Inge's standards, probably should be listed on the novel's title page. Only in very insignificant ways was she ever able to restore the punctuation of her manuscript.

Modern editors of *Jane Eyre*, taking Brontë's letters of 24 and 29 September as a clear statement of intention, have made the grave mistake of using the first edition rather than the fair copy as their copy-text, as Bruce Harkness decisively argued in a review of the Clarendon edition (*Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 25 [1970]: 355–69) and as I exemplified in my "Pointing Theory and Some Victorian Practices" (*Yearbook of Research in English and American Literature* 4 [1986]: 97–134, esp. 114–22). The result is that all readers except the few who have studied the manuscript have seen Charlotte Brontë or Jane Eyre (to borrow Inge's analogy) attired in the most grotesque Victorian garb imaginable and not in the relatively simple, neat, and appealing frock supplied by the author. Indeed, the thousands of changes made to the fair copy (Inge illustrates how a single comma can be noteworthy) do accumulate in importance and do help to govern tone, emphasis, pace, and certainly nuances.

Though I am not prepared to cite other instances like *Jane Eyre*, I suspect that the novel is not an anomaly and that other texts are equally in need of decollaboration. In any case, Charlotte Brontë, no longer obscure and powerless, deserves the kind of collaboration that she could not command in 1847. I would welcome an experienced editor who could collaborate with me to give the world the Fair Copy Edition, a readable edition suitable for both scholars and students.

Daniel P. Deneau
Fairhope, AL

Reply:

Daniel P. Deneau makes many sound points. It is not my intention, however, to suggest that the collaborative process in publishing that I describe necessarily benefits works of literature. As I note, "It doesn't always work this way, but it works often enough to have made some publishing firms financially solid and some authors wealthy" (625).

The case of *Jane Eyre* is an exceptional one that I doubt is widely representative, and if things are as bad as Deneau suggests, one wonders why Charlotte Brontë so freely acceded to the punctuation provided by the publisher. She may have been an "unknown [. . .] and powerless woman," but did she have to be so enthusiastic? It is true she was not in the position of Mark Twain, who owned his own publishing firm and could wire the managing editor about preparing *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* for publication, "[Y]esterday Mr. Hall wrote that the printer's proof-reader was improving my punctuation for me, & I telegraphed orders to have him shot without giving him time to pray" (*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, ed. M. Thomas Inge [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997] xix).

It is interesting to note what Deneau calls for at the conclusion of his letter—someone with whom to collaborate on a new edition. A lot of important things do seem to get done most easily with more than one hand at work.

M. Thomas Inge
Randolph-Macon College

The Tone of Debate in the Forum

To the Editor:

Your concern with the paucity of quality submissions to *PMLA* finds a partial response in Linda Hutcheon's timely Presidential Address (116 [2001]: 518–30), in which Hutcheon and other scholars explore alternatives to the "adversarial academy." I suggest that *PMLA* itself appears as a particularly adversarial forum, discouraging many, particularly junior, scholars from sending you articles.

Some of the letters that are published in the *PMLA* Forum exhibit the very culture of negative critiquing to which Hutcheon tries to find alternatives. We all know that destructive opposition can make or break professional identities and on occasion do lasting damage to the "loser's" con-

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