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# WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND THE RHETORIC OF INTERPRETATION

BY MICHAEL S. MACOVSKI

For storytelling is always the art of repeating stories, and this art is lost when the stories are no longer retained. It is lost because there is no more weaving and spinning to go on while they are being listened to.

—Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller”

I want you to *tell* me my way, not to *show* it; or else to persuade Mr. Heathcliff to give me a guide.

—Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights*

## I

Ever since F. R. Leavis first characterized it as a “kind of sport”—an anomaly with “some influence of an essentially undetectable kind”—critics have attempted to locate *Wuthering Heights* within various schools of literary interpretation or detection. To the “barred” doors of the Heights world have come those who see the novel as an allegory of class conflict, a microcosm of generational tension, or a response to Romantic tradition.<sup>1</sup> The last fifteen years, however, have seen a determined, if inconsistent, turn away from this legacy of attempted interpretation, of what J. Hillis Miller calls our need “to satisfy the mind’s desire for logical order,” to “indicate the right way to read the novel as a whole.”<sup>2</sup> These latter critics accordingly cite what they variously refer to as the “misinterpretation,” “crisis of interpretation,” or “conflicting possibilities of interpretation” that allegedly distinguish the novel.<sup>3</sup> Of course, such approaches differ among themselves: while some attribute this misinterpretation to a particular narrator’s unreliable point of view, others maintain that *any* path through the novel leads to a “reader’s quandary”—since its “multiplicity of outlook” and “surplus of signifiers” demonstrate an “intrinsic plurality.” Still others deny even the potential import of such signifiers, insisting that the very language of the novel presents us with a “missing center”: hence even the name of a given character “despotically eliminates its referent, leaving room neither for plurality nor for significance.”<sup>4</sup> Although these recent critics hardly consti-

tute a consensus, they would seem to agree that, in Miller's words, "however far inside [the 'penetralium'] the reader gets," he will find only "enigmatic signs," "bewilderment," and "ultimate bafflement." "The secret truth about *Wuthering Heights* is," Miller goes on, "that there is no secret truth."<sup>5</sup>

Thus, the present generation of critics seems inclined to let the problematic mysteries and open questions of *Wuthering Heights* live a life of their own, and indeed there is much to be said for this approach to interpretation. The tortured relationship, for instance, between Catherine and Heathcliff is inimical to any recognizable casuistic standard; and if some alien morality stands behind Heathcliff's own inconsistent actions, it has yet to be defined. Yet despite the reader's "bewilderment" and even "ultimate bafflement" at such mysteries, it is difficult to deny that the novel is about the act of interpretation itself. Despite its disturbing "crisis of interpretation," we must still recognize that Brontë presents the entire novel as a rendering, as a story reported at one, two, or three removes. The interpretive valuations of characters like Lockwood, Nelly, and Zillah distort almost every episode of the story we hear—thereby implicating the reader as the last in a framed succession of interpreters.

Much has been made of this peculiarly framed form of *Wuthering Heights*: several critics, for instance, have suggested that the listeners embedded in the novel are in many ways analogous to actual readers. Such studies attempt to liken our interpretations to those of the "normal skeptical reader," and to insist that Nelly and Lockwood, the primary witnesses to the events of the novel, serve to represent this reader.<sup>6</sup> Yet the question of reading in *Wuthering Heights* is surely more complex than this comparison would suggest: we must, for instance, ask how any reader who apprehends the novel can resemble Lockwood, a character universally acknowledged to be an effete bungler, insensitive to the dramatic power of the story he hears. We must also take into account that we hear Nelly's perspective during most of the novel, and sense that she too is not an observer worth emulating. Finally, we must consider what these models of audition say about the possibility for interpreting such characters as Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw.

What the foregoing studies have not considered is that the issue of interpretation and response is addressed directly within the text

of *Wuthering Heights*—most explicitly by interrogative exchanges between characters, but also by the rhetorical form of the novel itself. For the substance of the novel is in effect a succession of addresses directed to designated listeners, a series of witnessed narratives. These addresses include not only Nelly Dean's narrative to Lockwood, but the two climactic exchanges in which Heathcliff and Catherine respectively describe their preternatural union to Nelly (72–74, 255–56). The novel accordingly foregrounds the act of interpretation by framing both characters' experiences within the context of sustained audition.

In fact, in order for these two characters to “let out” (in Catherine's words) their secrets, the presence of an interpreter appears to be vital (70). At the beginning of one interchange, Catherine actually proceeds to restrain Nelly, her auditor (72). Furthermore, Catherine seems determined to incorporate a listener's response into her own evaluation of self. Again and again, she begs Nelly to corroborate her decision to marry Edgar. When Nelly mocks the question, Catherine again demands, “Be quick, and say whether I was wrong”; still later, Catherine pleads, “say whether I should have done so—do!” (70). Finally, at the end of this broken colloquy Catherine says to Nelly, “yet you have not told me whether I'm right” (71). Thus, the impetus behind rhetorical interchange here appears to be interpretation: to “let out” one's “secret” is to need it received and judged.

Even Heathcliff displays the need to express his inmost feelings before another, to break his solitude, at least momentarily. During his most extended attempt to describe his relation to Catherine, he says to Nelly, “you'll not talk of what I tell you, and my mind is so eternally secluded in itself, it is tempting, at last, to turn it out to another” (255). Here again, the purpose of audition is to draw out the “eternally secluded” self: to delineate the ego according to social or dialogic correlates. Much as Catherine seeks to “let out” her buried “secret,” Heathcliff too attempts to “turn [his mind] out to another” in order to interpret it. In this sense, his request to “turn out” his self to Nelly resembles his earlier plea to Catherine's ghost: “Oh! my heart's darling, hear me *this time*” (33). In both cases, Heathcliff enjoins his listener to “hear” or comprehend the broken “heart”—the fragmented self. And although he eventually attains a form of union with the deceased Catherine, Heathcliff still spends the final days of his life endeavoring to address her

beyond the grave and thus transcend both his rhetorical and social isolation.

## II

Yet audition ultimately fails Heathcliff, as it does nearly all would-be interlocutors in *Wuthering Heights*; within the dialogic framework of the novel, they must remain “eternally secluded.” No sooner has Heathcliff begun his attempt to “turn out” his mind “to another” than he breaks off, saying, “it is frenzy to repeat these thoughts to you” (255). He then concludes: “My confessions have not relieved me” (256). And such an outpouring to Nelly does indeed resemble an undirected “frenzy,” since she proves incapable of any reciprocal response. In recounting Heathcliff’s earlier efforts to depict his attendant “spectre,” Nelly says, “He only half addressed me, and I maintained silence—I didn’t like to hear him talk!” (230).

Nelly’s silence here indicates a larger pattern of failed audition, for it implies an inability to apprehend those ghosts and visions which represent revelation in the novel. When Catherine, for instance, begins to speak of her vision of heaven, Nelly insists, “Oh! don’t, Miss Catherine. . . . We’re dismal enough without conjuring up ghosts and visions to perplex us” (72). When Catherine goes on, Nelly cries, “I tell you I won’t harken to your dreams, Miss Catherine!” Yet by refusing to “harken” to these revelatory visions, Nelly also misses the pivotal revelation of the novel: the spectral bond between Catherine and Heathcliff, a bond represented primarily by sightings and visions. As one critic has written in describing this mystic union, “To deny Heathcliff’s assurance of Catherine’s presence is to deny the novel.”<sup>7</sup>

Such denials amount to a kind of analytic deafness: both Nelly and Lockwood attempt to discount what they cannot understand. Thus when Nelly first bungles this auricular role, Catherine responds, in effect, to every interpretive process in the novel: “that’s not what I intend,” she says, “that’s not what I mean!” (73). Even Heathcliff has become a deceived auditor after he “listened till he heard Catherine say it would degrade her to marry him, and then he stayed to hear no farther” (73). We thus begin to see that this failure of interpretation runs deeper than any local misunderstandings of Heathcliff and Catherine on the part of Nelly. Al-

though revelations are “half-addressed” to listeners, they repeatedly encounter interpretive silence. Whereas exposure may be possible in this novel, colloquy is not.<sup>8</sup>

We are left, then, with the question of why this novel would incorporate a self-consciously flawed model of listening. What is more, why would Brontë emphasize these flawed interpretations by making them the central point of view, the irregular lens through which we see every character in the novel? Why would she actually dramatize a frustrated interchange seen from the position of an uncomprehending observer—as if she had built an intentionally skewed frame of reference into her novel? And if this distorting frame does leave us in what Miller calls “ultimate bafflement,” how might Brontë have expected us to respond to such an exegetical predicament? That is, what are we to make of those longstanding critical dilemmas which continue to dog the novel: the unaccountable cruelty and other Gothic events; the frame narrative and representations of reading; the import of Catherine’s climactic statement, “I *am* Heathcliff”?<sup>9</sup> Finally, if these critical problems are inseparable from the elusive beauty of the novel, we must still ask what they say about the status of interpretive possibility in Brontë’s world.

We can start to answer these questions of interpretation and response by reexamining what is certainly the most immediate audience for Heathcliff’s and Catherine’s story—those incorporated auditors who first witness the narrative. I will argue that many of these unresolved questions are a result of what I consider the vital structure of the novel: an epistemological disjunction between listeners and speakers. It is, moreover, precisely this disjunction that blurs the line between speakers and listeners. Indeed, the question of who interprets and who narrates becomes a complex one in this novel, since it is actually built around a pair of speaker/listener paradigms. We have noted, for instance, that while Nelly clearly directs her tale to Lockwood, the most crucial scenes of the novel center around those dialogues in which she herself must play the listener to Heathcliff’s and Catherine’s revelatory confessions. Nelly must therefore be both teller and listener, for she acts as an interpreter positioned between an unexplained character and an uncomprehending audience. Though she is a storyteller in her own right, she is also a listener attempting to fathom the “history” of an enigmatic Heathcliff (37, 139). And once again, the final lis-

teners in this succession of audiences are the readers: we receive Lockwood's journal of uncertain destination.

We can thus reconsider *Wuthering Heights* as a convergence of apostrophes, a chain of rhetorical exposures. Indeed, I would suggest that when the speakers of *Wuthering Heights* address a listener, they in effect expose a hidden part of the self—expose it to the interpretation not only of the other, but of themselves as well. While most of these interpretations break down during the novel, I ultimately reject the notion that Brontë leaves us with only circumscribed vision and misinterpretation. Instead, I will argue that the novel continually keeps the possibility of interpretation open *by sustaining a rhetorical process of understanding*, by enacting a series of hermeneutic forms. For even when these addresses come up against inadequate audition, they nevertheless establish models of ongoing comprehension and interpretation for the reader. What is more, these rhetorical exposures before an other come to represent not only the separate interpretation of self and other, but the actual fashioning of this self in terms of the other. In this sense, the listener's function is both interpretive and ontological.

It is not surprising, then, that these narrative exposures take on different functions at various points in the novel. On one level, I argue that when Brontë uses the narrative address to an auditor as a mode of interpretation, she in effect reenacts the nineteenth-century transformation of confession into self-decipherment. On another level, I show how, elsewhere in *Wuthering Heights*, this narrative exposure takes on attributes of an interpretive dialogue, and is accordingly analogous to such psychoanalytic processes as reconstructing the past and transferring onto the other. I then expand on Brontë's view of self-interpretation, taking as my model the child's method of mirroring his ego onto an other, and showing how this method illuminates the literary speaker's establishment of his or her own self before an addressee. At other points in the novel, this self-creation results from a character's "dialogic" interchanges with a listener, which I go on to consider in light of Bakhtin's paradigm of multiple voices. Lastly, I suggest that this nineteenth-century desire to inspire the self through an other is best explained by Coleridge's concept of "outness"—that state in which he can define the "Boundary" of his external "Self."

### III

Though the actual purpose of audition is rarely discussed, many studies note the deployment of frame narrative in *Wuthering*

*Heights*. Still other approaches stress the Gothic elements of the novel (the enigmatic hero, mist-shrouded house, hidden evil, and so on).<sup>10</sup> Yet what such studies miss is that these Gothic features are precisely what gives the novel its framed form, since the Gothic evils actually prompt the need for exposure to an other within a narrative frame. Accordingly, Brontë repeatedly invokes this notion of evil incarnate as something grossly inhuman and “unnatural,” comparable to a “ghoul” or “vampire” that must be unmasked (258–60). These terms are, in fact, Nelly Dean’s impressions of Heathcliff: at one point, she alludes to him as an “evil beast” (94), and even by the end of the novel he remains a “dark thing” for her (260). Charlotte Brontë, too, in her second preface to the novel, refers to Heathcliff as one “animated by demon life—a Ghoul” (12). It is such a “beast” that must be rhetorically loosed from *Wuthering Heights*.

This daemonically represented evil also spawns a host of guilty acts into the novel, which in turn become further motives for narrative confession. Heathcliff, the mysterious locus of the tale, is also the very incarnation of guilt, not only because of his own vengeful action, but because of his relation to the other characters in the novel. To Mr. Earnshaw, he represents familial disruption and, possibly, the memory of adulterous love; to Catherine, he becomes the image of innocence lost and passion abandoned; and to Nelly, Heathcliff stands as the reminder of her confessed “cowardice and inhumanity” to him, as well as her consequent punishment (39). He thus personifies an almost universal guilt in this narrative, an autochthonous other who returns to haunt nearly every character in the novel. He represents that omnipresent yet hidden incubus that must be verbalized before an interpretive listener.

It is this kind of persistent guilt that helps to explain the need to expose the “beast” within *Wuthering Heights*. For instance, in recounting his dream about Jabes Branderham’s invective sermon, Lockwood notes that “either Joseph, the preacher, or I had committed the ‘First of the Seventy-First,’ and were to be publicly *exposed* and excommunicated” (28, emphasis added). We soon learn, however, that the immoral acts which disturb Lockwood and the preacher prove to be no ordinary Christian sins: Lockwood insists that “they were of the most curious character—odd transgressions that I had never imagined previously” (29). He further contends that Branderham has committed a “sin that no Christian



need pardon" (29). Generally speaking, these "odd transgressions" seem to fall outside the realm of evangelical Christian morality; as such, they remain unredeemable by any conventional notion of repentance, absolution, or pardon by a listening other.

Brontë works out the implications of these unpardonable sins within the narrative structure of bogus confession. As we have noted, Heathcliff brings this form directly into question when he says, "My confessions have not relieved me" (256). That Heathcliff would refer to these outpourings as "confessions" is particularly telling, for his term reflects a widespread nineteenth-century desire to adapt and redefine the confessional form.<sup>11</sup> Generally speaking, many nineteenth-century theologians sought to transform the confession from a coercive means of compelling secret truths to a bilateral examination of self—a mutual, two-sided hermeneutic in which both roles are crucial to interpretation. In *Wuthering Heights*, too, both of these roles become crucial within the apostrophic form of the novel, and we would do well to examine each of them separately.

The role of the speaker/confessee in Brontë's novel reflects the nineteenth-century view of confession as self-examination, as opposed to the earlier injunction to provide evidence for external judgment. In Michel Foucault's formulation, "the nineteenth century altered the scope of the confession; it tended no longer to be concerned solely with what the subject wished to hide [from another], but with what was hidden from himself" (66). Earlier religious encounters had stressed an outside witness's role in both interpretation and absolution; now, confessional rhetoric was also seen as enabling a speaker to structure his own self-knowledge, his process of learning what was "hidden from himself." Hence in *Wuthering Heights*, when Heathcliff and Catherine deliberately seek to confess their secrets, each is framing these mysteries within a mode of discourse that demands as much decipherment from the speaking confessee as it does from the listening confessor (39, 70). Thus when Brontë depicts both characters deploying the rhetoric of confession, she suggests that each is engaged in a process of revealing the self. Such revelation is not only exposure of self (to another), but disclosure within self as well.

Yet the confessional mode still necessitates some external casuistry, however inadequate it appears in *Wuthering Heights*, and herein lies the role of the listener/confessor. This role becomes especially crucial when Brontë ceases "making the confession a

test, but rather a sign” (67). For when Heathcliff and Catherine seek to “turn” or “let out” their selves “to another,” this rhetorical situation becomes a figure or sign for ongoing interpretation. Inasmuch as the presence of Brontë’s listeners draws forth what a speaker has “hidden from himself,” they reenact this confessional figure. In *Wuthering Heights*, then, the narrative address itself constitutes a sign of interpretive engagement, despite the fact that many of the novel’s secrets remain opaque. Confessional narration thus takes on a hermeneutic function: a confessional impulse can be realized as truth only in the presence of a listener who both assimilates and attempts to interpret it. The personal secrets within *Wuthering Heights* can be revealed only within a symbiosis between confessee and confessor, an interchange between self-revelation and external decipherment.

Once again, though, such decipherment is particularly scarce among listeners in *Wuthering Heights*; yet this inability to apprehend the Heights world does not inhibit the dual roles of the confession form. However inadequate the casuistry of Lockwood and Nelly, it nevertheless keeps the continuing attempt to interpret confession before Brontë’s reader. Indeed, when any confessing speaker encounters a failed response, this problematic interpretation may in fact be evidence that a speaker’s revelation is taking place; as Foucault notes, confession is a “ritual in which the truth is corroborated by the obstacles and resistances it has had to surmount in order to be formulated” (62).

#### IV

Narrative addresses in *Wuthering Heights* thus make use of confessional tropes, and thereby enact a rhetorical search for unorthodox notions of relief and pardon. In other passages, however, the addresses in the novel represent a more overt form of interpretation—an enactment of that narrative form which is intrinsically self-analytical. In rhetorical terms, the recurrence of this attempted colloquy in *Wuthering Heights* signifies a proleptic method of interpreting the self, a method best explained in terms of the psychoanalytic dialogue. This heuristic again demands the presence of a listener, even an agonistic one, for he or she is the rhetorical equivalent of the analytic or interpretive figure. Even Lockwood can hold this rhetorical place in the novel, especially since his early request to play the listener to Nelly’s narrative actually initiates the analytic form of the novel. Accordingly, it is Lock-

wood who voices the novel's analytic intention, its interpretive quest to fathom Heathcliff's "curious conduct" and "character" (19, 37), "decypher" Catherine's "faded hieroglyphics" (26), and uncover, in Lockwood's words, "something of my neighbours" (37).

What distinguishes this analytic rhetoric is that it allows characters like Heathcliff and Catherine to effect the kind of projective self-understanding sought during the psychoanalytic exchange. When these characters address an interpretive figure, they necessarily attempt to imagine his listening experience, his process of interpreting their directed address. As one psychoanalyst has put it, "We have overt experience of this [projection] when we say 'I suppose you think that this is. . . .'"<sup>12</sup> In *Wuthering Heights*, we encounter such projection most explicitly when Heathcliff (speaking of Cathy's "startling likeness" to her mother) says to Nelly, "That . . . which *you may suppose* the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least, for what is not connected with her to me?" (255, emphasis added). Heathcliff again makes use of this other-directed trope in attempting to comprehend the "maddening" and "strange change" in him: again addressing Nelly, he says, "You'll perhaps think me rather inclined to become ['insane']" (255). Earlier, he wonders aloud to Nelly if his failure to avenge himself "sounds [to you] as if I had been labouring the whole time, only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity" (255; cf. 118). Generally speaking, characters engaged in this projective type of self-analysis assume the stance of the other, a position that actually enables them to inhabit an other's critical faculty and apply it to themselves. In becoming the other, they enter the interpretive process; they conjure their own analysis as well as their own listeners.

Hence both Catherine's and Heathcliff's secrets are consciously "half-addressed" to Nelly, despite her avowed preference, as we have seen, to have maintained silence. Their heuristic addresses proceed not in spite of but because of a paucity of genuinely insightful listeners, for Nelly's unresponsive silence enables them to envision her as a rhetorical surrogate, an analytic proxy. When Heathcliff, for instance, strives to verbalize the "eternally secluded" self, to "turn it out to another," Nelly's blank silence momentarily helps him to appropriate her angle of vision and substitute a personal perspective: it allows him to "try to describe the thousand forms of . . . ideas [Hareton] awakens, or embodies" (255). Finally, Catherine too depends on Nelly's audition without

heeding her response: “tell me,” she demands, “what I’ve done to grieve [Heathcliff]” (72, 75). Here again, Catherine seeks to know the critical faculty of her listeners in order to distinguish her own. She must “become the other” to interpret herself.

Thus the implied dialogues in *Wuthering Heights* are analytic in that they enable Catherine and Heathcliff to recreate the externality of the other. Yet this analytic rhetoric serves another purpose in the novel, one whose function is not so much interpretive as ontological. For this analytic form is also particularly suited to historical reconstruction, to the recovery of what Lockwood refers to as Heathcliff and Catherine’s “history” (36, 37). Indeed, such analytic exchanges can represent a succession of past dialogues from a given speaker’s history. Accordingly, when a character in *Wuthering Heights* manages to initiate such addresses, there are necessarily echoes of parallel conversations buried in his or her past. The attempted dialogue thus disinters a character’s rhetorical history, much as the analytic dialogue invokes a series of transferences to figures from an analysand’s past. Hence Brontë’s dialogic novel essentially exhumes the hidden past of its most impenetrable characters. When Heathcliff, for instance, attempts to “turn out” his mind, he seeks to recover his past dialogues not only with Catherine, but with those unknown listeners who presumably constitute his own hidden past: he exposes his thoughts “to another” in order to revive the “past associations” of his mysterious history (255). And when Catherine repeatedly endeavors to “let out” her “secret” before Nelly (70), she is attempting to evoke a series of interlocutors from her own history, including the absent mother, indulgent father, and, ultimately, the mis-hearing Heathcliff. In describing her first “fit” or dream to Nelly, she says:

Nelly, I’ll tell you what I thought. . . . I was enclosed in the oak-panelled bed at home; and my heart ached with some great grief which, just waking, I could not recollect. . . . most strangely, the whole last seven years of my life grew a blank! . . . I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff.

(107; cf. 108)

Here again, narrative apostrophe serves to disinter the buried figures in a character’s past. Such rhetoric enables Catherine to recover what is “enclosed,” to reconsider “separation,” in a word, to “recollect.”

According to this view, the recreation of dialogue gives voice to a silent history and thereby allows for its reinterpretation. If Heathcliff's truncated dialogues with Nelly represent his desire to hear his earliest historic voice, Catherine's flawed addresses attempt to invoke her father and Heathcliff, the auditors of her first linguistic era. Even Nelly, by sustaining her own narrative address before Lockwood, attempts to impose some contrived order on her past dialogues with both Heathcliff and Catherine. In each case, these characters initiate an interpretive reenactment of past voices—a regress that ultimately extends back to that original dialogue with the self, that confrontation with the other which we experience during the “mirror stage.”<sup>13</sup>

This stage is, of course, Jacques Lacan's term for the child's clarification of selfhood by focusing on an other with whom he can identify. The child thereby defines his ego by projecting his own separateness onto an other. Lacan sees this process of self-identification as a mirroring, “a veritable capture by the other . . . ‘as in a mirror,’ in the sense that the subject identifies his sentiment of Self in the image of the other.”<sup>14</sup> It is this mirror stage confrontation that lies at the heart of many sustained addresses in *Wuthering Heights*, for only in being recognized by the autochthonous other can characters like Heathcliff and Catherine extract their own identities. Indeed, “the first object of desire is to be recognized by the other” (31), and it is precisely this desire for recognition of self in other that in turn prompts Catherine to envision her identity in Heathcliff: “He's more myself than I am,” she says to Nelly; “Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same” (72). Later, she adds, “so, don't talk of our separation again—it is impracticable” (74). In *Wuthering Heights*, moreover, this primal recognition also takes place in rhetorical terms, which again accounts for the self-defining other's repeatedly taking the form of an addressee. Accordingly, establishing self in the novel must necessarily be a linguistic act, since only through language can the other both manifest itself and provide “recognition.”<sup>15</sup>

v

Thus the analytic addressee serves not only to represent the past interlocutors of Heathcliff and Catherine, but to provide them with recognition—the self imaged in the other. In what is perhaps the most explicit account of this projected selfhood, Catherine says to Nelly, “surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or

should be, an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here?" (73–74). On one level, of course, Catherine's "existence . . . beyond" refers to Heathcliff: she is explaining a union that eventually defies "separation." Yet on another level, this passage also alludes to a more vital capacity to move outside of one's contained existence, to establish creation and being through an other. Later, Heathcliff too seeks this externalized identification when, upon learning of Catherine's death, he cries to her, "take any form . . . only *do* not leave me . . . Oh, God! it is unutterable! I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!" (139). Heathcliff recognizes that life inheres in the form of the other, the surrogate soul.

The critic who has most thoroughly formulated this ontological connection between speaker and other is Mikhail Bakhtin. To speak of that "existence . . . beyond" the "contained" self, that object who informs being, is to speak at once of what Bakhtin calls "self-consciousness." He writes, "I am conscious through another, and with the help of another. The most important acts constituting self-consciousness are determined by a relationship toward another consciousness (toward a *thou*)." <sup>16</sup> For Bakhtin, this "*thou*" hypostatizes self-consciousness, which is to say that only this dialogic relationship can make the self aware of its own distinctness, can actually unveil the self to itself. He goes on: "in dialogue a person not only shows himself outwardly, *but he becomes for the first time that which he is*—and, we repeat, not only for others but for himself as well. *To be means to communicate dialogically*" (252, emphasis added). Thus dialogue with the "existence . . . beyond" enacts the ego. As Bakhtin says earlier:

The hero's attitude toward himself is inseparably bound up with his attitude toward another, and with the attitude of another toward him. His consciousness of self is constantly perceived against the background of the other's consciousness of him—"I for myself" against the background of "I for another." Thus the hero's words about himself are structured under the continuous influence of someone else's words about him.

(207)

Consciousness thus dissolves unless projected against the "background" of the other. The limits of the "I" emerge only amidst contrasts with the "thou," much as the Freudian ego takes form only in opposition to the superego. We can say, then, that when

Catherine suggests that her “existence . . . beyond” the self completes her own being, she recognizes that “consciousness of self is constantly perceived against the background of the other’s consciousness of [her].” When she concludes that Heathcliff is, in her words, “always in my mind—not as a pleasure . . . but as my own being” (74), she acknowledges that only in engaging the other does she “become for the first time that which [she] is.” In both passages, establishing the ego is a contrastive act, a matter of perceiving the other as “background” for identity. Catherine accordingly abhors what she calls “separation” since, again, “to be means to communicate dialogically”: only this dialogic presence sustains her selfhood. Invoking Heathcliff, she insists, “my great thought in living is himself” (74).

Thus “living,” for Brontë, requires keeping the other “in mind”: “existence” partakes of the other (74). In *Wuthering Heights*, moreover, this other can also manifest itself collectively, as what she refers to as “society.” For instance, although Lockwood pretends to abjure this society (13), proclaiming himself a “perfect misanthropist,” he ultimately casts his narrative in the form of what he calls “sociable conversation” with Nelly (22). Then, after only two days at the Grange, he also acknowledges a need for “social intercourse,” and remarks upon Heathcliff’s curious antipathy toward “conversation” (35; cf. 17). Heathcliff himself, of course, craves the preternatural society of Catherine; yet we should also recognize that, like Lockwood, nearly every character in the novel voices a commensurate need for such social interchange. Cathy, Nelly, and even Joseph each refer to disparate versions of a “friend,” “companion,” “company,” or “union” (247–250, 265; cf. 38). In each case, the quest for such companions represents the socially-connected self. Catherine, for instance, in seeking union with Heathcliff, is actually striving to orient her existence, to place it within the social world. She attempts to locate her consciousness within a human order, to eschew (in Lockwood’s words) the “perpetual isolation” of being “banished from the world” (17, 240). Hence this need for social intercourse recalls Bakhtin’s notion of polyphonic discourse, in which one “invests his entire self in discourse, and this discourse enters into the dialogic fabric of human life” (16). Brontë’s concept of self is thus essentially plural, social in the broadest sense. As Bakhtin goes on to say, the self “must find itself . . . within an intense field of interorientations” (239).

We must further bear in mind that if characters establish being

through social intercourse, they also stress this delineation of self as vocal or spoken. The ego must be overheard in the form of a voice. Hence Cathy Linton acknowledges Hareton's identity by first assailing his silence, an act which, if he listens, will rhetorically introduce her into his discourse and his life. "Hareton, Hareton, Hareton!" she cries, "do you hear? . . . you must listen to me (247). For Heathcliff, too, this ontological listening must precede a potential union: as we have noted, his plea to Catherine is "hear me *this* time" (33). Indeed, we have seen that throughout *Wuthering Heights* the self-affirming other is necessarily an auditor, and that the foregoing social "interorientations" are necessarily spoken, what Bakhtin refers to as "dialogues." "Life," he writes, "by its very nature is dialogic. To live means to *participate* in dialogue: to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth" (293, emphasis added). In the following passage, he goes on to develop this notion of portraying the ego within dialogue, of individuating the self as a "voice."

To find one's own voice and to orient it among other voices, to combine it with some and to oppose it to others, to separate one's voice from another voice with which it has inseparably merged—these are the tasks that the heroes solve in the course of the novel. And this determines the hero's discourse. It must find itself, reveal itself among other words.

(239)

Here again, the process of defining the self is both contrastive and verbal: one must oppose one's voice to another's. In *Wuthering Heights*, then, the dream narratives of Heathcliff and Catherine must also "orient [themselves] among other voices"; each must "find itself, reveal itself among" the spoken responses of inadequate listeners. Only such interchanges—including the listening which underlies them—can resonate the social self.

## VI

Bakhtin's discussions of the dialogic consciousness of self thus serve to clarify Brontë's concepts of existence and social intercourse. Yet we need not rely solely on modern commentary to expand on this notion of consciousness-in-other. Indeed, the writer who best exemplifies the nineteenth-century concern with the externally-defined self, with plural self-consciousness, is Coleridge, whose aesthetics are cited by the many critics who insist



on the Romantic quality of *Wuthering Heights*.<sup>17</sup> Although his use of an external other often differs from Brontë's, he too represents this ontological partner as a dubious listener (especially in poems like "The Rime of The Ancient Mariner" and "Christabel"). Regardless of the novel's Romantic allegiances, however, we can better understand its portrayal of "existence" (73), "conscience" (73), and "being" (74) if we briefly examine Coleridge's analysis of the same issues. For both Brontë and Coleridge discuss "being" in the context of what Coleridge, like Bakhtin, calls "Consciousness." In Coleridge's case, defining "Self" is a matter of establishing this "Consciousness" through "Conscience":

From what reasons do I believe in *continuous* (and ever-continuable) *Consciousness*? From *Conscience*! Not for myself, but for my conscience—i.e. my affections & duties towards others, I should have no Self—for Self is Definition; but all Boundary implies Neighbourhood—& is knowable only by Neighbourhood, or Relations.

(2:3231)

For Coleridge, "Self" is defined as a conscience "towards others," a "Boundary" consisting of close "Relations." Such "Relations" essentially distinguish the individual "Consciousness" and make it "knowable."

It is this sense of "Boundary" and "Definition" that Catherine derives from her "affections & duties towards" Heathcliff: only he can effectively represent what she refers to as "being." Catherine's one explanation of this projected being is thus crucial:

my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and *he* remained, I should continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it . . . he's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself—but as my own being.

(74)

What Catherine is suggesting is that Heathcliff, and the external "conscience" he stands for, can actually delimit self in this novel. In embodying her "Boundary" or "Relations," Heathcliff enables her to "continue to be"; in representing her link with "the Universe," he in effect confirms her "being." Hence Catherine herself might have said, as Coleridge did, "Self in me derives its sense of Being from having this one absolute Object" (2:3148). Her "Ob-

ject” thus defines a mental “Neighbourhood,” which in turn defines her place in “the Universe.” When she momentarily loses this “Boundary” (during Heathcliff’s absence), she necessarily loses her “being” and perishes (85). She falls victim to what Coleridge calls “the *incorporeity* of true love in absence”—that “incorporeity” of “Self” which follows from the loss of “Definition” (3:4036).

Catherine’s apparent need for this projected existence or “Definition” is further explicable in light of what Coleridge elsewhere refers to as “outness,” that state in which he can expose or “withdraw” his “painful Peculiarities . . . from the dark Adyt of [his] own Being” (3:4166). For both Coleridge and Catherine can circumscribe the “Peculiarities” of the self only by establishing this definitive “outness.” And once again, this outness emerges even in the form of the feckless listeners in *Wuthering Heights*: they provide not corroboration by others so much as an exposure before conscience. In Coleridge’s terms, the sole “Impulse” for establishing “Outness” is to unveil or “withdraw” the hidden self—and “not the wish for others to see it” (3:4166, 3624). It is the symbolic and rhetorical presence of such listeners that enables Catherine to expose her self, to demarcate “existence,” to “continue to be.”

Here, I would say, we are addressing what is perhaps the most perplexing critical dilemma surrounding *Wuthering Heights*: the status of Catherine’s cryptic statement, “I *am* Heathcliff” (74). For we can now account for this equation by reflecting on what we have been calling Catherine’s avowed need for outness, that desire to define being in terms of an “existence . . . beyond” one’s “contained” self. Thus, in the statement “I *am* Heathcliff,” Catherine essentially delimits her existence by locating it in another, by making her outness one with Heathcliff’s. It is this notion of outness that also accounts for Heathcliff’s last visions of Catherine’s specter, for he is essentially living out her stated description of her externality: “If all else perished, and *he* remained, I should continue to be” (14). And it is this depiction of self-defining, moreover, which also underlies the novel’s last ghostly images of Catherine and Heathcliff; by the time of his death, they have at last established this externally hypostatized self-through-other.

As the novel closes, it is this projection of self that finally accounts for the attenuated image of the second generation union—for in this couple, not only do part of Catherine and Heathcliff “continue to be,” but a symbol of their rhetorical process of out-

ness necessarily lives on. And when the younger Cathy ultimately asks Hareton to listen, she necessarily provides a vehicle for her own “affection & duties towards others,” her own “Definition” of “Conscience” and “Self,” her own outness. The legacy of the auditor is thus confirmed.

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#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> For an indication of this extraordinary range of readings—a range so contradictory that it begins to suggest a problematic approach to interpretation—see Richard Lettis and William E. Morris, eds., *A Wuthering Heights Handbook* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1961); Miriam Allott, ed., *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1974); Miriam Allott, “The Brontës,” in *The English Novel: Select Bibliographical Guides*, ed. A. E. Dyson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 218–45; Alastair G. Everitt, *Wuthering Heights: An Anthology of Criticism* (London: Frank Cass, 1967); as well as the criticism selected in William M. Sale, Jr., ed., *Wuthering Heights: An Authoritative Text, with Essays in Criticism* (New York: Norton, 1963). My citations of the novel refer to this edition; see page 17 for the reference to the “barred” doors of the Heights World. (I have also adopted the critical practice of using “Catherine” to designate Catherine Earnshaw, and “Cathy” to refer to her daughter by Edgar Linton.)

Regarding the novel’s Romantic characteristics, I have summarized research on this aspect of *Wuthering Heights* in note 17.

Finally, Leavis’s observation also accounts for the unusually disparate attempts to approach this novelistic “sport” and trace its “undetectable” influence; he briefly mentions the novel in *The Great Tradition* (1948; reprint, New York: New York Univ. Press, 1973), 27.

<sup>2</sup> See J. Hillis Miller’s *Fiction and Repetition* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), 52–53, 49. The remainder of Miller’s comments cited in this section are from an earlier version of his chapter on the novel: “*Wuthering Heights* and the Ellipses of Interpretation,” *Notre Dame English Journal* 12 (1980): 85–100.

For a survey of what I see as the prevailing approach to the novel during the last fifteen years, see note 3.

<sup>3</sup> The three phrases are, respectively, from Allan R. Brick, “*Wuthering Heights*: Narrators, Audience, and Message,” *College English* 21 (November 1959): 81, reprinted in Lettis and Morris, 219–20; Carol Jacobs, “*Wuthering Heights*: At the Threshold of Interpretation,” *Boundary 2* 7 (1979): 68; and Peter K. Garrett, “Double Plots and Dialogical Form in Victorian Fiction,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 32 (1977): 8. Although Brick’s essay predates the period I am discussing, it too partakes of the hermeneutical approach that has prevailed during the last fifteen years. A brief glance at the titles of these studies—see Donoghue, Jacobs, and Sonstroem (cited in notes 4 and 17)—again suggests this approach. See also Elizabeth R. Napier, “The Problem of Boundaries in *Wuthering Heights*,” *Philological Quarterly* 63 (1984): 96, 97; and Peter Widdowson, “Emily Brontë: The Romantic Novelist,” *Moderna Språk* 66 (1972), who notes that his essay “is not intended to circumscribe the range of interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* (which is splendidly impossible anyway)” (3).

<sup>4</sup> Those studies that attribute the novel’s problems of interpretation to its narrators’ “unreliability” include Gideon Shunami, “The Unreliable Narrator in *Wuthering Heights*,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 27 (1973): 449–68; and Jacqueline Viswanathan, “Point of View and Unreliability in Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Conrad’s *Under Western Eyes*, and Mann’s *Doktor Faustus*,” *Orbis Litterarum* 29 (1974): 42–60.

The phrases “reader’s quandry” and “multiplicity of outlook” are from David Sonstroem, “*Wuthering Heights* and the Limits of Vision,” *PMLA* 86 (1971): 59, 61; the phrases “surplus of signifiers” and “intrinsic plurality” are from Frank Kermode, “A Modern Way with the Classic,” *New Literary History* 5 (1974): 434, 425. See also J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition*, who writes that the “act of interpretation always leaves something over. . . . This something left out is clearly a significant detail. There are always in fact a group of such significant details which have been left out of any reduction to order. The text is over-rich” (52).

Both Miller (67) and Jacobs (note 3) argue that the language of the novel leaves us with a “missing center” (56).

<sup>5</sup> “*Wuthering Heights* and the Ellipses of Interpretation,” 92. Miller goes on to revise this sentence in *Fiction and Repetition*, where he writes that “there is no secret truth which criticism might formulate” as a “principle of explanation which would account for everything in the novel” (51). Despite this revision, however, he then goes on to say that “it is impossible to tell whether there is any secret at all hidden in the depths” of *Wuthering Heights* (69). And although he speaks of the reader’s “process” and “effort of understanding,” he repeatedly stresses the “baffling of that effort”—since an “interpretive origin . . . cannot be identified for *Wuthering Heights*” (53, 63). Yet if Miller dwells on that “remnant of opacity which keeps the interpreter dissatisfied” (51), I argue that the rhetorical force of those hermeneutic forms enacted in the novel counterbalances this opacity. Although such concerns are finally distinct from Miller’s, he is clearly aware of them when he writes that opacity keeps “the process of interpretation still able to continue” (51–52) and that “the situation of the reader of *Wuthering Heights* is inscribed within the novel in the situations of all those characters who are readers [and] tellers of tales” (70).

<sup>6</sup> See, for instance, Carl R. Woodring, “The Narrators of *Wuthering Heights*,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 11 (1957): 298–305, reprinted in Sale’s edition of the novel (338–43). See especially 315, 338, 340. Woodring comes closest to the concerns of this study when he writes: “If he [Lockwood] seems inane, he suffers from the inanity his author attributes to the average London reader into whose hands her book will fall. In his introduction to the Rinehart College Edition, Mark Schorer follows Garrod in interpreting the original plan of the novel as the edification of a sophisticated and sentimental prig, Lockwood, in the natural human values of grand passion. Rather, Lockwood reacts for the normal skeptical reader in appropriate ways at each stage of the story and its unfolding theme” (340). Woodring, however, never explains his use of the term “normal skeptical reader,” nor does he mention why Brontë would feel the need to represent such a reader’s reactions in this particular novel. We must also ask how readers since 1847 have read the novel: do they share reactions which have been widely recognized to be inadequate to the novel? Such questions, I would say, can only be addressed if we consider the status of listeners in the novel. See also Clifford Collins, “Theme and Conventions in *Wuthering Heights*,” *The Critic* 1 (Autumn 1947): 43–50, reprinted in Sale’s edition of the novel (309–18). Collins maintains that “Lockwood not only exhibits the reactions that may be expected from the ordinary reader (thereby invalidating them, for his commentary is carefully shown to be neither intelligent nor sensitive), but he is representative of urban life and by origin unfitted for the tempo of life about the Heights” (315). Yet I would say that, for reasons which I will make clear, the reactions of more than just the “ordinary reader” inform the frame structure of the novel. And I would add that *Wuthering Heights* is less about the incompatibility of “urban life” and the Heights than about interpretive rhetoric and the epistemological chasm between listeners and narrators.

<sup>7</sup> See Walter E. Anderson, “The Lyrical Form of *Wuthering Heights*,” *University of Toronto Quarterly* 47 (1977–78): 120.

Of course, most characters in this novel *do* deny its visionary premises (as represented by its spectral symbols) and in doing so they deny not only the novel, but the very possibility of interpretive audition. Lockwood, for instance, not only repulses the

ghostly Catherine's return to Heathcliff (30), but also fails to understand how this vision of Catherine resonates throughout the narration he hears from Nelly. He seems unaware of the connection between his waif-haunted nightmare and the later "confession" by Heathcliff: "the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels" (230). On an earlier occasion, Lockwood calls Heathcliff's belief in Catherine's ghost "folly" (33)—a term that Nelly later uses to describe Catherine's revelations (74). Indeed, when Catherine herself begins to describe her phantasmal union with Heathcliff, Nelly can only respond, "I won't hear it, I won't hear it! . . . I was superstitious about dreams then, and am still" (72). Later, Heathcliff's encounters with "ghosts and visions" prompt the same fearful response from Nelly: "Mr. Heathcliff! master!" she cries, "Don't, for God's sake, stare as if you saw an unearthly vision" (261). And when Nelly encounters the child who claims to have glimpsed the deceased lovers, she insists that "he probably raised the phantoms from thinking" (265). By the end of the novel, Nelly regards even her own dreams as lapses into "superstition," which, as she says, continued until "dawn restored me to common sense" (260).

We should also note that Lockwood's general incapacity for response precludes reaction not only to the visionary mysteries of Heathcliff and Catherine, but even to the "fascinating creature" who earlier shows interest in him (15). "I never told my love vocally," he says; and when he finally does prompt a "return" from her, he reports, "I . . . shrunk icily into myself, like a snail; at every glance retired colder and farther" (15). Once again, Lockwood's silence obviates any rhetorical return.

Finally, Edgar too becomes the victim of broken colloquy when he demands of Catherine, "answer my question. . . . You *must* answer it. . . . I absolutely *require* to know"—only to hear her order him from the room (101–102).

<sup>8</sup> As I go on to argue, it is this exposure which sustains both the ongoing process of interpretation and the vitality of the rhetorical form. This is not to say, though, that the novel discounts the fallibility of the interpretive process, including its potential for flawed judgment and moral caprice. Even Nelly seems at times to recognize this possible failure, for after condemning one of Catherine's explanations, she adds, "though I'm hardly a judge" (73). And indeed, the entire issue of judgment as interpretation is a questionable one within *Wuthering Heights*: the Branderham episode, for example, erupts into a chain-reaction of misfired auditions. First Lockwood renounces his listening role and attacks the offending narrator; then the congregation itself appears to misjudge its leader's account of Lockwood and falls upon one another. And response in *Wuthering Heights* is patterned after Lockwood's audition during this sermon—a botched audition which Branderham, with appropriate inclusiveness, refers to as "human weakness" (29). In the end, the Reverend's casuistry also proves to be flawed, for his "judgment" is actually retribution when he cries, "execute upon him the judgment written" (29).

Generally speaking, the listeners of *Wuthering Heights* indulge in seemingly arbitrary moral judgments; like Branderham, each has "his private manner of interpreting" (29). Because of this moral subjectivity, no interpretation can transcend another: as Nelly puts it to Lockwood, "you'll judge as well as I can, all these things; at least, you'll think you will, and that's the same" (152). Without interpretive standards, then, audition becomes a punishment with narration the trial. Listeners accordingly become the objects of judgment in this novel; like Lockwood, they are "condemned to hear" what they can never understand (29).

<sup>9</sup> See Anderson (note 7) for a reading of Catherine's celebrated statement. For discussions of the other critical dilemmas mentioned here, see the anthologies listed in note 1 (esp. Lettis and Morris).

<sup>10</sup> Numerous studies of the novel allude to its "Gothic" character; see, for instance, James Twitchell, "Heathcliff as Vampire," *Southern Humanities Review* 11 (1977): 355–62; Peter McIverney, "Satanic Conceits in *Frankenstein* and *Wuthering Heights*," *Milton and the Romantics* 4 (1980): 1–15; Ronald A. Bosco, "Heathcliff:

Social Victim or Demon?" *Gypsy Scholar* 2: 21–39; Judith Weissman, "Like a Mad Dog: The Radical Romanticism of *Wuthering Heights*," *Midwest Quarterly* 19 (1978): 383–97; Emilio De Grazia, "The Ethical Dimension of *Wuthering Heights*," *Midwest Quarterly* 19 (1978): 176–95; as well as the references to the Gothic listed in Patrick Diskin, "Some Sources of *Wuthering Heights*," *Notes and Queries* 24 (1977): 354–61; and Miriam Allott, "The Brontës," in *The English Novel: Select Bibliographical Guides*, ed. A. E. Dyson (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 218–45. Several of these studies also suggest that the Gothic novel may have redefined the frame narrative form.

<sup>11</sup> See Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon, 1978), esp. 66. All quotations are from Hurley's edition.

For a more detailed history of this shift in confessional rhetoric, see Walter H. Conser, Jr., *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815–1866* (Macon: Mercer Univ. Press, 1984), esp. 8–9, 99–160; Frank D. McConnell, *The Confessional Imagination: A Reading of Wordsworth's Prelude* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974); and Henry C. Lea, *History of Auricular Confession and Indulgences in the Latin Church*, 3 (Philadelphia: Sea Bros., 1896).

For analyses of the psychological aspects of confession—in terms of the two roles I discuss—see Terrence Doody, *Confession and Community in the Novel* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1980); Theodor Reik, *The Compulsion to Confess: On the Psychoanalysis of Crime and Punishment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1959), 304, 279; Erik Berggren, *The Psychology of Confession*, *Studies in the History of Religions* 29 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975); Walter J. Koehler, *Counseling and Confession* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1982); and Reverend Paul E. McKeever, S.T.L., *The Necessity of Confession for the Sacrament of Penance*, *Studies in Sacred Theology* 77, (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1953).

Emily Brontë's own religious attitudes toward forgiveness and confession are discussed in Clement King Shorter, *The Brontës: Life and Letters* (New York: Haskell House, 1969). (I would also note in passing that not only Heathcliff, but also Catherine and Nelly refer to their effusions as "confessions" in various passages of the novel [39].)

<sup>12</sup> Stanley Leavy, *The Psychoanalytic Dialogue* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1980), 40. The most pertinent discussions of psychoanalytic rhetoric, as it informs narrative structure in general and literature in particular, include Leavy, esp. 39–41, 55, 80, 86; Roy Schafer, "Narration in the Psychoanalytic Dialogue," in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed., *On Narrative* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), 25–50; and Robin Tolmach Lakoff, "When Talk is Not Cheap: The Language of Psychotherapy," in Leonard Michaels and Christopher Ricks, *The State of the Language* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1980), 440–48.

For linguistic studies of the necessarily bilateral aspect of interpretation within dialogue, see William Labov and David Fanshel, *Therapeutic Discourse* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Frederick Erickson, "Listening and Speaking," in *Languages and Linguistics: The Interdependence of Theory, Data, and Application*, ed. Deborah Tannen (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1986), presented at the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics 1985; and R. P. McDermott and Henry Tylbor, "On the Necessity of Collusion in Conversation," *Text* 3 (1983): 277–97.

<sup>13</sup> See Jacques Lacan, "Le Stade du miroir," reprinted in *Ecrits* (Paris, 1966). I am applying Lacan's model selectively here, with particular emphasis on his discussion of the infant's ontological development. See also Lacan, *The Language of the Self*, trans. Anthony Wilden (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1968), esp. 100, 163, 166, 172–174, 200. Unless otherwise noted, all references to Lacan are to Wilden's edition.

<sup>14</sup> See Lacan, "Propos sur la causalité psychique" (1950), 45; quoted in Wilden, 100, n. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Lacan, 9. In Lacan's terms, such linguistic recognition is a function of what he calls the "Word"—that abstract sign of the analysand's individual "response," his discreteness. "What I seek in the Word," he writes, "is the response of the other" (63). In *Wuthering Heights*, I would say that the interpretive listener represents this linguistic "response of the other": when characters like Catherine, Nelly, and Heathcliff seek out listeners, they seek that linguistic interpretation ("response") which identifies the self ("recognition"). Many studies, of course, have cited examples of such linguistic interpretations in *Wuthering Heights*, including the instances of Hareton's reading, Nelly's censorship, and Lockwood's decipherment and naming process; see, for instance, Jacobs (note 3), 99; Ian Gregor, "Reading a Story: Sequence, Pace, and Recollection," in *Reading the Victorian Novel: Detail into Form*, ed. Ian Gregor, (Totowa, N. J.: Barnes and Noble, 1980); and J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition*. What these studies have not noted, though, is that such linguistic interactions can use the "response of the other" to establish the self. In Lacan's words, "Language, before signifying something, signifies for someone" (76–77). Self-affirmation in *Wuthering Heights* is literally the articulation of the self to the other.

<sup>16</sup> *Poetics of Dostoevsky's Prose*, trans. Michael Holmquist (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1982), 287. All further citations of Bakhtin are to this edition. Although for Bakhtin dialogues between self and "thou" often take place internally, he nevertheless depicts them in terms of the spoken word.

<sup>17</sup> For studies which apply Coleridge's theory and poetry directly to the novel, see, for instance, Denis Donoghue, "Emily Brontë: On the Latitude of Interpretation," in Morton W. Bloomfield, ed., *The Interpretation of Narrative: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), 105–33, esp. 114; and Widdowson (note 3), 1–9 (esp. page 4 on the "Rime"). My references to Coleridgean theory are from Kathleen Coburn, *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (New York: Pantheon, 1957–61), and will be cited by volume and page number parenthetically in the text.

The most provocative applications of general Romantic ideology to the novel include Alan S. Loxterman, "Wuthering Heights as Romantic Poem and Victorian Novel," in Frieda Elaine Penninger, ed., *A Festschrift for Professor Marguerite Roberts* (Richmond: Univ. of Richmond Press, 1976), 87–100; and Widdowson (note 3). For more theoretical treatments of Romanticism in relation to the novel see J. Hillis Miller, *The Disappearance of God* (New York: Schocken, 1965), 160; Walter L. Reed, *Meditations on the Hero: A Study of the Romantic Hero in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1974); Weissman (note 10); Alain Blayac, "A Note on Emily Brontë's Romanticism in *Wuthering Heights*," *Cahiers Victoriens et Edouardiens* 3 (1976): 1–6; and Donoghue (above), 113, 115. Studies that discuss the novel directly in the context of Romantic poetry include John Hewish, *Emily Brontë: A Critical and Biographical Study* (New York: MacMillan, 1969); and Miriam Allott, *Novelists on the Novel* (London: Routledge Paperback, 1968), 169. Other research briefly notes this Romantic context for the novel, but chooses not dwell on its particular implications: see Q. D. Leavis, "Introduction to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*" (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), 25; Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Female Imagination* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 134; Muriel Spark and Derek Stanford, *Emily Brontë: Her Life and Work* (New York: J. Day Co., 1959); and E. A. Baker, *The History of the English Novel*, 8 (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), esp. 11–29, 64–77, and preface.

Still other approaches cite the Romantic qualities of the novel, but then go on to characterize it as transitional to (or indicative of) the Victorian era; see, for instance, David Sonstroem (note 4); Loxterman (above), 93; and even Arnold Shapiro, "Wuthering Heights as a Victorian Novel," *Studies in the Novel* 1 (1969): 284–95. I would stress that those who see the novel as a response to Romanticism also serve to locate the work within the general rhetorical and philosophical currents I am discussing (see, for instance, Nancy Armstrong, "Emily Brontë In and Out of Her Time," *Genre* 15 (1982): 243–264, esp. 260, 262, 259.