thus the tension that forecomes. These initial moments of a film as well as the aesthetic norms set by the genre are very important for the viewer to construct mentally the connections and the first intentions of the film, and in this case, later the viewers will confirm their expectations of a sad, strong, and nostalgic film. The viewers have a cue of a typical Hollywood style by creating expectations about cinematic form and style through using "the concept of *group* style", conventions of form, technique, and genre that constitute that style ("The Classical Hollywood Style" 3). Still according to Bordwell, the

spectator formulates “clear first impressions about the characters as homogeneous identities” since, generally, “the character's salient traits are indicated—by an expository title, by other characters' description—and the initial appearance of the character confirm these traits as salient” (14).

Right after the initial credits, one page of the book is turned and a woman’s voice narrates an excerpt; this woman, who is Jane Eyre, narrates the events that she underwent in the past[17], therefore giving the viewer a panorama of the period she lived in. Thus, the Victorian period is depicted through Jane's point of view as a harsh, cruel time, with strict rules and rigid structures:

> My name is Jane… I was born in 1820, a harsh time of change in England. Money and positions seemed all that mattered. Charity was a cold and disagreeable word. Religion too often wore a mask of bigotry and cruelty. There was no proper place for the poor and or the unfortunate. I had no father or mother, brother or sister. As a child I lived with my aunt, Mrs. Reed of Gateshead Hall. I do not remember that she ever spoke one kind word to me.



JANE EYRE

CHAPTER I

My name is Jane Eyre---. I was born in 1820, a harsh time of change in England. Money and position seemed all that mattered. Charity was a cold and disagreeable word. Religion too often wore a mask of bigotry and cruelty. There was no proper place for the poor or the unfortunate. I had no father or mother, brother or sister. As a child I lived with my aunt, Mrs. Reed of Gateshead Hall. I do not remember that she ever spoke one kind word to me.

Christmas and the New Year were celebrated at Gateshead with the usual festive cheer, presents interchanged, dinners and evening ... But from every enjoyment I was, of course, excluded: my ... the daily apparelling of Eliz... drawing-room, dress...

The book is opened and Jane, as a voice-over narrator, reads the excerpt.

The Victorian period was greatly marked by a very rigid social structure, which was comprised by three distinct classes: the Church and the aristocracy, the middle

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[14] I analyze the first person voice-over narration, according to the propositions of Sarah Kozloff in the Introduction, as a way of stressing individuality.

class, and the working poorer class. The top class, the Church and the aristocracy, had great power and wealth; the middle class consisted of the bourgeoisie, the middle working class was composed basically by factory owners, bankers, merchants, lawyers, businessmen, and other professionals; the lower class was divided between the working class and the poor class, which often received public charity and comprised the greatest percentage of the population. The monarchy headed by Queen Victoria set strict moral codes on people, as prudery, low tolerance of crime, strong social ethics and sexual repression. Women could not vote or even own a property and they could not hold a job unless that of a teacher or a domestic servant and were severely conditioned to Church rules, which were harsh and rigid regarding their roles as women, especially concerning sexual practices. The condition of women is described by Jane in Charlotte Brontë's novel:

> Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (111)

Jane Eyre introduces herself as an orphan, poor child and also introduces the first setting of the film, Gateshead Hall, where she was under the care of Mrs. Reed, Jane's aunt, and where she was deeply hurt, unloved, unwanted, and that had a great psychological impact on the character. The stress on individuality is highlighted by the use of unique proper name (her full name) and by personalized traits of character, tradition, which according to Ian Watt, comes from the novel to create a singularized individual more than stereotyped ones, for example, *Bertha, the mad* (qtd in Bordwell, "The Classical Hollywood Style" 14). From this first contact with the main character,

through the "homodiegetic" narrator[18] (first person) voice-over narration, it is possible to infer some characteristics and even mentally create the character as a person who suffered in life, underwent several obstacles, and who was severely mistreated during her childhood. Still according to Bordwell, in his propositions for the classical Hollywood style, a narrative film consists of three systems: "narrative logic" (causality), "the representation of time" (frequency, order and duration) and "the representation of space" (orientation), which he calls "three levels of generality" upon which the classical style depends, or more precisely, upon the relations among these systems[19] (6-7). From this very moment in the film, the three systems seem to be already presented/represented, since the main character is introduced as the causal agent (as a poor, orphan, mistreated child, yet obstinate, since if she is narrating the story from an adult perspective it is possibly due to the fact that she reached her objectives), the time is presented as being the Victorian period (including details and some characteristics of this period), and the space is set as England, more especially the setting Gateshead Hall.

The next (and initial) sequence, "Jane sad life at Gateshead Hall", begins with a candle light, and everything in dark, obscure, denoting the gothic atmosphere and anticipating the somber, solitary, severe and even mystic tone of the film. By Gothic[20] I mean the revival of medieval forms in architecture which gave rise to the Gothic novel genre, which, in narrative terms, included themes like psychological terror, mystery, haunted houses, castles, darkness, death, decay, madness, secrets, hereditary curses, and so forth. The Gothic plot in the film can be detected, for instance, in the establishing shots of Thornfield, that bears the architecture of a darkened castle and seems like a

[15] Narrators who are characters in the story. See Introduction, Sarah Kozloff drawing on Gérard Genette.

[16] As previously stated.

[17] In the nineteenth century, the Gothic revival was best supported by John Ruskin, an artist and philosopher, who was opposed to Classicism. These data were collected from the online encyclopedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page.

haunted house, full of mystery, enveloped in mist. This is emphasized by the speeches of Mrs. Fairfax regarding the place and Mr. Rochester: she states that in the winter time almost nobody goes to that desolate place, and that Mr. Rochester is “a wanderer on the face of the earth”, and that “in many ways Mr. Edward is a strange man”. At this point, there is the process of “coverage”, i.e. when a scene introduces the basic setting and characters, moving from a wide, or establishing, shot to a medium shot, and then to close-ups of the characters, as Thornfield is introduced in a establishing shot, and then Jane, shown in a close-up, enters in the castle and it is possible to observe some details of the mise-en-scene: the low-key lighting, increasing the shadows and raising the suspense, and the medieval style of the scarcely furbished room (see sequence of figures below).

Later in the film, more Gothic themes are explored such as “death”, presented when Bertha Mason throws herself from the top of the castle; “decay”, related to the fire at Thornfield Hall and the decadence of Mr. Rochester (before, a wealthy man, and then a blind man with no one around him to care for him); and “mystery”, which is perceived since Jane's arrival at Thornfield (Bertha Mason laughs and the fire scene during Mr. Rochester sleep, and the mysterious figure of Grace Poole, the servant who takes care of the woman in the attic). The characters in the film also correspond to the Gothic tradition of characters: the Byronic heroes (Jane and Mr. Rochester) and the madwoman (Bertha Mason). The Gothic ideas include a critique of Roman Catholic excesses; English Protestants associated medieval buildings with a dark and terrifying period, with fantastic and superstitious/pagans rituals. The ruins of gothic buildings represented both material and human decay; therefore, the scene when Bertha Mason sets fire at Thornfield (and later we see just ruins) is an example of this sense of decadence, since this happens after Mr. Rochester’s attempt to marry Jane, in an illegitimate wedding (he was already married). Thus a proper punishment for this sin would be the complete destruction of the place and of him.

The use of chiaroscuro, extreme low-key lighting, resource used to convey the gothic atmosphere.

Continuing the initial scene, the camera then shows the face of who is holding the candle, a tall man, as well as a woman beside him, Bessie. They have severe, harsh looks (see figure 2); from their clothes, both are wearing uniforms, it is possible to infer that they are servants.

The lighting comes from the candle light, thus providing a bold contrast between light and dark, a resource called *chiaroscuro*[21] which in cinematography is used to indicate extreme low-key lighting and the creation of attached shadows[22], and which is used especially in black and white films to enhance the obscure atmosphere of a setting[23]. Bordwell *et al* describe the low-key lighting purpose to create stronger contrasts and darker shadows, as well as the effect of *chiaroscuro,* and indicates that this kind of illumination has been usually applied to "somber or mysterious scenes", which were common in *film noirs* from the 1930s to the 1950s ("Film Art" 182).

Still concerning the scene mentioned right above, the first speech "Careful Bessie! She bites!", pronounced by the male servant, not only introduces the character Bessie, the first caring person that Jane has contact with in her life, but also serves for the viewer to construct a view regarding the main character by other characters, a fact that will be repeated throughout the subsequent scene, when her aunt starts presenting her as a wild creature. This sense of "wild creature" is reinforced when the servant opens a little door and we first see Jane in a basement; the imprisonment, to which Jane is submitted throughout the film, by society, by gender and by class position, is predicted at this point and evidenced in many other scenes, especially by the use of lighting and

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[18] Another example of the Gothic influence on the film, since this resource was extremely used by Gothic artists.

[19] The attached shadows occurs when "the light fails to illuminate part of an object because of the object's shape or surface features" like when a person walks in a darkened room with a candle (Bordwell Film Art 178).

[20] According to David Bordwell *et al*, in *Film Art: An Introduction*, much of the impact of images comes from the way lighting is manipulated, and they state that "[l]ighter and darker areas within the frame help create the overall composition of each shot and thus guide our attention to certain objects and actions" (178).

cast shadows[24]. That happens in the punishment scene at Lowood, where she is forced to stand in a stool where cast shadows are used to create radial lines which suggest her imprisonment. When deeply analyzing this punishment scene, it is possible to note expressionist [25] elements, since it shows us Jane's point of view externalized, symbolizing in the mise-en-scene her agony and psychological torture.

The cast shadows, forming radial lines, denotes Jane's imprisonment.

The servant then carefully opens the door and a little, fragile, thin little girl emerges among old stuffs, denoting her poor worthless life, and he takes her by her ears to see her aunt who wishes to speak with her in another room. The subsequent scene is very interesting, since it shows Jane on her backs facing a fancy, high door, fearing and hesitating in opening it; the camera is positioned behind the tall servant, in an over-shoulder shot, so we have access to the insignificance of Jane, since she is stand, little, in a low-key lighting so her little shadow is projected in the wall. On the other side, when she is going to open the door, she reluctantly looks back facing the servants, and it

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[21]The cast shadows occur when a person blocks out the light, "made by bars between the actor and the light source" (Bordwell Film Art 178).

[22]Expressionist in the sense that it depicts not objective reality but subjective emotions and responses. Bordwell analyzes the German Expressionist movement in *Film Art: An Introduction* (449-452).

is interesting to note that the editing intermingles the optical point of view of Jane and of the servants, by using low and high angles; when she looks back, the low angle shot shows the servants and in turn, when the servants look at her, the high angle shot makes clear the servant feelings towards Jane.

Example of a high-angle shot.

Example of a low-angle shot.

Jane enters the room where Mrs. Reed is waiting to speak with her, and in this shot Mrs. Reed, her son and Mr. Brocklehurst, the director of Lowood Institution are shown; Mrs. Reed and her son sit and Mr. Brocklehurst stands up next to them, holding a cup of tea. In this scene the distinction between classes is shown through the costumes they are wearing and Jane's simple costumes, and this distinction is also shown by

lighting and camera angles resources: a close-up of Mrs. Reed face, using three-point lighting[26] to maximize her beauty and her superiority look upon Jane.

Another resource employed by Hollywood filmmakers is the shot-reverse-shot in dialogue scenes; each character is framed in a close-up that preserves the viewer's orientation of the space. This sequence is enhanced with cuts made to match action or sight lines and this practice is referred to as “eyeline” matches.

[23]A key light (the brightest light) is supplemented by a fill light, to one side, and a light in back. This allows subjects in the frame to appear three-dimensional and this is a very common resource in Hollywood style. See discussion above on Hollywood classical style, Bordwell.

The shot-reverse-shot resource is used in many other moments, for instance, when Rochester has an intimate conversation with Jane seeking her support and fidelity, even when everyone else would disapprove him, after the unexpected appearance of Richard Mason, Bertha Mason's brother, at Thornfield. The conventional shot-reverse-shot sequence suddenly gives way to a scene where Jane is silently observing Rochester as he leaves the room, occupying a middle space in the frame, yet physically dominating the frame, gazing at Rochester as an object of desire; the viewers are not able to see her look but her looking.

Jane is usually in the position of an observer, in many scenes, and in many occasions this “voyeuristic” attitude is more apparent when she looks through a window, at actions happening outdoors. Jane is positioned on the left side of the screen, by a window, and gazes at Blanche and Rochester arriving in the castle. Right before this scene, Mrs. Fairfax talked about Edward and Blanche's old relationship, and Jane's look, at this moment, denotes her jealousy. Most of the time we are compelled to see what Jane sees. When, after hearing painful screams, all the guests at Thornfield wake up, Jane opens her bedroom's door in order to see what is happening and hears their conversation without leaving the room. Edward and Blanche have an intimate

conversation and Jane once again opens the door to spy on the action and to guide the viewer's attention to what she wants them to see.

This sense of witnessing through Jane's “eyes” is also apparent in the party scene, where she is ordered to take Adele (Mr. Rochester's ward) to the parlor and when she gets there; Blanche Ingram is singing and playing the piano. At this point again, it seems that Jane is our “eyes” onto the scene, since she is on stage and at the same time framing the action and presenting it to the viewer. And even though her performance here seems quite passive, it is as if she possesses a kind of silent authority.

Regarding the “Proposal Scene”, Sandra M. Gilbert in her essay “Jane Eyre and the secrets of furious lovemaking”, observes that:

> [...] the movie [...] feature[s] a kind of operatic melodrama, with Jane Eyre (Joan Fontaine) cringing before a swaggeringly Byronic Rochester (Orson Welles) and the pair's confessions of love punctuated by Welles's wildly glittering eyes and counterpointed by a howling wind that suggests the onset of tempestuous desires, as well as a ferocious streak of lighting that cleaves the novel's infamous 'great horse-chestnut' in one fell swoop. (16)

This scene reaches the climax of the film, as it is the assertion of Jane Eyre's achievement, thus it raises strong feelings and emotions. It is a sequence of shot-reverse-shot, where Jane and Edward are manifesting their love for each other, and he starts talking about the umbilical cord that unites both and that if this cord would be cut, he would bleed inside. Jane, complementing the melodramatic and ultra romantic moment, says that she would rather die to live without him. The sense of an “unearthly” relationship is confirmed when he asks her to marry him and a strong wind starts to blow, thunders cracking noises, and lightnings are observed. Then when she accepts and they hug each other, a lightning breaks the chestnut tree denoting the supernatural and gothic tone of the whole film. After this sequence, Jane assumes (again) the position of a voice-over narrator, reading the excerpt of the book where she describes what all that happened meant to her: “All my doubts and all the grim shadows that haunted over

seemed to vanish—shattered like the chestnut-tree". Therefore, for Jane, the tempestuous moments had gone and as the film progresses, the next scenes shows this sense of happiness that she was experimenting in her life, the "sunny days" besides her beloved Edward.

The supernatural plot can be observed in other scenes, for instance in the scene in which Jane, after leaving Thornfield, is at Gateshead Hall, in a room lit by a candle, writing a letter to Mr. Brocklehurst (to apply for a position as a teacher at Lowood, since she is lost and alone in the world and needs to make a living), and the strong wind is blowing. Then, the camera, in a close-up shot, frames her continuing writing the letter when a gust of wind spreads the papers and puts out the candle, leaving the room in the dark. Jane notices that the wind comes from an open door and goes there to close it; when she gets there, she hears Mr. Edward's voice, calling her, and here again, narrating the story, she explains what she felt when she heard his calling: "It seemed the cry of a soul in pain, an appeal so wild and urgent that I knew I must go, and go quickly.

The strong wind denoting the supernatural features permeating their union.

Only when I knew what had happened to him—only when I had looked once more upon that tortured face—could I make my decision". At this point she is referring to the next sequence of events: the burning of Thornfield, and the consequent blindness

of Mr. Rochester. Jane ultimately reaches happiness, since she decides to stay by Mr. Rochester's side, as Bertha Mason is dead and there are no more objections to their union.

Regarding the characterization, Orson Welles succeeds in performing Mr. Rochester as an ironic man, a man "[...] you cannot be always sure whether he is pleased or the contrary: you don't thoroughly understand him [...]" (*Jane Eyre*, "novel" 106). In another excerpt of the novel, Jane describes Mr. Rochester's appearance when they first met, which in my view, suits Welles perfectly: "His figure was enveloped in a riding cloak, fur collared and steel clasped; its details were not apparent, but I traced the general points of middle height, and considerable breadth of chest. He had a dark face and heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrowns looked ireful and thwarted just now; he was past youth, but had not reached middle age; perhaps he might be thirty-five" (115). According to Thomas Schatz, as regards to the presence of Welles in the cast, David O. Selznick, producer and the creative force behind this film adaptation, "wanted to hear how Orson Welles would dramatize the popular novel" since he had already adapted and narrated a radio version at Mercury Theater broadcast in April 1940, and had also played the role of Mr. Rochester together with Madeleine Carroll as Jane (328). Selznick encouraged Welles to do the film, admitting that he would enhance the project, but Welles had a "more gothic and stylized" conception than Selznick, and ended up working, among other things, in the film production and editing (330-331).

Selznick developed the project of shooting *Jane Eyre* during two years, before selling it to 20th Century-Fox, and his interest in the adaptation began with *Rebecca*[27]*,* which he considered as "a veiled adaptation of *Jane Eyre*" and had Joan Fontaine in the

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[24] Selznick founded the David O.Selznick Productions, in 1940, packaging a lot of pictures to then sell to studios in the pre-production phase. Alfred Hitchcock worked for Selznick as an employee, in a long-term and exclusive contract. *Rebecca,* and adaptation from Daphne Du Maurier's novel, was released in 1940, directed by Hitchcock and starring Joan Fontaine; she received an Academy Award for best actress in 1941 (322-323). Fontaine also played the leading role in *Suspicion* (1941)*,* by Hitchcock.

cast. Selznick signed John Houseman to adapt the story, and he hoped to have Hitchcock as the director, but facing his impossibility to direct the film, Selznick put Robert Stevenson to do so. Joan Fontaine was cast by her familiarity with the novel (*Rebecca* and *Suspicion* had their genesis in *Jane Eyre*, according to Schatz) and by her favorable reaction to the script (328-329). Fontaine's performance and characterization of Jane Eyre is much closer to her description in the novel, by Mr. Rochester:

> [...] you have the air of a little *nonnette:* quaint, quiet, grave, and simple, as you sit with you hands before you, and your eyes generally bent on the carpet (except, by the by, when they are directed piercingly to my face; as just now, for instance); and when one asks you a question, or makes a remark to which you are obliged to reply, you rap out a round rejoinder, which, if not blunt, is at least brusque. (*Jane Eyre*, “novel” 132)

This filmic adaptation, thus, corresponds in a large part to the original novel, except for some choices that the filmmaker had to do due to the change of medium. Characters from the novel, such as Miss Temple, the kind teacher at Lowood, St. John Rivers and his two sisters Diana and Mary, who were Jane's cousins, do not appear in the film. There is also the suppression of a subplot, that of Jane's life in the Moor House, where she spends some time after leaving Thornfield and where she has the chance of rebuilding her life with another man (St. John proposes to her), and where she discovers that she has inherited a fortune left by his uncle who lived in Madeira. The adaptors also chose to include a character that is not in the original book: Dr. Rivers. The doctor in the novel, named Dr. Bates, is not crucial to the development of the plot, as Dr. Rivers is in the film, since he is responsible for encouraging Jane to succeed in life.

History on the screen

So far, I have discussed specific and emblematic scenes, applying concepts and a

terminology used in film language[28], in an attempt to trace the general tone of Robert Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*. In addition, I analyzed the film as representative of mainstream classical Hollywood style[29]. The next procedure is to investigate how the film conveys the history of a specific period, the Victorian period, by using Robert Rosenstone's book *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* as a reference.

Rosenstone analyzes how mainstream films construct a historical world. Codes of representation and film conventions have been developed, according to him, to depict the "cinematic realism", which consists of a series of shots, edited, coupled with sound track and other filmic elements, to give the viewer the sense of a "real world" created on the screen; the sense that the viewer is witnessing the past as it was. Rosenstone makes six points regarding the construction of the past in mainstream films (55). The first point he makes is related to the narrative structure of the historical films, the "story" structure containing a beginning, a middle, and an end. The second point comments on the use of the story of individuals to construct history in a broad sense. He goes on arguing that these individuals can be "common people who have done heroic or admirable things, or who have suffered unusual, bad circumstances of exploitation and oppression" (57). The third point is that history is displayed through a closed story of the past, which raises no doubts and no possible alternatives to situations (57-58). Standard historical films present history in a personalized way, usually relying on emotions. For instance some films give us history as enveloped in suffering and heroism. For such purpose, these films use technical elements, like human close-ups and movie music, to intensify the audience's emotions; this is the fourth point raised by Rosenstone. Fifth, film gives us a panorama, a "look" of the past, providing a "sense of how common objects appeared when they were in use", for example, the use of period clothing (59). Rosenstone calls

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[25]Concepts and terminology proposed by Bordwell *et al,* in *Film Art: An Introduction*.

[26]"The Hollywood Classical Style 1917-60", by David Bordwell and *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era,* by Thomas Schatz.

this representation "false historicity", arguing that Hollywood depended much on this notion (60). And the last point made is that of history as a process. Films show different aspects of history as a mixed story, presenting an integrative, rather than a split, image of the past, in other terms, all the forces (social, economical and even political) acting in the period are presented as a whole, differently form written history, which presents them separately.

From this perspective, *Jane Eyre* follows these directions and it is possible to position the film into the category of "historical fiction film" according to six points raised by Rosenstone. The story of Jane Eyre has a beginning, her childhood; a middle, her life and growth at Lowood; and an end, she reaches happiness by Edward's side. It is centered essentially on an individual's story: the development of a young girl, who during the greatest part of her life suffered and was oppressed, but even so she managed to overcome obstacles imposed by the society of her time, until she reached her ultimate goal, as a heroine.

History in *Jane Eyre* is the story of an individual, with an extreme melodramatic approach, intensified by specificities of the classical Hollywood film. The cruel Victorian period is depicted, as stated early in this chapter, mainly through the use of mise-en-scene, portraying the gothic (medieval) elements especially in the architecture and in the mood. Jane's story is presented as a whole: as a series of interwoven historical aspects. For instance, social and economical aspects are joined/mixed to portray the Victorian period.

Therefore, in Chapter I, the analysis of Jane Eyre, directed by Robert Stevenson, led to an analysis of the classical Hollywood style, and to an analysis of how mainstream films construct the past. Chapter II will provide an analysis of another version of the novel directed by Franco Zeffirelli, released in 1996, approaching the

filmmaker's choices when adapting the novel (by analyzing emblematic scenes), and how he worked with the issue of history on film.

CHAPTER II

Franco Zeffirelli's passionate *Jane Eyre*

Franco Zeffirelli is an Italian film director, and also an opera, theater and television producer, best known for having directed *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)[30], which rendered him a nomination for Best Director by the Academy. *Jane Eyre* (1996) is an English, French and Italian co-production, mainly distributed by Miramax Films, directed by Franco Zeffirelli; the screenplay was signed by both Zeffirelli and Hugh Whitemore, an English screenwriter, whose plots often focus on historical figures[31]. Jenny Beavan[32] greatly contributed to the film success and representation of history through carefully chosen costume clothing, for which she was awarded the David di Donatello Award for Best Costume Designer. David Watkin[33], one of the most gifted British cinematographers, signed the cinematography, which included several off-set shooting of beautiful British landscapes and vivid colors, especially red, to express the general passionate and romantic tone of the film. Alessio Vlad and Claudio Capponi's score for Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre* version is romantic, flowing and delicate, composed with a violin led orchestra in order to emphasize the plot's romance and the tension. The main roles in the film are performed by Charlotte Gainsbourg, a British/French actress, as Jane Eyre, and William Hurt, Academy winner for Best Actor in *Kiss of the Spider Woman* (1985) directed by Hector Babenco, as Mr. Edward Rochester, besides the

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[1] Zeffirelli filmed some historical dramas, mainly adapting Shakespeare's play, for instance, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967) and *Hamlet* (1990).

[2] Whitemore's film credits include *All Creatures Great and Small* (1975), *The Blue Bird* (1976), *The Return of the Soldier* (1982), *84 Charing Cross Road* (1987), and *Utz* (1992).

[3] Jenny Beavan won the Oscar for Best Costume Designer in 1987, for *A Room with a View* by James Ivory adaptation from the E.M. Foster's novel, and she was seven times nominated for films such as *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) by Ang Lee and *Howards End* (1992), an adaptation of E.M. Foster, by Jame Ivory.

[4] David Watkin, British cinematographer, won the Oscar in 1985 for *Out of Africa* by Sydney Pollack; he worked with Zeffirelli and Alessio Vlad again (musical score) in *Tea with Mussolini* (1999).

remarkable performance of Joan Plowright as Mrs. Fairfax.

Zeffirelli's version of *Jane Eyre* focuses mainly on the major dichotomies presented in the novel, such as the tension between reason and desire, rationality and passion, and restraint and emotion. The reasonable Jane Eyre is the one who decides to leave the man she deeply loves and desires due to social constraints, thus she had to fight against her passion, be restraint avoiding her emotions, and use rationality to survive in the cruel world which surrounds her. Zeffirelli, in an extra feature in the DVD, "All About Jane", defines the central core of the novel that he wished to portray in the film: "the path to dignity"; according to him, classical novels are timeless due to the fact that the feelings they try to convey are universal and go beyond nationality, age, period, or other boundaries. That was precisely what Zeffirelli portrays in the film: universal feelings. Jane's friendship with Helen Burns (Leanne Rowe), evident in the passage where she insisted to have her hair cut just like Helen's; Jane's fondness and respect for children, observed in her treatment towards Adele (Joséphine Serre); Jane's devotion to Mr. Rochester, her life-love, which was proven when she decides to take care of him after the Thornfield's fire destruction and his consequent blindness; and Jane's ability to forgive her aunt, Mrs. Reed (Fiona Shaw), who made her suffer during her childhood. Therefore, friendship, motherhood, true and genuine love, forgiveness, as well as dignity and strength of character, function as "moral messages" in the film, as values that should be reestablished and/or reaffirmed.

In order to enhance this analysis, I used some quotations from the novel and the critical chapter "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress" (Gilbert and Gubar).

Jane Eyre (1996) is a romantic version, which focuses on the romance plot between Jane and Edward Rochester, as a primary plot, which can be observed since the

beginning of the film, in which red spots on the screen (during the credits display) denote the passionate tone. Actually, Zeffirelli seems to have chosen to present this primary plot as a "double plot", presenting Jane's maturation as well as Rochester's path to redemption. In this adaptation, Jane preserves the characteristic of being an "observer", however her voyeuristic traits are not so explicit because the camera is most of the times framing her frontally. In very few shots, she is the one who looks: she appears observing from a window, and in one shot she appears back to the camera observing Mr. Rochester's bedroom (as can be observed in the figure below).

The point-of-view, of course, is built from Jane's perspective, as she is the causal agent, however the shots present a characteristic of being very objective and the camera angles some times do not entirely give us the sense of witnessing through Jane's eyes. Jane's voice-over narration (see Introduction and Chapter I), just in some moments of the film, differs from the intention of Brontë's novel, in which Jane is all the time placed as a narrator and addressing the reader. The address to the reader is explicit in the novel, as can be observed in the excerpt below, in the beginning of Chapter II: "A new chapter in a novel is something like a new scene in a play; and when I draw up the curtain this time, reader—you must fancy you see a room in the George Inn at Millcote

[…]” (95). Jane Eyre is describing her story to the reader (as well as in many other moments in the narrative). In this way the reader could fancy and observe the events through Jane’s descriptions. Furthermore, in this excerpt the act of mentally imagining events as if they were screening on a play or a film is a resource extensively used by Charlotte Brontë.

The young Jane, performed by Anna Paquin, is an obstinate child, designated as deceitful and wicked by her aunt and by Mr. Brocklehurst (performed by John Wood), and the adult Jane (performed by Charlotte Gainsbourg as above mentioned) is an active

and strong woman, with a will of her own, yet she is polite and educated. In my opinion, she is not fully presenting the angry and rebellious nature of Charlotte Brontë’s novel. Jane is at the center of the narrative, and her power over Mr. Rochester is well captured by Zeffirelli since her first meeting with him, where he falls from his horse and “necessity compels [him] to make [Jane] useful”.

In many other moments her position as the heroine is evident, for instance when she rescues him from the burning bed and when she helps Rochester to take care of Richard Mason, wounded by Bertha (Maria Schneider). Jane has a power over Rochester, and maybe this power is so overwhelming that leads him to redemption, to a change in spirit. It is Interesting that she only decides to stay by his side after she inherits a fortune, left by his uncle, thus obtaining independence (because her search for

happiness is directly associated to her search for independence).

Major Themes

The major themes of the novel were transposed into the film: Jane's need for love and at the same time, for independence; Jane's search for religion, since she experiences many kinds of God's devotion: the extremist Evangelicalism of Mr. Brocklehurst, the Christianity of Helen Burns, and later the missionary vision of St. John Rivers; The barrier of social class, exemplified by her ambiguous position as a governess (not a servant nor a member of the family); and women's condition at the Victorian period, observed in the fact that women could only have occupations as teachers or governesses, or look after their family. The Gothic theme, including supernatural and mysterious events, is presented, but not as the way and causing the impact in which it is presented in the novel. The Gothic plot can be observed through the plot and settings (medieval architecture), and in some occasions through the use of low-key lighting, to create shadows. The film attempts to present a "realistic" atmosphere, especially using resources of lighting: the lighting shifts between daylight, providing a comfortable and agreeable atmosphere, and low-key lighting in the scenes shot at night and especially inside the locations. According to Robert Rosenstone, films in living color more accurately display the past, for "[they] carr[y] the notion that the past was in color too, and that our past—since we know our present to be in living color—was not always past but actually had a present too"(240).

The use of daylight relying on a “natural” light, the mise-en-scene, especially the costumes, are used in order to create a sense of authenticity. Props such as drawings representing pictures of people give a more reliable frame of the past, and they are explored in many scenes, for instance, when Jane enters Mr. Rochester’s bedroom for the first time and Mrs. Fairfax shows her a picture of him when he was a young boy, and in the scene where Jane is at Moor House and receives from St. John a portrait of her father.

In the scene after the credits, a drawing of an old house is shown and as Jane, in a voice-over narration, pronounces her first words and starts informing us how she was mistreated as a child, the drawing starts to take life and then it is named as Gateshead Hall.

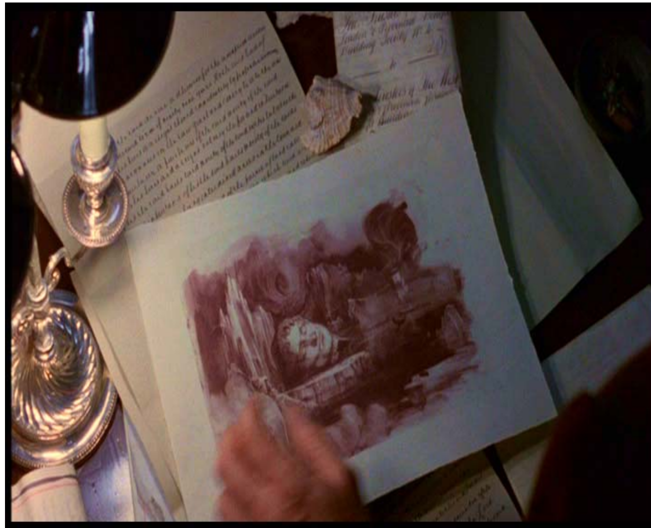
The same process, but on the other way round, happens in the end, when Jane and Rochester, after reaching complete happiness, are walking in a garden, distant from the camera, and then the camera freezes and a drawing is made, giving the impression that "the book is closed". The complexity of using drawings (or photos) to represent a more accurate vision of the past is described by Rosenstone as limiting "our attempt to feel or see our way into the past, because a sense of nostalgia and change adheres to all such photographic images. This nostalgia immediately signals that we cannot experience what people at the time felt" (239).

Besides the other kinds of drawings and framed images in the film, Jane's drawings are of a particular relevance, since they depict her inner feelings and through them Jane is able to demonstrate what her expectations and anxieties are. For instance, when Jane is at Lowood Institution and she becomes Helen Burn's friend, she starts drawing a picture of her, with her red curled hair upon the day light, in a beautiful and subtle scene which depicts all the love and strong friendship between the two girls. Later in this scene, Mr. Brocklehurst saw Helen without her bonnet, showing her red hair, and ordered Miss Scatchered to have her hair cut to avoid vanity and correct nature (due to strict Evangelicalism precepts). Jane, showing her generosity and complicity, asks to have her hair cut too.

The relationships between Helen and Jane, as well as between Jane and Miss Temple, one of the teachers, served to help Jane bear the hardships and privations of the place where "[s]emi-starvation and neglected colds had predisposed most of the pupils to receive infection: forty-five out the eighty girls lay ill at one time" (*Jane Eyre* 78). Helen did not escape from it and eventually dies, and her death functions as a passage of time in the film, since the young Jane is at the cemetery putting some flowers on

Helen's grave and when the bell rings and the camera tilts up to her face, she is a grown woman leaving Lowood.

The gothic theme presented through the setting of the cemetery is used in another scene, where Jane goes back to Gateshead Hall and decides to go "to places and people [she] could never forget" (Jane's narrating), thus deciding to visit Helen's grave. There, with the wind blowing strongly, she hears Mr. Rochester's voice calling her name (supernaturally), and it is probably at this moment that she decides to go back to Thornfield Hall, with a feeling that her master needed her.



Jane's drawings are also used to evoke love in another scene, where Mr. Rochester is observing her sketches. When he orders Jane to seat and talk to him, he is treating Jane as an equal, and from this scene that the viewer realizes that they are falling in love with each other, or better, it is Jane who begins to fall in love with him "not because he is her master but in spite of the fact that he is, not because he is princely in manner, but because, being in some sense her equal, he is the only qualified critic of her art and soul" (Gilbert 352).

To be treated as an equal was a difficult task for a woman, specially a poor one, one who had to work as a governess, and as Jane in the novel describes, regarding the position, "I anticipated only coldness and stiffness: this is not like what I have heard of the treatment of governesses; but I must not exult too soon" (*Jane Eyre* 98). Jane's strength is revealed in another scene, the proposal scene, when she, tired of oppression,

says to Edward, in a wonderful scene performed by Charlotte Gainsbourg:

> Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,--and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty, and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, or even of moral flesh:--it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet equal,--as we are!

In another scene, Adele asks Jane to draw a picture of Mr. Rochester, and behind Jane there are many red flowers; in a cross-cutting movement, the camera shows Jane quiet, observing and drawing and Rochester talking to someone in the garden above them. When he goes closer to them and asks to see the drawing, he is surprised by the severe and dark traces she used to draw his portrait, a man enveloped in mystery and shadows. He gets angry and asks Jane to accompany him, but before going Jane says to Adele: "The shadows are as important as the light". This statement will hold true throughout the film, where the balance between the shadows of Thornfield, with its night secrets and the light of the splendid landscapes surrounding the medieval castle illuminated by the day light, denoting Mr. Rochester's hope to find the light (the path to redemption).

There is a number of ways through which the historical film can display the past on the screen, for instance, positioning history as drama, as a personal history, as a spectacle, and so forth, being history as a drama the most common form of historical films. (*Visions of the Past* 50-51). Dramas set in the past can be divided in two categories suggested by Natalie Davis, drawn from the book *Visions of the Past: The Challenges of Film to Our Idea of History* by Robert Rosenstone: the category of films based on events or "documentable persons" and the category of films which, through fictional characters and plot, present a historical setting "intrinsic to the story and meaning of the work", as in the case of *Jane Eyre* (51).

Film emotionalizes, personalizes, and dramatizes history through the actor's performance, movie music, sound effect, editing, cinematography and many other filmic devices. Recalling the discussion on how films construct the past presented in Chapter I, Rosenstone makes six points regarding the construction of the past in mainstream films: the first point is that the mainstream historical fiction film contains beginning, middle, and end; the second point is the personalization of history, the use of a single character/individual as to represent history; the third point is that history is

displayed through a closed story of the past, which raises no doubts and no possible alternatives to situations; the fourth point is that standard historical films present history in a personalized way, usually relying on emotions, for instance, some films gives us history as enveloped in suffering and heroism; fifth, film gives us a panorama, a "look"

of the past, for example, through the use of period clothing; and the last point is that history is present as a process, as a whole and not as separately chapters in a book (55-59).

In the pre-credit scene all these features pointed out by Rosenstone can be observed. The scene introduces the main character, Jane, and soon the viewer is presented to her world of intolerance, cruelty and punishment. The first impressions of the character are created through the other character's behavior towards her: her aunt, Mrs. Reed, and her children are pushing her hair to a room, in order to be punished for something. Jane seems to be a vulnerable child, and we learn a lot from this scene, about her, about the other characters, and even about other events. Jane is locked in the "red-room", alone and frightened by her dead uncle's ghost. When Jane is left in the red-room, she faces herself in a mirror, desperate, crying and the viewer is led to experience how she is feeling through the use of camera movements, which show the room in unusual, obtuse angles, quickly rounding as if she were fainting.

The mirror has a great impact in this scene, as in many other scenes (as I will try to demonstrate), creating a trapped image of Jane, and the tones of red in the room can reflect her bleeding inside, but as well her passionate and strong nature. Jane's confinement, isolation and vulnerability are revealed in this scene, which according to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in the text "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress", "[…] perfect represents her [Jane] vision of the society in which she is trapped, an uneasy and elfin dependent" (340). Still according to Gilbert, "Jane's pilgrimage consists of a series of experiences which are, in one way or another, variations on the central, red-room motif of enclosure and escape" (341). Jane, in the novel, admits the effect that this episode had in her life: "[…] and it was cruel to shut me up alone without a candle—so cruel that I think I shall never forget it" (25).

Some recurrent themes can be observed in this opening scene, for instance, the act of staring at the mirror, the red color presented in several scenes, the theme of fire and ice, and the ringing of bells. As regards the mirror, there are some moments when this act of Jane' self-looking is relevant to the analysis of the scenes. After the red-room scene, the second moment is when Jane is at Thornfield Hall, and she enters the master's bedroom for the first time, with Mrs. Fairfax. Jane is at the right side of a larger mirror (there is a small one), and Mrs. Fairfax is at the center telling Jane how strange Mr. Rochester is, and then Mrs. Fairfax picks up some roses telling that they are not vivid as the master likes. Symbolically, the roses can be interpreted as his lack of hope, lack of passion in life that later will be flourished again by Jane. This moment reflects the Gothic elements of the original plot, since it intensifies the suspense and promotes a self-dialogue for Jane: How is Rochester like? What happens at Thornfield Hall? What is the mystery? Am I trapped in this mystery?

Another moment happens one night when Jane gets up to close a window that was squeaking and banging. Jane goes back to bed. Then she stops, and her image is reflected in a large mirror on the left side of the screen. Jane is wearing a white gown looking like a ghost, or like a madwoman (later there will be the connection with Bertha Mason, the madwoman in the attic); she indeed looks like "an unearthly thing", and when she stops, she hears footsteps and a woman laughing maniacally offscreen. As the laugh continues, she opens the door and she sees smoke in the corridor next to Mr. Rochester bedroom. She runs towards his bedroom, and there is fire everywhere in the room, she then tries to set up the fire but Mr. Rochester is sleeping. She tries to wake him up taking the roses out of the jar and throwing water on him, and eventually he wakes up and puts up the fire.

Later, when they are talking about what had happened, he wants to shake hands with the woman who saved his life, and he notices that there is blood on her hands. She simply answers: "The roses had thorns". At this moment, some considerations can be

made: first, her image on the mirror denotes her imprisonment (once again, first at Gateshead Hall, now at Thornfield), her strange nature (almost unearthly according to Rochester) and by her image it is also possible to trace a parallel with Bertha Mason (this subject will be treated further); second, the theme of ice and fire is present, the fire of passion, provoked by Bertha and put up by Jane, a woman who follows the society rules and preserve her chastity, opposed to Bertha, who is mad and as such has no connection with society anymore, being imprisoned in the attic for years as a way of being banned from the contact with people. Some examples of the dichotomy fire/ice are noticed from this moment on: the fire inside Thornfield and the frozen lakes outside Thornfield, the coldness of Lowood Institution and the warm presence of Miss Temple and Helen Burns, the cold St. John Rivers who proposes a marriage of convenience and neglect opposed to the fire caused by Rochester, the passion and heat that he raises in Jane's heart. The roses in the passage described below have a relevant meaning as well, as they indicate that now there is love and hope (opposed to the roses before), but the roses had thorns, the roses hurt Jane, there would be obstacles to solve before reaching the complete happiness.

In other scenes, the mirror has different functions: in one of them, after the fire, Jane is talking to Mrs. Fairfax, who tells her about the relationship between Edward and Blanche Ingram (Elle Macpherson), and as Jane is walking through a corridor, she turns to a mirror and in a close-up look, her image is reflected in three parts and she says: “You are a fool”.

Jane thought that after the romantic rescue of the other night, Rochester would stay with her and admit her love for her, and when she notices that she had been deceived by herself (and not by him), she feels like a fool, believing that he would love a simple, plain, and poor governess. The divided image also shows how she was feeling, torn apart, completely confused and (once more) trapped by her feelings. In another scene, Jane is wearing her wedding dress, however this time, when she looks at the mirror, the smile on her face denotes another sort of feelings different from those of imprisonment, feelings of happiness and of being proud of getting so far in her life. This time she will be imprisoned, but by her own will.

But the wedding does not occur, as the climax of the film is the revelation that there is an impediment, that Rochester is already married. The woman who laughed maniacally almost every night was Bertha Mason, his wife and Grace Poole's patient in the attic. When Jane meets Bertha, Bertha is wearing a white gown (just like Jane was at the fire scene) and Jane is in her wedding dress, they stare at each other for a moment, as opposed forces, as rivals (or perhaps as complementary forces). Jane is staring at the person who ruined her dreams of being loved and Bertha seems to be staring at the person who could be her. As Gilbert argues, Bertha is "Jane's truest and darkest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead". Claire Rosenfeld, cited in the text, wrote that the presence, in novels, of psychological Doubles, whether consciously or unconsciously conceived by the author, is made by the juxtaposition of "two characters, the one representing the socially acceptable or conventional personality, the other externalizing the free, uninhibited, often criminal self" (360).

The Moor House setting

After leaving Thornfield, Jane, in a voice-over narration, tries to direct the viewer to where she was going and how lost she was feeling; actually she did not have directions for her future at this moment, but as a fate (or destiny thing) she ends up at the home of the parsons of Gateshead Hall. Jane is received by Mary, St. John Rivers' sister, being very ill and depressed. Jane stays there for some months, as she narrates,

until she recovered her health, but, although she was feeling happy there, at Moor House, her thoughts were "constantly drawn back to the past". Moor House is a very important setting because it is there that she has the chance to be treated and cured from her illness by gentle and caring people, and it is there that she founds out about her origins. St. John Rivers gives her the news that she is a wealthy woman, since her uncle in Madeira, had left all his fortune to his only surviving relative. Besides all these discoveries, Jane also discovers that she was deeply loved by her father as St. John shows her a letter from him to her uncle, happily announcing her birth.

After spending some time at Moor House, St. John proposes marriage to Jane, not asking for her love, but proposing a union based on companionship, which would be lasting and good. Gilbert signals the possibility that what St. John was offering Jane was a "viable alternative to the way of life proposed by Rochester", a life of principles, of spirituality, rather than the way of roses (with thorns) by Rochester's side (365). Jane refuses St. John's proposal but tells him that it is her wish to leave part of her inheritance to his missionary work, as well as part to benefit the girls of Lowood Institution. Eventually, Jane goes back to Thornfield, which is now in ruins, and finds Rochester blind, even so, she stays with him and according to her narration, he recovered his sight and could see their first child be born. Gilbert has a peculiar vision of the end of the novel, and which, in my view, Zeffirelli was able to, or wanted to, portray: "Jane Eyre […] now literally as well as figuratively [is] an

independent woman [referring to her inheritance], free to go her own way and follow her own will. But her freedom is also signaled by a second event, the death of Bertha" (367). With the death of Bertha, there was no impediment to the couple's marriage and Jane's search for independence and her struggle to be free, like a bird, has ended, the only possible consequence was the complete happiness.

As regards the depiction of historical issues in the film, Leger Grindon (Intro) argues that often historical fiction films entangle personal goals and extrapersonal forces acting upon the actions of the main character (15). He proceeds defining what he calls "spectacle", or the experience of a public life, and this spectacle is shaped by period setting and architecture, while romance would be the personal experience. Both forces would serve the purpose to represent history (15-16). The extrapersonal forces acting in *Jane Eyre* can be identified as Victorian period problems such as public health condition, women's condition and family structure, class (difference between lower and upper classes), age difference in marriage, strict moral codes and religious codes, and

the position of governess, among others. The question of public health is represented through Jane's life at Lowood Institution in the film, following Jane's observations in the novel:

> That forest dell, where Lowood lay, was the cradle of fog and fog-bred pestilence; which, quickening spring, crept into the Orphan Asylum, breathed typhus though its crowded schoolroom and dormitory, and, ere May arrived, transformed the seminary into a hospital. (78)

The question of poverty and humiliation are also present in the novel through Jane's reflection, as a mature woman, consciously:

> I reflected. Poverty looks grim to grown people; still more so to children: they have not much idea of industrious, working, respectable poverty; they think of the word only as connected with ragged clothes, scanty food, fireless grates, rude manners, and debasing vices: poverty for me was synonymous with degradation. (26)

What refers to religion, Jane faces three types of religiosity: one through the extremist Evangelicalism of Mr. Brocklehurst, with severe punishments to save their souls; one through Helen Burn's generosity, chastity and abnegation of material things, as Jane observes: "I heard her with wonder: I could not comprehend this doctrine of endurance; and still less could I understand or sympathize with the forbearance she expressed for her chastiser" (58), and one type of religiosity proposed by St. John, preaching the missionary work, the pragmatic use of religion. Jane ends up choosing her own religion, following her own instincts and, absorbing all these doctrines, she learned how to be kind, to forgive and to give love.

As Grindon points out, the reward of the heroine for having suffered greatly under the oppression of those extrapersonal forces and for having overcoming so many obstacles is marriage and happiness. The marriage, according to him, is a way of unifying opposed forces and it is faced as a compensation for the struggle, "a reconciliation of conflicting forces […]" (10-11). Jane, an orphan, oppressed and poor governess, marries the proud, rich, and older master, Mr. Rochester.

Therefore, Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre* reproduces the aspects of the cruel Victorian society described in the novel, preserving and even highlighting the romantic plot through the use of symbols and dichotomies; symbols such as the use of the red color, mirrors, drawings, roses, and so forth, and dichotomies such as fire and ice, desire and constraint, passion and control, and many others. Mise-en-scene, cinematography, and sound are carefully manipulated to establish the connection with the world presented in the novel, in a way to reproduce the given historical period.

FINAL REMARKS

In the Introduction of this thesis I established some parameters under which my analysis would be carried out, as well as the theoretical frame to be used for such analysis. Therefore, my objective was to analyze two filmic versions, one directed by Robert Stevenson and the other by Franco Zeffirelli, of a nineteenth-century novel, *Jane Eyre*, written by Charlotte Brontë, using concepts of adaptation theory, concepts regarding film language, and concepts on historical fiction films. Moreover, my intention was to demonstrate how the filmmakers created particular versions of the text and how they conveyed history through the films.

For adaptation theory, I cited some theoreticians like Brian McFarlane, who states that the question of evaluating an adaptation is not merely restricted to levels of "faithfulness" to its source text. The adaptation process is a process of creativity and of selection and insertion undertaken by the director of a film. Robert Stam's theory is that the process of cinematization itself renders the difference between the written text and the visual narrative. He asserts that a single text can be re-worked in several contexts and allow infinite interpretations. He draws on the work of Gérard Genette, specifically on the term "transtextuality", to explain the relation a text bears with other pre-existing texts. Bakhtin's concepts of "dialogism" or "intertextuality" connect a single film with multiple prior texts. Geoffrey Wagner, cited by McFarlane, presents three categories of adaptation: transposition, commentary and analogy. The same procedure, of establishing the kind of adaptation, is adopted by Dudley Andrew, who has also proposed three categories: borrowing, intersection and fidelity of transformation.

When analyzing the two filmic versions I reached the conclusion that both reflect the intention of the novel with a minimum of apparent interference, in other words, they

intend to preserve the original text. The films underwent a process of transposition (to draw on Wagner's categories) or intersection (to draw on Andrew's categories). They both attend to specificities of the medium, the "cinematization", although attempting to preserve the narrative of the novel. Still in the Introduction I analyzed how these adaptations are presented in relation to its source text: Stevenson's version uses a book to make an allusion to the written text and Zeffirelli makes use of drawings and pictures to allude to the text.

Regarding the narrative, I set forth concepts proposed by Sarah Kozloff, who draws on Genette as well. Both filmic versions present homodiegetic narrators, or narrators who are characters in the diegetic (fictional) world. The narrator in the films is Jane Eyre, who, in first-person voice-over narration, presents her story, her past and her milieu. Stevenson's version relies much on this resource while Zeffirelli's story presents the narrator just at some specific moments. Kozloff asserts that the use of first-person voice-over narration "can greatly affect the viewer's experience of the text by 'naturalizing' the source of the narrative, by increasing identification with the characters, by prompting nostalgia, and by stressing the individuality and subjectivity of perception and storytelling" (41).

In Chapter I, I proposed an analysis of Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* (1944) based on the text "The Hollywood Classical Style, 1917-60", by David Bordwell and on the book *The Genius of the System: Hollywood Filmmaking in the Studio Era* by Thomas Schatz, as I treated the film as being representative of the classical Hollywood style. The narrative is based on exposition, conflict, complication, crisis, and denouement: the Exposition begins when Jane Eyre, an orphan child, is presented in the film as a wicked child who had suffered under the tutorship of her aunt, Mrs. Reed at Gateshead Hall. She is then sent to an Institution called Lowood, directed by the cruel Mr. Brocklehurst,

where she continued suffering. She grows up and leaves Lowood to work as a governess at Thornfield Hall. There, a mysterious and gothic place, she meets Mr. Rochester, to whom she deeply falls in love. After overcoming many obstacles, she finally marries him, but she discovers that he is already married to the madwoman in the attic (whose laughs she heard throughout the film), Bertha Mason. By the end, Jane leaves Thornfield, Bertha sets fire in the place and commits suicide and Rochester goes blind. The Denouement occurs when Jane returns to Thornfield, and marries Rochester. I observed that Jane has a voyeuristic characteristic in this version, then all the events (narrated by her) are constructed through her point-of-view (many shots are created to fulfill this purpose). In mainstream Hollywood films, "to win the love of a man […] becomes the goal of many characters" and there is an emphasis on the heterosexual romance. Thus, marriage can be a possible goal of the main character, starting then the cause and effect chain of actions, with which Hollywood classical style is very concerned ("The Hollywood Classical Style" 16).

Still in Chapter I, I analyzed the Gothic elements transposed from the novel into the film, for instance, the supernatural moment when Rochester proposes marriage to Jane and after a strong wind, a lightning creaks a branch of the chestnut tree. Camera position and lighting are also manipulated in order to create the Gothic atmosphere, for example, through the use of the *chiaroscuro* effect (bold contrast between black and white colors). I consider *Jane Eyre* to be a mainstream Hollywood film since it is marked by elements linked to this style, such as narrative logic, space and time, the use of three-point lighting, "movie music", continuity editing, high degree of closure, and so forth.

In Chapter II, I analyzed *Jane Eyre* by Franco Zeffirelli, and I reached some considerations: the film attempts to present a "realistic" atmosphere by the use of

natural lighting during the day and the use of low-key lighting at night, highlighting thus the light from candles and fires. The film presents many shots from landscapes to reach this purpose of being “natural” and “realistic”, and the mise-en-scene is manipulated to create a certain sense of authenticity, which is presented throughout the film. This version of the novel focuses mainly on the major dichotomies, such as the tension between reason and desire, rationality and passion, and restraint and emotion. The central motif in the film is the way Jane Eyre traces, full of dignity, until she reaches her happiness. Therefore, the emphasis on feelings, friendship, devotion, love, faithfulness, permeates the film. This version presents another setting: the Moor House, where Jane meets St. John Rivers and his sister, Mary. This setting is very important, since it represents an alternative to Jane to reach another kind of happiness. St. John proposes marriage to Jane, moreover, he proposes a relationship based on religion and missionary work but Jane ultimately refuses in order to go back to Thornfield and consequently to Mr. Rochester. Zeffirelli’s version is a very passionate one, and the red color is everywhere in the film, denoting not only passion but blood too, as many tragedies take place at the story.

Besides analyzing the adaptation process which the film versions underwent, the focus of this investigation was the understanding of how the directors portrayed history onto the films. As Leger Grindon points out, historical fiction films display history as personal experiences coupled with extrapersonal forces, such as economical, financial and cultural forces acting upon a given society in a determined period of time. *Jane Eyre* thus, through the individual experiences of Jane, depicts the Victorian period on the novel and on the screen.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their text, calls our attention to the reception and responses of the novel by presenting some Victorian critics by the time of its first

publication (under the pseudonym of “Currer Bell”), citing Elizabeth Rigby in *The Quarterly Review* in 1848, who wrote that “Jane Eyre is throughout the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit”. Another critic, in 1855, Mrs. Oliphant, related that “Ten years ago we professed an orthodox system of novel-making. Our lovers were humble and devoted … and the only true love worth having was that … chivalrous true love which consecrated all womankind … when suddenly, without warning, *Jane Eyre* stole upon the scene, and the most alarming revolution of modern times has followed the invasion of *Jane Eyre*” (337). This astonishment noted in the responses to the novel is due to Charlotte Brontë’s revolutionary view of many aspects of the Victorian society, which were transposed in both filmic versions, especially those regarding women’s condition at that period: education for females (and girls), the duties of the female sex, the position of governess (women at work), religious rules and strict moral codes imposed on females, madness and Victorian women, inheritance and marriage, and so forth.

In both versions, Jane appears in simple costumes denoting her humble origins. Moreover, her need to work as a governess reflects her economical situation since women at that time were discouraged from going out to work if not economically necessary. Gender was also an obstacle for reaching happiness at that period due to the male dominance (men were the landlords and “masters”), as it is characterized by the figure of Mr. Rochester. In the novel, Jane reflects about her economical status and about lower-classes position in the Victorian society:

> I reflected. Poverty looks grim to grown people; still more so to children: they have not much idea of industrious, working, respectable poverty; they think of the word only as connected with ragged clothes, scanty food, fireless grates, rude manners, and debasing vices: poverty for me was synonymous with degradation. (26)

The film medium, a visual document, can be used to talk about the past and

"communicate[s] the meaning and feeling of [a] historical world […] the readers have (probably) not seen" (Rosenstone 226-227). Rosenstone proposes some questions about historical films, such as "What do we know about the past? What can film tell us that we didn't know before? What was it [the film] asking us to think about that we had not thought about before?" (230). History, as posed by historical films, represents another kind of thinking of the past, or a kind of rethinking the past, providing visual, aural and emotional elements, making us learn "to think visually about historical questions" (232). Narrative history mix art and research. Rosenstone presents some issues that the best historical films will present to some extent. From one of these points, I could trace a parallel with the two *Jane Eyre*'s filmic versions analyzed in this investigation (238):

"Interrogate the past for the sake of the present": Through the creation of a spectacle (presenting Jane's individual story mixed with period detail), the two film directors lead the viewer to a "living" view of what had happened at the Victorian period, to witness (in black or white, or in color) how people acted and reacted, how they were dressed and how the things in general "seem" to have been like. Heroines are examples of dignity, hope, strength and kindness, so they are immortal. Jane's life can serve as an example of how to act when everything is against you (it is a lesson) and it also serves to provide a moral message: how people have to act and how they have to construct their lives. Zeffirelli does that by means of exploring the passionate tone of the novel, the devoted and true love between Jane and Rochester. The film presents drawings and photos and relies much on outdoors settings and "natural" light to convey authenticity, to make the viewer look through the window of the past. Stevenson's film displays excerpts from the novel onto the screen, in an attempt to call the viewer's attention that the film is a reproduction of the novel, being the novel a fictive narrative (thus the appeal to authenticity is not so explicit); however Stevenson recreates settings

and costumes (properly manipulating mise-en-scene and cinematography) in a way to convey History yet, in my opinion, relying much more on the book than on period research. Thus, films, through exploring visual elements, raising emotions and personalizing events, present a way of reproducing History and a way of commenting on past events.

Recalling the discussion on History by Hayden White, presented in the Introduction, three elements are combined and necessary to present History: an amount of “data”, theory applied to explain these data, and a “narrative structure”, a chain of events that possibly have happened in the past (ix). White proposes three types of strategies that can give the effect of historical explanation: the “explanation by formal argument”, “the explanation by emplotment”, and “the explanation by ideological implications”, and for each of these strategies there are four types of forms from which the historian can make use of: for formal argument explanation, the formalist, organicist, mechanistic and contextualist forms; for emplotment explanation, the romantic, tragic, comic and satirical forms; and for ideological implications, the anarchist, radical, conservative and liberal forms (x, 7-28).

Based on this theoretical frame, it is possible to position the two *Jane Eyre* filmic versions in the following frame: the emplotment is based on the romance form because *Jane Eyre* is a love story and the heroine fights to reach her goal; I believe the argument is organicist in the sense that the chain of actions are goal-oriented and the individual (Jane) is part of the whole, she is a character in the Victorian society; and the ideology takes place by means of a radical form since utopia is effected by revolutionary means, in other words, Jane needs to fight against rules to achieve her goals in life. Still following White's theory, there are four deep poetic structures: metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, and irony; *Jane Eyre* presents a structure based on synecdoche, since Jane's

qualities and actions inflect the whole tone throughout the films.

Therefore, as final remarks, I presented an overview of this investigation and some considerations I have made for both films regarding adaptations issues and the representation of history. I expect this investigation to be useful in the theoretical fields in which it is inserted, literature and cinema and history and films, as well as in researches on Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*'s other filmic versions. As suggestions for further studies, an investigation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* approaching historical issues and contrasting the films would be interesting. Another possibility of further research would be approaching other *Jane Eyre* filmic versions by isolating only one aspect, for instance, religion, and investigating how this issue is portrayed by the directors.

There are plentiful possibilities of understanding and interpreting a novel so rich and full of details as *Jane Eyre*. Besides being a wonderful romance, it is a historical drama which encompasses an amount of historical data shaped by narrative devices. Both Stevenson's and Zeffirelli's versions attempt to portray the "cinematic realism" to the viewer, although in different ways: Stevenson in a gothic romance and Zeffirelli in a passionate, symbolic and vivid love story. Through the passionate, touching and morally overwhelming story of a heroine, Jane Eyre, the viewer is invited to witness a plethora of feelings, such as friendship, love, devotion, motherhood, forgiveness, etc, which are part of every human being's life. These feelings grant the novel the label of "classical" and as a classical it is timeless and universal. The versions are different; however what seems to be the essence of Charlotte Brontë's novel remains the same: the path to dignity.

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