



TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

**CARY FUKUNAGA'S *JANE EYRE*
AS A RE-WORKING OF THE FEMALE GOTHIC**

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GRADO EN ESTUDIOS INGLESES

Curso Académico 2017-2018

Fecha de presentación 24/01/2018



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ABSTRACT

This essay aims at exploring Cary Fukunaga's adaptation of *Jane Eyre* as a current revision of Charlotte Brontë's world-renowned novel (1847). Likewise, we also examine how in spite of the high tradition of *Jane Eyre* in 40s female gothic cycle in cinema, the Gothic genre still survives in our epoch, but in a different way. In this light, our main concern consists of analyzing the most intriguing scenes included in Fukunaga's adaptation that has to do with Gothic tradition. Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* is consequently a modern vision of the Victorian era so we will treat the adaptation as a kind of intertext where allusions or rejections to previous adaptations will become relevant parts of our study.

In front of an audience already swamped with popular versions of the Gothic not really knowing what that literary genre consists of, Cary Fukunaga arrives with a "breath of fresh Eyre" opening up the debate of the varied interactions between literary Gothic and the "Gothic" that has been transferred to screen over the years.

KEY WORDS:

Gothic genre, *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë, Cary Fukunaga, adaptation, Byronic hero, empowered woman.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo pretende examinar la adaptación de *Jane Eyre* del director Cary Fukunaga como una revisión actual de la mundialmente conocida novela de Charlotte Brontë (1847). Asimismo, vamos a analizar cómo, a pesar de la popularidad de *Jane Eyre* y del gótico femenino en los años cuarenta en el cine, el Gótico aún sobrevive en nuestra época, pero de forma bien distinta. Por ello, observaremos las escenas más fascinantes de la adaptación de Fukunaga que tienen evidente relación con la tradición gótica. Su *Jane Eyre* es obviamente una visión moderna de la época victoriana por lo que trataremos la adaptación como una especie de "intertexto" en el que las alusiones o rechazos a las anteriores adaptaciones de la novela pasarán a ser partes relevantes de nuestro estudio.

Frente a una audiencia saturada ya de versiones populares del gótico, sin saber realmente en qué consiste dicho género literario, llega Cary Fukunaga con un "breath of fresh Eyre"

abriendo el debate sobre las múltiples interacciones entre el Gótico literario y el “Gótico” que realmente se ha llevado a la gran pantalla a lo largo de los años.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Género gótico, *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë, Cary Fukunaga, adaptación, héroe bironiano, mujer fortalecida.

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature has been and continues to be an inexhaustible source of stories for cinematographic art, and despite the numerous adaptations that have already been made of classical authors, it seems that there is still a faithful audience to this type of adaptation, mostly impassioned readers of those works. It is true that much of the audience of this type of film adaptations knows the stories before watching the film, but we cannot ignore that, today, the audience of the classic adaptations has increased and not all of them are familiar with the literature displayed on screen. In this way, filmmakers are forced to recreate stories -not so unattached to literary source- by bringing it closer to its present time to forge a closer link between viewer and adaptation. We cannot either think, as some scholars say, that the "audiovisual civilization" would be "incapable of surviving without the help of literature" (Bravo Gozalo 12), but rather that literary heritage is used as a way to counteract the immense number of blockbuster premieres that monopolize the movie box offices around the world.

However, the transference from novel to film is not that simple, because the demands of authenticity and fidelity that the audience requires when viewing an adaptation of a classic text are so high that the adapter is somehow restricted to perpetuate the original. On contrast, we cannot judge the quality of literary adaptations only by the fidelity that it maintains with the original text but by many other aspects that come into play when a new film is created. Some of these factors are how the film is “produced and packaged under a company logo”, “the high price of production necessitating the guarantee of box office success” (Cartmell and Whelehan 12 1999), current trends, historical events, commercial considerations, previous adaptations, production values, or the parameters of cinematic practice when producing the

film or the director's proclivities. And for all that, in many cases the adaptation of a classic becomes an "object of mass consumption".

According to Whelehan (2007), the interest in literary adaptations dates back only a couple of decades though there already are numerous publications that analyze the "hybrid" study. They call it "hybrid" because this study goes hand by hand with literary criticism and film studies since R. Richardson considered that both academic and film criticism complement and benefit each other. Whelehan (138) has the same idea in mind when states that we can not examine literary adaptation without taking into account the history of genre fiction in the two media, so to speak, what considerations have been made both of the original source and of the adaptation. Not all types of adaptations have managed to reach success in the seventh art, but Romantic films, and so, the adaptations of 19th costume melodrama become the best option for adapters eager to experience commercial success and consequently entering the mass market romance. This is the case that concerns us: the early adaptation of the work of Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that there was and actually is a constant need to remember the past, English audience feels a kind of nostalgia and interest for the Victorian period that causes an excess use of what this epoch entails in adaptations or films of new creation¹:

It can be no accident that the "past" with which our media seemed particularly concerned, certainly as far as classic novels are concerned, is the nineteenth-century -a major warehouse of historical commodities and evidence, and a period still almost within living memory in which culture we feel we have strong roots. (Cartmell and Whelehan 12).

Jane Eyre has become one of the most successful novels in the seventh art since its first release in 1918, at the height of the silent film by Edward José (*Women and Wife*), while Hugo Ballin premieres his *Jane Eyre* in 1921. A few years later, Christy Cabanne presented her *Jane Eyre* in 1934 to give way to Robert Stevenson's famous adaptation, *Jane Eyre* (1944), starring Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine. In 1970, Delbert Man performed for the first time his *Jane Eyre* and then, the miniseries created by R. Chapman. Another miniseries comes to the screen from Julian Amyes in 1983. Two more adaptations are made in the 20th century, one by Franco Zeffirelli in 1996 and another by Robert Young in 1997. Thus we reach the 21st century, and Charlotte Brontë's novel is still present in both the small and the big screen.

¹ As in the case of the film *The Piano* by Jane Campion. For more information, see Hendershot (1998) and Pérez Riu (2000).

In 2006 the BBC presents its miniseries while in 2011, Cary Fukunaga presents his version of the dramatic story of *Jane Eyre*.

Then, in order to provide a relevant reading of *Jane Eyre*'s adaptations, it would not be a good criterion to judge the adaptations in terms of its "fidelity" to the original text, but rather attending to the reading that each adapter has extracted from the novel. That way, the adapter makes a "kind of paraphrase of the novel" (Whelehan 8 2007) because, as Bluestone explains, the filmiest "does not convert the novel at all... the novel is viewed as a raw material" in which characters achieve a "mythic life of their own".

Consequently, Charlotte Brontë's original text is treated in different ways if we look at the different film adaptations, not only to the particular reading of the novel but to many interaction of elements. We are not only dealing with words as in novels but with aspects of sound, editing, mise-en-scène in addition to the linguistic codes, visual codes and cultural codes, therefore each word, each gesture, each sound or each special effect has a direct influence on the adaptation's aim even if the audience is aware of it or not. That is the reason why film criticism has to be consciously qualified to capture the essential details that let us see the film adaptations' social position².

Having said that, the adaptations that better represent the different changes that the novel of *Jane Eyre* has suffered when transferred to screen over the years are Stevenson's and Zefirelli's *Jane Eyre*, and obviously Fukunaga's version of the novel. All this means that, following Troost's categories of adaptations (Cartmell and Whelehan 75 2007), Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* may be treated as a Hollywood-style adaptation, Zefirelli's *Jane Eyre* as a heritage-style adaptation³ whereas Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* becomes a fusion adaptation⁴. At this point, it is worth mentioning that Stevenson's adaptation arises in the early 1940s Hollywood and consequently it is seen as part of the film noir and female gothic film. It is interesting how Stevenson uses the Gothic side of Charlotte Brontë's narrative as a springboard to success in

² We refer here to the adaptation's direct influence upon the audience at a particular epoch.

³ The 1990s adaptations were also influenced by Hollywood since they cannot avoid the rapid introduction of the Hollywood romance within these adaptations' structures which were originally focused on creating heritage space through location and costumes.

⁴ We refer here to the combination of Hollywood's entertainment and heritage drama.

Hollywood because of the increased demand of this type of film. The female gothic film became fashionable since there was a lot of debate about female identity at that time and that is the reason why movies starring by heroines were released in mass. However, the commercial success of these adaptations, in particular, that of *Jane Eyre* clashes with the content of those films that presented female suffering and victimization. This only led to the creation of a generic repetitions in which female stereotypes were reproduced.

Indeed, and according to literary studies, we are able to treat *Jane Eyre* as a Female Gothic novel since the story follows the Gothic genre's characteristics: the presence of a persecuted maiden, a male tyrant, a labyrinth castle, final marriage, the female development from girlhood to maturity... among other aspects, so the genre arises the question of female identity trapped in the patriarchal world. Looking at that, the female gothic cycle of 40s cinema does not reflect Female Gothic aims at all because Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* along with other adaptations⁵, contributes to reinforce male authority instead of giving voice to women.

In this light, we are going to examine how Brontë Gothicism is screened in the last cinematic version of *Jane Eyre*, according to the characters as well as the settings. In the certainty that some critics have considered *Jane Eyre* as a modernized Gothic story, we ask ourselves how filmmakers characterize female protagonists or their context and how do they recognize and introduce Charlotte Brontë's Gothicism in their adaptations. It is not a discussion about what is better, the book or the film, we are just talking about the way Gothic tradition is screened today, and about Charlotte Brontë's effect in constructing her novel according to the well-known Gothic patterns:

Within an imprisoning structure, a protagonist, typically a young woman whose mother has died, is compelled to seek out the center of a mystery, while vague and usually sexual threats to her person from some powerful male figure hover on the periphery of her consciousness. Following clues that pull her onward and inward –bloodstains, mysterious sounds- she penetrates the obscure recesses of a vast labyrinthine space and discovers a secret room sealed off by its association with death. (Kahane 334)

The story of *Jane Eyre* seems not to be detached from this gothic tradition. Jane, the typical young female protagonist without parents, does live in an imprisoning structure, first at Gateshead Hall, then at Lowood and finally at Thornfield Hall. She works as a governess at Thornfield and feels menaced by the "powerful" presence of her master. Jane ends up

⁵ Such as *Rebecca* (1940) or *Suspicion* (1941).

discovering the most inner secret of Rochester and of the house itself following the different clues such as "mysterious sounds" that direct her to the deathful hidden room in which Bertha is retained. Gothic novels has also to do with the psychology of characters directly influenced by the oppressive setting, as Kahane explained "the female Gothic depends on how much longing and desire as on fear and antagonism ... represent the pleasure of submission, it also encourages an active exploration of the limits of identity" (324). Thus, with this Gothic literary criticism in mind, we do not only have to look for the Gothic structure according to characters or settings when analyzing different filmic adaptations but for the influencing mood it has on the characters, in sum, going further through characters' psychological experiences and capturing the essence of the new readings of Brontë's fiction.

If focusing now on the Gothic tradition in cinema, we have to comment that even though the Gothic cinema or Gothic film does not exist as genre, we do find in numerous films vestiges of Gothicism in characters, settings, plots in order to recreate the Gothic style in which all the aspects of horror are included. It is a little delimited field, so, according to Kavka (qtd. in Hogle 209), Gothic does not exist as a cinematographic genre because the audience already knows how to recognize what is part of the Gothic and what is not through the spectacle that produces the fearful effect. In addition, the Gothic is a mutable genre due to the limitations of representation as well as its bound to the historical moment. Likewise, the visual codes so important in the constitution of Gothic films do not serve only to create this atmosphere of paranoia in the film-content but to make of this paranoia the objectification of the history moment as happened in American horror film in 1930s or in the female gothic in 1940s.

Gothic film has historically been placed between film noir and horror, so there is a serie of cinematic techniques that characterize this type of films (new creations or adaptations) and therefore these common techniques and conventionalized themes or obsessions let the audience recognize a gothic film as happen in some of the greatest Gothic adaptations, namely, *Frankenstein*, (1931) *Dracula* (1931) or *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925).

The Gothic then falls into "the codification of a set of techniques and characterizations that would cast its long shadow over all subsequent Gothic films, whether they were remakes... or

parodies” (qtd. in Hogle 215). In this way, directors exploit the visual codes of the gothic film: shadows that remind us of German expressionism; castles in ruins, vaults and arches along with small figures of humans (reminiscences of the sublime landscape) that form part of the props of gothic architecture; the human is also "dwarfed and enclosed by space, which seems to put pressure on it” (qtd. in Hogle 216) while the master’s control is exaggerated by the camera or the excessive use of threatening close-ups and bands of light. Kavka explains then that Count Dracula (Browning’s *Dracula*) and the Promethean monster (Whale’s *Frankenstein*) of the 1930s become crucial elements for the visual recreation of Gothic since both adaptations will mark the paraphernalia for future gothic films. However, gothic films loses its popularity in favour of the Female Gothic in American cinema introduced by Hitchcock’s *Rebecca*. Now, this new filmic Gothic focuses mainly on the permeability between supernaturalism and psychological manifestations, the influence of the Gothic house, that is, the domestic Gothic environment -a projection of the monstrous “act or occupant” as Kavka also says (qtd. in Hogle 219).

It is worth mentioning that we must differentiate between Gothic and horror since it seems that "we have moved from the Gothic into the realm of horror, into the dubious comfort of screaming at what we actually see". But, what sets the Gothic apart is that it does not let the audience see, in sum, we are trapped within an "in-between state” that arouses paranoia. Therefore, the Gothic film effect is not based on provoking horror but on leaving the audience witness “the permeability of boundaries, which is the point at which monstrosity begins to arise” and the ambiguity of interpretations. Let us broadly say that some critics affirmed that there is no Gothic without the conventional, recognizable cinematic props but Cary Fukunaga reinvents the monstrous space, monstrous sexuality and monstrous psychology by leaning, among other things, on the crucial element of "plasticity of space" that allows the young director to expand “the codes by which the Gothic comes to be expressed” (qtd. in Hogle 211).

Once commented the most representative aspects of the contemporary dilemmas about bringing literary adaptations to screen, the main characteristics of the Gothic genre that make *Jane Eyre* part of the Female Gothic and the brief revision of Gothic film tradition, we can say

that the latest cinematic version of Fukunaga allows us to consider a more original and updated screening of the novel in which, as the present thesis goes on, we will discover how the director approaches or moves away from the previous adaptations or even from the original text in some moments of the story and what new interpretations he brings to literary as well as filmic critics of Charlotte Brontë.

I.1. Aims and Methodology

We have seen that the process of adaptation that Fukunaga carries out goes hand in hand with the in-depth study of the novel as well as the previous adaptations:

... it becomes clear that the process of adaptation itself is influenced by numerous external factors, including previous adaptations, elements in the original text that seem to need "correcting"... or updating..., and the need to do something distinctive which challenges the audience's preconceptions about the classical serial... (Cartmell and Whelehan 7).

In the same way that -as B. McFarlane also affirms (Loh 2015)-, all spectators respond to an adaptation in a different way, depending on the greater or lesser influence they have on the original text, or on knowledge about other adaptations, Fukunaga has also responded to the previous versions with his *Jane Eyre*⁶. In addition, we will see that in the process of adaptation has indirectly influenced how previous directors presented their film, how they focused on some scenes more than others, how they avoided certain aspects of the storytelling, or how does simply influence "the auras that attach to the film's stars". For all this, and though our maximum attention will be dedicated to the version of Fukunaga, we will look throughout this thesis towards the past to make some comparisons with two of *Jane Eyre*'s most acclaimed adaptations, namely, the versions by Robert Stevenson (1944) and Franco Zeffirelli (1996). Stevenson's adaptation is highly marked by the tendency or popularity of the gothic or female horror fiction in the 40s, like in other films e.g. *Rebecca* or *Suspicion* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940-1941). On the other hand, Zeffirelli's version is subject to the softened action and the absence of the supernatural element. In contrast, Fukunaga recreates a narrative full of symbolism, very different from the previous ones, with which we can affirm that "what a film

⁶ We can not ignore the fact that Fukunaga commented in one of his interviews that, despite that one of his inspiring films was Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*, he wanted his new *Jane Eyre* to be "as different as possible".

takes from a book matters; but it does what it brings to a book.”⁷ (Cartmell and Whelehan 5 2007).

The fact that a new version of *Jane Eyre* has been created in the 21st century means firstly that the dramatic story of the young governess continues to permeate the audience, and secondly, that there are other aspects of the novel that have not still been taken to the big screen, despite the various versions that have been made over time, and that is where our analysis fits.

We propose to present a detailed analysis of Fukunaga’s adaptation of *Jane Eyre* through a careful selection of scenes:

- Image 1: Rochester’s proposal to Jane, (1:18:22-1:20:05).
- Image 2: The wedding scene, (1:25:32-1:26:00).
- Image 3: Jane at the lonely window, (0:31:26-0:32:15).
- Image 4: Jane breaks up with Rochester, (1:28:56-1:34:52).
- Image 5: Wandering Rochester, (1:52:50-1:54:00).
- Image 6: Erotic painting, (0:26:10-0:26:14 & 0:46:55-0:47:08).
- Image 7: Jane’s doll, (0:26:55-0:27:08).
- Image 8: Mr. Rivers’ kiss, (1:43:00-1:43:16).
- Image 9: Frightened Jane, (1:03:21-1:04:57).
- Image 10: Jane in Nature, (00:02:38-00:02:43).
- Image 11: Alone in the woods, (0:32:40-0:33:20).
- Image 12: At Thornfield’s garden, (0:54:28-0:54:50 & 1:22:44-1:23:06).
- Image 13: Taking off the wedding corset, (1:28:05-1:28:46).
- Image 14: Bertha’s laugh, (0:47:28- 0:47:44).

All these scenes seem to us the most representative to sustain our hypothesis: the new version of *Jane Eyre* by Fukunaga revitalises the Gothic in cinema, far from the excessive superficiality of Hollywood. To carry out our study, we are going to divide the content of this

⁷ We are referring here to the fact that, as we shall see later, Fukunaga’s version enriches very subtly certain aspects of the Brontë narrative making the story even closer to reality.

thesis into three parts: first, we will focus on presenting the differences between the conventionalities of the Gothic genre and the characteristics of Fukunaga's adaptation with regard to the female and male characters. The first and second parts, *Revision of the gothic treatment of gender relations and Revision of masculinity*, will follow the same working-pattern. Initially we will present a comparison between the original text of Charlotte Brontë and the corresponding screenplay in order to see what the young director emphasizes more. At the same time, readers can see images of the specific scenes (*Jane Eyre* 2011) that coincide with the exact moment of the screenplay. Afterwards, we will reflect on the psychological characterization of Fukunaga's characters, the similarities and differences we find out between them and Brontë's protagonists along with the quality of their interpretations.

Then, the third and last part of our analysis (*The importance of mise-en-scène*) moves away from the characters themselves to observe how Fukunaga presents the influence of the different settings on the female character of Jane, because as in all Gothic literary creation, the scenarios have a very specific function that accompanies the overall mood of the story. The same working-pattern will be found again in this part, namely the presentation of the original text and the image of the corresponding scene so that we can corroborate the transfer of the Gothic scenario created by Brontë to the big screen by Cary Fukunaga.

It seems appropriate to comment that we have used the edition of Penguin Classics for all the selected fragments of Charlotte Brontë's novel and Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* film from Focus Features for the compilation of all the scenes presented in this thesis. In addition, the selected fragments of the script of Fukunaga's film have been consulted in the screenplay published by the BBC films. Then, we made use of italics in Fukunaga's screenplay and Brontë's fragments to emphasize certain aspects of the selected lines. However, for the fragments of other versions, we consult them directly online through the website springfieldspringfield.co.uk and therefore will not be numbered. Regarding the different manuals and articles that we have been consulting throughout the present analysis, they will also appear duly quoted in the bibliographic apparatus.

II. REVISION OF THE GOTHIC TREATMENT OF GENDER RELATIONS

II. 1. Jane as an empowered woman

The heterosexual romance has always been a heavily exploited part of Charlotte Brontë's novel in film adaptations. If we consider that not only the most recent adaptation of Fukunaga, but other versions, such as Zeffirelli's or Stevenson's, do not spend more than 20-30 minutes on Jane's story at Gateshead Hall or at Lowood Institution, it seems that the directors prefer moving the love story to the big screen. All this provoked that in the different versions, like in Stevenson's, directors present completely stereotyped characters in order to please audiences reaching cinematographic success. The spectators of the 40s, for instance, expected in Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* a heroine that would not leave the conventional parameters, so to speak, that omitted any revolutionary feature of the feminine characters and consequently they wanted to see a heroine who fell devoted between the impressive Rochester's arms (starring Orson Welles). Now, the same thing we find out in the "austenian" version of Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre*⁸ because the whole film echoes a softened romance so the director keeps betting on conservatism, on the supremacy of the male character and the victimization of the heroine. With this formulaic presentation of the characters in mind, it might have been difficult for Fukunaga to adapt one of the most well-known classical novels of the whole history considering that it has a great cinematographic tradition behind it, added to the fact that he had to create a new Jane, a Jane fit for a 21st century audience. For all this,

⁸ When comparing Fukunaga's adaptation and Zeffirelli's, we must rather concentrate on the non-Gothic elements of 1996 adaptation because the whole film becomes an extremely "de-gothification" of Charlotte Brontë's creation. What was then Zeffirelli's intention? Brontë chose to make her writing a Gothic novel including the portrayal of "all states of mind that intensify normal thought or perception. Dream states, drug states, and states of intoxication have always been prevalent in the Gothic novel because repressed thoughts can surface in them." (Hopkins xii) Thus, I completely agree with L. Hopkins (2005) when says that there are cases when the Gothic is banished from where it originally was, and Zeffirelli's version is the case. Besides, the starring of Charlotte Gainsbourg differs from Brontë's heroine that we, as readers, imagine. Charlotte Gainsbourg does not imitate Brontë's female character, her reactions, answers, emotions, gestures do not cross the screen towards the audience's soul. Zeffirelli "replaces" all Gothic elements "with the schematic or with details which serve to anchor the story firmly in the realm of the social rather than the psychoanalytic." (Hopkins 91). Furthermore, the domineering romantic hero starred by Orson Welles in 1944 fades away when the 1996 Rochester (William Hurt) appears on screen. The faded wilderness of Brontë's male character disappears in favour of the smooth Edward who never screams at the heroine or makes some violent movement against her, much the contrary since after Jane's discourse in this part of the story, he starts kissing all her face in a very sweet manner. So, I completely agree with Sandra Gilbert's opinion "the proposal scene in the Zeffirelli movie is particularly banal" because there is no "furious" or "Romantically mystical", it is read as a "paper-back romance". (Gilbert 369 1998).

they needed not only a good screenplay but a thorough acting. We can then perceive that in cinema or in any kind of representation what is said is not enough, but how it is said becomes the most important thing. In spite of the "fidelity" to the original source or not, the way actors perform influences audience's perspective upon the characters. Looking at that, Fukunaga made both aspects interconnect in his last adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011), and we refer here to his intention to follow the original text and to the acting not only of Mia Wasikowska, but of M. Fassbender. Thus, Cary Fukunaga arrives years later to present a new reading of the narrative thanks to the renewal of the adapted text and the techniques used for the film.

We are going to analyze then the changes that Fukunaga makes in his adaptation regarding characters, meaning how he has transferred the protagonists from the original text to big screen through three sequences: Rochester's proposal to Jane, the wedding scene and Jane at the lonely window.

Regarding at first the part of the novel that tells about Rochester's proposal to Jane, we have to pay attention to how Brontë constructed Jane's attitude towards Edward when confessing her feelings. As the text says, she suffers from a "acute distress" but at the same time arouses within her an "impetuous wish", vehement "emotion" and "passion" asking for "mastery". Thus, it is explained how Jane manages the conversation and tells Rochester what she really thinks reassuring her position as an equal and free human being:

In listening, I sobbed convulsively; for I could repress what I endured no longer; I was obliged to yield, and I was shaken from head to foot with *acute distress*. When I did speak, it was only to express *an impetuous wish* that I had never been born, or never come to Thornfield... The *vehemence of emotion*, stirred by grief and love within me, was *claiming mastery*, and struggling for full sway, and asserting a right to predominate, to overcome, to live, rise, and reign at last: yes, — *and to speak*. [...] "I tell you I must go!" I retorted, *roused to something like passion*. "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? — a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? *Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you, — and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh; — it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, — as we are!*"... "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; *I am a free human being with an independent will*, which I now exert to leave you."... A *waft of wind* came sweeping down the laurel-walk, and trembled through the boughs of the chestnut: it wandered away — away — to an indefinite distance — it died. (291-292)

After reading this fragment of the novel above, it is important to compare it to Moira Buffini's screenplay⁹ because she summarizes the proposal without omitting any element of Jane's

⁹ Moira Buffini is 2011 *Jane Eyre*'s screenwriter.

discourse for equality. This is so relevant for the overall mood of the film since this scene indicates the general treatment of the female character that this new version of *Jane Eyre* offers. Then, we can observe in image 1 Jane's facial expression, she seems "impetuous", full of "emotion", a perfect mixture of "grief and love", she controls the conversation¹⁰ and doing so, she starts "claiming mastery", a spirit "roused to something like passion." Besides, she is not submitted to the Byronic presence of the hero-villain, much the contrary, she feels comfortable to show her anger and fury:

...And become nothing to you? Am I a machine without feelings? Do you think because I am poor, obscure, plain and little I am soulless and heartless? I have as much soul as you and full as much heart. And if God had blessed me with beauty and wealth, I could make it as hard for you to leave me as it is for I to leave you. I'm not speaking to you through mortal flesh. It is my spirit that addresses your spirit, as if we'd passed through the grave and stood at God's feet, equal ...as we are... I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you. (82).

Image 1: Rochester's proposal to Jane.



¹⁰ It clearly attracts our attention considering that other versions of *Jane Eyre*, such as Stevenson's adaptation destroys Jane's "claiming mastery". Brontë original words in this passage are full of feminine power, what really makes Jane who she is, an essential part of her characterization that cannot be omitted. However, it is interesting how in Stevenson's adaptation, her lack of power in front of the male hero-villain is even more emphasized not only by her words but her attitude and gestures. We find a softened Jane (Joan Fontaine) regarding her facial expressions, she seems to feel insignificant next to the magnificent Orson Welles, she does not pronounce her words angrily, but without fury (two feelings that strongly characterized Brontë's heroine). The continuous changes of camera angles reinforce our hypothesis because Rochester (Orson Welles) retakes once more the power within the couple, he is the physical and psychological representation of the Byronic hero getting away from her all what Jane signifies. Thus, Jane is completely submitted to Rochester's orders, as shown in Stevenson's proposal scene, when Mr. Rochester (Welles) forces her to say "Quickly. Say "Edward, I will marry you" after grabbing (in a violent way) her between his impetuous arms becoming Jane an object of his possession that can be imprisoned.

The impetuous Jane has finally destroyed one of the main features of the Brontë's Byronic hero, his arrogance and desire of controlling the heroine, being in this sequence, inferior to her. Thus, our point is that it is completely possible to present on screen the strong potential of the feminine character derived by the frailty of male character and through Fukunaga's vision of the novel, we are able to touch broader horizons that might guide us to a new critique of the never-ending gothic-romance of *Jane Eyre*. In fact, this empowered feminine character is going to fight against the ambiguous Byronic hero/villain all along the filmic adaptation (2011) as we might observe in some other sequences:

Image 2: The wedding scene.



This scene of the wedding gives some light to the ambiguity of the male character in Fukunaga's adaptation. Rochester does not look at Jane in any moment of the ceremony, he looks down or looks away, he cannot be motionless. In addition, Rochester's facial expression tells the audience he hides something, he seems to be shaken. Hence, blame, remorse and shame of cheating Jane lessen Rochester's Byronic tendency, he is not now the intense owner of Thornfield Hall, but a weak and debilitated man in front of the feminine presence. All this let us think of some internal fight that sharpens Rochester's mind, a constant fluctuation

between the byronic villain and the romanticized hero, between light and dark that amplifies Jane's increasing power and control over the male character.

Therefore, Jane's anxiety of achieving self-decision and control is expressed implicitly not only in the heroine's actions but even in her own words during all the adaptation, as we might see now:

I wish a woman could have action in her life, like a man. It agitates me to pain that the skyline over there is ever our limit. I long sometimes for a power of vision that would overpass it. If I could behold all I imagine... I've never seen a city, I've never spoken with men. And I fear my whole life will pass... (36)¹¹

Image 3: Jane at the lonely window.



¹¹ Compare it to the original text: "...Anybody may blame me who likes, when I add further, that, now and then, when I took a walk by myself in the grounds; when I went down to the gates and looked through them along the road; or when, while Adele played with her nurse, and Mrs. Fairfax made jellies in the storeroom, I climbed the three staircases, raised the trap-door of the attic, and having reached the leads, looked out afar over sequestered field and hill, and along dim sky-line — that then I longed for a power of vision which might overpass that limit; which might reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life I had heard of but never seen — that then I desired more of practical experience than I possessed... but I believed in the existence of other and more vivid kinds of goodness, and what I believed in I wished to behold [...] It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot... 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..." (129).

Actually socio-political speeches (made by women) are not elements of the Gothic genre, but it does form part of the Gothic romance Brontë renewed¹², a claim against the oppressive force of the patriarchal society (embodied by Thornfield)¹³. We cannot consequently agree with M. Jordan when says that “Fukunaga’s adaptation conveniently sets Jane up as a romantic heroine only” neither when says that he (Fukunaga) focuses the film on the couple “rather than” on the “representations of the problematic relationship between Victorian feminine and masculine subjectivity...” (Jordan 83) because we do believe that the director also captures the difficulties and anxieties of female/male sexuality in Victorian era. Thus, M. Jordan’s affirmation “Gender ideology is, of course, part of the dislocation Jane feels” (85) is not complete when referring to Fukunaga’s adaptation since he also portrays the dislocation of men.

III. REVISION OF MASCULINITY

After having seen in the previous section how Fukunaga builds the female character, expanding Brontë narrative through a renewed Jane, stronger and braver, even able to face the male character directly, remaining in clear superiority in front of him, we are also allowed to glimpse the constant ambivalence, the ambiguity that covers Rochester’s characterization, both in the novel and film. Though the majority of critics have focused mainly on the role that Jane has in the novel since its publication in 1847, rather than on investigating what is beyond the characterization of male protagonists, we are going now to focus on examining what Fukunaga saw in Brontë lines to make male characters one of the most intriguing aspects of his adaptation. So, we are going to examine now the moment when Jane finally leaves her

¹² This part of the novel is evidently omitted by other adaptations (Stevenson’s or Zeffirelli’s) because it is a direct emotive speech asking for female equality that Jane says to herself but that Fukunaga’s movie reproduces aloud. In Stevenson’s version it does not appear because Fontaine cannot be superior to Welles in any way, while in Zeffirelli’s version, the smoothed romance is just all we might get from the story.

¹³ As we are going to see later on, the gothic settings directly influence on the psychology of characters, at least in the 2011 adaptation of *Jane Eyre* because “... There is, first, the double status of the house as exotic Gothic mansion and ordinary, boring domestic space –and the fact that the Gothic imagery functions as a description of the boredom rather than a contrast to it... Such a word has its own horrors... the state of self-enclosure and stagnation...” (DeLamotte 199-200).

room after the wedding, specifically the moment she decides to leave Thornfield, to leave her beloved Edward Rochester:

"-You come out at last," he said. "*Well, I have been waiting for you long, and listening:* yet not one movement have I heard, nor one sob... But I err: you have not wept at all! I see a white cheek and a faded eye, but no trace of tears. I suppose, then, your heart has been weeping blood? ... *Will you ever forgive me?*"

-... I am tired and sick. I want some water." He heaved a sort of shuddering sigh, *and taking me in his arms*, carried me downstairs...

- *How are you now, Jane?*

- Much better, sir; I shall be well soon.

- Taste the wine again, Jane.

I obeyed him; then he put the glass on the table, stood before me, and looked at me attentively. Suddenly he turned away, with an inarticulate exclamation, *full of passionate emotion* of some kind; he walked fast through the room and came back; *he stooped towards me as if to kiss me*; but I remembered caresses were now forbidden. I turned my face away and put his aside.

-... *I do love you*," I said, "more than ever: but I must not show or indulge the feeling: and this is the last time I must express it... He bared his wrist, and offered it to me: *the blood was forsaking his cheek and lips*... I did what human beings do instinctively when they are driven to utter extremity — looked for aid to one higher than man: the words "God help me!" burst involuntarily from my lips... *A wild look raised his brows* —...

-... Who in the world cares for *you* ? or who will be injured by what you do?

-Still indomitable was the reply — "*I care for myself*. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustainable I am, the more *I will respect myself*..."

-...Never," said he, as he ground his teeth, "never was anything at once so frail and so indomitable. *A mere reed she feels in my hand!*" (*And he shook me with the force of his hold.*) "I could bend her with my finger and thumb: and what good would it do if I bent, if I up tore, if I crushed her? *Consider that eye: consider the resolute, wild, free thing looking out of it, defying me, with more than courage* — *with a stern triumph*..." (344-366).

When analyzing this part of the novel and when scrutinizing Charlotte Brontë's words, we observe an incredible well-mixed combination of the menacing Byronic hero/villain and the feminized hero of the Gothic Fiction¹⁴ as demonstrated in other descriptions Jane makes of Edward during the novel like "flaming and flashing" referring to his eyes *versus* "the real sunshine of feeling". In this passage, the feminized hero's attitude is evident in some other quotations e.g. "Well, I have been waiting for you long, and listening" or "How are you now, Jane?" which refer to the preoccupation Rochester feels about Jane's health, therefore his feeling seems to be far away of the strong cold character of the Byronic hero. However, his

¹⁴ See Nungesser (222) in Rubik and Mettinger-Schartmann (2007).

caring attitude quickly vanishes as we may see in “A mere reed she feels in my hand! (And he shook me with the force of his hold.)”, or in “Consider that eye: consider the resolute, wild, free thing looking out of it, defying me, with more than courage — with a stern triumph.” The Byronic hero/villain, according to the tradition, is impulsive, intense, arrogant, moody, sexually attractive, dominant, damned by an unnamed crime and trapped within a trouble past and consequently within a cycle of self-destruction. Thus, these well-known characteristics spring in the violent act of retaining Jane.

Having said that, the most modern version of *Jane Eyre* (2011) becomes the perfect “fusion of romance with opacity...”, a perfect example of the “female gothic films” that “fuse romance with anxiety” (Hanson 131), the same fusion with which Brontë created the characterization of Mr. Rochester:

-Jane. *Forgive me. I'm worthless.* How could I? Jane. No tears. Why don't you cry? Why not scream at me? *I deserve a hail of fire.*
- I need some water.
- Of course. Jane. How are you now?
- I will be well again soon.
-I know you. You're thinking. Talking is of no use, you're thinking how to act.
-All is changed, sir. I must leave you.
-*No. No! Jane, do you love me?* Then the essential things are the same. Be my wife.
-You have a wife.
-I pledge you my honor, my fidelity...
-You cannot.
-...my love, until death do us part.
-What of truth?
-I would have told you the truth.
-*You are deceitful, sir!*
-*I was wrong to deceive you.* I see that now. *It was cowardly.* I should have appealed to your spirit as I do now [...]
-...Who would you offend by living with me? Who would care?
-I would.
-You'd rather drive me to madness than break some mere human law?
-*I must respect myself.*
-Listen to me. Listen. *I could bend you with my finger and my thumb, a mere reed you feel in my hands.* But whatever I do with this cage, I cannot get at you. And it is your soul that I want. Why don't you come of your own free will?
-God help me!
-Jane! Jane! Jane! (93-96)

Image 4a: Breaking up with Rochester.



Image 4b: Breaking up with Rochester.



Image 4c: Breaking up with Rochester.



Every cinematic adaptation of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* allows us to put into question some different aspects of the nineteenth-century novel. Thus, this last version does not only reflect the novel as “the genre” that considers “the problems of the boundaries of the self as an aspect of women’s special psychological, social, and moral dilemmas.” (DeLamotte 193) symbolized here by the strong attitude Jane (Mia Wasikowska) displays, but there is much more within.

After observing these images and taking this quotation into account, “It is the intense ambivalence toward male dominance on the part of Brontë and her heroine that speaks so strongly to present day feminists” (qtd. in Rubik and Mettinger-Schartmann 233), we are now ready to face Fukunaga’s redefinition of characters, since Rochester seems to have recovered his enigmatic role on screen, the same he had lost in other adaptations.

The director presents on screen the indispensable duality that Brontë applied to her male character, therefore both, the novel and now the film, examine the blurred boundaries between Byronic hero and villain, what is demonstrated in Fukunaga’s screenplay: “Forgive me. I'm

worthless.”, “I deserve a hail of fire.”, “I was wrong to deceive you. I see that now. It was cowardly...”. Those parts of Rochester’s dialogue portray the affectionate side of the male character¹⁵, even asserting he is a coward or that he is repentant, lighting the inner essence of the feminized hero, and at the same time, letting the female character be superior to him, also represented by Rochester’s movements because he kneels in front of Jane and embraces her waist (Image 4c)¹⁶.

On the other hand, the enchanting aspect of the sequence is that Fukunaga and his screenwriter (Moira Buffini) are able to represent the violent Byronic side of Rochester, “Listen to me. Listen. I could bend you with my finger and my thumb, a mere reed you feel in my hands.”, screened also by Rochester (M. Fassbender) gazing Jane’s throat (M. Wasikowska) in image 4b. Furthermore, to demonstrate this fluctuation, it would be important to mention that the weakened Rochester also reappears in scene when Jane went out of Thornfield calling her “Jane, Jane!”:

¹⁵ Along with images 4a-c.

¹⁶ However, if we compare image 4 of Fukunaga’s *Jane Eyre* and the sequence in Stevenson’s adaptation, we may see that Stevenson’s Rochester is not waiting Jane behind her bedroom, but downstairs, what does not provide the impatience Edward felt for not knowing anything from his lover. Stevenson does not follow Brontë lines e.g. “Well, I have been waiting for you long, and listening” because this quote clearly suggests that Rochester is near her bedroom, but he is not in Stevenson’s version. Therefore, the duality in Rochester’s characterization does not exist and we get only closer to the cold and distant Byronic “villain”. Besides, the imperative tone (which is not present in Brontë’s text) reappears in some part of Rochester’s (Orson Welles) dialogue like “Say you remember” or the violence with which he gazes Jane between his arms, “I could crush you between my arms”. By doing so, both moments reassure the dominant position he never abandons during the whole film. Orson Welles evidently represents “the epitome of heterosexual masculinity”, a hero who suffers “from inflated egos”, far from the Rochester that Brontë wanted to describe when writing this passage, an emotional Rochester also present in Fukunaga’s version. Apart from that, the impetuosity of Orson Welles (intensified by the camera angle) only simplifies the sweet and delicate Jane (Joan Fontaine), so “one can hardly say his performance steals the show from her or that his presence overpowers the narrative” because “Jane is placed as Rochester’s observer... as object of desire...” (Campbell 2003), much the contrary of Brontë’s intention at that particular moment in which Jane completely controls the male-female confrontation.

Image 4d: Breaking up with Rochester.



All this reassures lastly that “... the central feature of the Gothic is ambiguity, the hesitation between two possible interpretations of events...” (Hanson 48).

Jane Eyre is an “endless potential for transformation that regenerates rather than recycles meaning” (qtd. in Rubik and Mettinger-Schartmann 239) as demonstrated in Rochester’s portrayal in the film. Besides, Rochester is not the only surprising element of Fukunaga’s version, but Jane, since Buffini portrays her as the real Jane of Brontë’s lines, e.g. “I must respect myself.” or “You are deceitful, sir!”, presenting to our eyes how the author conceived the female character, just in the same way Rochester does, “...wild, free thing looking out of it, defying me, with more than courage — with a stern triumph.”, the Jane that does not fear the Byronic hero/villain and even faces him leading the couple’s destiny. That way, we cannot agree with L. Hopkins, “... those texts whose affiliations with the gothic were originally the clearest become the least Gothic when they are filmed.” (xiii), seeing that all these scenes evidently squeezes the physical and psychological Gothic characterization within the

protagonists even intensified by the inclusion of the direct sound such as both actors' breath, sobbing, or Jane's swallowing.

Again, we find another sequence that clearly evidences the two different portrayals of Mr. Rochester. This part of the novel refers to Jane's return to Rochester who is blind and damaged by the fire Bertha initiated, the same fire that disintegrated the gothic male and his dynasty through the destruction of the "ancestral house":

... Who is it? *What* is it? Who speaks?

-Pilot knows me, and John and Mary know I am here. I came only this evening, -I answered-

-Great God! — *what delusion has come over me? What sweet madness has seized me?*

-No delusion — no madness: your mind, sir, is too strong for delusion, your health too sound for frenzy.

-And where is the speaker? Is it only a voice? Oh! I *cannot* see, but I must feel, or my heart will stop and my brain burst. Whatever — whoever you are — be perceptible to the touch or I cannot live!

He groped; *I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine.*

-Her very fingers! -he cried-; her small, slight fingers! If so there must be more of her.

-[...] Jane Eyre! — Jane Eyre, -was all he said-

-My dear master, -I answered-, I am Jane Eyre: I have found you out — I am come back to you.

-... Gentle, soft dream, nestling in my arms now, you will fly, too, as your sisters have all fled before you: *but kiss me before you go — embrace me, Jane.*

I pressed my lips to his once brilliant and now rayless eyes — I swept his hair from his brow, and kissed that too. He suddenly seemed to arouse himself: the conviction of the reality of all this seized him.

- [...] Certainly — unless you object. I will be your neighbour, your nurse, your housekeeper. I find you lonely: I will be your companion — to read to you, to walk with you, to sit with you, to wait on you, to be eyes and hands to you. Cease to look so melancholy, my dear master; you shall not be left desolate, so long as I live.

-... Yes — but you understand one thing by staying with me; and I understand another. You, perhaps, could make up your mind to be about my hand and chair — to wait on me as a kind little nurse (for you have an affectionate heart and a generous spirit, which prompt you to make sacrifices for those you pity...

-...*Shake me off, then, sir, — push me away, for I'll not leave you of my own accord.*" (500-501).

After reading the novel's quotation, there are some lines that attract our attention. One of them is "what delusion has come over me? What sweet madness has seized me?" (the fact that

Rochester behaves as an irrational man) that portrays Edward Rochester as if he was not in his previous faculties therefore, we may assert that he lost the certainty with which he talked and acted. Then, “I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine.” informs us about how Brontë depicted the male character as the wandering vessel while Jane seems to be his lighthouse (in Fukunaga’s film, she takes Edward’s hand and guides him to her face). This idea emphasizes the importance and power of the heroine, and the weakness of the Byronic hero.

Besides, attending to the formal aspects of the text, the verbs seem to be cautiously chosen by Brontë, e.g. “arrest” and “prison” in “I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine”. The author maybe tried to explain how the male-female role has been reversed. Another interesting quotation is “but kiss me before you go — embrace me, Jane.”, because we can observe how Rochester is eager to touch and kiss Jane though he does not articulate the action, but asks Jane to do so (“I pressed my lips to his once brilliant and now rayless eyes”). The last quote we are referring to is “...Shake me off, then, sir, — push me away...”, important words that prove it is Jane who even dares to defy Mr. Rochester.

The question we all would ask would be: Who is then Mr. Rochester? It becomes the most intriguing question in Fukunaga’s 2011 *Jane Eyre*. Is he the picture of the idealized Byronic villain or the Romanticized hero? The constant ambivalence of his character requires a more cautious analysis. Even though it is obvious that Buffini has summarized the final pages of the novel in barely ten lines, there are two relevant elements that support our hypothesis. The first one is how Mia Wasikowska performs Jane’s movement, “I arrested his wandering hand, and prisoned it in both mine.” (Image 5), that makes us think about the lack of determination that the Byronic character now implies:

- Where is he? Pilot. Who’s there? This hand... Jane Eyre. Jane Eyre.
- Edward, I am come back to you. *Fairfax Rochester with nothing to say?*
- You are altogether a human being, Jane.
- I conscientiously believe so.
- A dream.
- Awaken then.

Image 5: Wandering Rochester.



So here we can affirm that Fukunaga presents how Mr. Edward Rochester abandoned his Byronic side in favor of the feminized hero that envelops him in all this sequence. In addition, as long as the gothic romance is reversed, Rochester has not complete Jane's development, but instead "[she] has given [him] a character" (Tóth 32-33) exemplified in these words of Fukunaga's script "Fairfax Rochester with nothing to say?" which clearly proves the superior psychological position of the heroine.

But we cannot forget the physical position of Jane, equally important in the sequence, since Jane remains up whereas Rochester sits, a symbol of his weakened power. Rochester becomes

now the male character who needs the heroine to “be able to define himself”¹⁷ as much as the heroine needs the intervention of the gothic villain to be able to get independent and wakes her real self up. Thus, she gets to step out the role of objectified, victimized woman and let the audience see our point, the real vulnerability of Victorian men.

¹⁷ Fukunaga does not only know in depth Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, but the other versions that filmmakers have adapted throughout the years. Thus, this whole sequence does not recycle any aspect of Stevenson’s or Zeffirelli’s adaptations, much the contrary since Fukunaga constructs the sequence in a radically different way. If talking about Stevenson’s *Jane Eyre*, we may observe that the screenplay does not respect the original text considering that the presence of Rochester (Orson Welles) keeps overwhelming every scene in which he appears. Instead of encountering a damaged calm Rochester, sit down alone, isolated from society, as Fukunaga’s presents, we face a powerful figure (intensified by the camera angle that focuses Welles and increases the difference of stature between both protagonists) that seems not to fear anything, intense, full of pride exemplified when he violently says “I don’t want your pity”. It demonstrates he is the same rigid Rochester that oppresses the governess all along this 1944 film. Besides, it is obvious that another aspect Fukunaga wanted to delete from his adaptation is Jane’s attitude in Stevenson’s version seeing that she is portrayed as an intimidated, hesitant woman that even begs the Byronic hero not to send her away, “Don’t send me away. Please, don’t send me away.” Taking this into account, we cannot agree with V. M. Glad when says about Stevenson’s film that “Mr. Rochester leaves his Byronic hero motifs in the end and needs to depend on Jane for everything...”, (18) because there is no such ambiguity between the Byronic hero/villain and the Feminized hero in his film but within Fukunaga’s 2011 adaptation. Another crucial clue that allows us not to consider that Stevenson’s Rochester leaves the Byronic motifs is that, against Brontë’s original, Jane does not kiss Edward, but he is the one who kisses Jane, and in a violent way, taking complete physical and psychological control of her, so this assertion “But Mr. Rochester kisses Jane and is released of his Byronic hero motifs.” (Glad 20) is completely dismantled. Thus, we observe here that “the presence of such a character at least held out the possibility, however utopian, for a model of male sexuality based on something other than brutality, a heterosexual relationship based on something other than male power and dominance, and female anger and distrust.” (Waldman 38). That is why we may define Stevenson’s film as an incoherent adaptation, because his aim of “reversing the patriarchal structures” implies “the dilution of Jane’s rebellious vision” and therefore “she is seen from a male point of view” (reasserted through the “very Wellesian mise-èn-scene”).

III. 1. Rochester's vulnerability

At this point, it is important to take into account that when analyzing an adaptation, the scenes that coincide with the original source are as much significant as the ones that do not follow rigidly the story-telling. It is the case of some sequences that do not appear in Brontë's narrative neither in some other versions of *Jane Eyre*, such as Stevenson's or Zeffirelli's . That way, Fukunaga wanted to offer a new reading of some parts of the novel differing from the other adaptations he looked at.

The first scene (Images 6a-b, 7) that we are going to analyze here reminds us of the very moment the Jane arrives at Thornfield. Mrs. Fairfax guides Jane through the corridors until her bedroom. But if paying attention, the camera focuses on an specific part of the corridor where a peculiar painting¹⁸ hangs. The painting depicts two people, a woman and a little boy naked and apparently asleep.

Image 6a: Erotic painting.



¹⁸ We do not know if this painting really exists or Fukunaga's producers created it for the film.

We can only see this painting for a few seconds so it is impossible to explain its role in Fukunaga's film in advance. However, it is curious that the following scene that appears shows Jane waking up for her first day at Thornfield Hall:

Image 7: Jane's doll.



What we can get from this new scene is that the camera focuses a doll, a doll (Image 7) which the protagonist seems to be sleeping with. Thus, the fact that Jane looks at the erotic painting in the corridor and the fact of embracing her doll seem to symbolize Jane's development from girl to woman, the visual representation of her sexual arousal at the very moment of entering Thornfield.

It is obvious that some critics might not agree with that hypothesis since the painting may be considered just a mere detail. But, in fact, it reappears in another scene of Fukunaga's adaptation, what let us think about its real symbology within 2011 *Jane Eyre*. The painting reappears after Jane's and Rochester's talk about moral degeneration:

...When fate wronged me, I had not the wisdom to remain cool: I turned desperate; then I degenerated. Now, when any vicious simpleton excites my disgust by his paltry ribaldry, I cannot latter myself that I am better than he... Besides, *since happiness is irrevocably denied me, I have a right to get pleasure out of life: and I will get it, cost what it may.*"
-Then you will degenerate still more, sir.

-Possibly: yet why should I, if I can get sweet, fresh pleasure? And I may get it as sweet and fresh as the wild honey the bee gathers on the moor...
-*To speak truth, sir, I don't understand you at all: I cannot keep up the conversation, because it has got out of my depth...* (159-160).

After reading the original quotation, their talk seems to be about carnal pleasure as if Rochester was exonerating himself for his sins and sexual debauchery in front of the angelic Jane. Moira Buffini has adapted Brontë's lines, capturing in a few lines the inner essence of their talk, how Rochester explains he has the right to ask for pleasure, how Jane answers "Then you'll degenerate still more [sir]" and finally how she needs to get out of the conversation since she does not even meet her own sexuality, and consequently she cannot follow his points:

-... When I was your age, fate dealt me a blow. *And since happiness is denied me, I've a right to get pleasure in its stead.* And I will get it, cost what it may.
-*Then you'll degenerate still more.*
-But, Miss Eyre, if the pleasure I was seeking was sweet and fresh, if it was an inspiration, if it wore the robes of an angel of light, what then? [...]
-*To speak truth, sir, I don't understand you at all. I fear the conversation has got out of my depth ...* (47).

Image 6b: Erotic painting.



Maynard suggests that "Brontë's inclusion of the strength of sexual forces in her character's lives and the stresses and difficulties from that strength was unusual at the time and therefore important." (Loh 21) and if so, why the other previous adaptations try to omit sexual or erotic

references? If looking at for example Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*, the director seems to cover the female sexual fantasy as long as the domineering brute (starring Orson Welles) satisfied the female audience¹⁹. It is important to mention that the 40s was an epoch in which prevailed the female gothic, but in a "female-centred" and "female-addressed cycle". Therefore, according to Mitchell, "... there are two kinds of visual pleasure in which the cinema audience is invited to take part: the obvious narcissistic pleasure of identifying with the controlling male protagonist, and the scopophilic pleasure of erotics stimulation through sight." (13), and so, female 40s audience may have experienced certain sort of pleasure when looking the continuous oppressive power that Rochester applied over the powerless Jane. To sum up, Stevenson included an element of "potentially fatal sexual attraction" that is the role of the male character, but there is no more eroticism within. Well now, Zeffirelli's *Jane Eyre* escapes completely the heterosexual sexual love. That way, we reaffirm Sadoff's words, 1996 *Jane Eyre* just modernized the "female submission by suppressing the sexual imaginarios that drive romance genre" turning the novel into a "romance acceptable to postfeminist female viewers..." (Loh 63).

Then, Fukunaga's inclusion of the symbolic picture (Images 6a-6b) that seems to be a kind of Venus and Cupid naked becomes the physical representation of sexual temptation and desire, and so, it reorientates our study of Fukunaga's movie. Regarding the hero/villain, it is emphasized as M. Jordan also thinks that "his identity in realization of a necessarily guilty desire, a transgression against the divine principle that flesh, specially female flesh, is a snare and a delusion" (81) through the symbolism depicted by the erotic picture.

That way, we find out that the picture may have two connected interpretations. The first time it appears (Image 6a), the painting seems to be a sort of representation of Jane's sexual development, however the second time it appears, it seems to symbolize our sexually repressed Rochester (Image 6b). But, we cannot forget that this painting was created retrospectively and I refer here that Fukunaga's scenario editors created this painting according to the techniques and styles used by painters during the nineteenth century, what may bring light to our hypothesis. At the nineteenth century, we all know that women were

¹⁹ "... the 1940s perverse sexual scenarios indulged female fantasy even as they enhanced masculine power..." (Loh 63).

only male objects, they needed to be educated and saved from their “inherently” perversion. But then, women started to get aware of their own capacities, and denied to be submitted to male teachings or orders, and consequently, this changing scenario formed part of the “battlefield of words and images”.

Looking at that, the painting becomes more than a simple detail as long as the representation of “weak, exhausted, and dangerously heavy” females did not depict their “passive existences” but their recovering power in front of men. The representation of such women, “a sleeping maiden sunk on a marble couch in utter abandon of repose”, becomes a “true icon of restful detumescence.” Thus, women’s lassitude (and the emphasis upon their nudity) is explained by sexual causes, an excessive indulgence in solitary pleasures from which “masculine participation” has been removed:

... rather than appealing to the viewer’s appreciation of the woman as self-sacrificial martyr, this variation based itself on a generalized assumption of the ability of women to satisfy her own physical needs, thus clearly removing the male from sexual responsibility and allowing him once more to enter into voyeuristic, passive erotic titillation within a soothing, undemanding context conducive to a state of restful detumescence.(Dijkstra 78)

In sum, after reading this last quotation and after linking those ideas with Fukunaga’s painting, our point is that this scene symbolizes not only how powerless Rochester feels since he has been removed from Jane’s sexual development²⁰ but how Jane could be able to satisfy her needs one day. Thus, as been pointed out throughout this thesis, Fukunaga’s adaptation tries to emphasize the heroine’s superiority making the male protagonist fall from his previous sexual active role to a passive one and making he loose his “natural” status of virility.

Nevertheless, that is not all we have to explain about the sexual issue. There is another scene that faces the female-male confrontation within Fukunaga’s adaptation and has to do with how “... the Byronic hero is paired with a more innocent, angelic figure, just as Jane has to choose between the saintly St. John Rivers or the Byronic Mr. Rochester to spend her life with.” (Glad 21). It is curious to mention that other versions of *Jane Eyre*, such as Stevenson’s or Zeffirelli’s , were not interested in including Jane’s adventure in the Moors, maybe because they did not see anything relevant or special for their cinematic versions, or because they

²⁰ What might also explain why the painting appears at the very moment Jane enters Thornfield Hall.

really found something that crashes directly with the overall mood (or subliminal intentions) of their adaptations.

Our point is, if both adaptations²¹ follow the path of female submission in favor of the male dominance, how could Fukunaga screen a Jane who opposes to the more important male figures of the novel? Thus, this idea guides us to another question, is St. John the angelic figure, the rescuer of the suffering Jane or another version of the double Byronic character? Cary Fukunaga explained in an interview that “the last part of the story is slow but important”²² and consequently it had to be present in his adaptation, what collides with the lack of interest that the other two directors displayed towards this part of Brontë’s novel.

As Craik said, Moor House becomes in some aspects Thornfield’s “antithesis” because it becomes a “symbol of security and family unity...”, however “subjects her to more anxiety than Thornfield ever did, when St John calls her to submit to a soulless and self-destroying marriage of duty.” (Bloom 10) Fukunaga evidently knew how to portray the menacing oppression of the Moors through this particular moment (Image 8) when St. John kisses Jane even though both consider themselves brothers:

Image 8: Mr. Rivers’ kiss.



²¹ Stevenson’s and Zeffirelli’s versions.

²² Jane’s stay at the Moors.

As Jordan affirms, we cannot deny the fact that 1996 *Jane Eyre* “serves a heteronormative function”²³ just in the same way 1940 *Jane Eyre*, and it is obvious that the screenwriter of Fukunaga’s *Jane Eyre* also made use of the heteronormative love²⁴ when foregrounding the problematic of female identity during the Victorian era. But, it is important how Fukunaga does not forget about the question of male identity at that time represented in the Brontë Gothic male characters, an ever-ending ambiguity of the Byronic villain and the romanticized hero. Thus, the Gothic effect²⁵ is included in Fukunaga’s *Jane Eyre*, not only when considering that “the Gothic center the mystery of female identity teeming with archaic fantasies of power and vulnerability, which a patriarchal society encourages by its cultural divisions.” (Kahane 350) but screening the mysteries of male sexual identity, its fantasies and vulnerabilities.²⁶

Then, *Jane Eyre* may be seen as a novel of “erotic domination” even though Brontë’s protagonist tries to redefine mastery to invert the male and female. We, as viewers, may notice the difference between the Janes in the diverse cinematic versions, and so, in Fukunaga’s creation, we notice that “her character is not objectified in the way that those of most Victorian heroines are” not only “in that she is not beautiful” (Mitchell 45). Besides, the “activity of looking in this novel is -astonishingly- directed toward the male rather than the female in a reversal of the usual scope economy” (Mitchell 46) hence Fukunaga turns Jane into the subject while Rochester into “an aesthetic object”.

According to Mitchell, *Jane Eyre* is a “tale of erotic domination and submission” (57) so it allows us to read the cinematic version of Fukunaga as the reversal of the tale of erotic male

²³ “The adaptations of the 1990s almost always ended in happy marriages between liberated women and sexually respectful idealized men... a utopian space in which erotic fulfillment could merge with feminist triumph” (Jordan 90).

²⁴ We only have to observe that Fukunaga allots no more than twenty minutes of his film to show Jane’s stay at Gateshead Hall and Lowood. The rest of the adaptation is completely devoted to her stay at Thornfield Hall and the Moors.

²⁵ We may consider Jane’s and St. John’s kiss as an element of the Gothic fiction if we are able to see this kissing as a kind of incest. Jane and John share relative bonds even though they did not know it yet, but they are also linked psychologically as Jane asks him to be her brother, and he actually accepts the proposal (“-Good night. Is Jane not our sister, too?”[102]). There are other actual female Gothic films that include this sort of illicit forbidden love between relatives, such as Del Toro’s film *Crimson Peak*.

²⁶ It seems evident how St. John becomes vulnerable (triggered by the kiss) to the female protagonist just in the same way Rochester becomes completely vulnerable to Jane at Thornfield Hall.

dominance and female submission²⁷. Our point is that there is no rescuer in the novel because both male characters are paired since suffer from the same illness, sexual repression and sexual obsession. Hence, Fukunaga seems to follow an alternative to the ever-ending question of the subject/object discussion²⁸ in *Jane Eyre*, “an early solution to male dominance” that would be “for women to become more male-identified, appropriating power in order to become more autonomous” (Mitchell 6) thanks to those scenes²⁹ included in the film. As commented before, the painting makes reference to how Jane can develop by herself without male participation and to Rochester’s fears of being a passive agent. Finally, St. John’s kiss makes reference to how Jane opposes the other male character because she is completely capable of fulfilling herself so Mr. Rivers represents again male worry of sexual passivity in Jane’s development.

IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF MISE-EN-SCÈNE

The characters as well as the settings have an essential part within Brontë’s novel and consequently, both must be equally indispensable in *Jane Eyre*’s adaptations. We all know that the suspense, the horror and mysterious events are carried by the gloomy setting that creates some expectancy upon the audience. The most common elements (regarding the setting) that form part of the Gothic genre are the old “seemingly abandoned” castle or mansion, secret hidden rooms providing a sense of haunting place, the inclusion of mist, the presence of cemeteries, dark large corridors... Thus, it is not difficult to find all these elements in *Jane Eyre*’s different adaptations since it is the basic knowledge to create a Gothic film. However, we must look further as Craik did:

²⁷ Our hypothesis is also supported by S. Gilbert’s words “Brontë’s novel broods as intently on the mysteries of male sexuality as it does outhouse of female eroticism, transcribing the fantasies of both sexes with uncanny clarity and (for its period) astonishing candor... tells a shifting almost phantasmagoric series of stories about the perils and possibilities of sexual passion.” (1998 357). Furthermore, the “reversal of the tale”, commented in the *corpus* of this thesis, is a trendy discussion, although not perceived at first sight. It is interesting how in a interview of Michael Fassbender, the interviewer asked him how did he feel after becoming the sex symbol of Hollywood and its audience. Our point is that we are nowadays facing a new analysis of the female Gothic in cinema in which the heroine is not the sexualized object, but the hero. See www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pha3ZuvnuhA.

²⁸ For instance, in Stevenson’s *Jane Eyre*, the exaggerating use of camera angle focusing Rochester (Orson Welles) all along the film put into question the subject/object discussion, the same discussion that has shaped *Jane Eyre* adaptations through generations.

²⁹ See Images 6-8.

The shape of [*Jane Eyre*] is very much represented by the places where the action occurs, which Charlotte Brontë makes an essential part of the structure, as well as the atmosphere, of her stories. Places have indeed as much character as people... (Bloom 7)

According to Craik's words, it is not enough to recognize the Gothic elements within the novel, we must understand and interiorize them. In this light, it is not enough to construct a Gothic adaptation following rigidly the Gothic patterns and putting them one behind the other, as if they had not any connection with the overall atmosphere of the text. A good example would be that, the Gothic setting is clearly accompanied by the dark vocabulary and suspense tone, all in concordance with the novel's idiosyncrasy as demonstrated in:

...The ground was hard, the air was still, *my road was lonely*; I walked fast till I got warm, and then I walked slowly to enjoy and analyse the species of pleasure brooding for me in the hour and situation. It was three o'clock; the *church bell tolled* as I passed under the belfry: the charm of the hour lay in its approaching dimness, *in the low-gliding and pale-beaming sun...* but whose best winter delight lay *in its utter solitude and leafless repose*. If a breath of air stirred, it made no sound here; for there was not a holly, *not an evergreen to rustle*, and the stripped hawthorn and hazel bushes were as still as the white, worn stones which causewayed the middle of the path. *Far and wide, on each side, there were only fields*, where no cattle now browsed; and the little brown birds, which stirred occasionally in the hedge, looked like single russet leaves that had forgotten to drop [...] *A rude noise* broke on these fine rippings and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear: *a positive tramp, tramp, a metallic clatter*, which effaced the soft wave-wanderings; as, in a picture, the solid mass of a crag, or the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in *dark and strong* on the foreground, efface the aerial distance of azure hill, sunny horizon, and *blended clouds* where tint melts into tint [...] As this horse approached, and as I watched for it to appear *through the dusk*, I remembered certain of Bessie's tales, *wherein figured a North-of-England spirit called a "Gytrash"* which, in the form of horse, mule, or large dog, *haunted solitary ways*, and sometimes came upon belated travellers, as this horse was now coming upon me.

It was very near, but not yet in sight; when, in addition to the tramp, tramp, I heard a rush under the hedge, and close down by the hazel stems glided a great dog, whose black and white colour made him a distinct object against the trees. It was exactly one form of Bessie's Gytrash—a *lion-like creature* with long hair and a huge head: it passed me, however, quietly enough; not staying to look up, with strange pretercanine eyes, in my face, as I half expected it would. The horse followed,—a tall steed, and on its back a rider. The man, the human being, *broke the spell at once*. Nothing ever rode the Gytrash: it was always alone; and goblins, to my notions, though they might tenant the dumb carcasses of beasts, could scarce covet shelter in the commonplace human form... (131-133)

These long quotation directly extracted from Brontë's text that coincides with the moment before Jane and Edward first met, clearly proves that the vocabulary, carefully selected by the author, intensifies the quality of "the atmosphere of gothic; mystery; horror; gloomy and sorrow." (Hemy 52). We are now forced not only to focus our attention on the simple setting, but the way it interconnects with characters and the story-line or how much does it say about the internal self of characters, specially of female protagonists. That way, the last *Jane Eyre* (2011) seems to be born to reaffirm Botting's opinion:

In Gothic productions imagination and emotional effects exceed reason. Passion, excitement and sensation transgress social proprieties and morals laws... signified a trend towards an aesthetics based on feeling and emotion... associated primarily with the sublime. (Hanson 53).

We cannot deny the fact that the majority of films based on the Victorian era (adaptations or new movies) fall in certain Gothic stereotypes, architectural stereotypes above all, in order to satisfy the curiosity the audience feels about the Victorian past and atmosphere. And so, we also found stereotypical aspects in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* such as the very moment Jane walks through the woods and a raven suddenly appears on screen scaring the protagonist as well as making the audience give a start. Another example of this formulaic Gothic in Fukunaga's adaptation may be the moment when Jane has to take care of R. Mason whereas Rochester looks for the doctor:

Image 9a: Frightened Jane.



Image 9b: Frightened Jane.



As we might observe in the images 9a-b, Jane is alone in Rochester's bedroom taking care of R. Mason who was attacked by Bertha. We cannot deny that Fukunaga is also carried along by the common gothic paraphernalia in those scenes: soft breeze that provokes shivers, some creaks as if someone was running upstairs and some cries that complete the overall mood of the scene. Besides, as many Gothic heroines did, Jane also tries to investigate what is going on getting closer to the hidden door, but a strong sound scares her.

However, Fukunaga has become the director who expanded the contemporary vision of the Gothic, demonstrated in many parts of his adaptation when introducing new techniques such as long silences that raise audience's expectation (images 9a-b). But, this new techniques can be also observed through the interconnection between the Gothic genre and the sign to late romanticism in painting. We cannot omit that Gothic literature was related to romanticism, and consequently to Nature. This Nature becomes a projection of mental states in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, a projection of Jane's isolation, as reveal those images presented below.

Image 10a: Jane in Nature.



Image 10b: Jane in Nature.



Gothic literature transformed the pleasure of natural beauty into confusion and terror caused by sublime moments. Nevertheless, we are not dealing here with that concept of the sublime that impresses or terrifies, common characteristics of romantic painters like Friedrich, but with a softer romantic style. Therefore, the introduction of this type of scenarios aims to bring us closer to the nineteenth-century, and consequently be closer to the time when Charlotte Brontë reworks the Gothic genre turning it into a more mundane genre, closer to reality. Likewise, we can consider that the producers wanted to make a nod to those contemporary Romantic painters of Brontë who found pictorial inspiration in landscapes similar to those present in Fukunaga's adaptation (Image 10a-b). For all these reasons, we affirm that Fukunaga analyzes Jane's character and fears to create some space to influence her actions and thoughts.

Getting back on track, after this digression, the scene in the forest is a good example of how Fukunaga keeps expanding the contemporary vision of the Gothic. The director transports Jane to the periphery of the social world, the uninhabited forest directly related with Brontë Gothicism made for both excite and suffer:

Image 11: Alone at the woods.



Fukunaga's scenario achieved the transformation of Brontë's lines, the solitude with which Jane walks through the "hard ground" (it seems difficult for her to advance) and the shadowy forest. The lack of leaves is also significant as if there would not be any sort of lively being there, "leafless repose." There are numerous leafless trees one behind the other which embody the oppressiveness that the horror and mystery create upon the heroine, "the rough boles of a great oak, drawn in dark and strong on the foreground". Furthermore, the sinister atmosphere is even intensified through the absence of any sort of music³⁰, so we are only able to recognize the ambient sound of Jane's breath and walk, following Brontë's description "If a breath of air stirred, it made no sound here; for there was not a holly, not an evergreen to rustle... worn stones which causewayed the middle of the path."

The "rude noise" that "broke... at once so far away and so clear" forms part of the recreation of the horror since we must not forget that "terror depends on not seeing clearly, and created an effective obscurity or mystery that allowed for maximum projection of the reader's [or the audience's] fantasies..." The sightless noise, "a positive tramp, tramp, a metallic clatter" that at the same time "efface the aerial distance of azure hill, sunny horizon, and blended clouds where tint melts into tint [...] intensified in this adaptation by the inclusion of the dense mist, precedes the arrival of the dark rider. That way, all the colorless and hopeless atmosphere

³⁰ We all know that filmic techniques have developed and improved as time goes by. It is worth mentioning that in the 40s decade the lack of certain technology restricted the quantity and quality of cinematic productions. I refer here for instance to the way of recording sounds in Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*. In comparison, it is interesting to analyse how Fukunaga made use of ambient sound in numerous parts of his *Jane Eyre* (2011): the flashback, the scene in which Jane and Edward first met, the scene in which Jane took care of R. Mason or when she left Thornfield and found herself alone in the middle of nature. That way, ambient or direct sound faces the constant inclusion of soundtracks in Stevenson's or Zeffirelli's adaptations that was only used to fill all the silences. This idea connects with other of our hypothesis: there is another new way of representing the gothic genre in cinema, a gothic closer to the real literary gothic far away of common stereotypes.

evidently influenced Jane's reaction, filling the empty settings of Stevenson's *Jane Eyre*³¹ and redirecting the un-Gothic version of Zeffirelli³². Besides, we agree that all these perceptions of the heroine really come from "the physical, emotional, psychological and political constraints..." (Jordan 81) that she feels at Thornfield Hall.

It is also curious that the references that Jane makes about the Gytrash monster when she feels menaced in the woods in the original text ("It was exactly one form of Bessie's Gytrash..."), do not appear in the Stevenson's or Zeffirelli's adaptations. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that in the last version of *Jane Eyre*, Buffini actually included these references in a dialogue between Jane and Adèle in the previous moments of Jane going to the woods:

JANE

'Oh do not go,' begged her maid, 'For

the gytrash roams these hills...'

³¹ When analyzing Stevenson's adaptation we must take into account that the popularization of horror fiction provoked an increase of the female gothic during the 40s. At the same time, this gothic popularization overlapped with the renewal of film noir and doing so, both shared "many stylistic visual and aural elements" like the chiaroscuro lighting, mobile camera, sound contrasts... Thus, in this particular scene of Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* in which Jane faces Rochester for the first time, we may observe easily the stereotypical elements present in all Gothic adaptations of the epoch, the dense mist that precedes the arrival of some thing, the increase of the dramatic soundtrack that becomes stronger as Rochester moves closer, along with the prompt first appearance of Rochester behind Jane just few seconds later he fells the horse. Nevertheless, the gothic environment crashes directly with Jane's (J. Fontaine) reaction and facial expression since she is not worried, anxious or bewildered, but is perfectly idealized, serene and beautiful in spite of not knowing what is approaching to herself. The powerless feminine attitude is also resembled by how Rochester stands up after falling his horse without any sort of harm, what actually symbolizes he does not need the female help, making her even smaller in front of the male character. We cannot, therefore, admit that Stevenson was able to portray Brontë's places full of character "as people", but much the contrary since "The supernaturalism in *Jane Eyre* [and *Villette*] seems to be linked to the interiority of the female protagonists..." (Lorber 9), and it is obvious that he fails when considering this Brontë perspective.

³² If focusing on Zeffirelli's 1996 version, "... the Gothic aesthetic of the 1943 film is replaced by a more realistic setting". What impresses the audience is the inclusion of settings full of light and sunshine throwing away all the darkness and menacing atmosphere that characterize Gothic fiction. That way, we are able to assert that 1996 Jane became more a "costume drama" nearer to Austen's perspective, a mere love story without "melodramatic emotion" than a transposition of Charlotte Brontë's novel. These ideas are proved by that particular sequence in which the Brontë place is completely dismantled, there seems not to be "Far and wide, on each side... only fields...", there is no "a rude noise broke on these fine rippings and whisperings, at once so far away and so clear..." that prevents the audience of something sinister to happen. There is neither "a positive tramp, tramp, a metallic clatter... drawn in dark and strong on the foreground..." or "blended clouds..." that increases the mysterious aspect of the story, but rich colors with lovely warm landscape. Thus, without any surprise, Rochester appears as a noble gentleman riding his horse and both keep looking at each other with apparent devotion. Against Brontë's depiction of Jane's attitude, Zeffirelli's Jane (starring C. Gainsbourg) remains strangely calm, there is no inquietude in her expression as in Stevenson's Jane. This enchanting encounter is intensified by the music created by Alessio Vlad and Claudio Capponi smoothening the sequence to its extreme so it allows us to describe 1996 *Jane Eyre* as an un-Gothic adaptation *versus* Brontë's own aim:

"... the hunger, rebellion and rage, fostered in both Charlotte Brontë and her heroines by a coercive cultural architecture; the subversive strategies through which the author and characters alike sought to undermine the structures of oppression; and the egalitarian sexual as well as social relationships toward which the novel strove." (Gilbert 1998 353-354).

ADELE (In French)

What's that?

JANE

A spirit of the North that lies in wait for travellers. It tenants the carcasses of beasts; possesses horses, wolves, and great dogs. You know it only by its eyes, which burn as red as coals and if one should chance upon you -

ADELE (in French)

What? What will it do? Jane sees that she has scared Adele.

JANE Nothing. A mere story.

Sophie enters with drinks and biscuits for Jane and Adele. Adele speaks confidentially to Jane.

ADELE

Sophie told me of a lady who wanders

here at night. Sometimes you can hear her. She comes to suck your blood.

Jane blinks, taken aback. She looks disapprovingly at Sophie.

JANE What nonsense. (53)³³.

Then, the aim of the Gytrash reference in 2011 *Jane Eyre* is the raising expectation upon the audience. We all know that “omens” form part of the gothic architecture, and so, we may consider this conversation between Jane and Adèle a sort of omen too, because it seems to anticipate not only her first encounter with Rochester (when remarking the sight of the monster, what we can curiously associate with the sight of Rochester, the most relevant characteristic of Brontë’s gothic hero³⁴) but the first apparition of Bertha Mason since Adèle talks about the phantom “of a lady who wanders here at night.” or even the moment in which Bertha bites her brother when Adèle again says “she bites you with her teeth and sucks the blood”. Therefore, we are not talking now about the fidelity that the film maintains upon the original text, but upon the author’s aim in order to continue or amplify the gothic sensationalism of Brontë’s lines. What we can extract from this dialogue is that Jane is not safe either inside or outside the “haunted” mansion since “the truth of this relationship is an interior truth... all landscape of psychological development.” (Bloom 61) in the presence as well as in the non-presence of the Byronic hero, as also shown in those scenes of Fukunaga’s film presented below (Images 12a,b,c,d).

³³ See min. 00:29:58-00:31:02 in Fukunaga’s adaptation.

³⁴ E. g. “... with a pretercaninze eye...” (134); or “... and he searched my face with the eyes that I saw were dark, irate, and piercing.” (142).

At the very beginning of her arrival at Thornfield, Jane feels the necessity of going outside to breath fresh air. Thus, the incontable footprints of the heroine (Image 12a) left upon the garden denote her interior worries. She seems to be desperate and lost within the labyrinth walls of Thornfield, in the same way her footprints does not follow an only right path, but disorganized ones. However, in this sequence, there is another element, maybe imperceptible for some viewers, but full of significance in our opinion. Jane goes around in circles breaking with her fingers a little flower into pieces (Image 12b). This fact symbolizes again Jane's psychological instability because she does not know her role in Thornfield at all. Curiously, this scene will be repeated in the film after the sequence in which accepts Rochester's proposal so it seems that Jane's psychological instability is reaffirmed inasmuch as she seems even not to know her role as Rochester's future wife (Image 12c).

Image 12a: At Thornfield's garden.



Image 12b: At Thornfield's garden.



Image 12c: At Thornfield's garden.



Therefore, our point is that it is not just the oppressive presence of the Byronic hero, but Jane's intuition that prevents her about the constraints that stopped her development, and consequently we cannot agree:

Such simple combinations of good and bad prepare for the much more subtle use of Thornfield. The place has several aspects: freedom and happiness are embodied in some parts of the house, in its gardens, and in the surrounding landscape; while the sinister and evil are embodied in the upper stories (specially at night); the grand world of society, heartless and tasteless, belongs in the drawing room... (Bloom 9).

And we cannot agree with that hypothesis since "the sinister and evil" are not only embodied in the "upper stories", either "at night". In spite of the beauty and majesty of Thornfield, we must not deceive ourselves, the director perfectly knew how to capture the protagonist's insecurity and oppression not only during all the threatening events that occurred at night, but at daylight, as we may see in the next scenes (Images 12d and Image 13), and so, there is presented a permanent distressed Jane.

Image 12d: At Thornfield's garden.



Hence, we might observe in this sequence (Image 12d), a Jane in an enigmatic gesture, going from top to bottom the same part of Thornfield's garden. However, what is curious is that this zone seems to be more a sort of labyrinth than a free landscape, depicting a recurring understanding of Jane's attitude. Even though she is eager to go out from the oppressive place, she seems doomed to remain there, in that long greenish corridor without any option to turn right or left. Besides, her arms in jar evidently denote the anguish in which is trapped the gothic heroine. She seems to suffer from claustrophobia though she is not in a narrow dark place, what evidences that the extreme feeling is intensified at night as well as at daylight. She is a woman in distress, without any possibility of escape, what provoked at the same time this state of despair (despite of being paradoxically "outside"). It is also important to remark that the facial expression of the actress embodies perfectly well Jane's collision of feelings as the oppression that she feels does not only comes from the outside, but her inside.

Looking at that, we can observe that Fukunaga's technique of screening the Gothic differs from his predecessors, not only because he portrays better the horror and suspense Brontë achieved in her lines, but because he fills the "empty" settings relating the physical and the character's psyche. He does not only present sequences of the supernatural or inexplicable events, but simple tiny realist details that may be unnoticed but keep a basic part of the Gothic, as a psychological genre that plays with the audience's mind.

Those ideas might be perceived in one more scene through Jane's incapacity of breathing normally (Image 13), also increased by the transcendental election of costumes (the corset). In this manner, the costume team created a work of art, knowing how to read between Brontë's lines, as long as the "vestural code" "acts as an exteriorization of interior identities and emotions." (Hanson 79). Precisely, Mia Wasikowska talks in an interview³⁵ about how she felt starring Jane and how the corset restricted even her breathing so it becomes a way of representing the repression women in general, and Jane in particular, felt at that time. It cannot be coincidence that there is a sequence in the film, after the fake wedding, in which the camera only focuses on how Jane takes off the corset violently. Thus, we could considered that the act of taking off her wedding closet symbolizes her decision to get out of the repressive world of Thornfield and Rochester:

³⁵ See www.youtube.com/watch?v=ov1p7InXxaE&list=SP603532F528F31CF4.

Image 13a: Taking off the wedding corset.



Image 13b: Taking off the wedding corset.



But this analysis does not remain here, there is another last transcendental sequence that gives more light to the great influence that gothic settings have upon the feminine character in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*. This sequence presents Bertha's terrifying laugh which may allow us to understand better the importance of Bertha's role in the film.

The supernatural elements in *Jane Eyre*... are repressed in much the same way the female protagonist is... [She] feels that it is necessary to bury their emotions. As a result of this repression, they outwardly come across as somewhat dull and drab. (Lorber 17-18).

According to Lorber's words, the crossroads of compressed emotions within Jane's mind, let her imagination flower and in some way, exaggerate the events that take place around her, making them phantasmagoric and inexplicable to human reason. If we pay attention now to the original text of *Jane Eyre*, we could find out how filmmakers adapt this crucial moment:

... Though I had now extinguished my candle and was laid down in bed, *I could not sleep for thinking of his look* when he paused in the avenue, and told how his destiny had risen up before him, and dared him to be happy at Thornfield.

"Why not?" I asked myself. "What alienates him from the house? Will he leave it again soon? Mrs. Fairfax said he seldom stayed here longer than a fortnight at a time; and he has now been resident eight weeks. If he does go, the change will be doleful. Suppose he should be absent spring, summer, and autumn: how joyless sunshine and fine days will seem!"

I hardly know whether I had slept or not after this musing; at any rate, *I started wide awake on hearing a vague murmur, peculiar and lugubrious, which sounded, I thought, just above me*. I wished I had kept my candle burning: the night was drearily dark; my spirits were depressed. *I rose and sat up in bed, listening*. The sound was hushed.

I tried again to sleep; *but my heart beat anxiously: my inward tranquillity was broken*. The clock, far down in the hall, struck two. Just then it seemed my chamber-door was touched; as if fingers had swept the panels in groping a way along the dark gallery outside. I said, "Who is there?" Nothing answered. *I was chilled with fear*. (172-173).

Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* tries to emphasize all the gothic technique giving significance to the psychological part of the genre, derived from Jane's mind and the oppressing setting. As Michael Fassbender, the actor playing Rochester, says in an interview, this new version of *Jane Eyre* clearly tells "the story through the visual", so this sequence will not be less. Actually, Moira Buffini does respect the author's lines (Image 14) since Jane (Mia Wasikowska) cannot sleep in the same way that the Jane of the novel cannot sleep either e.g. "I could not sleep for thinking of his look..." It is obvious that cinema is not capable of expressing what characters are thinking, but the way the actor or actress performs gives the

audience clues to understand their feelings and move us closer to their thoughts³⁶. Thus, Mia's acting identifies herself with Jane's feelings "...but my heart beat anxiously: my inward tranquillity was broken", not only through her puckered frown but through her difficult breath and sigh, symbolizing both preoccupation and entrapment, respectively.

Image 14: Bertha's laugh.



³⁶ Brontë lines clearly manifest that Jane is not capable of sleeping because of Rochester's impetuous sight. She is completely affected by the second encounter of Mr. Rochester and their really tense conversation that unbalanced her emotions and thoughts. That way, the Byronic hero starts performing his role, the role of catching the heroine, controlling her emotionally and physically. But, if we compare how other filmmakers have screened this particular sequence, we could observe that for instance, Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* or Zeffirelli's adaptation do not respect Brontë's lines. Stevenson's *Jane* (1944) sleeps placidly what may shock us since despite the numerous interventions of the Byronic hero/villain (Orson Wells) presented during the whole film as a superior being, more powerful than the weak Jane (Joan Fontaine), there is nothing of Rochester's Byronic influence upon Jane in that sequence. It is quite queer to see how, though explicitly expressed in the novel, Stevenson's protagonist is not trapped from the very beginning in the tangle of Gothicism, in the physical territory of Rochester, Thornfield Hall, the personification of the male character himself. Therefore, this sequence helps us to reinforce our hypothesis. Stevenson's treatment of the gothic genre is a mere facade, because if we keep analyzing the scenes, we could prove that the setting does not interact with the characters. And so, 1944 *Jane Eyre* just follows the gothic principles as if they were banal instructions of "how to create a gothic scenery" omitting that this genre forms itself from a psychological point of view.

The same problem covers Zeffirelli's adaptation. Jane is again deeply sleepy, despite Brontë's lines specify that the heroine cannot fall asleep. We all know that the director "de-gothicise" each part of his filmic adaptation, and this scene goes in consonance with Zeffirelli's idiosyncrasy. However, it is queer how in place of being Rochester's psychological power the reason why she cannot sleep, it is in fact, common noises of the window what wakes her up, not even Bertha's phantasmagoric laugh, embedding logic and coherence within the "dark imperatives" of the Gothic genre.

Furthermore, there are two more relevant details, the sweat drops that fall from Jane's forehead along with the greenish color of the screen. These keen details intensify the oppressing and claustrophobic sense provoked by the Gothic atmosphere. Thus, it is not only the setting, we mean, the gothic architecture of Thornfield, but the emotions it provokes upon her. Rochester is therefore in her mind, he does not let her rest, she is pursued in the psychological corridors of the old mansion³⁷. Jane's expression denotes her hesitation, there is something that attracts her to Rochester and Thornfield, but at the same time, there is another sensation that warns her not to trust (maybe represented by the different tonality that enlightens her face, the light and the darkness). Our protagonist starts being trapped in the domineering territory of Edward, Thornfield³⁸, where he tries to apply his superior psychological control.

³⁷ "Yet not only is Thornfield more realistically drawn than, say, Otranto or Udolpho, it is more metaphorically radiant than the most Gothic mansions: it is the house of Jane's life, its floors and walls of architecture of her experience." (Bloom 73).

³⁸ "Just as a single person is felt and judged in different ways at the same time, so places may arouse a variety of conflicting feelings, and the tensions, beginning fairly simply with the child's view of Gateshead, increase in complexity through Lowood, Thornfield, Morton and Ferndean." (Bloom 7).

V. CONCLUSIONS

After having exposed throughout this thesis the various arguments that support our hypothesis, that is, that most of the scenes of Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* should be studied as a new recreation of the novel and a new form of Screening the Gothic. Thus, he recycles aspects of the original novel, rejects totally the famous versions of Stevenson or Zeffirelli, manages to bring a new approach to *Jane Eyre* giving voice to certain aspects of the novel that Brontë "undermined" maybe by fear of censorship to the extent that "Fukunaga's adaptation privileges a notion of the Gothic as the transgression of the flesh, rooted in sexual desire." (Jordan 94). If we consider, as M. Jordan does, that Brontë's novel only "privileges Gothic uncanniness as a way to understand and realize one's place in the patriarchal world" (94), it seems that Cary Fukunaga expands this "Brontë uncanniness" to deal freely with sexual issues. We will not deny that, despite the film was marketed as "a classic for a new generation" and despite that Jane is presented as a stronger young woman than in previous versions, braver and more daring, Fukunaga and Buffini also abuses in some way the heterosexual love, the romance between the couple perhaps to attract attention from an audience that only knows very vaguely Charlotte Brontë's novel.

As we have already mentioned, *Jane Eyre* (2011) also participates of Hollywood's world, with all that it entails, so to speak, that the exploitation of romance is an aspect that appeals to the audience, which ensures success on the big screen. What would have happened if Fukunaga had dared to change the end of the never-ending story of the young governess? How would the public have reacted to the fact that Jane had not returned to Thornfield Hall and remade her life elsewhere? We will never know, unless some other director wants to present a more radical change in the story. Fukunaga was careful at choosing the actors - those with good performance in Hollywood - that for his new creation. As we know, Mia Wasikowska appears on the big screen with *Alice in Wonderland* -a year before the premiere of *Jane Eyre*-, a film that we could define, if we are allowed, as "retro-Victorian", so it should not surprise us her presence in another film based on the Victorian era as *Jane Eyre*. Thus, Fukunaga ends up turning Mia Wasikowska into the actress who will give life to the protagonists of the classic literary adaptations or "retro-victorian" new films like *Crimson*

Peak (2015), as was Keira Knightley with *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), *The Duchess* (2008) or *Anna Karenina* (2012).

Indeed Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* can be defined as "[a] love story as fiercely intelligent as it is passionate" (Focus Features 2010), because, it is passionate, and not only because of how Charlotte Brontë transmits to us the strength of Jane or Rochester, but by how the actors let us experience it through the screen³⁹. But also, it is a "fiercely" intelligent movie, a film that tries to revive the literary Gothic in its essence, far from the retro-Victorian superficiality created in previous versions e.g. The use in Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* of the characteristics of the Gothic genre as a simple correlation of techniques without unifying sense. We must not overlook that "[a] n audience can not merely read the Gothic story; they must experience it. Their own sensibilities must be aroused, their own values re-evaluated, and their own social codes questioned." (Hanson 53). And this is a *sine qua non* condition in Fukunaga's adaptation.

As we have been observing in the present thesis, Fukunaga explores the basic principles of Gothic, both in regard to the characters and in the different settings in which the story is framed. He hence removes the empty Gothic through the change in cinematographic techniques or the treatment and characterization of the protagonists in Brontë's novel. On the one hand, we have found out that there is a duality in the male characters, a constant ambivalence between the Gothic villain and the romanticized hero in both Rochester and Mr. Rivers. In this way, through the symbology of painting and through the motif of incest, we demonstrate that Fukunaga arises the question of sexuality about what would trouble victorian men when becoming passive agents in women's sexual development. Therefore, we can say that both Rochester and St. John need to cling to the female character to be able to define themselves. It is through Fukunaga's use of the gothic mode that not only questions of female identity but male "come back to haunt the contemporary moment" (Hanson 198). That way, we expose the importance of Fukunaga's re-adaptation of the male characters in his film and also the psychological function implied by the Gothic settings. We show that it is not necessary to be at night or to be in a menacing or terrifying place to feel the oppressive

³⁹ Even, Cary Fukunaga defines M. Fassbender in this way: 'I hadn't seen that sort of fierceness in an actor in a long time... There was an intelligence, an intensity and a masculinity that is very difficult to find in a leading man's one words that remind us of Brontë's own male character (Edward Rochester).

influence of the setting on Jane thanks to the sequences in which the protagonist is in the garden of Thornfield Hall.⁴⁰

With this in mind, Fukunaga's screening techniques differ from his predecessors as he makes great use of ambient sound instead of including constant soundtracks⁴¹. We discover, therefore, that the entire soundtrack album created by Dario Marianelli has an only aim, so to speak, to amplify the feelings of the protagonists at key moments in the story⁴², but it is not used in the peak moments of the horror in which the ragged breathing, the crying, the sighs, or menacing sounds comes to scene. In addition, it seems evident that Fukunaga searches the history of the Gothic to enhance its origins and to let the audience glimpse the close relationship between the Gothic and late romanticism thanks to the amazing landscapes through which Jane wanders to reach the Moors.

Nor can we affirm with complete certainty that -though all these new technical and content aspects that make of Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* a true revitalization of literary gothic in the film tradition of the novel and a new re-reading of the novel- there is a radical new 21st way of screening the Gothic, because for that, we should analyze many of the recently adapted or newly created films framed in the Victorian era, the height of the Gothic genre. However, we can not ignore that the whole content of this thesis gives us the opportunity of a new approach. Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* opens our eyes to a new cinematic Gothic perspective in which terror does not necessarily have to be explicit that is rather hidden behind words, gestures or actions. As noted before, "Fukunaga's adaptation privileges a notion of the Gothic as the transgression of the flesh, rooted in sexual desire..." since Brontë also privileges the uncanny of the Gothic to reveal or understand the place of characters "in the patriarchal world" and as a way to exteriorize their feelings and thoughts, what connects directly with

⁴⁰ See Image 16 a,b,c,d.

⁴¹ Many directors use music film to maintain temporality, to produce some kind of mood, to indicate era or culture or to amplify, as Fukunaga does, the emotions or feelings of protagonists. However, Stevenson's *Jane Eyre* made only use of strong soundtrack to surprise the audience through what is not seen, in sum, a sort of anticipation of the horror.

⁴² We could see some examples of this issue such as the song "Wandering Jane", included in those moments when Jane wanders huge fields in order to dramatize even more the suffering of our female gothic heroine; "Life on the Moors", a slow melancholic song that represents Jane's desolate feeling for being far away from Thornfield Hall, or "The Call Within", a song exclusively created for the moment when Jane hears the weary call of Rochester, a tense sequence amplified by the high sound of violins.

one of the director's statements : "other adaptations treat [*Jane Eyre*] like it's just a period of romance, and I think it's much more than that". (Jordan 94).

In our opinion, Fukunaga knew how to reinterpret the novel, knew how to discover the Gothic essence that came out of the Charlotte Brontë's lines, knew how to make the Jane of 1847, the Jane of the 21st century, and of course he teaches us a new approach to what the Gothic ultimately is and signifies within the seventh art. Likewise, just as we can affirm that "[...] Characteristically, Charlotte Brontë reworks Gothic romance to bring to the surface its representation of reality" (DeLamotte 198), Fukunaga returns to re-work the Gothic genre, elevating it to its extreme in order to show the more Gothic the more reality, so we could define 2011 *Jane Eyre* as the epitome of the reality of the irrational. Finally, we found out that Fukunaga gives the possibility for future studies of film criticism regarding the new techniques of screening the Gothic and the concept of retro-victorianism and intertextuality in Gothic films⁴³.

⁴³ Many are the original aspects that Fukunaga presents in his new Gothic *Jane Eyre*, but there are some particular aspects not included in this thesis: the character of Bertha Mason and the symbology of insects in the adaptation. Likewise, we are introduced again deeply into the question of the new approach of screening the Gothic initiated by Cary Fukunaga. To rescue Bertha's role in Fukunaga's film from oblivion, we must not consider Bertha's apparitions as part of a mere love conflict, but as something more significant. We analyze that in the very moments of Jane's weakness, the first Mrs. Rochester joins the scene. By doing so, we could explain those apparitions as a way of warning the heroine not to commit the same mistakes of her predecessor. The same occurs when the novel tells how Bertha appears in Jane's room before the wedding and breaks her veil what allows us to affirm that the crucial situations of our protagonist are determined by the return of the past and supernatural gadgetry. Our hypothesis of Fukunaga facing a new, well-prepared and revisioned Gothic in cinema would not be valid if those elements we are referring to, would just appear in Fukunaga's 2011 *Jane Eyre*. But, we must take into account that there are some other directors that also make use of the symbolism of insects to exteriorize the very sense of their films and of the continuous presence of the former wives, such is the case of Guillermo Del Toro's *Crimson Peak*. At first, we must appreciate that Del Toro actually includes three of Thomas's former wives (the Byronic male character of this Gothic film), the ones that her sister and mistress, Lucille Sharpe, killed. For that reason, as happens in Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre*, the former wife joins the crucial moments of the story. Even though we know that the associations between Fukunaga's *Jane Eyre* and Del Toro's *Crimson Peak* escape the primary objectives of this thesis, it is really worth mentioning that the technical similitudes as well as the close content that we are able to identify in both films might become an important analysis for further studies.

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