Spectrality and Temporality: A Study of Beloved as a Paradigm of Rhetorical Narrative in Relation to Wuthering Heights

by

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A Thesis
presented to
The University of Guelph

In partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
English

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

Spectrality and Temporality: A Study of Beloved as a Paradigm of Rhetorical Narrative in Relation to Wuthering Heights

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University of Guelph, 2016
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This thesis investigates the intersections of textual dynamics with reader response in Wuthering Heights and Beloved. Beloved, a recent novel by Toni Morrison, has been read as a political text interrogating racial inequality since its time of publication. Comparatively, Wuthering Heights, a canonical nineteenth-century novel by Emily Brontë, has been seriously neglected as an attempt to pioneer women rights. This thesis tries to unveil how the use of particular textual and rhetorical techniques in both novels address certain audiences. In particular, the enframed ghost story is used as a compelling device to bring in readerly attention in both texts. Also, because both novels present a non-linear temporal progression, they can be deemed fine examples of narrative temporality in relation to reader responses to the texts.

Although Wuthering Heights and Beloved are obviously published in two distinct sociopolitical contexts, it is worthwhile to examine their textual dynamics in relation to their authors’ marginalized status within each individual society because both texts use comparable structural elements. The present study considers the temporal framing
technique of the two narratives as a textual device to alter readers’ responses to both
texts. While temporality is considered a major thematic instrument, the presence of a
ghost character is also increasingly defining. The use of a ghost story together with the
framing narrative technique, which results in a sort of concurrent temporality, serves as a
conflated textual device in both narratives. These conflated categories intertwine, leading
to a reconfiguration of the concepts of self and other on the part of readers. In this
manner, these two writers succeed in bringing their readers to their own side of the
struggle for recognition, equality and identity.

Keywords: Beloved, Wuthering Heights, Temporality, Spectrality
Dedication

To my daughter who has been the greatest teacher of love and endurance;

My little girl! Grow up passionate and ambitious and never give up.

To my husband, my unconditional supporter and my true source of solace,

I love you and I vow to stand by you every single day of this journey.

And last but certainly not the least,

To the unruly daughters and the refusing slaves whose interrogating voices reverberate through centuries;

Your struggles will not be forgotten.
Acknowledgments

I wish to thank immensely the members of my advising committee, Dr. Susan Brown and Dr. Sandra Singer, for their generosity, invaluable insight, and unconditional support throughout this learning journey. This would not be possible without their commitment in educating me. Also, thank you Dr. Ann Wilson for your understanding and your flexible timelines, which eased the pressure of the last couple of weeks and made the process much more bearable for me. I also want to thank Dr. Julie Cairnie who has continuously encouraged me to think independently and to express my thoughts wholly and fearlessly.

Lastly, I wish to thank the ones closest to me; thank you my family who stood by me throughout this whole academic experience. My dearest Mansour, Shailynn, Maman and Baba, I cannot express how gratified I am to have each and every one of you in my life. You have made my life a blessed haven with your generous love, kindness, and support. I am indebted to all of you beyond words.
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Chapter One

1. Introduction

Authors write stories for different reasons. For marginalized authors, stories are ways to interrogate the repressing context they are living in. But, do stories signify the rhetoric of social politics they are made to preach? In other words, can one discern the appealing voice of a fiction’s rhetoric by scrutinizing the structural elements of a text itself? Narratologists believe it to be possible. Shlomith Rimmon Kenan claims that postclassical narratology is different from rigid structuralism; it is a move away “from text to context, from closed system to open and dynamic processes, from objective text properties to readerly constructions” (143). Therefore, postclassical narratology encourages “representation and rehumanization” of textual dynamics (143). This rehumanization of the text celebrates a leaning towards the anthropomorphic connotations of the text and brings context and audience to the fore. In the literary criticism, it is common to read texts using context as the defining paradigm. I hereby want to move from text to context, from what the text signifies to how the audience receives and responds to those signifiers within the context; the process, therefore, is unlike other common approaches to political reading of texts. As a result, I have picked two celebrated novels in two distinctively different time eras which interrogate two sets of contextual ideologies: Beloved by Toni Morrison, which questions the racism of the 1980s America, and Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë, which raises questions about the patriarchal culture of mid nineteenth-century Britain.
Beloved, a recent novel by Toni Morrison, has been read as a political text as per its author’s testimony. Comparatively, Wuthering Heights, a canonical nineteenth-century novel by Emily Brontë, has been seriously neglected as an attempt to pioneer women rights. I decided to study these particular texts side by side since the two novels use similar textual techniques to alter the audience’s response. In particular, the enframed ghost story is used as a compelling device to bring in readerly attention in both texts. Also, because both novels present a non-linear temporal progression, they can be deemed fine examples of narrative temporality in relation to the reader responses to the texts. In other words, both Beloved and Wuthering Heights direct readers through their textual dynamics to read politically. The present study aims to focus on the reciprocal relations between narrative time and ghost character to retrieve such an agenda in both texts. The focus, therefore, is placed upon the novels’ textual dynamics and their relation to reader response, the reader being the point of contact who connects textuality to the context.

Beloved has been read as a narrative of an ex-slave in which Beloved’s ghostly being disrupts the narrative discourse in the attempt to redefine the racial politics of 1980s America. Wuthering Heights, on the other hand, has rarely been read in relation to the ghost of the female character which perpetually foreshadows its discourse. As a result, even though Catherine in Wuthering Heights functions quite akin to Beloved in Beloved, Wuthering Heights has seldom attached attention to its spectral aspect and the role temporal framing plays in the whole scheme.
Even though *Wuthering Heights* and *Beloved* are obviously published in two distinct sociopolitical contexts, it is worthwhile to examine their textual dynamics in relation to their authors’ marginalized status within each society. The present study will consider the temporal framing technique of the two narratives as a textual device to alter the readers’ responses to both texts. While temporality will be considered a major thematic instrument, the presence of a ghost character becomes increasingly defining. The liminal quality of ghosts as not alive, yet not completely absent, makes them entities that by definition trouble the linear progression of discourses and blur normal conceptions of time in both narratives. The use of a ghost story together with the framing narrative technique, which in turn results in a sort of concurrent temporality, are conflated textual devices in both narratives. These categories intertwine to shape reader responses to both texts.

2. Purpose of this Study

*Beloved*’s readers are the addressees of a rhetoric that promulgates racial equality in the context of 1980s America. In that sense, readers become the point of contact, the beings who relate textual dynamics to the rhetoric of social politics. This thesis intends to study *Wuthering Heights*’ textual dynamics in relation to its readers’ response using *Beloved* as a paradigm of rhetorical narrative. Study of readers’ responses contextualizes the two works and leads to a better understanding of the rhetorical mechanisms at work which aim to counter the repressive contextual ideology.
Through the use of characters’ fragmented memories of past events, both *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* textually rob their actual readers of their comfortable reading distance and pull them into the discourse of the novel. The consequent non-linear temporal progression of the two narrative discourses engenders a form of double consciousness in the readers who experience the main characters’ traumatic past alongside them. Thus, in order for readers to be able to make sense of characters, they have to revise the present through a filter of the recurrent past. As a result, in spite of the fragmentary account of the characters’ memories, the reader is bound to gather these shattered pieces of evidence to form a holistic knowledge of the history which has induced the story.

In his book, *The One vs. the Many*, Alex Woloch argues that rhetorical texts have the tendency to “direct readerly attention to their ‘character systems,’ that is, the distribution of textual space allotted to each character and the larger network of relationships among those characters” (11). In those terms, both *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* can be deemed fine examples of narratives which govern readers’ responses. Furthermore, the persistent presence of a ghost character in control of other characters’ destinies emphasizes the strong hold of past events and foreshadows the recurrence of present and past events. Additionally, the intimate relationship of the ghost characters with the material location directs the reader to read their stories in relation to confinement, traversal and reclamation.

I will seek to answer the following questions: What type of character functions do the two novels exploit in order to affect reader response? What function do the ghost
characters have in the whole web of the microcosmic society the narrative delineates? How do the textual dynamics of both texts (characterization and plot development) work in relation to the reader response? The study attempts to answer these questions to illuminate ways in which the two novels perform their respective political agendas through a careful observation of their textual dynamics and the interrelation of temporality and readerly response in the text.

3. Significance of this Study

Beloved has been deemed a political text in which Beloved’s ghostly character illuminates and redefines the racial politics of 1980s America. On the other hand, Wuthering Heights has scarcely been read in relation to its ghost story. Hence, even though Catherine’s spectral presence continues to foreshadow and disrupt the novel’s discursive progression, the novel has seldom been read in terms of such spectrality and its relation to the temporal development of the work. Reading these two particular novels side-by-side is a worthwhile configuration process; it aims to study the ways in which textual dynamics have historically corresponded to the contextual situations in which the narratives circulated.

By use of an omniscient narrator, Beloved attempts to negotiate, re-personalize, and re-humanize the ideal of subversive resistance through Sethe’s mimetic characterization. The narrator appeals to the universality of maternal instincts in its re-picturing of black womanhood through Sethe’s story. Thus, the text in its portrayal of
“resistance to oppression in its multiple manifestations” endeavors to exhibit the restrictive and traumatizing effects of slavery on the woman slave (King 274).

While Sethe’s character progression is highly mimetic, Beloved, the ghost character, has minimal (yet memorable) character development. Beloved’s characterization against the backdrop of Sethe’s powerful fictional existence signals a return to the past due to the presence of an uncanny spectral entity. In those terms, the uncanny is intertwined, or to be precise defined, through the relation to the past. In his book, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, Michel de Certeau explains about the intersections of narrative time and the uncanny in the following terms:

There is an “uncanniness” about this past that a present occupant has expelled (or thinks it has) in an effort to take its place. The dead haunt the living. The past: it “re-bites” (it is a secret and repeated biting)... re-infiltrates the place of its origin – it resurfaces, it troubles, it turns the present’s feeling of being “at home” into an illusion, it lurks – this “wild,” this “obscene,” this “filth,” this “resistance” of “superstition” – within the walls of the residence, and, behind the back of the owner (the ego), or over its objections, it inscribes there the law of the other. (6)

This synthesis of the uncanny and the past can be clearly detected in *Beloved*; it is what surges Beloved to the crown of the story in *Beloved*. In those terms, Beloved becomes the defining aspect of her namesake novel, *Beloved*. The reading of Beloved as a ghost character physically returning to the narrative world is lamented by Stanely Crouch:
“nothing is more contrived [in Beloved] than the figure of Beloved herself, who is the reincarnated force of the malevolent ghost that was chased from the house” (qtd. in Marks 67). However, Beloved’s character development forcefully highlights the uncanny and superstitious through a recurrence of traumatic images of the past; she embodies an ugly reality that tries to make her enunciations reincarnated into existence. Hence, Beloved, the figure, is the fleshly reincarnation of the unspeakable, the unpresentable, and the inexpressible; she embodies the horrors of African-American enslavement and silencing, which in spite of happening in the past return to haunt the perception of the present in the novel.

The trauma associated with the ghostly character frustrates the normal temporal progression in Beloved. Where powerful past events come to dwell in the present of the disoriented sufferer and haunt in Beloved, it is fair to say the past is placed at the disposal of the present. Through the redundancy of constituent events and thematic recurring of the past, Morrison writes a history of the return of the repressed, a story about the “reclamation of slavery,” in Claudia Tate’s terms (qtd. in Finney 107). Thus, the present characterization of Sethe’s mimetic character only makes sense if put in the context of the past. Beloved’s ghostly yet physical presence is an embodiment of that horrific past: a time of physical bondage that Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs and Stamp have only managed to escape in the flesh, but that mentally, they still encounter in the “rememories” of their traumatic past lives (Morrison 248).
*Wuthering Heights* arguably follows a pattern closely comparable to *Beloved.* Gilbert and Gubar's famous essay on *Wuthering Heights,* “Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë’s Bible of Hell” studies how every character of the novel contributes to “the fall of Catherine” (39). Hence, Catherine is related to everyone else in the novel in the sense that her character gets reflected in everyone else. Catherine’s ghostly presence throughout the narrative discourse, therefore, contributes to every character of the novel being judged in relation to her.

*Wuthering Heights*’ gothic characteristics constitute a literary space for the subversive female character. For nineteenth-century middle-class women, confined to the domestic sphere under the fastidious regime of feminine propriety, Catherine’s ghostly presence is the reincarnation of grim realities of womanhood. Her characterization illuminates the restraints on freedom and employability of nineteenth-century women. Catherine’s non-existent yet traumatizing spectral presence speaks to unexplained and incomprehensible legal aspects of women’s property rights for the non-educated middle-class Victorian woman. Catherine’s lack of physical or legal hold on her paternal residence during her lifetime ironically leads to her perpetual wandering in Wuthering Heights as a ghost.

It is no wonder that *Wuthering Heights* employs a double-edged form of narration to attend to such a controversial issue. Embodying “patriarchy’s paradigmatic housekeeper,” Nelly is the extremely conventional narrator of Catherine’s story and a highly thematic character (Gilbert and Gubar 70). Therefore, who Nelly is and what she
is trying to accomplish through her act of storytelling is of enormous significance in how the reader understands *Wuthering Heights* in a Victorian context.

*Wuthering Heights* encourages a proleptic grasp of the original story; the novel starts in its narrator’s present in relation to which all events of the novel have happened in the past, including Catherine’s death. The non-linear temporal progress introduces the reader to a “pro-world” (Currie 33), a world that is beyond the original story's temporal dimensions yet is a direct consequence of its occurrences. In those terms, Catherine’s ghostly recurrence interferes with the temporality of the novel in a way that could be translated into Currie’s “teleological retrospect”: a “looking back from an endpoint” (33). The proleptic treatment of time in the novel’s storytelling gives the past “a significance it did not possess at the time of its occurrence” (Currie 34). In other words, the retrospective quality of temporal progression in *Wuthering Heights* gives its reader a kind of “fictional self-consciousness” (Currie 47).

The thesis investigates how the issues of race and gender have been negotiated in *Beloved*. The findings will be used as a paradigm to study *Wuthering Heights*. I will address how the two novels employ comparable structural techniques in order to configure a paradigm of rhetorical narrative. Rhetoric aims to initiate an interrogation of the sociopolitical circumstances at the two novels’ time of publication.

4. Literature Review

*Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* have both generated a great deal of critical engagement. While both novels have been studied in relation to their structural
ambiguities and political enunciations, there exists no sustained relational study of the two. The matter seems to be more problematic with *Wuthering Heights* because previous critical engagements with the novel have scarcely touched on the reciprocal intersections of the textual techniques with its feminist agenda. The following critical literature has been selected from the greater body of scholarly work on the two novels. The selection criterion is the explicit and direct relevance to the main arguments of this thesis.

In “Temporal Defamiliarization in Toni Morrison's *Beloved,*” Brian Finney argues that Toni Morrison “appears to drift between past and present in a way which both baffles and intrigues her reader” (104). Finney maintains that Morrison uses temporality “for very special purposes,” as an instrument to alter readers’ response and invites the reader to participate in the “(re)construction of the story” (104-5). Although Finney employs the narratological terminology of “Fabula” (story) and “Syuzhet” (narrative discourse) in order to interpret the non-linear temporal progression in *Beloved,* he does not elaborate on the importance of simultaneity of past and present in the text (Finney 107).

In *Toni Morrison’s Beloved and the Apotropaic Imagination,* Kathleen Marks agrees that “Morrison’s *Beloved* calls to mind a past, [and] investigates a certain relation to the past at a particular crisis point” (145). She further argues that “only in raising the dead past can the Plutonian riches of the otherwise dangerous underworld be invoked and controlled” (146). Marks’ interpretation of *Beloved* pays almost exclusive attention to Sethe’s characterization and its interactions with Beloved and does not delve into the temporal peculiarities of the novel.
Conversely, Lovalerie King in “The Disruption of Formulaic Discourse: Writing Resistance and Truth in Beloved” pays attention to structure and temporality. King argues that Morrison uses “certain narrative patterns that perform the work of resisting the ‘master’ narrative” (272). King differentiates between autobiographical narration of early African-American literature and the neo-slave narration of Morrison on the basis of the use of a third-person narrator in Beloved. She believes that autobiographical narration is deemed to be a manifestation of black subversive desire to counter the assumption of inherent racial inferiority in its very essence through the use of white instruments of writing a logical narrative. On the other hand, King argues that the use of a third-person omniscient narrator in Beloved contributes to a favorable response from readers who cannot primarily identify with the black persona. Therefore, King directly interconnects the peculiar use of the narrator as an instrument to influence a white audience whose perceptions of self are in direct opposition with that of the black ex-slave. Yet, King fails to account for the novel’s multiple switches of focalization and voice; particularly, she completely relinquishes the seemingly first-person prose style parts towards the end of Beloved.

Beloved’s ghostly quality has also absorbed some critical attention. In “Belated Beloved: Time, Trauma, and the Sublime in Toni Morrison's Beloved,” Steve Vine pays exclusive attention to Beloved’s ghostly character. Vine argues that the presence of Beloved throughout the narrative discourse is an “enigmatic, unmanageable, and unassimilable symbol of the shared terror, desire, and suffering” of all victims of African-
American enslavement (302). Vine reads Beloved’s character as the “spiritual but flesh” return of the horrors which slavery inflicted on the black population (303).

In comparison, the *Wuthering Heights*’ critical literature I survey does not entail a great deal of attention to the interconnections between its textual and characterly dynamics. Although there is a body of feminist reading of *Wuthering Heights*, they almost invariably neglect the spectral quality of Catherine’s character. Also, these feminist readings of *Wuthering Heights* do not take heed of the textual dynamics of the text.

As an early critic of *Wuthering Heights*, Charles Percy Sanger rightfully discerns that readers of the novel “are made to feel the lapse of time without being pestered by dates” (8). He concludes that, in order “to arouse the reader’s interest and give vividness and reality to the tale,” the most obvious thing about the structure of the story which deals with three generations is “the symmetry of the pedigree” (9-10). As a legal expert, Percy takes his time to explain various legal aspects of *Wuthering Heights* chronologically. Percy credits Emily Brontë with knowing the earlier laws pertaining to inheritance and real property; he applauds the appropriation of the story’s timelines in *Wuthering Heights* even when such laws may have been slightly altered (in terms of inheritance and wills which were altered by The Inheritance Act of 1831 and Wills Act of 1837) by the time the novel was published (14). The most interesting points about Percy’s reading of the novel at the turn of the century are his references to inheritance and marriage settlement; he writes:
The settlement made by Mr. Linton’s will must have been as follows: the estate was devised to Edgar, his only son, for life, then to Edgar’s son in tail; Edgar’s daughters were passed over in favour of Mr. Linton’s daughter, Isabella, who presumably, had life interest with remainder to her sons in tail. This is the usual form. Thus, on Edgar Linton’s death, Linton Heathcliff became tenant in tail in possession during the few weeks he survived his uncle… Heathcliff claims the [real and personal] property [in the following manner] … there is no difficulty as to the personal property. Whatever Isabella had Heathcliff got by marrying her. They eloped so there was no question of marriage settlement. Edgar Linton had saved out his rents to make a provision for his daughter, Catherine… [but] he dies before his will is altered, so the money passes to Catherine and then to her husband, Linton. He, though a minor, could make a will of personalty. He is induced or forced to do so, and leaves it all to Heathcliff. (16-8)

By carefully analyzing the costly settlements and agreements made by the two major landed gentry patriarchs’ of the story, namely senior Mr. Linton and his son Edgar, Percy, in effect, affirms the inadequacy of such legal proceedings to serve the interests of their female descendants even in the cases where the effort has been made to maintain their rights by their male benefactors. Although Percy’s reading is elaborative in terms of the legal aspects of the novel, it does not entail consideration to the novel’s literary aspects.
Moving back to the literary aspect of the novel, in “‘The Situation of the Looker-On’: Gender, Narration, and Gaze in *Wuthering Heights*,” Beth Newman argues that Catherine’s gaze is “a gaze that escaped patriarchal specular relations; [a gaze that] would not simply reverse the positions of male and female, as Catherine’s malign look pretends to do, but would eliminate the hierarchy altogether” (1032). Newman studies at length the politics of the gaze in *Wuthering Heights*, but does not speculate on Catherine’s ghostly gaze from beyond the grave.

In “Gender and Layered Narrative in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*,” Naomi Jacobs argues that “the framing narrator or fictional editor generally belongs to the world of the reader, and is a conventional and pragmatic sort who is shocked by the gothic evils he encounters” (206). Jacobs argues that the enframed quality of *Wuthering Heights*’ narration “exemplifies the ways in which domestic reality is obscured by layers of conventional ideology” (204). Although Jacobs’ reading closely considers the intertwined quality of layered narratives in *Wuthering Heights*, Jacobs does not advert to the perceptions of temporality and the function of the ghost character in the text.

In “Framing in *Wuthering Heights*,” John T. Matthews discusses the enframed quality of narration in the novel. While he admits that *Wuthering Heights* attaches a “verbal frame to the modest ambiguity” of the two primary narrators’ act of storytelling, he maintains that “frames are meant to be forgotten” (57-8). In “The Villain in Wuthering Heights,” James Hafley laments the lack of critical attention to the enframed story; he argues that *Wuthering Heights* as a “celebrated novel has been seriously and consistently
misread — so much that its essential meaning has not in that time been recognized by
countless people who have discussed it”(199). Hafley continues by presenting multiple
instances of Nelly's unreliability. His study, however, does not pay attention to the
perceptions of temporality in the narrative and the role of ghostly Catherine.

In “‘The Villain in Wuthering Heights’: an Analysis of Ellen Dean's Narrative
Discourse,” Lucia Tudor pays exclusive attention to Nelly’s narration. The study
concludes that her narration “plays a twofold role” as both a “narrative instance” and an
“acting character” (181). The study maintains that Nelly cannot be deemed a “mere
observer” because such a notion contradicts the actual events corresponding to
Catherine’s illness and death (Tudor 182).

Amy Almedia in “Wuthering Heights: ‘Curioser and Curioser’” primarily argues
that Emily Brontë is “the agent of creation of curious female characters” while being “an
object of curiosity because of her natural role as a woman and in her culturally
transgressive ambition to improve her present social position” (47). Almeida’s research
does not deal with the matter of Nelly’s fidelity in narration, but it pays attention to the
horizontal violence that Catherine suffers in the form of gossip. The study concludes that
“Gossip is one of the central forms of curious communication, or a ‘curious custom’: a
means of collecting prohibited and taboo knowledge” (Almedia 51). Almedia places
Nelly and Catherine in a dichotomy of conventional/subversive womanhood; hence, the
reading can be deemed useful in the ideological configuration of the narrative’s frame.
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's study of the novel, “Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë’s Bible of Hell” argue that “everyone [in Wuthering Heights] is finally related to everyone else and, in a sense, repeated in everyone else” (37). Gilbert and Gubar pay attention to Nelly’s patriarchal nature, but only focus on the interactions between Catherine and other characters up until the point of Catherine’s death. The study, however, pays minimal attention to Catherine’s ghostly presence in the second half of the narrative discourse.

5. Contextual Background


In the first half of the eighteenth-century, the enlightenment period sparked contemplative dialogues about the “God-given order of nature” in the west (Linné qtd. in Eze 10). Institutionalized by Christianity, the pervasive idea that an “underlying hierarchical order” was established by God in the first place became commonplace (Eze 10). Hence, it was presumed that it was the duty of civilized men to configure this ‘natural’ order and to classify everything that exists including human beings. The question of skin colour, therefore, became a definitive parameter in this western process of classifying. Carl von Linné articulated this idea in the eighteenth-century. He classifies human beings into five major categories:

1. Four-footed, mute, hairy. Wild man.

Hair black, straight, thick; nostrils wide; face harsh; beard scanty; obstinate, content, free. Paints himself with fine red lines. Regulated by customs.


Hair yellow, brown, flowing; eyes blue; gentle, acute, inventive. Covered with close vestment. Governed by laws.

4. Sooty, melancholy, rigid.

Hair black; eyes dark; fever [sic], haughty, covetous. Covered with loose garments. Governed by opinions.

5. Black, phlegmatic, relaxed.

Hair black, frizzled; skin silky; nose flat; lips tumid; crafty, indolent, negligent. Anoints himself with grease. Governed by caprice. (Linné 13)

This colour-coded classification of human beings became pervasively used as the rationale behind white supremacy. When European settlers were squeezed for cheap and permanent labor supplies for their huge American plantations, the same so-called natural order justified importing black slaves from Africa, whose people were presumed naturally inferior.

The slavery regime completely interrupted the imported African people’s lives and annulled their familial relations. Edward Franklin Frazier explains that the “Negro slaves in the United States, who were scattered over a wide territory, lacked a common medium of communication” (92). Furthermore, the breaking up of slave families resulted in a lack of belonging and destroyed the slaves’ cultural heritage altogether. The Negro slaves
were made to search for a motive to live under American slave culture; they found it in Christianity. Edward Frazier explains:

Christianity caused the Negro to accept his position as a slave and established the prestige of the white race. The master was careful that the slaves should know only those sections of [the] Bible which would confirm his authority over them. It was only the [rare] literate Negro who could break through such mental isolation and use [the] Bible as an authority for slave revolts. (93)

Christianity, therefore, became a controlling tool in the project of slavery. Slave laws, religious beliefs, colour-coded hierarchy and the cruel corporal punishments exercised by slave-owners all formed the orchestrated institution of the slaveholding system.

By 1804, however, eight American northern states had abolished slavery or set measures in place to gradually reduce it. The knowledge that there was freedom beyond the Ohio River gradually seeped into the lower south. By the 1850s, the number of runaway slaves had become large enough for the slaveholding power to have Congress pass the Fugitive Slave Law requiring citizens of the north to return fugitives to their southern owners. Although Beloved was first published in 1987, some of the events of the story are set before the American Civil War which ultimately resulted in the abolition of slavery in the United States. The novel primarily interrogates the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which gave the slave-owners the legal right to reclaim their runaway slaves across state borders.
Morrison wrote her story of slavery in the 1980s. Although slave laws were repealed at the time, racial stratification and a consequent lack of attention to black lives, emotions and traumatic history were still intact in the United States. Several mainstream social studies during the period claimed that there had been a radical change in the race politics and an eradication of racial parameters in the new societal dynamics. As an example, in his book, *Race, Class and Life Chances*, which was published in 1980, William Wilson claims that class parameters replaced racial factors; Wilson maintains that America went through several stages in regards to race relations:

The initial period lasted until just after the Civil War and was characterized by a black slave system in a plantation economy. The second stage, which lasted from the latter part of the 19th century to the 1930s, was a period of industrial expansion and class conflict but also continued racial oppression. The third and present stage is the modern industrial period since World War II, involving progressive transition from racial inequities to class inequities.

Wilson’s classifications annul claims of racial inequality and presume the gap of income between white and black educated workers to be “a product of older black’s lack of opportunity in the past discrimination era” (17). Nonetheless, Wilson along with his many contemporaries fail to note the concentration of racial conflict outside the economic sector but within the sociopolitical order.

The United States mainstream scholars during the 1980s carried out many studies claiming the “decoupling of race from class in the African-American experience,” mostly
performed by white academics (Wilson 279). These studies, however, did not consider the constant marginalization of black people in the sociopolitical sense. It is consonant with such eradication of slave history that Morrison writes *Beloved*. The novel objects to the intensive underrepresentation of black people in the political and academic environment and asks its black audiences to come up with a history of their own.

5.2. Marital Slavery: Victorian Coverture

During the Victorian era, the law conferred absolute power and control of women under family laws. Not only were married woman deemed “legally non-existent,” but the practice of legal coverture forced every woman to condescend to her relative male benefactor (Norton qtd. in Shanley 22). For married women, coverture went further than an allocation of the wife’s property to her husband; also, an initiation of legal action for “restitution of conjugal rights” gave the husband custody of his wife’s body and ordered the errant wife to return to her matrimonial abode (Shanley 4). The process eradicated all liberal values of individual autonomy and equal rights for female citizens, values which were common for male British subjects at the time. In order to justify this gender-based inequality, liberal theorists argued that there is a “natural division” between men and women that therefore exempted private familial relations from the rules of public justice (Shanley 4). The Victorian feminist movement advocated against privatizing the family unit and against sentimental idealization of marriage. Feminists relentlessly tried to expose the underlying patriarchal ideology of such idealizing.

Furthermore, the male-dominated ruling class of Britain’s society mostly attempted to deny allegations of gender-based inequality and claimed that the proper
function of women was assigned by nature. Such belief in the gender-based ‘natural’ hierarchy was pervasive throughout the nineteenth-century, even until the early twentieth-century. As an example, Frederic Harrison in 1909 cautioned that allocation of rights to women could “disintegrate families” and “plant anarchy in the home” (qtd. in Shanley 6). He argued that “education, manners, social philosophy, [and] religion are all essentially involved in the change” in gender dynamics and warned against the “folly and hubris” that such change could potentially bring about (qtd. in Shanley 6). During the nineteenth-century, Victorian nuptial laws mirrored such dogmatic views about female subjects; marriage was perceived through a sentimental lens and laws pertaining to matrimony were profoundly lenient towards coverture and matrimonial custody. Also, common debates around the laws pertaining to marital affairs intertwined with the principles of Christian propriety and the controlling rules of the Protestant church.

Throughout the nineteenth-century, British parliament resisted equalizing the rights and obligations of husbands and wives. This was amid Victorian feminists’ continued condemnation of the sentimentalization of patriarchal power in the family. Feminists during the period tried tirelessly to expose how the rules of coverture violated some of the most fundamental principles of Britain’s legal and political system. The intensity of this unequal treatment of British subjects under the nuptial law was so acute that Caroline Norton called the institution of marriage in Britain “marital slavery” (qtd. in Shanley 22). J. S. Mill even used a stronger image to express his outrage over the confiscation of women’s property upon marriage:
The wife’s position under the common law of England is worse than of slaves of many countries; by Roman law, for example, a slave might have his peculium, which to a certain extent the law guarantees to him for his exclusive use, while a married woman in England has no income of her own. (qtd. in Shanley 59)

Hence, as Polly Comber urged to the lawmakers of the time, a change in the property laws was considered “an attempt at emancipating slaves who are in our [sic] midst” (qtd. in Shanley 60).

Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* was first published in 1847. Although Victorian feminists did not elaborate on the demands of equal rights for women at the time, *Wuthering Heights* perfectly discusses the inadequacy of nuptial laws in protecting female subjects and appeals to the conscience of its readers through portrayal of domestic violence and death and asks for readers’ sympathy with the traumatized woman protagonist.
Chapter Two

1. Introduction to Methodology

The present study aims to use rhetorical narratology in the process of reading the subtle rhetoric of the two texts. In doing so, the character functions of the two stories come into play. Since the two major characters of the story have spectral qualities, as well as lively functions (in memory), a study of the ghost characters is necessary. While narratology explores the textual and the rhetorical, the Derridean concept of the specter proves most helpful in finding the ways in which these textual dynamics resist being trapped in the egocentric and the mainstream. In other words, the study of the ghost story helps with exploring the rhetorical aspect of the text and places it within the sociopolitical context that this thesis seeks to elucidate.

Furthermore, the presence of the ghost is predicated upon the non-linear temporal encryption in both novels. These temporal encodings re-emphasize the final leap beyond the two narratives’ syuzhets; hence, the non-linearity of time leads to a non-linearity of language and further strengthens the relation to the sociopolitical context of the works. These characterization and plot dynamics are ultimately at the service of reader response. It is, therefore, pertinent to carefully analyze the readers’ interaction with the two texts after having ascertained the textual dynamics.
2. Characters and Ghosts: Real and Spectral

2.1. Character System

In *Narrative as Rhetoric*, James Phelan develops a model for character analysis. Character, according to Phelan, consists of three components: “the mimetic (character as person), the thematic (character as idea), and the synthetic (character as artificial construct)” (29). In other words, while mimetic characters represent “normal” and “possible people,” synthetic characters are formed in a way that conveys artificiality (Phelan, *Reading People Reading Plots* 2). Thematic characters are “representative figures” (Phelan, *Reading People Reading Plots* 3); they might stand for a class or a social construct. Their representation is supported by propositions or assertions made by them (Phelan, *Reading People Reading Plots* 3). Phelan explains that the relationship between these components varies from narrative to narrative. The mimetic may be undermined by the foregrounding of the synthetic, usually for some thematic purpose, or the mimetic may be highly developed and the synthetic kept covert. Usually, however, one of the character functions is given greater emphasis.

Phelan argues that the relationships between these functions are determined by narrative progression. Characters may at times perform some or all functions to varying degrees simultaneously. The way in which the narrative initially establishes certain issues or relationships to be the center of its implied audience’s interest and the way in which the narrative complicates or resolves (or refuses to resolve) those interests become definitive parameters of narrative progression. Phelan further elucidates the matter:
Progressions are generated in two ways: through instabilities, that is, some unstable relationship between or within characters and their circumstances, and through tensions, that is, some disparity of knowledge, value, judgment, opinion, or belief between narrators and readers or authors and readers. (Reading People Reading Plots 30)

The general character construction of a narrative may develop many nuances, but nonetheless provides an effective way of understanding the narrative and how the audience generally participates in its reading.

2.2. Spectral Characters

Characters may perform artificial or true-to-life functions. In works where artificiality is overt, thematic dimensions get developed into functions to convey meaning to the reader. Hence, artificiality goes hand in hand with theme in the narrative (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 13). Because this study is primarily preoccupied with a reading of two ghost characters, it is pertinent to pay attention to the synthetic quality of these spectral characters as an overt narrative artificiality. Spectrality has been traditionally used in nineteenth-century English literature to mark subversion of the dominant and the egocentric (Wolfreys ix). The liminal quality of the specter as something not alive, yet not completely dead and absent, has enabled political writers to use ghost stories as a textual instrument to delineate a subversive social presence (Wolfreys xii). One can claim that textuality generally is haunted to mark such subversion: “haunted as being articulated – and disrupted – by the spectral, the phantom,
the phantasm, the uncanny and the ghostly” in an authorly attempt to divert from the
dominant power structure (Wolfreys ix). Hence, the mimetic is arguably distorted by the
authorly use of the ghostly phantom.

Jacques Derrida theorizes spectrality and its aesthetic and political effects. For
Derrida, the ghost’s secret is not a puzzle to be solved; rather the structural openness or
the textual “address [is] directed towards the living by the voices of the past or the not yet
formulated possibilities of the future” (Lather 258). Hence, the structural secret of the
ghost narrative is not only unspeakable because it is taboo to its readers, but also because
it is non-articulable by the available instruments of language. Colin Davis further
explicates about Derrida’s notion of literary ghosts: “The ghost pushes at the boundaries
of language and thought… [the ghost] is ‘the structural enigma which inaugurates the
scene of writing’ … The ghost becomes a focus for competing epistemological and
ethical positions” (379). Derrida’s deconstruction focuses on the enigma of the textual
ghostly presence in terms of the lingual non-linearity associated with the phantom
cracter, thus, combating the assumption of the linearity of language.

Derrida claims that there is no concept outside of the network of differences and
references that gives a textual structure its worldly meaning. Because ghost stories are
working against the oppositions that assure global concepts, the specter remains in excess
of traditional political agendas. The speculative force of this excess works toward
establishing new relational structures with “a greater emphasis on ethics and its
relationship to the political” (Lather 258).
Spectrality remains resistant to conceptualization. Whereas traditional politics are inexorably products of a heterogeneous social context, the ghost story moves beyond and above those conflicting social meanings. The specter places itself outside the complex epistemological negotiations of power relations while it simultaneously interrupts the coherence and the complete subordination to the demands of regulatory regimes. Thus, by remaining “neither alive nor dead,” the ghost becomes a phenomenon that resists “the philosophical concept of the concept” (Derrida qtd. in Wolfreys x). Along these lines, the presence of a ghost story implies “a shift from the sociological to the cultural” and “brings textuality, discourse, and representation to the fore” (Lather 259).

Reading the ghost as liminal and in-between helps in uncovering hidden textual forces and structures, and facilitates “reinscribing a textual (rhetorical)/real (material) binary and [setting new] oppositional (dialectical) contradictions” (Lather 259). Hence, interpreting a ghost story is a process of reading the framing discourse and searching for the ideological axioms of social forces and material structures. The indeterminacy and the paradox associated with the spectral become conditions of affirmative power which undo social fixities and map new possibilities for playing out relations between the central and the marginal.

In Cryptomimesis: The Gothic and Jacques Derrida's Ghost Writing, Jodey Castricano pays exclusive attention to the relationship between the margin and the center in ghost stories. Castricano coins the term “cryptomimesis” to denote a writing practice that generates its uncanny effect through the production of a “contradictory topography of inside outside” (6). Moreover, the term draws attention to writing predicated upon
encryption, “the play of revelation and concealment lodged within parts of individual words” (6).

According to Derrida, this ghostly textual encoding is mostly at the service of affecting reader response (Specters of Marx 15). Derrida extends the caveat to the reader who disavows unpredictability and who is predestined to read in a particular way; he warns against reading in fear of indeterminacy and undecidability in a manner that refuses the call of the other. Castricano maintains that “this has to do with the structure of a text, with responding to the text of the other in a performative way” (7). Castricano vouches that the Derridian moment of readerly “transcendence” is irrepressible, but “it can be complicated or folded” (7). This remark directs attention back to the challenges presented by cryptomimesis, a practice of writing that simultaneously encourages and resists transcendent reading. Through the use of phantoms, cryptomimesis compels an irreducible plurality of meanings, a textual “self-transgression” in Gayatri Spivak’s terms (Ixxv).

Wherever the theme of the living-dead arises, whether it be in so-called Gothic texts or in Derrida’s work, the topic of reverence and desire cannot be separated from that of “ghostly inheritance,” whether in the sense of what is received by descent or succession or what returns in the form of a phantom to tax the living (Castricano 9). Haunting always implies a debt; it “materializes a certain symbolic debt beyond physical expiration” (Žižek qtd. in Catricano 11). The return of the phantom is uncanny and is indicative of inheritance, a “transgenerational haunting” that manifests the voices of one
generation in the unconscious of another (Castricano 16). In this transgenerational process, the textual structure is both “uncanny” and “double” according to Derrida (Otobiographies 33). Therefore, whenever a text calls the readerly attention through the use of a phantom, the readers are propelled to make a double-edged choice. This choice takes the forms of invitation and resistance. Suggesting the “uncanniness of reading and interpretation” (Castricano 17), the presence of a ghost signals ambivalence, “multivocality” and a “double-bind” (Derrida, Specters of Marx 16).

To be called by a text entails a paradox, a paradox of being “drawn into the crossroads of secrecy and desire” (Castricano 17). In Derrida’s work, the notion of the phantom has Gothic affinities in that the return of the dead from the grave and haunting can be understood to demonstrate, for better or for worse, what is at stake when, to recall Ulmer, “a word treated as a thing that is unspeakable [finally] achieves utterance by means of a complex [spectral] process” (qtd. in Castricano 21). What achieves utterance is also, generally speaking, that which horrifies. It horrifies because it is unspeakable and it haunts for the same reason. Hence, the ghost is a means for the hidden ideology to become expressible in the text. Furthermore, the horrific realities of ideology are innate in the scarcity of spectral utterance; for the ghost is unable to communicate to the living, but when it seldom does, it horrifies and informs all at once. In this manner, the spectral alters the audience’s response, arguably in a profoundly determinative way.
3. Tripartite Audience System

Once the structural functions of the texts are established, the question of reader responses to such a textual system comes into play. In other words, when we get to know the dynamics of characters (spectral and lively) in the narrative, we can better analyze how the texts shape their readers’ psyche. Phelan and Rabinowitz’s rhetorical reader response theory could prove highly effective in trying to interpret *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights*. They maintain that readers tend to draw on their personal experiences to create meaning in a narrative. In that sense, the narrative stimulates its own readers’ responses; the text becomes an event that occurs within the reader, whose response is of primary importance in the process of narrative world-making (Phelan and Rabinowitz 139). Thus, the analysis of how the narrative performs pays attention to the cognitive process of what the narrative does to its reader.

It is impossible to make meaningful contributions to the study of textual rhetoric at work without a sense of who is being addressed. Inexorably, reader response is closely related to the textual dynamics of the narrative. Therefore, character and plot progression become important aspects of the textual dynamics that trigger the readerly response. Once character and plot as elements of the textual dynamics are identified, their relative importance depends on the particular progression of the narrative under consideration (Phelan and Rabinowitz 112).

Rabinowitz set out the readerly dynamics in a tripartite system, namely, the actual, authorial and narrative audiences (139). By virtue of narrative fiction being an imitation
of a nonfictional world, the narrator is an imitation of the author. Thus, narrators always speak to a hypothetical group – the narratorial audience – that treats the narrator as real. The authorial audience on the second level of the readerly diagram is the group for whom the author writes, “the group that shares the knowledge, values, prejudices, fears, and experiences that the author expected in his or her reader and that grounds his or her rhetorical choices” (Phelan and Rabinowitz 6). The actual audience on the third level is the flesh and blood reader who receives the text and reads it. The authorial audience always hovers in between the other two entities; it is the “virtual projection of a consciousness that can tune into the narrator’s message, an imaginary reader who ‘gets it,’ even when the narratee appears to be in the dark” (Warhol 144). The distinction between the multi-leveled dialectics of audiences helps deal with many issues in interpreting the readerly dynamics of the text.

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan defines narrative voices on the basis of the following chart in which the narratee functions akin to Phelan’s ‘narratorial audience’ and implied readers to ‘authorial audience.’ Rimmon-Kenan mentions that implied author and implied reader have a rather voluntary function.

Real author → Implied author → Narrator → Narratee → Implied reader → Real reader

The implied authors are often far more superior in intelligence and moral standards than the real author (Rimmon-Kenan 88). While the narrator can only be defined circularly as the narrative voice or the speaker of the text, the implied author is – in opposition and by definition – voiceless and silent. In this sense the implied author must be seen as a
construct inferred and assembled by the reader from all components of the text (Rimmon-Kenan 88).

4. Non-linear Temporality

Non-linear temporal progression can be identified as another “overt artificiality” of the two primary texts I consider (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 13). Progression, according to Phelan, “refers to a narrative as a dynamic event, one that must move, in both its telling and its reception, through time” (Reading People, Reading Plots 15). Hence, the matter of narrative progression is tied to narration on one end and temporality on the other. Time, as an integral aspect of progression, has consequences for the narrative which might lie in its effect on the “reader’s understanding of the instabilities, tensions and resolutions” of the story (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 15).

Conversely, narration is closely tied to the temporal progression; narration marks an important ‘juncture’ in the narrative discourse. Everything prior to the narration time serves as disclosure information, information that is necessary for the authorial audience’s understanding of events. According to Rimmon-Kenan, this act of narration out of temporal sequence is defined in relation to the narrative’s temporal progress. Anterior or analeptic narration – narration which precedes the events and appears in framed narrative – can be of prime synthetic function. The anterior narration can signal a change in progression and function as a thematic construct.
Rimmon-Kenan allocates a full chapter to prolepsis, the “type of narration [that] tends to appear in narratives within narratives in the form of prophecies, curses or dreams of fictional characters” (91), and adds:

Anterior narration is a narration which precedes the events. It is a kind of predictive narration generally using the future tense but sometimes the present. This type of narration tends to appear in narratives within narratives. Any prolepsis is of course a pocket of anterior narration. (91)

She clarifies further that “the transition from one narrative level to another is in principle affected by the act of narration which draws the reader's attention to the shift” (94).

Because the present study deals with the two texts’ non-linear temporal progression, it is important to be fully aware of the theories of analepsis and prolepsis, and their operations according to narrative theory. Non-linear temporal progression introduces the reader to a “pro-world” (Currie 33): a world which is beyond the original stories’ temporal dimensions yet is a direct consequence of the fictional occurrences. In those terms, the two central figures’ crisis of identity in *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* becomes the central thematic enigma of the texts. The progression of such crisis impacts the temporality of the novels in a way which could be translated into Currie’s “teleological retrospect”: a “looking back from an endpoint” (33). Hence, the proleptic treatment of time in the novels arguably gives the past “a significance it did not possess at the time of its occurrence” (Currie 34); in other words, the retrospective quality of temporal progression gives the text a kind of “fictional self-consciousness” (Currie 47).
In order for the readers to be able to make sense of the characters’ mental turmoil, they revise the present through a filter of the past.

Mark Currie’s *About Time, Narrative, Fiction and the Philosophy of Time* is most helpful in terms of analyzing narrative temporality. While Currie agrees that “the description of narrative temporality has a tendency, like the description of tense in general, to hurtle towards an absurd complexity” (33), his categorization of narrative temporality can help resolve such complexity. Currie classifies temporality into two distinct realms: namely, “cosmological and phenomenological time” (33). Cosmological time is the clock, linear time which treats time as a line succession of ‘nows’ while phenomenological time is interpreted as a recurrent temporal progression in which tenses seem to be embedded inside one another as the “constituent parts of a perpetual present” (Currie 34). In *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights*, the concept of cosmological time is deeply troubled because both narratives start in the aftermath of the events when the ghost protagonists haunt and frustrate the living.

According to Currie, in literary prolepsis the fictional tenses of past, present and future lose their linear cosmological meaning. When dealing with a proleptic narrative, the reader is at all times departing from cosmological time towards phenomenological time. Prolepsis, therefore, is the moment in a narrative in which the chronological order of story events is disturbed and the narrator narrates future events out of turn. The narrative takes a peek into its own future to consequent events still mysterious to the
reader and then returns to proceed with the linear sequence. Hence, prolepsis can be of prime importance in the configuration of unspoken encrypted narrative phantoms.

In analyzing narrative, it is possible to identify three time zones that structure communication: the time locus of the narrated, the time locus of the narrator, and the time locus of the reader. Currie identifies three types of prolepsis in a narrative fiction framework based on the above categorizations of narrative temporality: Prolepsis 1 “which takes place within the time locus of the narrated,” Prolepsis 2 “which takes place between the time locus of the narrated and the time locus of the narrator,” and Prolepsis 3 that “is a form of anticipation which takes place between the time locus of the narrator and the time locus of the reader” (31).

Prolepsis 1 offers a rudimentary training in the anticipation of retrospect. By jumping ahead within the time locus of narrated events to a future point which is often an outcome, Prolepsis 1 creates the effect that is referred to as “teleological retrospect”: a looking back from an endpoint; this gives the event a significance it did not possess at the time of its occurrence (Currie 33). Prolepsis 2 deals with the preterite tense of classical narration; it is a form of anticipation which takes place between the time locus of the narrated and the time locus of the narrator. The preterite tense has anticipation built into it in the sense that the events of narration are only narrated in the past tense. Therefore, Prolepsis 2 implies a sense of retrospectivity: a temporal progression in which the present of a narrative is structurally retrospective, or is structured in relation to the future present from which it is narrated (Currie 39). Therefore, in Prolepsis 2, the narration travels
forward from narrated time to the time of the narrative as a mode of fictional self-consciousness. In the case of Prolepsis 1 in which the time travel takes place within the boundaries of narrated time, the future is predetermined, literally already written, and lying in wait, while, in the case of Prolepsis 2, the future is successfully brought into being by the act of anticipation.

In Prolepsis 3, temporal progression forms an anticipation, an attempt mostly doomed to fail, to preclude objection. Hence, the actual future time locus involved is indeterminate and unforeseeable. In relation to time, Currie explains that time incorporates the hermeneutic circle of “resentification” and “depresentification” (40). Prolepsis 1, with its Godlike power to visit the future, instructs the reader in teleological retrospect. Looking back on the present from envisaged future moments, Prolepsis 2 installs in the present a temporal self-distance which operates as a self-conscious mode of storytelling. Such temporal self-distance also operates in Prolepsis 3, in which the temporal narrative teleological retrospect is contained within a “packet of anterior narration” (Rimmon-Kenan 91). The anterior narration acts as a protection towards an imagined objection and forestalls that objection by the act of self-conscious narration brought about in Prolepsis 3. Hence, Prolepsis 3 entails a form of rhetorical manipulation or ideological interpellation in its essence. Careful attention to narrative temporality and the act of prolepsis, therefore, can configure a discursive paradigm on the axis between time and self-conscious reading, which in turn can be very useful in a study of readerly response.
Chapter Three

1. Introduction

This chapter is dedicated to a thorough analysis of characters in *Wuthering Heights* and *Beloved*. I will focus on the female characters and their interrelation with the ghost characters. The chapter will discuss the character functions of Beloved in *Beloved* and Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* both in terms of their lively character enunciations and their role as ghosts within the web of the narratives’ microcosmic society. This chapter is intended to form a comparison between the natural and the unnatural, the real and the uncanny within the narratorial social proxy.

2. *Wuthering Heights*

   In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine is a strong, central being who places every other character into different kinds of minor roles. Catherine’s centrality emerges only in dynamic interaction with the development of these other minor characters, so the narrative encompasses an array of her archived interiority reincarnated in others. In those terms, Nelly and Lockwood’s characterization as the framing narrators with minimal mimetic functions are of pivotal importance in how the story is comprehended. Also, Catherine II’s character encompasses a minimal synthetic progression which arguably reinforces Catherine I’s persistent hold on the narrative’s progress.

   *Wuthering Heights*, therefore, delineates a characterly “distributional matrix” generating two essential modes of characterization (Woloch 34). On the one hand, Catherine I is the strong, rounded, fully realized central protagonist which supplements
the narrative’s mimetic traits; on the other hand, the novel presents a manifold group of “delimited” and “specialized” characters (Woloch 33). Alex Woloch argues that the closed structure of narrative fiction suggests a “radical interconnection between the two modes of character” (34). Drawing on Woloch’s position on *Pride and Prejudice*, the moral force of *Wuthering Heights* is located not only in Catherine I’s “full development,” but also in the novel’s insistence on showing how the protagonist’s development rests on top of a character system (35).

Woloch’s argument of characters’ “distributional matrix” can be linked closely to Phelan’s tripartite character functions (34). Catherine’s character remarkably possesses all three character traits. As a young subversive girl blooming into womanhood, Catherine is strongly mimetic; she undergoes the gradual process of female confinement almost every middle-class Victorian woman could identify with. As a subversive non-compliant woman who ends up losing her life to her struggles, Catherine populates the story with multiple accounts of traumatic experiences; remarkably, the accounts of her traumas and torments are only related to the audience through the zealous framing of Nelly’s narration. In that sense, Catherine’s characterization reflects a thematic portrayal of Victorian womanhood. Not only does Catherine function as a central being in the first half of the syuzhet, but her character’s enunciations continue to foreshadow the story beyond her death. As a ghost appearing at the novel’s introductory scenes, Catherine is away from reality and possesses an artificial synthetic function. Also, the presence of a
namesake daughter, whose only mission is fulfilling her mother’s incomplete worldly errands, further emphasizes Catherine’s synthetic stronghold on the narrative.

2.1. The Clash with Ideology: Mimetic Catherine, Thematic Nelly

In *Wuthering Heights*, lively Catherine never speaks to the readers directly. It is through Nelly’s narration that Catherine is perceived. Ironically, Catherine appears to be in possession of mimetic functions while her implied creator, Nelly, is solely thematic. Catherine’s multi-dimensional characterization is in stark contrast with that of her story’s narrator. Nelly is the sole person who addresses her experiences with Catherine to Lockwood. She is the only focalizing lens through which Catherine is perceived; yet her story is intertwined with a sharp ideological aura. Nelly, ironically, identifies with the patriarchs of the story and helps promote and preserve their hegemonic wellbeing.

Newman further explains:

> Nelly's telling is enabled by her habit of looking, which here authorizes a threefold telling: she narrates, informs on and advises all at once. Looking as telling, then, works in the service of regulating the family – or, precisely, regulating the erotic relations of its members — to preserve order for the male head of the house. (1035)

Nelly's version of *Wuthering Heights*’ story, therefore, forms a big prolonged gossip, a gossip Nelly passes on to curious Lockwood telling Catherine’s story from an extremely ideological perspective. Nelly proves to act selectively in the process of shaping her
story. She fails to cover parts unimportant to her cause and mentions questionable events all at the service of furthering her patriarchal agenda.

Catherine’s subversive existence framed by Nelly’s ideological narration form two polarized narratives which shape the readers’ understanding of *Wuthering Heights*. This clash of ideologies remains mostly subtle; at times, however, the text becomes very forceful in contradicting its own narrator. As an example, Nelly tries to idealize Catherine’s post-marital life at Thrushcross Grange; she suggests that the young Lintons “were both very attentive to her [Catherine’s] comfort” after Catherine’s marriage (Brontë 74). Nelly even goes to the height of analogizing Catherine to an unbending thorn within honeysuckles, in saying “it was not the thorn bending to the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn” (Brontë 74).

When Heathcliff comes back to visit married Catherine for the first time though, Edgar suggests that Catherine cannot meet him in the seating room and suggests the “kitchen as a more suitable place” (Brontë 76). Edgar’s assertion here contradicts Nelly’s idealized picture of Catherine’s marital life. Nevertheless, Catherine refuses to settle in the kitchen, and, at a preceding scene, confronts Nelly who backs the Lintons’ inclinations:

Nelly, if we have a dispute sometimes, you back Isabella at once; and I yield like a foolish mother: I call her a darling, and flatter her into good temper. It pleases her brother to see us cordial, and that pleases me. But
they are very much alike: they are spoiled children, and fancy the world was made for their accommodation; and though I humor both, I think a smart chastisement might improve them all the same. (79)

Here, Catherine directly repudiates Nelly’s previous accounts of her married life. Where Nelly tries to promulgate Catherine and Edgar’s marriage “in possession of deep and growing happiness,” Catherine speaks of her troubles coping with her childish insecure husband (Brontë 74). While Nelly’s narration promotes Edgar’s mastery, Catherine not only divulges the hollowness of such patriarchal ascendancy, but also reveals the intensity of the societal pressure put on her as a married woman to conform her submissive role towards her “spoiled” partner (Brontë 79).

Nelly’s judgment of Catherine as a “wild, wicked slip” little girl (Brontë 34), who grows up to adopt a “double character” (Brontë 57), therefore, is positioned at odds with the authorial audience’s prior judgment of Catherine as a victim who is primarily introduced as a ghost. As the portrait of an ideologically unreliable narrator develops, Nelly becomes much like a speaker in a dramatic monologue, who, in effect, discredits her own narration. The tension initiated by this clash of competing ideologies is rooted in the fact that Nelly is morally obtuse, beyond comprehending Catherine’s struggle. In other words, for Nelly as the “patriarchy’s paradigmatic housekeeper,” it is impossible to sympathize with the pains and passions of womanhood (Gilbert and Gubar 70).
This ongoing instability leads to a “cognitive tension” in *Wuthering Heights* (Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29). Catherine’s strong mimetic traits, as opposed to Nelly’s thematic framing, result in a gap between authorial and narratorial audiences. The ethical tension created by this clash of ideologies between the audiences induces the actual audience to judge the proceedings in *Wuthering Heights*.

2.2. A Reincarnation in *Wuthering Heights*: a Second Catherine

In *Wuthering Heights*, the lively Catherine dies during childbirth half-way through the narrative. Her namesake daughter, Catherine Linton (whom I will call Catherine II to avoid confusion), claims her name at birth. The narrator emphasizes the connection between the former Catherine’s death and the latter Catherine’s arrival multiple times throughout the discourse.

> Time wore on at the Grange in its former pleasant way till Miss Cathy reached sixteen. On the anniversary of her birth, we never manifested any sign of rejoicing, because it was also the anniversary of my late mistress’s death. (Brontë 170)

These exemplary passages, indicating the narrative’s two major events’ concurrence, are not the only way in which the two Catherines are interconnected besides their names.

Catherine II literally starts her juvenile life where her mother had left it. Born motherless to the confinement of Edgar Linton’s patriarchal household, Catherine II’s
first uttered statement links her back to her mother’s passionate longing to be back at her native Wuthering Heights:

> While surveying the country from her nursery windows, she would observe:  
> “Ellen, how long will it be before I can walk to the top of those hills? I wonder what lies on the other side – is it the sea?” (Brontë 153)

Catherine’s desire to discover the unknown “sea” beyond the hills makes Wuthering Heights the destination of her multiple breaks from the Lintons’ incarceration (Brontë 153). In that sense, Catherine II is the embodiment of what her mother’s vehement female desire failed to achieve during her lifetime; Catherine II has her same high spirit, the same urge to escape the confinement of Thrushcross Grange, the same passion to love and be loved that belonged to Mother Catherine in the first place.

Catherine dies to be able to give birth to a newer version of herself, a version that is more resilient to the miseries patriarchy could bring upon her. Little Catherine proves to be a fighter. She fights for her life at the time she is born prematurely. She fights for her independent way of thought through the years she is being raised in the extremely confining Lintons’ household. She struggles to attain her self-respect at the time she is nothing in Heathcliff’s household but a servant having lost her husband, father and consequently her share of inheritance, and she wins; she wins back what legitimately should have belonged to her all along. She takes hold of Thrushcross Grange, her father’s estate; a matter Catherine, the mother, never managed to do with Wuthering Heights. Catherine II claims Wuthering Heights at the dénouement; hence, not only does she
succeed in getting hold of her mother’s paternal estate, she also manages to reclaim her name contrary to all Victorian laws pertaining to married women’s post-marital affairs. Davies elaborates:

*Wuthering Heights*, with its story of Catherine’s willful separation from her “twin,” Heathcliff, her exile at Thrushcross Grange, the riddle of her delirium and the “baby-work” of her pregnancy and delivery of the new Catherine, is an original myth of loss, exile, rebirth, and return. (111)

This return pushes Catherine back to the story’s forefront; Catherine II acquires her mother’s maiden name at the dénouement. By marrying Hareton, Catherine Earnshaw is reborn. In those terms, Catherine II pursues the continuation of her mother’s subversive journey. Her character is linked to the original Catherine through multiple textual references which signal their synthetic intimacy.

Even though Catherine’s ghost never gets to enter Wuthering Heights during her initial plea to Lockwood in the first chapter, Catherine finally arrives at her destination through her own daughter who looks into the world with eyes that are identical to her mother’s. This self-fulfilling prophecy involves an upcoming marriage, but the marriage is far from Victorian. Hareton is by no means an image of the cultivated man. He is illiterate and in deep need of guiding company; he does not own anything aside from what his marriage to Catherine would entitle him to. Gilbert and Gubar consider Hareton “the illiterate outcast [who can play] as metaphorically the true son of his [Heathcliff’s] own true union with Catherine” (77). Hareton, therefore, plays a twofold role. Not only is he the emblem of Catherine I and Heathcliff’s impossible union, he is also the medium
through which their alliance can ever be conventionally accredited in Victorian society. The ending scene of the novel, therefore, signals anything but domesticity. Kate Flint explains: “It is Cathy who teaches Hareton to read, thus giving him the key to unlock literature: the very thing which, the novel demonstrates by its own existence has the potential to unsettle norms, to pose questions rather than provide answers” (177).

This is to say that, even though *Wuthering Heights* ends in cozy domesticity, the gaps in its enunciation mark a subversive resistance to the gender norms of Victorian society.

Moreover, Catherine’s specter never leaves Wuthering Heights after fully claiming it through her daughter. Her ghost roams the moors she could never walk as a married woman accompanying Heathcliff. Nelly tells Lockwood at the dénouement: “that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on ‘em looking out his chamber window on every rainy night since his [Heathcliff’s] death” (270). Catherine’s ghostly presence extends beyond narrative time in that sense. This last account of her spectral sighting perpetuates her hold on a soon-to-be-vacated Wuthering Heights “for the use of such ghosts should they choose to inhabit it” as Lockwood confirms (Brontë 271). Catherine’s spectral presence will be discussed more thoroughly in the following chapter.

3. *Beloved*

3.1. Tension in *Beloved*: Mimetic Sethe, Thematic Beloved

Although *Beloved*’s narrator is grammatically third-person and omniscient, the novel executes its destabilizing effects, “cognitive tension” in Phelan’s terminology, by multiple changes of focalization and voice throughout the narrative discourse (*Reading*
People, Reading Plots 29). Focalization is a definitive parameter in the process of interpretation, be it focalization through a first-person narrator in the case of an autobiography or focalization through a third-person omniscient narrator. Gérard Genette considers focalization a textual device through which the author limits the reader’s access to what is going on inside the narrative (12). Focalization is directly linked to the problem of representation; it is a textual instrument for the author to establish the way in which the reader enters the narrative world. Therefore, the reader is appointed to experience the focalizer’s perception, feelings, thoughts, and worldview. In those terms, a switch in focalization anchoring in Beloved can function akin to an instability produced by unreliable narration in Wuthering Heights. While in Wuthering Heights the framing of subversive Catherine through an ideologically patriarchal Nelly induces the sense of “cognitive tension,” in Beloved the multiple changes in focalization and voice, which facilitate the narration of events from different perspectives, bring about the same tension (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 29).

In Beloved, shifting focalization goes hand in hand with defining character functions. In writing a fictional account of slavery, Morrison uses different focalizers as a textual instrument for picturing the interior lives of the black objectified persona; this is hugely manifested in Sethe’s mimetic character progression. Beloved’s detailed mimetic characterization of Sethe, together with constantly changing focalization from one character to the other throughout the novel, contribute to the sense of the narrative act as negotiation. In that sense, the narrative could be staging a trial for its authorial audience,
by bringing in witnesses from all perspectives to testify to Sethe’s resource-less calamity. Thus, the authorial audience is the addressee of the text’s facilitating of negotiation.

Through multiple changes in focalization, *Beloved* executes “cognitive tension” (Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29). On the one hand, by focalizing Beloved’s murder scene exclusively through a white lens, *Beloved* showcases the absurdity of the colour code ideology. The most disturbing scene of the novel gets focalized through Schoolteacher’s vantage point. It almost seems like no other character is competent to visualize the horrific scene of Beloved’s death by infanticide.

Three of them [white men] dismounted, one stayed in the saddle, his rifle ready, his eyes trained away from the house to the left and to the right… Schoolteacher and the nephew moved to the left of the house… Inside, two boys bled in the sawdust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood-soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did not look at them; she simply swung the baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time… in the ticking time the men spent staring at what there was to stare at. (Morrison 174-5)

Schoolteacher stands for the white self who only makes sense of himself by putting his civilization in contrast with Sethe’s savagery, his literacy in prominent hierarchy to Sethe’s inability to write (but not to fix ink), and his dominance to her invalidity. This extremely ironic use of focalization foreshadows the vanity of the white presumptuous standardizing and points towards the hypocrisy of the white self. The extremity of the
hierarchical position which would put the black at a far lesser value than an animal – “a
dead nigger could not be skinned for profit and was not worth his own dead body weight
in coin” (Morrison 175) – is therefore effectively eradicated by the very act of
focalization. Schoolteacher, as the textual representative of the white historian, thereby
loses his ideological mastery in the reader’s view.

Consequently, matters in Beloved are predominantly focalized through a black
focalizing lens. In this manner, Beloved attempts to negotiate, re-personalize, and re-
humanize the ideals of subversive resistance through Sethe’s mimetic, true-to-life
characterization in spite of the use of an omniscient narrator. The narrative appeals to the
universality of maternal instincts in its re-picturing of black womanhood through Sethe’s
story. The text in its portrayal of “resistance to oppression in its multiple manifestations”
is a tireless endeavour to exhibit the restrictive and traumatizing effects of slavery on the
woman slave (King 274).

The frequency of scenes narrated through Sethe’s focalizing lens strengthens
Sethe’s mimetic traits. Throughout the novel, Sethe is pictured as unable to reconcile
with her past. Traces of her past keep hunting her in manifestations too horrible and too
violent for her to either remember or forget. Beloved’s syuzhet starts with the accounts of
Sethe’s struggles with her “rememories” (Morrison 248). Not only are Sethe’s accounts
of her tormenting “rememories” an indication of her agonizing past; her recollections of
her time as a slave link her back to the daughter she was forced to behead (Morrison
248). Having killed Beloved in order to gain the child’s freedom from capture by
Schoolteacher, Sethe finds it impossible to come to terms with her past and, therefore, tries to forget.

In order to be able to have a bearable future, however, Sethe has no refuge but to liberate her present from the burdens of the past. She must use her constructive historical imagination to reconstruct and reshape a history of her own, a history that would justify the horrible murder of Beloved. Thus, as Morrison moves from image to text, Sethe too begins with image and proceeds to shape her recollections of the past through a process of “narrativization” (Henderson 85). This process of narrativizing places Sethe’s mimetic character in sharp contrast with all other characters of the novel. Her centrality is enforced by her mimetic traits; hence, the moral admonishment of Beloved stems from Sethe’s centrality. Her true-to-life character function creates the “cognitive tension” and forces her actual audience to take a judging position (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 29).

While Sethe struggles to put her memories in order, she also has trouble coming to terms with Beloved; thus, Beloved becomes the emblem of Sethe’s vulnerable being. Sethe’s inability to rearrange a narrative in order to be able to judge her own history is portrayed in her inability to recall the looks of the daughter she beheaded; Beloved lacks a ‘face’ in the novel constantly switching between Sethe and Denver claiming both ‘faces.’ The mimetic characterization of Sethe negotiates its narratorial reader to exonerate her from being responsible for the crime of killing Beloved. Sethe’s characterization shouts out through multiple manifestations that she was left with no
other choice. Sethe, herself, testifies to that: “It ain’t my job to know what’s worse. It’s my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that” (Morrison 194).

_Beloved_, therefore, takes a two-fold twist to its plot progression through, Sethe’s mimetic character to an adumbration of Sethe’s sense of selfhood and subjectivity that is also her only way towards recovery. Sethe concludes her journey at the novel’s dénouement; this is emphasized in Paul D’s last address: “‘Sethe’ he says, ‘me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow.’ He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. ‘You your best thing, Sethe. You are’” (Morrison 322). Thereby, Sethe’s constant challenge to arrange her “rememories” is concluded; her joyful cry of “Me?Me?” echoes her relief (Morrison 322). She had made sense of the unwritten and unaccounted records of her memories and had put them forward into a narrative configuration that would exonerate her, both before Paul D and her authorial audience.

Sethe’s narrative-history making empowers her to make a history out of clusters of painful memories and enables her to shape her fragmented life story into a new understanding of black history in spite of Schoolteacher’s figurative recording. Sethe’s inability to see the marks on her back makes her rely on others to read it to her; thus, Sethe has to narrativize her past through the gaze of others. This process entails the text’s multiple changes in focalization. This constant tension initiated by the switched
anchoring focalization not only enables the implied author to shape a narrative of compurgation, but also places the actual audiences in a position of judging.

Sethe’s challenge is to be able to configure the story of her past on her own. The process translates into linking traces of her past to the construction of a new personal and historical self. Sethe’s shortcoming as an illiterate black woman ex-slave is that she finds the past subjected to the definitions of others, and is not able to assert agency over her own identity. Thus, the black woman becomes a symbol of double-negativity, the ultimate Other who becomes a defining force in the narrative’s act of negotiation. For many actual readers of *Beloved*, it might be hard to sympathize with a black ex-slave woman who commits infanticide. Through its textual dynamics, however, *Beloved* succeeds in removing the racially encoded barriers of understanding; Morrison narrates a traumatic story of slave motherhood to its black authorial audiences. The actual audiences continue hovering between the narratorial white self and the authorial black other, only to find themselves surprisingly aligned with the woman slave through a traumatic account of black motherhood.

3.2. The Reincarnation in *Beloved*: Synthetic Beloved

Flesh and blood Beloved returns to 124 the child she has been in death despite appearing older; the soft skin on “the knuckles of her hands” is her initial witness, for no black girl can reach adulthood and not labor for her upbringing (Morrison 61). The repeated textual references to her soft skin, her appetite for sweets and her puerile talks all attest to her infantile psyche. Her character progression, consequently, becomes
extremely one-dimensional; only enough is said for the reader to know that Beloved is
the reincarnation of the child Sethe had killed, ironically to rescue her from slavery:

Beloved, scratching the back of her hand, would say she remembered a
woman who was hers, and she remembered being snatched from her. Other
than that, the clearest memory she had, the one she repeated, was the bridge
— standing on the bridge looking down. (Morrison 140)

Beloved’s recollection of her past life is subsumed in her jubilant childish union with her
mother. Her only other clear recollection is coming back from death. In Beloved’s
memory, the only players are the bridge, which borders life and death, and the mother
who performs that same function.

Beloved’s fraught memory, which continually references the most traumatic
events of Sethe’s life, is in stark contrast with Sethe’s tormenting accounts of the
incident; it is almost as if Beloved has gone numb beyond her beheading. Nonetheless,
her synthetic bodily apparition is perfectly complete:

I come out of blue water after the bottoms of my feet swim away from
me I come up I need to find a place to be the air is heavy I am not dead
I am not there is a house there is what she whispered to me I am what
she told me I am not dead I sit the sun closes my eyes when I open
them I see the face I lost Sethe’s face that left me Sethe sees me see her
and I see the smile her smiling face is the place for me it is the face I lost

(Morrison 252)

Beloved, here, describes her fluid life beyond death. By saying she is what Sethe told her, she confirms being a part and one with her mother’s consciousness. Therefore, not only does Beloved endorse her spectral aspect in this passage, she also authenticates her very artificiality. In those terms, Beloved becomes the emblem of the black slave’s suffering, an extremely synthetic reminder of the horrors of slavery whose one and only function is to ensure the unforgettablity of her traumatic being.

*Beloved* utilizes two functions for Beloved the character: the spirit, Sethe’s “child returned to her from the dead,” and the flesh, the “factual slave,” the “true survivor of slavocracy” (Morrison qtd. in Vine 303). Thus, the novel can be read as a history of the impossibility of maternal agency in face of slavocracy’s regime in which Sethe only gains agency by removing Beloved from the system of slavery. By the unbearably painful act of love, Sethe saves all three of them from slavery: Beloved, Denver and herself. At the same time, Beloved, the figure, is the fleshly reincarnation of the unspeakable, the unpresentable, and the inexpressible; her limited synthetic character development during her lively presence at 124 emphasizes this reincarnating function. Beloved embodies the horrors of African-American enslavement and silencing, which return to haunt the novel. In that sense, Beloved’s soliloquy could be understood as the fragmented “rememory” of unhealed wounds (Morrison 248), wounds of the African-American racial exposé, wounds which cannot be cured unless they are seen directly and fleshly as Beloved. At
the point where Beloved’s disorderly soliloquy transforms into a polyphonic hymn of communal suffering (253-6), the frequency of the shift of identities – in terms of who the ‘you,’ ‘she,’ and ‘I’ pronouns refer to – provides for a fugue-like relationship between the women characters. Thus, even though implied readers are able to recollect the characters’ collective memory from previous readings, the text destabilizes its own characterization and brings about a sense of tension in itself that is meant to appeal to a new notion. It is an appeal to a sophisticated implied black reader to read American history from a new perspective, not as the object of what the white likes of Schoolteacher have done to them, but rather as a subjective reader asserting agency over that history.

In those terms, Beloved’s synthetic characterization is the call to the authorial audience to reincarnate and recreate the unspeakable, the unpresentable, and the inexpressible history. Beloved is the horrors of African-American enslavement and silencing; she is the apparition of the deformed and tormenting life Sethe would have lived had she stayed in Sweet Home. Beloved leaves the novel at the end; her departure, however, means anything but a resolution. Beloved’s closure signals the quandary of the dilemma female African-Americans have to deal with when thinking which parts of the history they should remember. Beloved, to the contrary, is a textual invitation to black women not to hold on to their “undecipherable” thoughts, “the thoughts of women of 124, unspeakable thoughts, unspoken” (Morrison 235). Beloved’s synthetic character emphasizes the necessity of dealing with those thoughts before they reincarnate into a pregnant belly, swollen with trauma, which threatens to devour the last bits of sanity.
4. Comparative Analysis

Both *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* alter the reader’s response through exhibiting the resource-less status of a central mimetic character. The cognitive tension which enables the texts’ act of negotiation is executed through two different techniques (Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29): the unsettling use of narration/focalization which interrogates the underlying ideology, and the “distributional character matrix” that places the mimetic characters in stark centrality compared to every other character of the novels (Woloch 34).

*Beloved* executes its cognitive tension through changes of anchoring focalization. While Sethe is mimetic for the authorial audience in terms of maternal instincts, Beloved is synthetic and thematic at the same time. The text uses Beloved on two different levels; on the one level, she is the embodiment of Sethe’s fears and traumas. In that respect, her character functions thematically. On the other hand, Beloved portrays the continuation of the life Sethe would have lived under slavery coming back in bodily bondage to haunt 124. The text gives her ghostly character an interior monologue, a voice which speaks of the horrors of slavery. The fact that she runs away with a swollen belly at the sight of white men coming to arrest her – akin to her mother’s flight to Cincinnati – further underscores the synthetic function of her character.

Beloved’s close ties to the chronotope of 124 can be closely compared to Catherine’s inclination to Wuthering Heights. The place is important in that respect because these ghost characters choose to roam a house which could not have belonged to
them otherwise. The legal constraints on married women’s property push Catherine out of Wuthering Heights. In the case of Beloved, her very existence belongs to Schoolteacher by virtue of her skin colour; her stronghold on 124 is extremely subversive given that a slave was not to own anything, not even her own body. The intimate relationship between the ghost characters and material location brings forth the “contradictory topography of inside outside” (Castricano 6). In other words, in both texts, the other world of the ghost gets intertwined with the proceedings of the material world during the ghostly haunting.

The instability initiated by this reverse process makes the actual audiences leave their comfortable reading distance; the actual audience hovers between the authorial audience’s judgmental position and the narratorial audiences’ fictive stance. Ultimately, in order for the actual audiences to be able to make sense of the narrative, the cognitive tension of the narrative must inhabit in the dynamics of characterly encodings; this is precisely the Derridean moment of readers’ transcendence from the narrative to the larger picture of the sociopolitical context in a “performative” way (Castricano 7).

The narrative conveys that Catherine had no other choice but to die and haunt the living, and that Sethe was made to kill Beloved and submit to the perpetual torture of her ghostly presence. Beloved is the very indication of those feelings that transcend the spectral bondage and comes back in flesh and blood; her fleshly return exonerates Sethe and redeems her socially. Catherine II arguably performs the same function for her mother; she is the continuation of a life never lived and a battle never fought by
Catherine, the mother. Her marriage to Hareton facilitates the rebirth of Catherine Earnshaw and wins Catherine Earnshaw back her inheritance.

Furthermore, Beloved continues to roam the storyworld beyond the novel’s closure just like Catherine who never rests at the dénouement. In those terms, Beloved and Catherine succeed in resolving the narratives’ central tension; they both “tax the living” in spite of the ideological context (Castricano 9). This perpetual haunting “materializes a certain symbolic debt beyond physical expiration” (Žižek qtd. in Catricano 11); it is the collective debt of a repressed and “unaccounted for” social proxy (Morrison epigraph).

In this manner, Beloved and Wuthering Heights both point towards the controlling contextual ideology. Through their journey along the lines of syuzhet, the audiences are reminded, over and over again, that Victorian women did die whithin domestic incarceration with no witness, and that African-American ex-slaves did have a history that cannot be eradicated in the matter of decades. The ghost perpetuates the stronghold of this traumatic inheritance on the narratives and fiercely questions discriminating ideology with its very being. The specter, therefore, claims attention to the impossibility of its lively existence. This perpetual hold of the phantom is uncanny and is indicative of a ghostly inheritance, a “transgenerational haunting” which extends beyond the story’s temporal dimensions (Castricano 16). The following chapter is dedicated to a closer study of the haunting process.
Chapter Four

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the characters’ functions of the two novels were studied. This chapter will take a comparative approach towards the issues of time and spectrality. As established earlier, temporal progression can be closely intertwined with a character’s spectral quality; when non-linear temporality is used as a thematic instrument, the presence of a ghost character becomes increasingly defining. The liminal quality of ghosts as something not alive, yet not completely absent, makes them entities that by definition disrupt the “cosmological time” and blur normal temporal conceptions in the narrative (Currie 33). Thereafter, the story of the phantom intersects with the proleptic quality of narrative discourse. These intertwined techniques reinforce one another to further affect readerly response. The present chapter seeks to establish that the use of a ghost story – intertwined with a non-linear time – results in a sense of concurrent “phenomenological” temporality in both Wuthering Heights and Beloved (Currie 33). This is to say that temporality and spectrality are conflated textual devices in both narratives which emblematize trauma and defy social conformity at the same time.

2. Wuthering Heights

In Wuthering Heights, all events of the novel shape a distant past in relation to the narrator’s present. This non-linear temporal progression introduces the reader to a “pro-world” (Currie 33). In those terms, the story of Catherine I with its deadly consequences
becomes the central thematic enigma of the text; the reader is signaled to read *Wuthering Heights* in relation to Catherine’s ghostly agony of abandonment.

When Catherine is first introduced to the story, she is a ghostly presence clinging to Lockwood’s hand through *Wuthering Heights*’ window, sobbing to be readmitted to her childhood “oak closet” (Brontë 20):

I tried to draw back my arm, but the hand clung to it, and a most melancholy voice sobbed, ‘Let me in – let me in!’ ‘Who are you?’ I asked, struggling meanwhile to disengage myself. ‘Catherine Linton,’ it replied, shiveringly … terror made me cruel; and, finding it useless to attempt shaking the creature off, I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes: still it wailed, ‘Let me in’… ‘Begone’ I shouted. ‘I’ll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.’ ‘It is twenty years,’ mourned the voice: ‘twenty years. I’ve been a waif for twenty years!’ (Brontë 21)

This traumatic image of the excluded feminine specter is how Catherine enters the narrative realm. She introduces herself as Catherine Linton, her married name, and soaks the bed sheets with the blood of her lost virginity; nonetheless, her passionate plea to be re-admitted to her pre-marital status is only made in a bid to enter yet another confined space. Catherine’s spectral introduction forms the narrative’s central enigma which the reader is set to solve throughout the discourse. Hence, the reader is signaled to read
*Wuthering Heights* with respect to Catherine’s traumatic womanhood, a ghost, who has been a “waif,” perhaps a wife, for twenty years (Brontë 21).

In the immediately preceding passage, Lockwood observes that “time stagnates here [in Wuthering Heights]”; his assertion, thereby, links the trauma of ghostly transpiration to the progression of time (Brontë 23). This progression of such a traumatic spectral entity affects the temporality of the novel in a way which could be translated into Currie’s “teleological retrospect” (33). It is, therefore, fair to argue that prolepsis in *Wuthering Heights* is meant to give the past events a greater significance; in other words, the retrospective quality of temporal progression gives the text a kind of “fictional self-consciousness” as Currie terms it (47). *Wuthering Heights*’ readers are able to make sense of Catherine’s spectral presence only when they revise the present through a filter of the embedded past. In those terms, readers have been signaled to read Catherine’s scuffle as history, a history which forms a wholesome and concise notion of the trauma which Victorian patriarchy has imposed on the female persona. Therefore, the proleptic quality of narration foreshadows the narrative discourse with death and spectrality from the outset.

Catherine’s phantom continues its stagnated presence in Wuthering Heights till the very dénouement. In those terms, her specter moves towards becoming one and the same with the locality of Wuthering Heights. Her apparitions become exceedingly frequent towards the novel’s closure. While her love affair with Heathcliff becomes replicated in Catherine II and Hareton’s romantic spark, any mention of her name initiates one of her
repetitious reincarnations. Heathcliff’s confession about the reason of his bewilderment is very enlightening on that front:

I cannot look down on this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree – filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day – I am surrounded by her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women – my own features – mock me with resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her… Hareton’s aspect was the ghost of my immortal love … his society is no benefit; rather an aggravation of the constant torment I suffer, and it partly contributes to render me regardless how he and his cousin go together. (Brontë 260-1)

Here, not only does Heathcliff confirm Catherine’s multiple ghostly appearances as the reason for his bewilderment, but he also divulges the passionate and feminine nature of these apparitions. The passions of Catherine’s traversing female phantom continue to replicate in Hareton and Catherine II’s bonding. Even Nelly notices the spectral quality of the cousins’ union in confirming “their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw” (Brontë 259). Nonetheless, the climax of Catherine’s ghostly stronghold shows in her persistent haunting of Heathcliff. Catherine’s passionate plea for reclamation of his love and attention contributes to his frenzy, hunger strike and death; to confirm matters, Heathcliff follows the exact same route towards his annihilation which Catherine had taken some twenty years before.
In those terms, *Wuthering Heights* departs from fictional and social norms. Exploring the consequences of the socially sanctioned choice, Catherine’s marriage proves not to be the answer to the traumatic problems of her life; nor is her ghost relieved beyond the physical bondage of living. Contrary to the idealistic notion of Victorian marriage, Catherine’s marriage compounds the problems of her life and exposes the inadequacies of Victorian ideologies of marriage. Whereas Catherine is made to marry Edgar by the orchestrated and suffocating dynamics of her life, every other marriage in *Wuthering Heights* also seems to transfigure that of Catherine with yet new nuances of trauma. The frequency of these reincarnations raise questions about the nature of the choice Catherine has been required to make in the first place and further troubles the capacity of genteel marriage to comprehend women’s needs.

Christine Colón mentions that depiction of gothic trauma and violence is associated with ambivalent meaning for nineteenth-century playwrights:

For some playwrights, the Gothic plays that filled the London stages may have been created simply as an escape for these [trauma-acquainted] audiences: an entertaining ghost story to take their minds off the very real dangers in the world around them. For others, the Gothic horrors were a means of exploring the chaotic political and social situation of their own society at a safe distance: one that could escape the careful eye of the censor. (129)
One can claim that *Wuthering Heights* follows the latter paradigm. Catherine’s specter places the story outside the complex epistemological negotiations of power relations while it simultaneously interrupts the coherence and complete subordination to the demands of patriarchy’s regulatory regime. By remaining “neither alive nor dead,” Catherine’s ghost becomes a phenomenon that defies “the philosophical concept of the concept” (Derrida qtd. in Wolfreys x). The strong and persistent presence of Catherine’s ghost, which starts and finishes *Wuthering Heights*, implies “a shift from the sociological to the cultural” and “brings textuality, discourse, and representation to the fore” (Lather 259). On a textual level, the story defies temporal conceptualization; not only does the text showcase multiple proleptic scenes, those scenes are closely intertwined with the ghostly haunting to the point that the discourse initiates and concludes with the ghost. Catherine’s phantom shouts the inadequacy of Victorian marriage, both legally and socially, and demands a realization of the passions of womanhood.

3. *Beloved*

*Beloved*’s discourse also starts with an account of ghostly haunting. Comparably, the locality of 124 is tied in with the spectral presence – curiously very alike Wuthering Heights’ location – from the outset in *Beloved*:

124 was spiteful. Full of baby’s venom. The women in the house knew and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had
run away by the time they were thirteen years old – as soon as merely
looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as
two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard).

(Morrison 3)

These accounts highlight the trauma felt by the residents of 124 coping with the dead
baby’s ever-present stronghold. Beloved’s ghost defines the mode of the living at 124;
she rules the state of being in that sense. These fierce spectral hauntings result in
everyone in 124 being “suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of
death” (Morrison 4). Beloved’s phantom initiates the discourse and concludes it over and
beyond temporal dimensions. Beloved tells a story of entrapment, trauma, reincarnation
and redemption. That redemption, however, is anything but a ‘salvation from evil’;
Beloved gets to tame the evil of ideology, yet chooses to run free of the closure.

Beloved warns against the eradicating colour politics of 1980s America. The novel
enables its residual effects through multiple references to the past, a past in which slavery
is still a fresh wound. Sethe’s recurring rape scene – executed under Schoolteacher’s gaze
– is arguably the most forceful picture of the story that keeps recurring throughout the
narrative discourse. The scene emblematizes the slave woman’s maladroit state in the
hands of the “slavocracy” system (Morrison qtd. in Vine 303). Sethe’s rape forcefully
portrays the abusive methods of rape white ‘masters’ used to assert their hegemonic sense
of superiority over defenseless blacks. It signifies how blacks’ own bodies were
dispossessed and subjected to the bureaucracy of slave law in which a human body is
owned and subject to whatever sort of abuse the white master might feel like practicing against it. Thus, Sethe’s inscribed mark on her back – lashed upon her in connection with the rape scene in order to tame her – becomes the twin image of the brutal rape. The back marks symbolize the traumatic accounts of the enslaved past she has gone through. Sethe’s whole back is numb; in that sense, she is desperately trying to forget the marks of slavery on her character. Although Sethe’s back is numb signifying her helpless attempt of trying to repress her past, the return of Paul D and later on Beloved translates into the return of what Sethe has been repressing all along; Sethe has no choice but to face her past and to make some sense of it. The temporal sequence of the discourse only further emphasizes the inevitability of facing her traumatic and unforgiving past.

Trauma frustrates the normal perceptions of temporality in *Beloved*; the powerful past events govern the present status of the disoriented sufferers who helplessly experience the traumatic past events over and over again in their rememories. Morrison reclaims the black ex-slaves’ history through the redundancy of constituent events and thematic recurring of the past. Thus, the present characterization makes sense if put in the context of the past. Beloved’s ghostly yet physical presence is an embodiment of that horrific past, a time of physical bondage all black ex-slaves have managed to escape in the flesh, but whose intellectual existence still lives in the ‘rememories’ of their traumatic past lives.

By reading the fragmented accounts of characters’ traumatic ‘rememories,’ actual readers get robbed of their comfortable reading distance and pulled into the story. The
consequent non-linear temporal progression of the syuzhet engenders a form of fictional self-consciousness in the reader who experiences the characters’ traumatic past in their footsteps. Thus, in order for the characters to make sense, readers get to revise the perceptions of the present through a filter of the recurrent past.

Beloved’s fear of ending up dismembered signifies the loss of the ability to form a communal black identity resulting from years of enslavement, and re-emphasizes the readerly lack of a grasp of the discourse’s progression. Beloved’s fear of ending up “exploding” or “being swallowed” by memories is a close reflection of what the novel does to its disarmed readers (Morrison 157).

Beloved looked at the tooth and thought, This is it. Next would be her arm, her hand, a toe. Pieces of her would drop maybe one at a time, maybe all at once… It is difficult keeping her head on her neck, her legs attached to her hips when she is by herself… She had two dreams: exploding, and being swallowed. (Morrison 157)

In spite of the fragmentary accounts of the ‘rememories,’ the reader is bound to gather these shattered pieces of evidence to form an integrated knowledge of what the story has historically been. The process of filling in narrative gaps by readers in an attempt to move forward with the act of reading is what Wolfgang Iser calls “a revelation of the inexhaustibility of the text” (qtd. in Abbott 92), meaning, even though the actual readers seem to be reading the story from a static position which fails to correspond to the idea of temporal dynamic linearity, they are bound by the very act of narration to make
sentence of the story. Therefore, actual readers set to consolidate, reassemble and recollect in order to form a narrative in spite of the white historical knowledge that dismembers, writes and classifies the characteristics of blackness in the way Schoolteacher does in classifying Sethe’s “animal” and “human” characteristics (Morrison 193).

While at first the account of traumatic memories might feel unbearably impossible for the actual reader to follow, there comes a point in the discourse in which the story is whole, non-fragmented and complete to its reader. The readerly sense of satisfaction initiating from the deep immersion into the story world parallels the pleasures of maternal closeness on the part of the statically infantile character of Beloved in the scene of their “short-lived glory” (Morrison 204). Thus, the reader is set to “lay it all down, sword and shield” by the very dynamics of the text, and to enter the story’s pinnacle of maternal ecstasy (Morrison 203). In this manner, actual readers of Beloved are bound to internalize the destabilizing effects of the text in terms of the ideologies of colour coding.

By refraining from using conventional colour codes, the text deprives the whiteness of its hegemonic ideological supremacy. The white stairs of 124 are where black Beloved roams, practicing her authority over whiteness in walking up and down the stairs in a flash as a child and as a haunting ghost. The reverse use of colours is emphasized in Baby Suggs’ struggles with blue, orange and yellow throughout her helpless attempt to avoid the sharp contrast of black and white after Beloved’s death. Beloved’s ecstatic love affair with Sethe leads almost immediately to Sethe’s figurative possession of the white image in the pinnacle of maternal union of the story. In the scene
where the three women, Sethe, Denver and Beloved, are at the height of their coalesced ecstasy, Sethe makes ‘white,’ both word and image, her own and brings new meaning to it, hereafter reintroducing white as a racial identity and “black as the Other of the same of white identity” (Whitford qtd. in Nicol 213).

Sethe wiped the white satin coat from the inside of the pan, brought pillows from the keeping room for the girls’ heads…with that, she gathered her blanket around her elbows and ascended the lily-white stairs like a bride. Outside, snow solidified itself into graceful forms. (Morrison 208)

Positioned to see whiteness as yet another colour, the actual readers are set to personalize Beloved’s plea to re-humanize the loss of “sixty million or more” black lives (Morrison epigraph).

4. Comparative Analysis

By the end of the first half of both novels, actual audiences have acquired complete knowledge of the narratives’ central enigma. The readers become aware of the events which have rendered Wuthering Heights and 124 haunting places by discovering the pre-history of what happened prior to the ghostly hauntings. The word haunting is, as Mark Wigley points out, “etymologically bound to that of ‘house’” (163). Therefore, the notion of haunting involves creation of an inside as opposed to an outside. This is what Wigley implies when he says that haunting is “always the haunting of a house,” or of a “space” (163). Nonetheless, haunting implies interiority as opposed to exteriority, private as
opposed to public. Haunting, therefore, implies interiority, and the necessary construction of an inside whether of a house, a system or an ideology.

Beloved and Wuthering Heights both showcase not only the damages the intransigent system of ideology have brought upon the characters, but also the very ways the characters seek to subvert and annul those apathetic rules, if only in ghostly terms. The spectral haunting is thereby infused with the trauma of ghostly passion throughout both novels. Authorial audiences become aware that even the prior extensive knowledge of the ideologies’ mechanism of control, both in terms of text and context, has underestimated its controlling power at the story’s closure. In other words, through their narrative journey along the stream of the narratives’ syuzhets, the implied readers acquire a greater grasp on the contextual, ideological system of governance which continues to exist beyond the story. Closure, therefore, becomes not resolution but a mark in time signaling the flow of the story beyond narrative dimensions.

Catherine’s and Beloved’s death scenes in the middle of the narrative discourse have strong implications. At that juncture in time, the story divides neatly into two parts; everything before that point serves as the disclosure information about the lives of chief characters and their information, information that is necessary for the authorial audience’s understanding of how the characters are positioned in relation to their sociopolitical context. The apparently scattered events of the first half are brought into a coherent relationship through the traumatic disclosure of the two central characters’ death scenes. The residual effects of such character development illuminate ways in which the
authorial audiences infer meanings and motives behind the central events of the story. This non-linear arrangement of time makes the second half of each story move with economy and power towards its closure, where the questions raised in the first half get answered with parsimony.

Closure “refers to the way in which a narrative signals its end,” according to James Phelan (Reading People, Reading Plots 17). It is critical to differentiate between closure and completeness in the narrative; “closure need[s] not be tied to the resolution of instabilities and tensions but completeness always is” (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 18). In those terms, the two novels’ closure at the end signals only a partial resolution; both Beloved and Catherine continue to haunt. The characters’ spectral quality emphasizes both the power and respulsiveness of an underlying ideology. The closing scene indicates the extent of an ideology’s ability to control lively characters’ quests to break through and signals the traversing of the ghost characters beyond temporal and ideological bindings altogether.

Beloved and Wuthering Heights bridge the narrative world and the world of the actual reader by use of a spectral enigma. The textual mechanism of prolepsis forms a rudimentary training in the anticipation of the retrospectivity which, intertwined with the ghostly presence, compels the implied audience to take a judging position. Thus, the subverting woman/slave succeeds through literary impersonation in appealing to readers through conveying trauma, effecting passion and haunting. This would set the actual
audiences to enact the texts’ central enigma, emanated in the phantom being, and perceive the Other’s burden as their own.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

1. Characterization

Both *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* exhibit the resource-less status of a central mimetic character in the attempt to interrogate the ideologies of race or gender superiority. The “cognitive tension” which enables the texts’ act of interrogation is executed through two different techniques (Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29): the unsettling use of narration/focalization which marks a sharp authorial contrast with an underlying ideology and the “distributional character matrix” that places the mimetic characters in stark centrality compared to every other character in the two novels (Woloch 34). Furthermore, the presence of spectral characters who initiate and close the narrative discourse conveys the cruelty of the ideology and foreshadows the story with ghostly trauma.

1.1. Mimetic Characters

Sethe in *Beloved* is extremely mimetic. It is through Sethe’s focal lens that readers enter and experience the traumas of slave womanhood. Sethe’s centrality places every other character into a secondary role. It is almost as if every other character is there to re-narrate Sethe’s struggles. Hence, the novel is constantly changing focalization anchoring in its attempt to configure Sethe’s forlorn status. This process places Sethe on top of *Beloved*’s character “distributional matrix” (Woloch 34). Her centrality only gets reemphasized in the manifold group of the “delimited” and “specialized” characters who each focalize Sethe’s story at a point during the narrative discourse and from a different
perspective (Woloch 34); it almost feels like all different vantage points are there to attest to Sethe’s innocence. As Woloch argues the closed structure of narrative fiction suggests a “radical interconnection between the two modes of character” (34); thus, the novel’s moral force is located not only in Sethe’s full development, but also in the novel’s insistence on placing Sethe on top of this characterly matrix. *Beloved*, consequently, shapes the story of a slave mother’s struggle to narrate the reasons why she was forced to behead her infant daughter.

The unsettling focalization goes hand in hand with defining character functions. Morrison tells a fictional story of slavery through different focalizing lenses in *Beloved*. Morrison’s decision to re-narrate the traumas of slavery brings life back to the otherwise objectified slave woman persona. In this manner, *Beloved* stages a trial for its actual audience by bringing in witnesses from all perspectives to attest to Sethe’s resource-less calamity. *Beloved* attempts to re-portray and to re-humanize the catastrophes associated with subversive resistance through Sethe’s mimetic, true-to-life characterization. The narrator appeals to the universality of maternal instincts in its re-picturing of black womanhood through Sethe’s story.

In a more explicitly political sense, *Beloved* executes its “cognitive tension” through multiple changes in focalization (Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29). On the one hand, by focalizing the most defining constituent event of the novel – Beloved’s murder scene – through a white lens, *Beloved* emphasizes the absurdity of the hierarchy of racism. The most disturbing scene of the novel is focalized through Schoolteacher’s vantage point or focalization. The extremely ironic use of focalization accentuates the
falsehood of white presumptuous standardizing and points towards the hypocrisy of the
civilized white focalizer who detachedly reports an infant’s murder scene. The bigoted
racial hierarchy is thereby effectively eradicated through the subsequent change in
focalization. Schoolteacher, as the textual representative of the white historian, loses his
ideological mastery.

The same textual dynamics are employed in a meaningful way in Wuthering
Heights. Catherine is also a strong, central being whose characterization serves to place
every other character into different kinds of minor roles. Catherine’s centrality emerges
only in dynamic interaction with the development of other minor characters. Thereby,
Wuthering Heights encompasses an array of Catherine’s archived interiority reflected in
others. Ironically, Catherine’s character is placed within Nelly’s narratorial frame of
patriarchal ideology. While Nelly’s character is deeply intertwined with patriarchal
values, the accounts of Catherine’s traumatic experiences shout out the inadequacy and
the inequitablity of Nelly’s ethical stance. This instability produced by narration in
Wuthering Heights functions akin to the switch in focalization in Beloved. As a result,
Nelly gradually becomes much like a speaker in a dramatic monologue who serves to
discredit her own narration.

This ongoing narratorial instability leads to the “cognitive tension” in Wuthering
Heights (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 29). Catherine’s strong mimetic traits, as
opposed to Nelly’s thematic framing, result in a gap between authorial and narratorial
audiences and induce an ethical tension. This tension is only resolved once the actual audiences align their ideology with that of the authorial audiences.

1.2. Spectral Characters

Beloved in *Beloved* is not only the child Sethe has killed to protect from slavery, but also the reincarnation of the dead slave who never survived slavery. In the latter sense, Beloved’s synthetic characterization calls to the implied reader to reincarnate and recreate the unspeakable, the unpresentable, and the inexpressible history. Beloved conveys the horrors of African-American enslavement and silencing returning to claim the present of the novel. Coming back with the subversive mission to narrate slavery from the point of view of the slave who lost her life to the ugly ideology of racial superiority, Beloved is the bodily apparition of the deformed and tormenting life Sethe would have lived had she stayed in Sweet Home.

Beloved re-enters the discourse as a continuation of Sethe’s process of narrativizing the story of her inarticulate calamity. As a result, her character is extremely one-dimensional. She only exhibits enough evidence to authenticate her physical reincarnation. Her only clear recollection is coming back from death. Beloved’s fraught memory, which continually references the most traumatic events of Sethe’s life, proves to be in stark contrast with Sethe’s tormenting accounts of the proceedings. Beloved, therefore, comes from the other side, from “under the water,” and lacks a memory (Morrison 252). Her synthetic character, consequently, becomes a part of
Sethe’s psyche, the most traumatized part which blocks her from being able to narrativize her rememories.

In that sense, Beloved’s bodily apparition is a continuation of Sethe’s life, the life she had never experienced in Sweet Home but where her rememories perpetually live beyond physical bondage. Beloved, therefore, becomes the emblem of the slave woman’s life, a synthetic reminder of the horrors of slavery whose only function is to assure the unforgettablity of her traumatic being. By returning in physical form, Beloved’s ghostly character is given an interior monologue, a voice which speaks of the horrors of slavery. In those terms, Beloved’s synthetic characterization is the call to the implied reader to reincarnate and recreate the under-represented, mostly non-articulated, slave history.

_Wuthering Heights_ is also a story of death, reincarnation and redemption. Interestingly, like _Beloved_, _Wuthering Heights_’ act of telling a traumatizing history is enabled through the dynamics of a mother-daughter relationship. This intimate domestic relation results in Catherine II’s continuation of her mother’s journey in the material world. Catherine II succeeds in taking possession of her mother’s paternal estate; she also manages to reclaim her name, contrary to all Victorian laws pertaining to married women. Catherine II marries Hareton Earnshaw at the dénouement; the marriage, however, is anything but Victorian. Not only is Catherine II the presumed master and the abler partner, but her marriage also enables Catherine Earnshaw to be ‘reborn.’ This physical arrival of Catherine Earnshaw at Wuthering Heights pushes Catherine, the mother, back to the story’s forefront. In other words, Catherine II becomes the synthetic
twin of her mother’s existential mission; she is linked to the original Catherine through multiple textual references which signals their synthetic intimacy beyond the mother-daughter likeness.

Through their “cognitive tension,” *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* negotiate on behalf of an otherwise marginalized character (Phelan *Reading People, Reading Plots* 29). Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* has no choice but to die and haunt the living and Sethe in *Beloved* finds no resource but to commit murder and submit to the perpetual torture of Beloved’s ghostly presence. Beloved is the very indication of those feelings. When Beloved transcends the spectral bondage and comes back in flesh, her return helps Sethe rationalize her motives in committing infanticide and eventually redeems her.

Catherine II arguably performs the same function for her mother; she is the continuation of a life never lived and a battle never fought by Catherine the mother. Her marriage to Hareton facilitates the rebirth of Catherine Earnshaw and legitimizes Catherine Earnshaw’s hold on her paternal inheritance. Hareton, therefore, plays a twofold instrumental role; not only is he the figurative harvest of Catherine and Heathcliff’s union; he is also the medium through whom the Victorian rules which have prevented such union are forced to yield. Therefore, even though *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* both end in the fantastic picture of a domestic haven, the gaps in the narratives’ enunciation mark a repellant subversion of their relative race and gender dynamics.
2. Plot Progression

*Beloved*’s syuzhet is initiated by an account of ghostly haunting. Not only does the ghost start the story, but the locality of 124 is tied in with the notion of haunting from the outset in *Beloved*. Beloved’s ghost defines the mode of the living at 124 through her apparitions. These fierce spectral hauntings result in all residents of 124 living in a perpetual isthmus, which is neither life nor death. Beloved’s phantom initiates the discourse and concludes it, over and beyond the storyworld’s temporal dimensions. In this manner, *Beloved* tells a story of entrapment, trauma, reincarnation and redemption.

*Beloved* participates in the race politics of 1980s America from an ex-slave’s perspective. The novel enables its residual effects through multiple references to the past, past in which slavery still claims black lives. The traumas of slave life frustrate the normal perceptions of temporality in *Beloved*. The story’s plot progression disorients the reader with accounts of the horrifying past. In this manner, “phenomenological” time conflates *Beloved*’s past and present (Currie 33). Through a thematic recurring of the past which continually re-narrates the novel’s most traumatic events, Morrison validates her history of the return of the repressed.

Faced with the fragmented quality of narration, actual readers are set to narrativize the story alongside the central character. Thus, the reader is forced by the narrative’s textual dynamics to envision and absorb a distant past. Beloved’s fear of ending up dismembered echoes the loss of the ability to form a communal black identity, resulting from years of enslavement, and signals the traversing of the discourse from the set
societal boundaries altogether. *Beloved*'s actual readers are bound by the very act of narration to make sense of the story; they set to consolidate, reassemble and recollect, accordingly shaping a narrative of their own. While at first the account of traumatic memories might feel unbearably impossible for the reader to follow, there comes a point in the middle of the syuzhet in which the story is whole, non-fragmented and complete to its reader. In this manner, the actual readers of *Beloved* are bound to internalize the destabilizing effects of the text in terms of the ideologies of colour coding. By refraining from using conventional colour codes, the text deprives whiteness of its hegemonic ideological supremacy. Positioned to comprehend the ugly realities of whiteness, the actual reader is set to personalize *Beloved*'s plea to re-humanize the loss of “sixty million or more” black lives (Morrison epigraph).

In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine’s ghostly apparition initiates Lockwood’s quest in search of a history. Catherine is introduced as a ghostly presence clinging to Lockwood’s hand through Wuthering Heights’ window, sobbing to be readmitted to her childhood bed. This traumatic image of the ostracized feminine specter is how Catherine enters the narrative realm. In this manner, the story of Catherine I with its deadly consequences becomes the central thematic enigma of the text; the reader is signaled to read *Wuthering Heights* in relation to Catherine’s ghostly agony. In order for readers to be able to make sense of Catherine’s spectral presence, they also have to revise the present through a filter of the recurrent past. *Wuthering Heights*’ readers, therefore, have been signaled to read Catherine’s struggle to attain selfhood as a history, a history which forms a wholesome and concise notion of the trauma that Victorian patriarchy imposed
on the female persona. Therefore, the proleptic narration foreshadows death and
spectrality from the outset.

Catherine’s phantom continues its stagnated presence in Wuthering Heights till the
very dénouement, which compares closely to Beloved’s ghostly presence in 124. In those
terms, Catherine’s specter moves towards becoming one and the same with the locality of
Wuthering Heights. While her apparitions become exceedingly frequent towards the
novel’s closure, her love affair with Heathcliff replicates in Catherine II and Hareton’s
romantic spark. Nonetheless, the climax of Catherine’s ghostly stronghold is her
persistent haunting of Heathcliff. Catherine’s passionate plea for reclamation of
Heathcliff’s love and attention contributes to his doom. The frequency of Catherine’s
apparitions raises questions about the nature of the choice that eventually pushes
Catherine towards her death. Catherine’s phantom, therefore, troubles the capacity of
Victorian marriage to enclose and ‘protect’ the woman partner. Conversely, Catherine’s
specter pushes the story outside the epistemological negotiations of power relations and
interrupts the complete subordination of women to the demands of patriarchy’s
regulatory regime.

On a textual level, Beloved and Wuthering Heights defy temporal
conceptualization; not only do the texts exhibit multiple proleptic scenes, those scenes are
closely intertwined with the ghostly haunting to the point that their syuzhets are initiated
and concluded with the ghostly apparitions. Catherine’s persistently present phantom
shouts the inadequacy of Victorian marriage, both legally and socially, and demands a
realization of the passions of womanhood while Beloved raises a dead past, in flesh and blood, and resists the disremembering of a traumatic history of slavery; she roams beyond the narrative’s temporal frame “down by the stream in the back of 124 [where] her footprints come and go” and signs the narrative journey closed, yet not completely resolved (Morrison 324).

3. Reader Response

By the end of the first half of both novels, actual audiences have acquired complete knowledge of the narratives’ central enigma. By setting a pre-history, the implied audiences become aware of the events which have rendered Wuthering Heights and 124 a haunting place. Haunting goes hand in hand with the non-linear arrangement of time in Wuthering Heights and Beloved. The irregular temporal progression makes the second half of the stories move with economy and power towards the closure, where the questions raised in the first half get answered with parsimony. Both novels create an early tension which is only resolved partially and at the very dénouement. Hence, at the novels’ closure, the ghosts continue to haunt beyond the narrative’s temporality. Beloved and Wuthering Heights both exhibit not only the damages an intransigent system of ideology has brought upon the characters, but also the very ways the characters seek to subvert and annul those cruel rules, if only in ghostly terms. In those terms, the novels’ closure becomes not the resolution but a signal that the fiction (and the reality which the fiction represents) flow beyond the storyworld. The characters’ spectral quality emphasizes both the power and the injurious nature of an underlying ideology. The closing scenes not only
indicate the extent of ideology’s ability to control and destroy the lively characters’ quest to break through; they also signal the traversal of the ghost character beyond temporal and ideological bindings.

Beloved leaves the novel at the end. Her departure, however, means anything but a resolution; she continues to roam the chronotope of the novel beyond the story’s closure, just like Catherine who never rests at the dénouement. Thereby, Beloved and Catherine succeed in resolving the narratives’ central tension; they both rule the material world in spite of the ideological context which tries to withhold and confine them. This perpetual haunting signifies a communal debt; it is the collective debt of a social proxy for the repressed and “unaccounted for” (Morrison epigraph). The perpetual hold of the phantom is uncanny and is indicative of a ghostly inheritance which extends beyond the story’s temporal and fictional dimensions. Beloved’s strong claim to the chronotope of 124 can be closely compared to Catherine’s roaming of Wuthering Heights. Hence, an attention to the topography is enlightening because these ghost characters choose to seize a property which could not have belonged to them otherwise. The legal constraints on married women’s property push Catherine out of Wuthering Heights and her body to the graveyard of Gimmerton Creek. In the case of Beloved, her very existence belongs to Schoolteacher by virtue of her skin colour. This exaction of the human body is precisely what leads to Beloved’s death. Her stronghold on 124 is extremely subversive as a slave who is not to own anything, even her own body. Although Sethe buys Beloved her
headstone, paying once more with her body, Beloved’s fleshly apparition refuses to abide by the colour code of possession and traverses her grave site and ideology altogether.

The intimate relationship between the ghost characters and material location brings forth the contradictory relationship between ‘inside’ and ‘outside.’ In other words, the other world of the ghost gets intertwined with the proceedings of the material world during the ghostly haunting and reemphasizes the brutality of the ideology. The instability initiated by this reverse process of haunting encourages actual audiences to leave their comfortable reading distance. In their attempt to configure a moral correctness, actual audiences are bound to hover between the authorial audience’s judgment position and the narratorial audience’s fictive stance. Ultimately, in order for the actual audience to be able to make sense of the narrative, the “cognitive tension” must be resolved through an understanding of character functions (Phelan, Reading People, Reading Plots 29); this is precisely the Derridean moment of readerly transcendence to the larger sociopolitical context in a “performative” way (Castricano 7).

*Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* bridge between the narrative world and actual audiences by use of a spectral enigma. The textual mechanism of prolepsis forms a “rudimentary training in the anticipation of the retrospect,” which, intertwined with the ghostly presence, compels the authorial audiences to take a position of judgment (Currie 33). In those terms, the subverting woman or slave succeeds through literary impersonation in appealing to the readers through trauma, passion and spectrality. This sets the actual audiences to absorb the text’s central enigma (emanated in the phantom
being) as their own and to perceive the Other’s burden as related to their own struggle. Therefore, it is safe to say that temporality and spectrality are conflated textual devices in both narratives which emblematize trauma and defy social conformity at the same time.

It is important to see how marginalized writers have used textual dynamics to influence the sociopolitical context within which they were writing. Writers from marginalized groups have inevitably worked within a legal system of which they were part; therefore the particulars of the oppressing legal systems were often explicitly or implicitly a governing piece of what they wrote about. Using the effective instrument of readerly imaginative impersonation, both Morrison and Brontë have tried to interrogate those very repressive ideologies. Many of their audiences through the years have shaped their understanding of the authors’ era solely on the basis of these stories. Morrison and Brontë, as politically engaged writers, have used the very textuality of their works as a way to criticize and interrogate oppressive laws by affecting readerly response. In this manner, these two writers have succeeded to bring their readers to join their own side of the struggle for recognition, equality and identity.

4. Final Remarks and Recommendations

As I have discussed at length, Beloved and Wuthering Heights both engender a narrative of loss, redemption, reincarnation and spectral presence. These narratives reveal how the trauma of ghostly characters not only encourages articulation, but also subverts the underlying ideology at the same time. The ghost, therefore, introduces narrative gaps into the discourse and ruptures any communication that opposes its traumatic prophecy.
By overlaying the narrative strategies of cognitive tension, unsettling narration/focalization, and fierce and perpetual spectral trauma intertwined with a material haunted location, these fictions provide their readers access into a communal wound, the wound of a society of voiceless beings whose very existence is denied by the repulsive and hegemonic ideology. Hence, the role of the ghost is critical in the process of narrativizing these otherwise voiceless characters. This whole process leads to a reconfiguration of the concepts of self and Other on the part of the actual audiences. The actual audiences, faced with the unnerving effects of these narrative strategies, move towards a state of moral epiphany in which the trauma of the Other becomes one of their own. I have thus argued that these texts can indeed divulge their own relation to their contexts. The strategies used in *Beloved* and *Wuthering Heights* configure a paradigm of rhetorical storytelling.

Both Brontë and Morrison have established a literary tradition of spectral characters which trouble the narratives’ linear progression in order to interrogate the contextual ideology of their time. Such textual devices have arguably been exploited by reusing the previously established literary and linguistic structures to the advantage of the oppressed ‘Other.’ This implies that the process of interpreting a text should involve scrutinizing attention to its textual dynamics because, more often than not, those textual signifiers point toward the bigger contextual scheme.

Hence, although narratology involves greater attention to the text, rather than the context, it is arguable that further engagement with narratives’ textual dynamics can help
discover the underlying principles that govern their composition; discovering the mechanical devices employed to achieve certain reader response systems can be counted as one of these principles. Hence, the narratologist’s task involves a two-tier procedure; firstly, a structural system of classification needs to be generated. Secondly, using the established classifying paradigm, the narratologist can demonstrate how each individual text can potentially belong to a particular paradigm. Setting such structural paradigms can eventually help achieve a better understanding of how texts represent certain attitudes towards their context. This is not to say that only one reading of the text (in relation to the context) is authentic; rather, it suggests that texts signify how their composition indicates the underlying organizers that assist in the process of meaning-making.

Having devoted more than two years of my life to this study, I still feel there is a lot more to discuss about these texts, and about rhetorical storytelling in general. In regards to these particular texts, a further study of the dynamics of the mother-daughter relationship and its intersections with domesticity are worthwhile to consider. In terms of rhetorical narratology, I sensed a rupture between the studies about narrative temporality and other structural elements of the text. While temporality remains an understudied subject in narratology, I decided that a more scrutinizing attentiveness to narrative time can help discover unnoticed details and open new horizons for the literary scholar.
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