A Memoir Woven out of the Stories of Others: Lucy Snowe's "Heretic" Self-Narration in *Villette*

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1. Introduction

The initial and direct source of self-narration of female protagonists in the novels of female development written by nineteenth-century female authors can presumably be traced back to the late eighteenth-century epistolary novels. Roughly speaking, an epistolary novel consists of the narratives presented by each letter-writing character who sometimes tells about oneself and at other times about others. Jane Austen took the self-narration of a heroine out an epistolary novel and changed it into a free-indirect speech of a focal person, and set it effectively in the third-person narrative. Charlotte Brontë, by contrast, preferred first-person narrative style in which she could make the best use of self-narration of a protagonist.

Her last novel *Villette* (1853),[1] however, is a "heretic narrative" (163) of the female protagonist Lucy Snowe. "My godmother lived in a handsome house in the clean and ancient town of Bretton" is the beginning sentence of this novel, yet who the narrating "I" is, is not disclosed until the second chapter. After the first three chapters in which Lucy depicts not herself but another little girl Paulina Mary Home, Lucy at length commences telling her own story. Unlike Jane Eyre who dedicates her-

self to "self-presentation" (O'Dea 45), Lucy is not always the prominent character in *Villette*. Indeed she remains an amorphous onlooker particularly in the first three chapters. Despite being written in the form of an autobiography, Lucy's stories about other people are a significant proportion of the whole story from the beginning to the end. This intermingling of two narrative modes—narration of herself and others—is the most distinctive feature of *Villette*, and one of its themes, Lucy's self-development, is projected upon the process in which she establishes her self-narration in her narrations of other people. In this paper, I will first examine how Lucy's self-narration evolves and eventually settles in the world consisting of various individuals and how her observation and narration of others function in that process. Then I would like to discuss the importance and significance of this peculiar memoir woven out of the stories of others with regard to Charlotte Brontë's literary development.

2. An awakening to the Necessity of Self-Narration

As I already mentioned in the introduction, Lucy only observes and gives information about others and scarcely talks about herself in the first three chapters filled with the portraits of Paulina Mary Home, John Graham Bretton, Mrs. Bretton (Lucy's godmother), and Mr. Home as well as in the fourth chapter mainly composed of the descriptions of old Miss Marchmont and her past story. However, as for example Mike Edwards, Janice Carlisle, and Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar point out,[2] what Lucy depicts in these beginning chapters prefigures her own life history kept unopened at this moment.[3] Lucy as a subject at this stage seems just to watch and talk about people around her, but older

Lucy as a narrator secretly scatters suggestive hints regarding Lucy's story.

From chapter 5 entitled "Turning a New Leaf," she begins to speak about herself. Losing her mistress Miss Marchmont whom she has served as a companion, she has to leave her present abode without being provided another. Likewise she also "ha[s] to look out for a new place" (43) in terms of narration, since she lost the person on whom she has depended. Although Lucy goes to see and consult her former nurse "as a last and sole resource," she cannot get any word of advice from her (ibid.). While she is walking on a dim, lonely path through fields after leaving the nurse's working place, the "Aurora Borealis" gives her some new energy. Then "a bold thought [is] sent to [her] mind" and she "mentally saw" London (43-44), and then she actually goes there. She expresses her anxiety about the future on the night of arrival as follows: "What was I doing here alone in great London? What should I do on the morrow? What prospects had I in life? What friends had I on earth? Whence did I come? Whither should I go? What should I do?"(46) In this monologue, she now tells her concern about her own life, not about Paulina's as she did at the end of chapter 3: "'How will she get through this world, or battle with this life? How will she bear the shocks and repulses, the humiliations and desolations, which books, and my own reason tell me are prepared for all flesh?'" (34) Lucy, as if to recognize her advance in self-narration, says next morning that her "inner self" has just begun to move (48), and she enjoys walking around London and then crosses the channel on that evening.

However, "harassed" and "exhausted" at boarding, Lucy resumes

observation and narration of other passengers—Ginevra Fanshawe in particular—while she is on the ship. Though she gets back to self-narration after she lands in the kingdom of Labassecour alone, her actions and decision at this stage tend to be directed not by her own will but by someone or something else, such as "inward voice" (60) or "Procidence" (64), as when she reaches Mme. Beck's Pensionnat by chance: "Providence said, 'Stop here; this is your inn.' Fate took me in her strong hand; mastered my will; directed my actions: I rung the door-bell." (ibid.) In addition, she is unable to exchange even a word or two at this moment because she cannot speak French at all.

After becoming a "gouvernante and lady's-maid" (71) at Mme. Beck's Pensionnat, she again continues to observe and portray the "little world of the Rue Fossette" from a "watch-tower of the nursery" (75) until she is promoted to being an English teacher. To become a teacher means "to be called down from [her] watch-tower" and "to be compelled into intercourse with [the] little world" (ibid.) of the Pensionnat. This is certainly the first step to the ultimate goal of self-narration, since she now starts living in the world of the Pensionnat as an agent. Nevertheless she still tries as much as possible to stay away from others in order to make her life calm and quiet by taking refuge in "the seclusion" (108) of a gloomy walk in the school garden, and to keep looking on and talking about others such as Mme. Beck, Ginevra, Dr. John and other teachers and students.

Yet she becomes gradually unable to be a merely "colourless shadow" (155) in the outer world by repressing her inner active thoughts and feelings. Although she studiously suppresses her nature as if she were

"in catalepsy and a dead trance," she sometimes cannot stifle the desire to be fetched out from the present existence and led upwards and onwards (109). Her twofold life—the life of thought and the life of reality "limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter" (77)—is now in crisis. This present situation of Lucy might be also represented in the fact that her secluded "shadow-world" where she lives her own life and leads "the life of thought" (118)—narrow and gloomy path called "l'allée défendue" (107) and her "own quarter" of the empty long dormitory (118)—is by degree encroached on by others. For instance, when Lucy enjoys her life of thought on "l'allée défendue," "rude Real"—a box with a love letter—abruptly drops at her feet and bursts in on her in the retreat (110). In fact the casket and the note are not for her but for Ginevra and they later turn out to be a part of the flirtation between her and Alfred de Hamal, but Lucy gets involved with the affair as she is the one who first finds it. After this incident, Dr. John, who loves Ginevra, speaks much to Lucy though he has hardly paid any attention to her, and Mmd. Beck also watches her much more closely than before. After this intrusion of reality and others into her inner shadow life, she gets in the "cobwebs" (115) of the world of the Pensionnat which she has so far regarded as only an object for observation. This involvement certainly shakes the twofold life of Lucy, and moreover it exercises an effect on the development of self-narration in her extrospection.

The episode in which Lucy acts on stage (chap.14) also indicates the importance of being engaged in the outer world of others. On that day of the fête, Lucy, as usual, retreats from a cheerful group of students and teachers into her "sanctuary" (133) as "a mere looker-on at life"

(141). M. Paul Emanuel, a professor of the Pensionnat, bursts into the place and asks her to be a substitute for a sick girl who was to play a role of a leading character, and "her lips drop[s] the word 'oui'" (134) almost against her will. Probably since this acting scene centers around her self-narration, her self-awareness likewise seems to be raised in this event. For example, Lucy decidedly rejects the male costume prepared for the part and claims as follows: "...it must be arranged in my own way: nobody must meddle; the things must not be forced upon me. Just let me dress my self." (139) Despite her initial reluctance, once she begins to perform on stage before the audience, she "feel[s] the right power come" (140) and eventually acts to please herself (141). Besides, even after "withdrawing to a quiet nook" (142), Lucy fiercely turns on Ginevra and expresses her opinion bluntly (148), or indirectly objects to Dr. John's blind thoughts about Ginevra's virtues by deliberately admiring de Hamal, his rival in love (151). These examples of unusual self-expression on that evening certainly show her progress in self-narration.

Lucy's development of self-narration reaches the first climax in chapter 15, since in this chapter, which follows the episode of the play, Lucy realizes the significance of the presence of others in the life of reality and also the fact that her own life can be sustained only within that sphere. Though so far she has observed and told about other people, she might have never been aware what this meant to her until she is left in school "quite alone" (161) during the long summer vacation. Depressed by loneliness, she now craves for "companionship" (158) of other people. Although she has usually isolated herself in her shadow world

and from which she has viewed others silently, she feels unable to endure being "quite alone"; the life of reality without the presence of others is meaningless since it does not provide her with the objects for observation and narration through which she has more or less interacted with the outer world and its people. Therefore "the solitude and the stillness of the long dormitory" which she used to see as her refuge for her own life "[cannot] not be borne any longer" (160).

Likewise, Lucy's reaction to the "crétin" with whom she has been left at the Pensionnat for the first few weeks of the vacation also suggests the change that occurred in her; "the crétin did not seem unhappy" and "she only asked food and sunshine," says Lucy, "lethargy was [her] Paradise" (157). This representation of the inactive crétin can be associated with the former state of Lucy who was also "in a dead trance" and content with the life of reality limited to daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter. But Lucy now feels she cannot be satisfied with such minimum life with no word and no communion, and therefore she often goes out and wanders about the city and fields outside the gate (158). She finally walks out of the Pensionnat when she decides to alter the present situation by her own hands, and "pour[s] out of some portion of long accumulating, long pent-up pain" at the confessional of a Catholic church where she goes in tempted by the sound of the bells (160-62). Some critics like Gilbert and Gubar offer a negative interpretation of this confession (415), but it can be evaluated as an advancement for the establishment of self-narration, considering how important it is for Lucy to tell about herself in public.

3. A Searching Exploration of Self-Narration

As Lucy gets lost "in a net-work of turns unknown" (163) shortly after leaving the church, she seems at this point to have little command of self-narration though she entered upon a new phase of talking about her own experience and life in the outer world. Curiously enough, this second stage in which Lucy seeks for a narrative mode of her own opens up in the world of the Brettons again. The place to which she in a faint was carried turns out to be a house of her godmother and her son—Dr. John Graham Bretton —whose identity is now disclosed by Lucy, and she stays there and is "made much of" (5, 254) as she did and was about eight years ago in Bretton. Since Lucy has learned the importance and necessity of others in her life, she relies on them, Graham in particular, as if he were the only anchorage of her hope and happiness after she returns to the school.

In terms of self-narration, however, Lucy seems to make less progress during her sojourn at the house of the Brettons, because she frequently serves as an observer and narrator of others rather than herself, and moreover, she is half compelled to hear about and speak on Ginevra, Graham, or Mrs. Bretton with patience even if she becomes engaged in the conversation with Graham. While she is listening to him, she often represses herself:

> A disclaimer of the sentiments attributed to me burned on my lips, but I extinguished the flame. I submitted to be looked upon as the humiliated, cast-off, and now pining confidante of the distinguished

Miss Fanshawe: but, reader, it was a hard submission.(189)

Similar suppression can be found in a small incident in which Lucy is led, influenced, and quietly overruled by Mrs. Bretton's will and forced to dress in pink (207), and in the fact that she writes two answers to a letter of Graham—"one for [her] own relief" and for "pour[ing] out[her] sincere heart," and "the other for Graham's perusal," "a terse, curt missive of a page" (253-54). In these examples, Lucy seems as if she went backward to the twofold life.

Considering the present state of her self-narration, the meaning and function of her detailed narration of other women whom she sees in public spheres—such as an art gallery, a concert, or a theater—can be easily assumed; this is certainly a sort of indirect self-expression. Lucy is rather a commentator than a mere observer, and she adds her own opinions and impressions while she is describing a picture of "Cleopatra" (200), images of an ideal woman in a painting (201-02), the queen of Labassecour (213-14), and Vashti on stage (257-59).

Lucy's self-narration develops further when she decides after the appearance of Paulina to leave the unhealthy world of the Brettons and to search for another way of her own. As Lucy has already experienced once during her stay in Bretton, Paulina who has now grown up to be the rich and beautiful Miss de Bassompierre again usurps Lucy's place in the world of the Brettons; although Lucy has been looked after, visited, and taken out once a week to the house of the Brettons before the reunion between the Brettons and the Homes (254), she is suddenly forgotten while they renew their old friendship. The letter she receives

after seven weeks interval is from Mrs. Bretton and it is occupied with the descriptions of her son with sweet words of a doting parent, except a note of invitation written at the very end. And when she visits the house and goes up to "[her] own little sea-green room" (273) which she used to use during her stay, she finds Paulina there, just like she one day found a small crib and a chest added in her bed-room in Bretton (6). Pushed aside with the emergence of Paulina, Lucy becomes an observer again, and in the course of observation, Lucy feels more strongly as if she were "placed in a false position" (284). Recognizing that Graham's attention and concern are now devoted to Paulina and that she will never find a place for herself in this world of the Brettons, she buries both the letters of Graham and a grief, and then starts afresh the exploration:

> If life be a war, it seemed my destiny to conduct it single-handed. I pondered now how to break up my winter-quarters—to leave an encampment where food and forage failed. Perhaps, to effect this change, another pitched battle must be fought with fortune; if so, I had a mind to the encounter: too poor to lose, God might destine me to gain. But what road was open—what plan available? (296-97)

As this scene is linked to the previous scenes of her resolution in which she decided to go to London and to visit the confessional at the church (295), this cited monologue can be thought of as another turning point of her life and self-narration.

Actually there are some succeeding parts which demonstrate her growing awareness of her own existence in the world of others. For example, Lucy declines the offer of a highly paid office as Paulina's com-

panion and refuses to live with her:

> I was no bright lady's shadow—not Miss de Bassompierre's. Overcast enough it was my nature often to be; of a subdued habit I was: but the dimness and depression must both be voluntary—such as kept me docile at my desk...in Madam Beck's first classe; or alone, at my own bedside, in her dormitory, or in the alley and seat which were called mine, in her garden: my qualifications were not convertible, not adaptable; they could not be made the foil of any gem, the adjunct of any beauty, the appendage of any greatness in Christendom. Madam Beck and I, without assimilating, understood each other well. (298; my underline)

The underlined assertion in the excerpt shows a strong consciousness of autonomy, and it also indicates that those personal spaces enumerated in the quotation are no longer shady retreats for self-effacement but rather space of her own acquired in the world of others. In addition, it is further notable that Lucy in this self-narration defines herself within the relationships with people around her. There is also similar sort of self-narration in which she analyzes how Graham misapprehends her and how often he gives her a role not hers (318). Thus Lucy is now able to locate herself in the network of human relationships.

4. Establishment of Self-Narration

As Lucy's awareness of her own course of life increases, the proportion of self-narration expands and the focal male character also shifts gradually from Graham to M. Paul Emanuel. M. Paul is an indispensable

figure for Lucy's development of self-narration, since he is the one who directs a spotlight on to this colorless onlooker submerged in a quiet nook (334), and talks to her, and provokes her to speak out. It is worth noting that Lucy's narration of M. Paul tends to include Lucy herself in the episodes and dialogues illustrating his personality and behavior, and therefore she simultaneously talks about herself in many of the descriptions of M. Paul.[4] In addition, she can assert herself without hesitation, as she insists on her way of arranging male costume for the play (139), and flatly contradicts his remarks at the gallery whereas she only asks and listens to Graham's comments on a picture in the same scene (202-05). Interestingly enough, the contrast between Graham and M. Paul seems to be deliberately presented on the occasion when they and Lucy assemble somewhere in a public place—a gallery, a concert hall, a theatre, a public building—and her attitudes and opinions about them which are juxtaposed in those scenes show how her interest and affection turn from one to the other.

The more she directs the plot of her life, the more she writes and talks in the presence of others. One example of writing can be found in the event in which all of a sudden Lucy, who is "copying" an elaborate line of an engraving, is compelled to improvise a composition in French in front of two men (398). Although she seems, in this episode, still inexperienced in self-narration since she does not have words to express the ideas surging up in the mind (400), her effort might be regarded as progress, considering the fact that last time when she was ordered by M. Paul to make a French composition on the public examination-day, she rejected it on the excuse of being unable to do so and also unwilling

to "write for a show" (357). Through this and other experiences, Lucy gradually develops her style of narrating. The underlined phrases in the following citation are striking examples:

> That night M. Paul and I talked seriously and closely. He pleaded, he argued. I could not argue—a fortunate incapacity; it needed but triumphant, logical opposition to effect all the director wished to be effected; but I could talk in my own way—the way M. Paul was used to—and of which he could follow the meanderings and fill the hiatus, and pardon the strange stammerings, strange to him no longer. At ease with him, I could defend my creed and faith in my own fashion; in some degree I could lull his prejudices. (418; my underlines)

It should be noted here regarding the self-narration that what makes her creed and faith more specific and therefore, perhaps, makes her narrative clearer might be the religious education by Père Silas. Observing and learning "Other"—Catholicism—raise awareness of her own way of thinking, and she can tell M. Paul even "more currently and clearly" (421) than before her ideas concerning Catholicism and Protestantism.

There are other important pieces of evidence which demonstrate that Lucy has obtained her sense of self and her way of life different from others in both chapter 37 and 38. Although chapter 37, like others about the world of the Brettons, is also filled with the narration of Paulina and Graham, what she declares in the conversation with Paulina should not be overlooked; she says, "I have my sort of life apart from yours," and also refuses Paulina's offer of sharing her beautiful life with Graham

by saying, "I shall share no man's or woman's life in this world, as you understand sharing. I think I have one friend of my own, but am not sure; and till I *am* sure, I live solitary" (425). These remarks prove clearly that she has found her sort of life different from the one expected in the world of the Brettons to which she used to belong. Next in chapter 38, Lucy says, "Keep your hand off me, and my life, and my troubles," to Mme. Beck who is the center of the world of the Pensionnat, when Madam physically steps in the path which Lucy has made for herself in the classroom and on which she keeps walking at that moment (446-47). These two are crucial events in which she announces the possession of her own way of life to the women who hold a key position in the two different spheres to both of which Lucy more or less belongs.

Then, for the first time, Lucy is given the command of the whole life of reality in the night park where almost all the main characters assemble. Although what she saw and watched in public places were rather female images and figure—paintings, the Queen, Vashti onstage, and Nun, now in this adventure to the crowded park Lucy observes real persons whom she knows. First she gets out of the Pensionnat which she now calls "prison" (451), and then she sees Paulina in a wedding costume. Yet Lucy leaves the world of "Paulina and her friends" (453), even though they are "[w]ithin reach of [her] hand" if she chooses to extend it and moreover Mrs. Bretton and Mr. Home are talking about Lucy at that moment and Graham also notices her presence (456). Next she forces herself to abandon her possible life with "one friend of [her] own"—M. Paul, convinced of the future marriage between him and his ward Justine Marie Sauveur, though this later turns out to be a complete

misunderstanding. In addition, Ginevra elopes with de Hamal on the same night and Lucy also sees their carriage near the Pensionnat. As the others thus achieve or almost achieve their aim, she must fulfill her own goal. All what she has to gain now is a sphere for her own life.

Lucy's self-narration is finally established in the penultimate chapter in which she obtains her house with a classroom as well as a true friend/fiancé of her own. While Lucy and M. Paul have a meal together in a small house which he has prepared for her use as well as for a safe transmission of letters after his departure for the West Indies, Lucy finally begins to narrate all that she saw and felt in the night park, prompted by him to speak:

> I spoke. All leaped from my lips. I lacked not words now; fast I narrated; fluent I told my tale; it streamed on my tongue. …; the whole history, in brief, summoned to his confidence, rushed thither truthful, literal, ardent, bitter. (491)

This excerpt in which she tells her own story fluently without lacking any words indicates the accomplishment of self-narration. After she finishes narrating everything including her jealousy toward his ward Justine Marie Sauveur, M. Paul proposes to her (491). In the following quotation which describes Lucy and M. Paul walking together back to the Pensionnat in the Edenic moonlight, they are not only a "happy pair" like Ginevra and de Hamal but also as "blessed" as Paulina and Graham whom Lucy associates with a trace and evidence of Eden (377, 436):

> We walked back to the Rue Fossette by moonlight—such moonlight as

> fell on Eden—shining through the shades of the Great Garden, and haply gilding a path glorious, for a step divine—a Presence nameless. Once in their lives some men and women go back to these first fresh days of our great Sire and Mother—taste that grand morning's dew—bathe in its sunrise. (491; my underline)

Thus Lucy and M. Paul, though temporarily, enjoy blessed happiness such as given to Paulina and Graham and such as suitable for the typical closure of female Bildungsromans. Nevertheless, Lucy's life story still continues.

The closing chapter in which Lucy tells her life of "the three happiest years of [her] life" (493) testifies and confirms the establishment of Lucy's self-narration as well as her life in the society. Though M. Paul found and arranged a house with a classroom for her to be independent and keep a school of her own, she is responsible for rent and management. During the three years of M. Paul's absence, she opens first her externat and enlarges it to a pensionnat, using the hundred pounds suddenly sent from a relative of her late mistress Miss Marchmont. Regularly supplied with "bounteous fuel" (494) from the West Indies, Lucy prospers as a directress of the school and eventually achieves integration into the society. As a matter of fact, this is what *Villette* aims to portray at the end of the life story of Lucy Snowe, and it is distinctive all the more for the existence of Lucy's narrations about other female characters. Her establishment of self-narrative might be seen most clearly in apparently odd closing remarks of *Villette*:

> Madam Beck prospered all the days of her life; so did Pere Silas;

> Madam Walravens fulfilled her ninetieth year before she died. Farewell. (496)

It is certainly quite strange that Lucy's memoir ends with the references to the prosperity of other people—the members of "the secret junta" (460) —who did intrude into her life and sent M. Paul to Guadalupe and accordingly tore him from her. Some critics, such as Patricia Beer, Carlisle, Kathleen Blake, are very pessimistic or rather skeptical about the ending of *Villette* and they regard it as a novel of deprivation.[5] Interpreting the closure in terms of Lucy's establishment of self-narration in her stories of others, however, nothing else could thus represent the accomplishment of this female protagonist. It is Lucy settled in a foreign, heterogeneous society composed of various others that *Villette*, as its title suggests, strives to represent.[6]

4. Conclusion

What is presented in *Villette* is the process in which Lucy, who is at first an amorphous onlooker, gradually begins to tell her own life and experiences while she continues observing and describing the life of other characters. Just as Lucy thus establishes self-narration in/through her narrations of others, she first emerges from the shady retreat in her inner world where she lives her own life, then enters the life in the real world, and finally obtains her own sphere and way of life in society. This personal space is totally different from the former seclusion for withdrawal and self-effacement since it is, rather, a place for establishing her self and life in the outside world. Paradoxically enough, it is Lucy's narrations of

other characters which are simultaneously displayed in her life story that accentuate her self-narration as well as her life established in the world. *Villette* is, therefore, a memoir woven out of the stories of other people.

Actually a rudimentary use of the narration of other characters can be found in the epilogue of *Jane Eyre*. As its subtitle "[a]n [a]utobiographe" indicates, *Jane Eyre* is also an autobiographical fiction written in "a simpler mechanism of first-person narration," and unlike *Villette* it is full of "self-presentation" of the protagonist (O'Dea 45). Nonetheless, this autobiography does not end with the self-narration of Jane; instead, it is the words of St. John Rivers that close the novel because Jane's future death which she cannot narrate in the mode of self-narration is in fact projected upon the very words of St. John.[7)]

After she wrote a third-person novel *Shirley*, Charlotte Brontë came back to the world of first-person narrative, and explored in *Villette*, another autobiographical retrospection, the use of the narration about other characters in the first-person narrative mode. Lucy's narration of others never damages nor excludes her self-narration; indeed it ultimately makes her way of life more distinct. The multiple foci for various individuals of Charlotte Brontë suggested in her last and the best novel are certainly reminiscent of the world of George Eliot depicting the manifold lives of provincial society. In "this heretic narrative," not only Lucy Snowe but Charlotte Brontë as well at length establishes her own method of the first-person narration which opens a new horizon for autobiographical literature.

Notes

1) Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*, ed. Margaret Smith and Herbert Rosengarten (New York: Oxford UP, 2000). Subsequent references to the novel will be to this edition and will be cited parenthetically in the text.
2) See Mike Edwards, *Charlotte Brontë: The Novels* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999) 33; Janice Carlisle, "The Face in the Mirror: *Villette* and the Conventions of Autobiography," *ELH* 46 (1979): 271-73; I would like to note here that although I agree with Gilbert and Gubar on the point that Lucy, who at the beginning as a self-effacing narrator and a character often tells any story but hers, gradually becomes less evasive and the author of her life story and of her life, I regard Paulina and other female characters as separate individuals whereas they rather consider them to be the "divided self" of Lucy. See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000) 404, 416, 434.
3) Paulina's self-repression at a parting, Paulina being at the mercy of whimsical boy Graham, Miss Marchmont in an agony of the death of her fiancé are all associated with what Lucy experiences later.
4) See, for example, chapter 30 entitled "M. Paul."
5) See Patricia Beer, *Reader, I Married Him: A Study of the Women Characters of Jane Austen, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot* (London: Macmillan, 1974) 93; Carlisle, 287; Kathleen Blake, *Love and the Woman Question in Victorian Literature: The Art of Self-Postponement* (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1983) 72.
6) Nina Auerbach also directs her attention to Lucy's integration into society, yet her interpretation is different from mine since she thinks Lucy eventually possesses M. Paul and she becomes a member of the female community directed by Mme. Beck and Mme. Walravens. See Nina Auerbach, *Communities of Women: An Idea in Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978) 77-113.
7) For a fuller discussion of this topic in Jane Eyre, see Eri Mabuchi, "The 'Apocalypse' of Jane and St. John: Reading the Epilogue of *Jane Eyre*," *Brontë Studies* 4.6 (2008): 47-59.

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SUMMARY

A Memoir Woven out of the Stories of Others: Lucy Snowe's "Heretic" Self-Narration in *Villette*

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Charlotte Brontë's last novel, *Villette* (1853), can be said a "heretic narrative" since, despite being written in the form of an autobiography of the female protagonist—Lucy Snowe, what it often describes is Lucy exerting herself for self-effacement and observation of other people rather than for self-presentation and narration of her own life and story as Jane Eyre, the protagonist of Charlotte Brontë's previous autobiographical fiction, does. The intermingling of two narrative modes—narration of herself and others—is the most distinctive feature of *Villette*, and this novel depicts the process in which Lucy who is at first an amorphous onlooker gradually establishes her self-narration in her narrations of others, and that process certainly represents her self-development. What *Villette* strives to present is Lucy settled in a foreign, heterogeneous society composed of various others, as it is suggested in the life of Lucy portrayed in the final chapter, in the apparently odd closing sentence referring to the prosperity of other characters, and in the title of the novel derived from the name of the city where she lives. Lucy's stories of other people make her way of life and memoir more distinct, and these multiple foci for various individuals which are reminiscent of the world of George Eliot demonstrate Charlotte Brontë's literary development. In her last and probably the best novel, not only Lucy but Charlotte Brontë as well at length establishes her own method and style of the first-person narration.

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