The Third Space:  
*Between Enclosure and Exposure in 19th-Century England*

Kathryn Ikenberry

Advisor: Professor Jules Law  
Honors Coordinator: Professor Nicholas Davis

2 May 2014

English Department  
Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences  
Northwestern University

Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for English Honors
Acknowledgements

The efforts of several people who provided support and guidance to me during the course of my studies and preparation of this thesis must be recognized. I am particularly appreciative of Dr. Jules Law, my thesis advisor, for his continual counsel and support throughout my research and writing efforts. I also would like to acknowledge Dr. Nicholas Davis, the Honors Thesis Coordinator, for his unabated and invaluable guidance over the course of this year. The counsel of Dr. Sarah Lahey, Dr. Christopher Herbert, Dr. Deborah Cohen, and fellow thesis writer Caroline Dean, also helped to shape and refine my research.

Words cannot express the gratitude I carry for my family. The everlasting support of my parents, Nancy and David Ikenberry, has provided me cherished encouragement throughout my academic endeavors.
# Table of Contents

Introduction....................................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 1: Pride and Prejudice and the Third Space.................................................................8

Chapter 2: Wuthering Heights and the Inhabitable, Nonsensical Third Space.......................18

Chapter 3: Tess of the d’Urbervilles and the Paradoxical Third Space................................30

Conclusion ...................................................................................................................................... 42

Works Cited..................................................................................................................................... 46
Introduction

Within the first few chapters of *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet makes a rash resolution. She embarks on a three-mile trek to Netherfield to visit her ailing sister Jane, a decision that perhaps would not be so ill-received if she traveled by horse or carriage rather than by foot. Yet, despite disapproval from her family, Elizabeth traverses “field after field at a quick pace, jumping over stiles and springing over puddles with impatient activity” (Austen 33).

Based on this early episode, so exemplary of Elizabeth’s indomitable determination, critics often interpret her excursions into open landscape as liberating activities. The outdoors becomes a venue where Elizabeth can experience freedom from domestic expectations, and is interpreted as a metaphor for her broadened perspective and ambition. Thus, Rosemarie Bodenheimer says of Elizabeth’s introductory trip to the Pemberley estate halfway through the novel, “this ‘view’ is a breakthrough in Elizabeth’s vision” (Bodenheimer 610). Other critics offer alternative explanations of such outdoor excursions, arguing that Elizabeth possesses a proprietary relationship to landscape. Susan C. Greenfield examines the trek to Netherfield, describing Elizabeth’s “weary ankles” and “dirty stockings” as evidence of her sharing “the mark (and the mud) of valuable property” (Greenfield 342), thereby connecting her to the very land that she cannot possess herself. Regardless of the interpretation, critics tend to stress Elizabeth’s generally positive feelings towards landscape and its salutary effects on her. Some even assert that she is particularly drawn to wide open vistas: “Elizabeth likes being outdoors, especially in what might be termed ‘landscapes of exposure’” (Wenner 58).

---

1 Other critics with claims similar to Bodenheimer’s include William C. Snyder, who focuses on how landscape acts as Elizabeth’s source of wisdom, and Barbara Wenner, who emphasizes Elizabeth’s interest in exposed landscape.
2 Other critics with arguments regarding Austen’s interest in property include Thomas Hothem, who argues that Austen links property to self-discovery, recommending estates like Pemberley above others because they allow “comfortable distances from society” and “promote personal experience best” (53). Critic Sandra Macpherson posits Austen’s comprehension and incorporation of entailment and possession laws in *Pride and Prejudice* (8).
While landscape is a significant trope in *Pride and Prejudice*, it does not categorically offer Elizabeth a means of liberation and optimism. Elizabeth’s journey “field after field” is her sole excursion into open landscape in the novel, one that wholly exposes rather than protects her. Furthermore, Elizabeth’s stated motive for traversing the landscape is not to enjoy or commune with nature, but solely to reach her sick sister, which she claims is “all I want” (Austen 32). In fact, she asks for the carriages but they are unavailable, so “walking was her only alternative” (Austen 32), not an activity chosen or desired. As Elizabeth insists, “the distance is nothing, when one has a motive” (Austen 33). Austen even describes Elizabeth’s activity as “impatient,” thus underscoring her yearning to reach her sister. Since “impatient” also denotes intolerance (OED 1b), Austen’s language suggests that Elizabeth would rather not be outdoors at all.\(^3\) This excursion is both unglamorous and inconvenient for Elizabeth, which raises questions concerning critics’ idealization of Elizabeth’s relationship to landscape as one that broadens her perspectives or challenges a gendered regime of nearly all-male landowning and masculine freedom of movement.\(^4\) Is Elizabeth’s defiant and liberal-minded character inherently linked to her excursions in nature, as many critics contest? Have critics misread Elizabeth’s journey to her ill sister (or other notable outdoor scenes in *Pride and Prejudice*) in an attempt to discern a proto-feminist ambition and perspective in the novel? And if Elizabeth is discontented both when sheltered indoors and when exposed outdoors, where—if anywhere—does she truly find peace and independence?

\(^3\) Wenner further argues that Elizabeth “starts out with a fair degree of self-assurance both in her personal experience in the landscape and in her artistic knowledge of it” (58). Wenner also cites a scene where Elizabeth declines moving from a sheltered walkway to a broader avenue. While Wenner gives this as an example of artistic knowledge (as Elizabeth says, “You are charmingly group’d…the picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth”[Austen 52]), this is clearly evidence of Elizabeth preferring partially enclosed landscapes to the more open outdoors.

\(^4\) Land inheritance was a broadly masculine privilege, with the exception of a few aristocratic women (such as Lady Catherine De Bourgh). Primogeniture, the widely accepted practice of property transferring to the eldest son, prevented women from attaining landownership, and laws of entailment “limited the heir’s ability to sell or give away part of the estate” (Davidoff and Hall 205-6).
My thesis will address these concerns as they pertain to Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* as well as to the female protagonists from two renowned Victorian novels, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* and Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. In terms of the depictions of women in landscape, obvious incongruences divide the three novels. For example, Elizabeth Bennet’s frequent walks in *Pride and Prejudice* occur in landscapes more mild and picturesque, while Catherine Earnshaw’s numerous escapades on the moors with Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* often result in sickness or injury, and Tess is sexually assaulted deep within the densely wooded Chase in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*. However, upon a closer examination of how and precisely where the protagonists explore the outdoors, as well as the diction used to describe these settings, we discover that, against popular presumption, the landscape often possesses elements of interiority or seclusion. These spaces represent an amalgamation, a place more private than open landscape, but less private than domestic interiors. They yield instead what I call a “third space”: an intermediate dimension that blurs the binary between indoors and outdoors, ultimately constituting an undomesticated, semi-enclosed venue towards which the heroine often gravitates.

The goal of this thesis is not to schematize a fixed model or strict trajectory of the third space throughout the nineteenth century. Rather, I will examine how the third space functions differently in each novel, yet still poses a consistent and recognizable representation, and will question whether landscapes and domestic interiors can be so confidently and categorically distinguished as past literary criticism suggests. *Pride and Prejudice, Wuthering Heights,* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* are not only canonical, but are also of significant interest to feminist critics in that they present a broad range of 19th-century representations of femininity and space. I expect that examining three familiar novels that represent literature spanning the nineteenth
century will provide readers the tools to interpret and apply arguments on landscape and gender to other novels of these literary movements.

In chapter one, I will examine how *Pride and Prejudice*’s Elizabeth Bennet is neither fully comfortable in open landscape, nor fully content within domestic environments. Close examinations of Austen’s diction and descriptions of landscape in both exemplary and neglected passages of *Pride and Prejudice* will reveal how the liminal zones I refer to as “third spaces” actually attract Elizabeth’s attention and become refuges where she can attain a certain independence of thoughts and focus her desires. The third space, at least in Austen’s hands, provides a new type of freedom for the female protagonist, a middle ground that combines the most attractive elements of interiority and exteriority—a space that protects her from the purely open and potentially dangerous landscape while providing an escape from the monotony of domesticity. In these passages I will fully establish the concept of the third space and examine how Elizabeth’s relationship to landscape is sheltered both in terms of the physicality of the landscape, and in the emotions and ambitions such landscapes trigger. I will also explore how Elizabeth is not the only character who focuses such idiosyncratic thinking and desires in third spaces; the third space also provides an opportunity for Elizabeth’s adversary Lady Catherine De Bourgh to ridicule Elizabeth’s class, her relationships, and even her land, thereby challenging Elizabeth’s own sense of independence in these spaces.

Critics are all too familiar, or consider themselves to be, with Catherine Earnshaw’s wild excursions in the outdoors in Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*. However, many of Catherine’s escapades in landscape occur not on the purely open moors, but rather in more secluded or peripheral spaces that are neither indoors nor out. Similar to Elizabeth, Catherine also appears attracted to these semi-enclosures that blend together the most attractive qualities of interiority
and exteriority. However, Catherine is attracted to third spaces as evidenced by how she associates elements of domesticity and open landscape, respectively, to her two love interests. Though *Pride and Prejudice* often depicts Elizabeth stumbling upon and traversing such semi-enclosures, *Wuthering Heights* provides fewer *inhabitable* third spaces for Catherine, even though she often actively seeks them out. Instead, Catherine is consistently victimized and tortured in spaces that are characterized by both interior and exterior elements, but that are not necessarily *protective*, such as gated yards, open windows, and gardens. We will see how third spaces in Brontë’s novel represent a type of purgatory, a space in which Catherine often accidently, or sometimes purposefully, propels herself, often while brooding on the men she is drawn to and the diametrically different futures she can imagine with them. While the third space never gratifies Catherine as it does Elizabeth, understanding the locations of Catherine’s excursions in more enclosed spaces rather than wide open moors will completely alter our sense of one of the most landscape-associated novels of the Victorian literary movement. Hence, in a novel esteemed for its exceptionally wild and threatening depictions of landscape, I will highlight the presence of the third space in both famous and overlooked passages alike in order to reveal a new way of understanding the female protagonist’s adventures in the outdoors.

Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* presents yet a different approach to the fictional representation of femininity and space. Unlike middle-class women Elizabeth Bennet and Catherine Earnshaw, Tess Durbeyfield is a peasant accustomed to toiling and traversing the outdoors in her position as a dairymaid. Thus, Tess is already exposed to open land in her work and often finds the kind of mental or spiritual reprieve in her agricultural labors that Elizabeth finds in third spaces and that Catherine seeks in them. By sharp contrast, her frequent and often forced habitation of third spaces is counterintuitive. By exploring several passages in the novel,
culminating in her brief refuge at Stonehenge, I will show how Tess’s occupation of third spaces is regressive and inhibiting to her previously contented relationship with landscape. In fact, Tess is actively placed in third spaces where she is subjected to aggression and injury, and experiences a total loss of that impetuous and authoritative attitude she exhibits in earlier chapters. The placement of Tess in these spaces repeats several times throughout the novel, an activity that becomes even more antithetical, and even paradoxical, when Tess begins placing herself in such spaces as an attempt to regain a sense of agency and voice.

Before delving into close readings, I want to address some historical context from the eras in which these novels were written in order to inform the authors’ treatments of female activity amid seemingly open landscape. The Industrial Revolution from the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth centuries created and gradually intensified a separation of the domestic and public spheres, leaving women in charge of a home now disassociated from and even at some social echelons antithetical to the public, political, and economic realms. The agricultural revolution occurred simultaneously, with horticultural innovations physically distinguishing home life from city life. These distinctions progressively bifurcated in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a transformation that may have been an influence on the authors. For example, as Marianne Thormahlen and Steven Wood analyze Emily Brontë’s upbringing, “It is safe to say that the youth and brief adulthood of the Brontë siblings coincided with a period in the life of their country which witnessed transformations on an exceptional scale, not least with regard to the ways in which people earned their living” (Thormahlen and Wood 276). The issue of how people earned their living was so tied to the concept of landscape, whether people toiled in the outdoors as a laborer or left the landscape behind to work in an urban setting.

---

5 Two of the three novels were written and published during England’s First Industrial Revolution: Pride and Prejudice (1813) and Wuthering Heights (1847). Tess of the d’Urbervilles (1897) was written during England’s Second Industrial Revolution, which occurred from the late nineteenth century until World War I.
These advances in industry and alterations in landscape dramatically affected women’s sanctioned capacity for mobility in the outdoors. Literary critic Moira Donald claims, “the increasing separation of home and work, the growth of middle-class suburbs and the gendered ideology of domesticity together created this myth of the home as refuge, as a peaceful sanctuary distant from the trials and tribulations of the workplace” (Donald 109). In fact, women were subjected to more restrictions and boundaries, in terms of both legal entitlements and physical mobility, since the outdoors was considered a space separate from women’s domestic responsibilities. As Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall explain in their book *Family Fortunes*, “Women were mainly still restricted to shorter journeys, part of the general constraints on their physical mobility. Young men were expected to roam, to seek adventure, to go out from as well as return to the home” (Davidoff and Hall 405). Thus, albeit to sharply varying degrees, these novels that not only feature women *in* landscape but also associate female errancy and transgression *with* landscape dramatically defy the prevalent ideologies of female behavior.

While the dominant historical paradigm focuses on separate spheres ideology, some research has been done to question the rigidity of this binary. For example, Davidoff and Hall address the function of gardens in 19th-century family homes: “The garden setting of the villa proclaimed the values of privacy, order, taste, and appreciation of nature in a controlled environment. Gardens were now seen as an extension of the home” (Davidoff and Hall 370). During the early nineteenth century, in an era when women had limited access to the outdoors, the garden was a site for emancipation, where “behind walls and hedges, genteel women could legitimately engage in brisk physical activity and even display some aggression against pests and weeds” (Davidoff and Hall 374). We will see how some of the female protagonists, specifically
Elizabeth and Catherine, will seek out third spaces for similar reasons, as a reprieve with an atmosphere conducive for thinking clearly and focusing on certain desires or aspirations.

Elizabeth Bennet’s unique attraction to semi-enclosed landscapes introduces a new strand in the binary between indoors and outdoors, one that is represented far into the Victorian era by Catherine Earnshaw and Tess Durbeyfield. Austen’s preoccupation with the third space may be a response to the earliest glimpses of this dichotomized indoor/outdoor pattern that appeared at the turn of the 19th century, a structure that would only intensify as the nineteenth century wore on. Thus, while my main project with this thesis is not to schematize these spaces, I do plan on explicating the existence of a third space in all three novels, as well as tracing the growth and development of these spaces in literature spanning the nineteenth century. In a historical narrative, one might expect *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* to relate most closely, as both were written during the 1st Agricultural Revolution. In contrast, a literary narrative would project *Wuthering Heights* and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* to share similar themes, both written during the Victorian literary movement. While both of these narratives are valid, I believe the overlapping nature of these novels emphasizes even more that we cannot simply categorize the third space based on a single narrative trajectory. Rather, by examining the three novels’ illustrations of the outdoors, I will show how third spaces are consistently distinguished from more traditionally interior and exterior spaces. Though their nature and effects are complex and varying, these spaces remain important and recognizable landmarks for female protagonists throughout the nineteenth century.

**Chapter One: *Pride and Prejudice* and the Third Space**

During Elizabeth’s visit to Rosings, in the early half of the novel, Austen portrays the two women’s relationship as confrontational and bellicose, insofar as Lady Catherine’s “authoritative
tone, as marked her self-importance” clashes with Elizabeth’s quieter but clever ingenuity (Austen 159). Lady Catherine thrives on her high rank and status, which visitors (and the reader) are reminded of just by examining her estate. Mr. Collins, for example, is completely enraptured with the whole estate, but is enamored even more by the exquisite house than by the surrounding landscape as he gives an “enumeration of the windows in front of the house, and his relation of what the glazing altogether had originally cost Sir Lewis De Bourgh” (Austen 158). Another guest of the house, Sir William, is “completely awed, by the grandeur surrounding him” (Austen 159) only upon entering the house, not by the surrounding outdoors. Unlike the other guests, Elizabeth demonstrates little enthusiasm for the estate as a whole, which further illustrates her troublesome relationship with Lady Catherine. Elizabeth favors the parks and landscape over the house itself, yet even so, she notes that “every park has its beauty and its prospects; and [she] saw much to be pleased with, though she could not be in such raptures as Mr. Collins expected the scene to inspire” (Austen 158). By emphasizing that Elizabeth views the park’s beauty as common and perhaps overrated, and by Elizabeth evincing no interest in the house itself, Austen sets the foundation for a complicated indoor/outdoor binary in the novel and for other environments that exceed or unsettle that ostensible dichotomy.

Once inside Rosings, Elizabeth feels restrained and agitated, constantly chastised by Lady Catherine for her liberal and unladylike behavior. Rather than submit to Lady Catherine’s constant castigations and remain indoors only to look out “the windows, to admire the view” (Austen 159), Elizabeth explores the outdoors, frequently traversing the grounds during her stay. These excursions allow respites, albeit brief, from Lady Catherine’s hostility, and thus might fuel critics’ impulses to equate the general outdoors with Elizabeth’s contentment. Austen describes Elizabeth and her favorite path:
…the weather was so fine for the time of year, that she had often great enjoyment out of doors. Her favorite walk, and where she frequently went while the others were calling on Lady Catherine, was along the open grove, which edged that side of the park, where there was a nice sheltered path, which no one seemed to value but herself, and where she felt beyond the reach of Lady Catherine’s curiosity (Austen 165).

In this passage, Austen emphasizes the idiosyncrasy of Elizabeth’s preference for exteriors over interiors: “no one seemed to value [the park] but herself.” Elizabeth may, then, have a unique appreciation for landscape; however, her fascination seems to be focused specifically on a more enclosed space, one that “edged that side of the park.” The verb “edged” implies that this path is at the property’s limit, as far away from Lady Catherine’s house as possible. “Edged” also evokes notions of division and separation, which are concepts central to the indoor/outdoor binary and the idea that one can only exist indoors or outdoors, but not both simultaneously.

However, Elizabeth actually complicates this binary as she traverses the outdoors. She is drawn to this “edge,” which transforms from a mere divider or line into an independent, and special, dimension. Furthermore, the “sheltered path” implies a place of concealment “beyond the reach” of Lady Catherine’s harassments. Thus, though technically outdoors, Elizabeth actually straddles the dividing line of interiority and exteriority, and inhabits a third space.

In subsequent scenes detailing landscape, Elizabeth is repeatedly attracted to such semi-enclosures in a way that complicates her ostensible dauntless independence. In turn, Elizabeth’s predilection suggests that Austen is expressing a compromise to the supposed indoor/outdoor binary, an ideal of temperance that she herself expresses in other areas of her writing. Furthermore, during the Romantic era, the increased separation of home life from business life heightened the value of female domestication and the role of women in the home. Homes were

---

6 William Snyder states that Austen’s “strongest, cleverest women… are the only persons shown to have an intimacy with Nature” (149).

7 For example, the titles of her works *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* pose diametric opposites, but perhaps Austen suggests a tension between these emotions as an ideal, alternate solution.
considered safe havens for females, as women were deemed too physically and mentally weak to capably manage life outside of the home, most specifically in terms of business or outdoor recreation. Yet for many women, including Elizabeth, domestic life itself became restrictive. This is common knowledge to most scholars, many of whom associate Elizabeth’s attraction to landscape with this desire to escape domesticity. However, one cannot ignore the association of landscape with property ownership, thereby denoting a space privileged for males (or aristocratic women like Lady Catherine).  

8 Readers of the time would have been aware of land ownership and entailment as overwhelmingly male prerogatives.  

As the inability to secure the Longbourn estate within the all-female Bennet lineage is central to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice*, it is natural that Elizabeth would feel uncomfortable inhabiting the open landscape, or a male dominated expanse. Thus, Elizabeth gravitates to an outdoor space that blends together the positive qualities found on both sides of the indoor/outdoor binary: a refuge for individuality and safety that is entirely her own.

Elizabeth continues to seek out third spaces when she visits Pemberley, an episode usually cited for its extensive landscape description. Rosemarie Bodenheimer explains in what has become a virtual staple of *Pride and Prejudice* scholarship that the Pemberley visit is the pivot in the novel’s plot, insofar as Elizabeth both reevaluates her interest in Darcy and realizes her own aspirations, all through an appreciation of Darcy’s sprawling estate.  

10 William Snyder makes a similar argument, claiming that Elizabeth’s epiphany is gained “through apprehensions complemented by picturesque landscape: as a viewer, as a woman, she gains perspective, and modulates her feelings accordingly” (Snyder 150). While an obvious paradigm shift does occur

---

8 Critic Sandra Macpherson argues that land entailment was particularly anti-feminine, as it “often took the form of a donation” to male heirs (6).

9 Macpherson claims that Austen not only was familiar with entailment and other land laws, but “she has a highly articulate position in it,” as exhibited by her expert detail in the land settlements of the Bennet girls (8).

10 Bodenheimer 610-11.
in Elizabeth’s opinion towards Darcy, I believe this is not due to an awareness of extensive possibilities, much less simply “picturesque” ones alone, associated with the Pemberley estate. Rather, Elizabeth’s change of heart is not expressed through coveting the expansive grounds; she instead finds herself drawn to more sheltered, outdoor spaces that evoke ideals of temperance and coalescence.

Initially, Elizabeth does not wish to go to Pemberley, Darcy’s family home. In fact, she dreads the visit and attempts to persuade her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner, her travel companions through the English countryside, that “she ha(s) no business at Pemberley” (Austen 232). Even after Mr. Gardiner attempts to lure Elizabeth with promises that Pemberley’s “grounds are delightful,” possessing “some of the finest woods in the country,” Elizabeth still insists that “the possibility of meeting Mr. Darcy, while viewing the place…would be dreadful” (Austen 232), denoting that picturesque grounds are not themselves a sufficient lure for Elizabeth. However, just a page later, Elizabeth’s disposition completely transforms from stubborn apprehension to utter enthrallment when she views Pemberley for the first time:

The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent…They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road with some abruptness wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills…Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more…at that moment she felt, that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something! (Austen 235)

In these few sentences, Austen masterfully describes the surrounding estate, building anticipation to the final reveal of the house and manifesting the dramatic transformation of Elizabeth’s now positive opinion of Darcy. Bodenheimer argues that “the sequence of descriptions in the chapter creates a sense of ascent, multiplicity, and expansion, which defines not only the landscape, but
also the widening of Elizabeth’s vision of Darcy, and the increasing intensity of her feeling” (Bodenheimer 610).

However, while the views of Pemberley do provide a different perspective for Elizabeth, these views are not expansive but are instead concentrated, steering her focus directly to the house as situated in or enclosed by the sweeping grounds: “the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House” (Austen 235). Pemberley is the nucleus of Austen’s description, literally centered in the paragraph, while all other scenic descriptions frame and support the house’s grandeur, much as the grounds themselves literally support and enhance the house, as the building “stand(s) well on rising ground” and is “backed by a ridge of high woody hills.” Austen describes the structure of the house as a complement to the surrounding landscape; as critic William Synder suggests, “a house which Austen presents as built into its setting, and not imposed upon it” (Snyder 149). Austen’s language visually and contextually manifests the house itself as a third space writ large, bolstered by both domestic and exterior qualities that engender Pemberley an ideal, temperate setting for Elizabeth.

Elizabeth maintains this perspective and preoccupation with the third space throughout the visit. While she takes a tour of the expansive grounds with the Gardiners, and “every step was bringing forward a nobler fall of ground or a finer reach of the woods,” Elizabeth instead concentrates on the Pemberley house (Austen 242). Her thoughts are so captivated by the house—to the pointed exclusion of the surrounding landscape—that Austen explicitly describes Elizabeth as uninterested and vacant in her admiration for the grounds:

It was some time before Elizabeth was sensible of any of it; and, though she answered mechanically to the repeated appeals of her uncle and aunt, and seemed to direct her eyes to such objects as they pointed out, she distinguished no part of the scene. Her thoughts were all fixed on that one spot of Pemberley House, whichever it might be, where Mr. Darcy then was (Austen 242).
Remarkably, in an episode recognized for the change of heart Elizabeth experiences upon entering the estate, this passage shows Elizabeth exhibiting no fascination in the surrounding landscape. Her apathy is emphasized even further by Austen’s cleverly constructed syntax, which underscores Elizabeth’s specific interest in Pemberley House and “that one spot” within it that Darcy occupies. Snyder posits that Elizabeth’s lack of dialogue with her companions “constitutes an aside, in which Austen achieves a deeper tone of intimacy” with Darcy (Snyder 150). Her preoccupation with the house while physically exploring the open landscape again constructs a new kind of third space, as her body is literally outdoors while her mind focuses on the indoors. Thus, while Bodenheimer argues that “the descriptions [of the nobler grounds] suggest an immense expansion of feeling and possibility” (Bodenheimer, 611), Elizabeth’s thoughts actually divert from the expansive outdoors and concentrate on the possibilities associated with Darcy and the house itself. Though this is not quite the third space as I have been describing it, the passage weaves together exteriors and interiors, causing the reader to feel as if they are in two places at once, and evoking Elizabeth herself as engaging in a simultaneous indoor/outdoor experience.

When it appears that Elizabeth will travel the entire Pemberley estate without exhibiting interest in the surrounding landscape, she finally snaps out of her trance. As Elizabeth and the Gardiners proceed further into the woods and gradually ascend to higher ground, Bodenheimer suggests that “the highest grounds promise future richness and activity: ‘the opening of the trees gave the eye power to wander’ over ‘many charming views’” (Bodenheimer, 611). However, while Elizabeth regains her focus and seeks to explore the landscape, she uses “the eye[’s] power to wander” to observe a narrow, enclosed area: “the valley, here contracted into a glen, allowed room only for the stream, and a narrow walk admits the rough coppice-wood which bordered it.
Elizabeth longed to explore its windings” (Austen 243). Even on high ground with an expansive view of the wide estate, Elizabeth narrows in on a coppice, a thicket of small trees or underwood. The coppice represents a space more private than open landscape but less private than domestic interiors; once again, a semi-enclosure captures Elizabeth’s interest and furnishes her a spot to think and focus after overwhelming first impressions.

Though Bodenheimer is correct, then, in connecting the Pemberely estate to Elizabeth’s aroused aspirations, and to her new interest in Darcy, these desires are not directed to “both the larger and the more complex perspectives she sees beyond the idiosyncratic structures of Longbourn” (Bodenheimer 611). Rather, Elizabeth’s perspective is sharpened and focused, as she does not engage with the larger landscape but rather concentrates on third spaces within the estate.

If Pemberley offers the clearest and most pivotal instance of how Elizabeth’s idiosyncrasies and aspirations are linked to third space, it is all the more disheartening when her affinity for third spaces is shaken by an unexpected visit from Lady Catherine De Bourgh. Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth at Longbourn to interrogate her on suspicions of Elizabeth’s engagement to Darcy, and after deriding the small size and modest stature of the Longbourn estate, Lady Catherine requests to go outside for a walk with Elizabeth in the “prettyish kind of a little wilderness on one side of [their] lawn” (Austen 333). Though Elizabeth is instructed by her mother to “shew her ladyship about the different walks,” believing “she will be pleased with the hermitage” (Austen 333), Elizabeth is unable to fulfill her mother’s request. Lady Catherine immediately controls the direction of the walk, leading them down a “gravel pathway”—foreshadowing the rough and coarse conversation to come—into a “copse” (Austen 334). Derived from the same etymological root, “copse” is a second spelling for “coppice,” and
therefore a semi-enclosed space with a strong textual link to Elizabeth’s transformative experience on Darcy’s estate. The fact that Lady Catherine begins to admonish Elizabeth “as soon as they entered the copse” (Austen 334) is significant, as not only does the outdoor setting dictate the start of Lady Catherine and Elizabeth’s conversation, but also it provides a space of seclusion. While the third space acted as a refuge for Elizabeth on Lady Catherine’s property and again on Darcy’s, in this case, the privacy and seclusion of the copse provides an opportunity for Lady Catherine to freely berate Elizabeth, causing her to experience a “discomposure of spirits” in a space that usually allowed her resolution and clarity.

Ironically—or perhaps hypocritically—while in this third space, Lady Catherine continually reminds Elizabeth of her domestic responsibility, claiming “you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up,” an insult that is reflective both of Elizabeth’s lower social status and her feminine duties in the private sphere. After five pages of constant harassment from Lady Catherine, Elizabeth finally relinquishes, saying, “I must beg to return to the house” (Austen 338). Elizabeth’s request to return indoors suggests that she experiences a sense of displacement while speaking with Lady Catherine, who has dominated the landscape by entering Elizabeth’s estate without warning, ridiculed Longbourn’s modest scale, and berated her in the third space that, at least temperamentally, feels like Elizabeth’s home turf. Elizabeth feels startled and threatened and, contrary to her character, desires to return home, to her domestic sphere (where Lady Catherine has assigned her) rather than stand defiant and with confidence in the copse.

If the reader is meant to view Pemberley as an extension of Darcy himself (Bodenheimer suggests that “Darcy’s character, expansive, intricate…is also implicit in the unobtrusive handling of conventional picturesque terminology” [611]), then Elizabeth’s preoccupation with
the coppice, and gravitation to semi-enclosures in general, also represents her newfound interest and curiosity in Darcy. Thus, perhaps it is not purely coincidental when Lady Catherine De Bourgh interrogates Elizabeth in “the copse” at Longbourn. Austen selects a venue for their conversation that is subliminally linked to Darcy. Indeed, leaving the copse suggests that Elizabeth not only retreats from “the third space” to the private sphere, but gives up her fight for Darcy as well. Of course this relinquishment of Darcy is only temporary, as Elizabeth and Darcy reconcile and profess their love at the end of the novel. After their marriage, Elizabeth awaits with great anticipation the delight of settling into her new home with Darcy, “when they should be removed from society so little pleasing to either, to all the comfort and elegance of their family party at Pemberley” (Austen 363). Though not explicitly described in terms of semi-enclosures, Elizabeth still reflects on Pemberley as a place of seclusion and refuge, a more habitable and practical type of third space for her to permanently settle.

As its title suggests, *Pride and Prejudice* is rich with dichotomies that are resolved by blending apparent opposites together. Elizabeth’s attraction to more enclosed outdoor spaces heightens this overall pattern of compromise. Though the third space takes on different physical manifestations throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, each constitutes a reprieve or refuge, both from domesticity and from unregulated nature. Elizabeth’s solitary walks on the sheltered path of Lady Catherine’s estate already point to her temperamental independence, implying as well an escape from mundane domestic life. At Pemberley, the third space’s physical shape alters, but Elizabeth’s gravitation to its core principles remains the same, as she focuses her attention and ambition on these semi-enclosures and their corresponding values of harmony and reprieve. However, after Lady Catherine’s intrusion at Longbourn punctures this solitary refuge, Elizabeth wants nothing more than to escape it. These spaces represent a reprieve from intensely and
ideologically domestic constraints, while also allowing a manageable, private place “just beyond the reach” of both interiority and exteriority for Elizabeth to recuperate, focus her independence, and call her own. During a period when concepts about domesticity and exteriority became increasingly polarized, and considering Austen’s overall bias toward temperate or qualified conditions of all types, it is natural that the novel presents the third space as a dimension that mediates the outright constraints of domesticity and the unfettered openness of the outdoors.

Though Elizabeth’s idiosyncratic attachment to semi-enclosed spaces both conforms with and departs from Romantic mainstays of landscape portrayals, the concept of the third space can be applied to other works of the Romantic literary movement that somewhat includes Austen. For example, William Wordsworth describes third spaces in his work “Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,” as he portrays his narrator resting in a landscape “’Mid groves and copses” (line 14) and finding specifically in such spaces “thoughts of more deep seclusion” (line 7). The representation of third spaces in works of this time period is, therefore, not unique to Pride and Prejudice. Though its characterizations and functions may vary from text to text, the third space is a concept that consistently reappears throughout the nineteenth century, establishing a dimension other than a binary in these fictional, literary worlds.

Chapter Two: Wuthering Heights and the Inaccessible, Nonsensical Third Space

Scholars and readers of Wuthering Heights alike acknowledge that Catherine Earnshaw possesses an unparalleled fascination with and gravitation toward landscape and the outdoors. However, this oft-imputed obsession in fact fluctuates throughout the novel. Though the narrative begins with Catherine exploring the open moors, these initial excursions in open landscapes abruptly cease. Instead, outdoor spaces that nonetheless merge aspects of interiority and exteriority begin to pervade the novel as the narrative continues. In chapter one, we used the
term “third spaces” to describe semi-enclosures that are more private than open landscape, but less private than domestic interiors. Just as Elizabeth Bennet seeks out semi-enclosures for respite and independence in *Pride and Prejudice*, so too does Catherine envision such spaces as a site in which she can focus her own ambitious and independent mind. However, though Catherine encounters many settings in *Wuthering Heights* that unsettle the binary of interiority and exteriority, most of these spaces differ from the semi-enclosures that we saw in *Pride and Prejudice*. Brontë’s famously explicit and detailed language in her depictions of landscape portrays spaces that blend interiority and exteriority as threatening and dangerous rather than attractive and reassuring. Indeed, though Brontë’s diction clearly portrays these spaces as both outside and inside, it also crucially portrays them as unsheltered and unprotected. Therefore, while the more peripheral third spaces of *Pride and Prejudice* offer Elizabeth a type of refuge, such spaces in *Wuthering Heights* lack the central component of protection. As a result, third spaces become uninhabitable and torturous for Catherine and do not gratify her in the way she desires.  

The correlation between third spaces and concepts of victimization and danger reveals the heightened stakes of trying to reconcile indoor and outdoor worlds and values in *Wuthering Heights*. Indeed, the novel was written at a time when these concepts appear even more opposed than in Austen’s era, due in part to Victorian ideals of the domestication of women. As FML Thompson writes, “the separation of work from home, non-working and thoroughly domesticated womenfolk, intensely private and self-contained nuclear families, and strict and all-pervading morality, were [19th-century] principal means of expression….this flowered in the

---

11 I will focus primarily on the elder Catherine (Catherine Earnshaw) for the clarity of examining just one female protagonist per novel, and as she is a subject of more critical analysis in relation to landscape than her daughter, Catherine Linton. However, I will discuss how Catherine Linton is affected and carries on her mother’s experiences in the next generation.
early Victorian years, when morals, manners and respectability all pointed to this as the domestic ideal” (Thompson 175). The novel’s violent depiction of third spaces emphasizes an understanding of landscape that not only discourages women from seeking a space for idiosyncratic thoughts and ambitions, but also deems such a pursuit ultimately perilous. We will see how Catherine’s attempts bravely to enter and locate third spaces consequently result in her vulnerability. This torment in third spaces, often represented as physical anguish or endangerment, extends to a mental torment as well, as Catherine experiences extreme indecision in her competing affections for two very different men. I will argue that we can understand Catherine’s suffering in the third space as a metaphor for her irresolution between Heathcliff and Edgar, whom the text often constructs as corporal personifications of the outdoors and domesticity, respectively.

Torn in her affections between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton throughout the novel, Catherine often depicts her indecision between these men in terms of landscape and nature, though not always as an inside/outside opposition. She describes her love for Edgar as “the foliage in the woods” because “time will change it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees” (Brontë 82).12 Her love for Heathcliff, she asserts, is indelible, one that “resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary” (Brontë 82). Catherine’s delineation of her sentiments towards both men visually constructs a semi-enclosure, a wooded and canopied space on a solid foundation of stone similar to Elizabeth’s copse and sheltered grove. Her definition of a third space combines the ideal purposes and advantages of both men into an ideal space, one in which she can weigh her decisions and appreciations for both men.

As both Heathcliff and Edgar are vital components of Catherine’s self-designed third space, she

---

12 While Edgar is described here in terms of landscape, this episode shows how sometimes the choice between Heathcliff and Edgar produces an alternative space for Catherine. As we progress further into the novel, Edgar will more consistently represent the domestic sphere.
cannot only choose one man or the other, but must choose both. Though Catherine believes her decision to love both men is not only a happy resolution but also a practical one, her self-designed third space will not allow for such aspirations to be realized. 13 Though Catherine envisions an ideal semi-enclosure, she never enters one that gratifies her as it did for Elizabeth. Instead, we will witness Catherine enter spaces that merge notions of interiority and exteriority—often in situations pertaining to her indecision between both men—but she experiences anguish in these spaces rather than respite as we observed with Elizabeth.

Prior to Heathcliff’s abrupt introduction to the Earnshaw family, Catherine was certainly a lively six-year-old, as she “could ride any horse in the stable” (Brontë 36). However, she displays a certain level of obedience, as she and her brother Hindley would “[run] down to the gate to look” for their father’s homecoming, but would not traverse past the boundaries of Wuthering Heights’ premises. It is only after Heathcliff’s arrival that Catherine develops mischievous behavior. A young boy rescued by Catherine’s father, Heathcliff is a character whose very name is composed of the English landscape. Richard Dellamora says, “In tracing the geography of the novel, Brontë conflates two different parts of the landscape of the West Riding—the limestone crags of the northwest with the industrialized moorlands of the South. The name Heathcliff that Earnshaw gives the foundling conflates these two Yorkshire landscapes in a single term” (Dellamora 546). Catherine’s nanny, Nelly, describes Catherine’s newly recalcitrant behavior, saying, “from the hour she came down stairs, till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute’s security that she wouldn’t be in mischief” (Brontë 42). Heathcliff fuels Catherine’s attachment to the outdoors so much so that she traverses the open landscape with no discretion. Nelly remembers, “It was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in

13 Defending the necessity of maintaining a relationship with Heathcliff, Catherine argues, “Don’t talk of our separation again—it is impracticable” (Brontë 83).
the morning and remain there all day, and the after punishment grew a mere thing to laugh at” (Brontë 46).

Catherine and Heathcliff’s adventures come to a climactic halt, though, on their famous “ramble at liberty” at Thrushcross Grange (Brontë 47), the home of the Linton family and of Catherine’s future husband, Edgar. Heathcliff and Catherine trespass onto the Linton property; as Heathcliff describes, they “crept through a broken hedge, groped [their] way up the path, and planted [themselves] on a flower-pot under the drawing-room window” (Brontë 49). The garden is a space that combines elements of interiority and exteriority, “an important extension of the middle-class domain where men and women could meet in ‘complementary tranquility’” (Davidoff and Hall 370). This concept of gardens as spaces of “tranquility” supports the idea of third spaces as refuges where women could comfortably and permissibly express themselves by “engag(ing) in brisk physical activity and even display(ing) some aggression,” sometimes in the presence of their male counterparts (Davidoff and Hall 374). However, the garden in this case does not provide such repose. Catherine falls victim in the garden to Skulker, the Linton family’s bulldog, while Heathcliff escapes. The violent attack leaves Catherine’s ankle purple and bloody and her brazen spirit weakened. As she whispers, “they have let the bull-dog loose, and he holds me!” (Brontë 49).

In their book *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar posit that Catherine is involuntarily altered after her experience at Thrushcross Grange: “Though many readers overlook this point, Catherine does not go to the Grange when she is twelve years old. On the contrary, the Grange seizes and “holds [her] fast”’ (Gilbert and Gubar 271). Expanding upon Gilbert and Gubar’s impression of Catherine’s captivity at the Grange, Jamie S. Crouse describes the vicious bulldog that bites Catherine’s ankle as “symbolic of the patriarchal
oppression which she succumbs to while at the Grange” (Crouse 183). She argues that Catherine’s confinement at the Grange is forced on her, symbolically positioning her to assume the role of a lady in society. However, these interpretations fail to take into account the exact moment and location where the assault takes place: in the garden. In the moment of Catherine’s most extreme vulnerability, she is not convalescing inside the Grange with Edgar at her side or traversing the moors alongside Heathcliff, but is literally “held” in between these two spaces—within the garden. Thus, in this singular moment of violence, Catherine is literally stopped, suspended in a space that possesses aspects of both the outdoors and domesticity.

After her assault in the garden, and thus during her residence at Thrushcross Grange for the ensuing five weeks, Catherine is repeatedly portrayed as torn between her feminine responsibility within domestic interiors and her desire to traverse the expansive moors. Consequently, the novel’s unsettling of binaries extends not only to the garden’s literal confounding of any dichotomy between indoors and outdoors, but also to Catherine’s internal struggle to reconcile the polarities of her indoor responsibility versus her outdoor, adventurous spirit. As we will see, Catherine is unsuccessful in her pursuit or creation of third spaces, as each space lacks a central component of protection, hence rendering Catherine vulnerable and exposed. Even in the Thrushcross Grange episode, Heathcliff and Catherine enter the garden through a “broken hedge” (Brontë 48), suggesting that this third space is not sufficiently protective or sheltering.

Furthermore, this first interaction among Edgar, Heathcliff, and Catherine in relation to the third space environment of the garden accentuates the two boys as diametric opposites. Heathcliff is declared by Mrs. Linton to be “quite unfit for a decent house” (Brontë 50),

14 Gilbert and Gubar even posit that not only has Catherine entered proper society, but also the bloody imagery of this scene hints that “Catherine has been simultaneously catapulted into adult female sexuality and castrated” (272).
emphasizing even further his association with the outdoors rather than domestic interiors. Edgar, on the other hand, is characterized by the indoors as a weaker and domesticated boy who “stood on the hearth weeping silently” when he quarreled with Isabella over the dog (Brontë 48).

However, both Edgar and Heathcliff are attracted to Catherine, as Heathcliff returns to his station at the window to spy on Catherine and Edgar “stood gaping at a distance” watching her recover (Brontë 51). Both boys, representing extreme opposites of the indoor/outdoor binary, gaze lovingly at Catherine. Just as Catherine was literally “held” in the garden, here she similarly is held within two different gazes.

Catherine eventually decides to marry Edgar rather than Heathcliff, a choice consistent with the expectations and values of the Victorian era. Catherine defends her acceptance of Edgar’s marriage proposal based on financial and social status, saying, “it would degrade her to marry [Heathcliff]” (Brontë 81). Unable to secure property through inheritance or entailment, Catherine is in a similar predicament to Elizabeth Bennet’s and must choose a marriage partner while considering financial and property advantages over emotional attachment or attraction. As Richard Dellamora says, “This ambition signifies both lack of confidence in Heathcliff plus her capitulation to the Victorian value of individual improvement through social and financial advance” (Dellamora 544). Though Catherine selects Edgar to wed legally, she remains in key senses forever wedded to Heathcliff spiritually. In her famous words, “Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton’s is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire” (Brontë 81). In contrast, Gilbert and Gubar argue that it is futile to examine Catherine’s indecision between Heathcliff or Edgar, as they believe she only truly had one choice: “to talk of morality in connection with Catherine’s fall—and specifically in connection with her self-deceptive decision to marry Edgar—seems pointless, however, for morality only
becomes a relevant term where there are meaningful choices” (Gilbert and Gubar 277). They claim that, as a reasonable lady in this patriarchal culture, Catherine’s only sensible choice is to select the only eligible bachelor around: Edgar. Though it is true Catherine’s decision is partially guided by social expectations, her own romantic preferences and attractions influence her decision as well, as she so clearly explains when she describes Edgar and Heathcliff as serving different but necessary functions as the foliage above her head and the foundation beneath her feet, respectively. In fact, Catherine’s partiality to both social expectations as well as her own personal desires helps produce her tormented indecisive state, which Wuthering Heights increasingly renders within a range of what I am calling third spaces.15

Catherine’s decision to marry Edgar rather than Heathcliff develops into a long lasting regret, as it confines her to a life torn between allegiances to two different men. Catherine’s moral dilemma is consequently amplified in her surroundings as spaces that coalesce interiority and exteriority. No longer does she explore the moors as she once did, but she now obsesses over the outdoors, a space representative of her love for Heathcliff, while confined inside, a space representative of and also occupied by Edgar. Moreover, Catherine’s mental torment is physically manifested in her repeated positioning in spaces that are simultaneously indoors and outdoors. For example, upon hearing of Heathcliff’s flight from Wuthering Heights after he overears her intent to marry Edgar, Catherine immediately runs to the outdoors to look for him. However, rather than break past the gate to search for him, Catherine stops and instead “[keeps] wandering to and fro, from the gate to the door, in a state of agitation which permitted no repose” (Brontë 85). In this passage, Catherine traverses the yard, an outdoor space that might be

15 Similar to Gilbert and Gubar, Elizabeth Napier says, “Catherine’s repeated inability to choose suggests, perhaps, the ultimate, tragic result of the dissolution of the self’s limits: in a world defined solely by the self, the act of choice becomes impossible. Cathy, thus (as the plot of Brontë’s novel dictates), repeatedly assumes the emblematic posture of choosing, standing (most notably) between Edgar and Heathcliff and Isabella and Heathcliff.” (104)
considered an extension of the home according to Davidoff and Hall. She paces back and forth between her allegiances, as the door represents Edgar and Catherine’s domestic union, while the gate symbolizes Heathcliff and her yearning for adventure. The space in between, then, connotes Catherine’s tormenting indecision as she struggles to commit to one side or the other, while also demarcating a space in which she can reflect on the values associated with both men and their corresponding environments.

In this episode, not only is Catherine’s location in the third space representative of her predicament being torn between Edgar and Heathcliff, but it also leaves her exposed and susceptible to injury. Brontë specifically notes that Catherine is agitated and cannot rest, and when a threatening storm arises during this crisis, Catherine is left uniquely vulnerable. As Nelly testifies, “The uproar passed away in twenty minutes, leaving us all unharmed, excepting Cathy, who got thoroughly drenched for her obstinacy in refusing to take shelter, and standing bonnetless and shawlless to catch as much water as she could with her hair and clothes” (Brontë 85). Unlike Elizabeth, then, who is pictured in outdoor areas that provide moderate and restorative enclosure, Catherine paces anxiously in the unsheltered garden and experiences primarily distress and confusion. Thus, it appears that while Catherine seeks out the garden to find clarity and focus, just as Elizabeth does the copse and the sheltered grove, she becomes susceptible not only to the elements, but also to her own indefatigable thoughts.

As the narrative of her affections for both men progresses, Catherine becomes more and more distressed in her irresolution, growing increasingly agitated in spaces that connote both interior and exterior qualities. For example, in a delirious and feverish state after learning of Heathcliff and Isabella Linton’s romance, Catherine recalls her childhood days—her days with Heathcliff—and desires to return to that life of openness, saying:
Oh, I’m burning! I wish I were out of doors—I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed?... I’m sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills... Open the window again, wide, fasten it open! (125-6)

Catherine opens the window and “ben[ds] out” (Brontë 126). With her body half inside and half outside, Catherine occupies a space that is both external and internal, but is not quite a third space (as we have defined it), as it is uninhabitable and unsheltered. Her position in the open window is equally abusive as other intermediary dimensions she has occupied throughout the novel, with “frosty air that cut about her shoulders as keen as a knife” (Brontë 126). Catherine even imagines herself out on the moors, envisioning and mapping out “the rough journey” to Wuthering Heights while remaining enclosed indoors (Brontë 126).16 As Catherine becomes more delusional and fanatical in this episode, her internal resolution becomes stronger. She clearly dictates where she would like to be buried upon her death, “not among the Lintons, mind, under the chapel-roof; but in the open air with a head-stone” (Brontë 127). Soon after her declaration of her preferred “open-air(ed)” resting place, Catherine tells Edgar “I don’t want you, Edgar; I’m past wanting you” (Brontë 128). Catherine’s mind is apparently and at long last made up—she no longer possesses wavering allegiances between Edgar and Heathcliff. However, while she describes her preferred resting place as “open air(ed),” a grave is enclosed in principle. Though it seems Catherine has become more assertive and resolved, in fact she paradoxically proceeds from one third space (of her ongoing indecision and suffering) to another (of inevitable, purgatorial confinement into what she perceives as “openness”).

Thus, even in death, which Catherine saw as an escape from some of the impossible choices that Wuthering Heights figures as third spaces, these tortuous indoor/outdoor

---

16 This episode evokes Elizabeth’s thought process at Pemberley, when she traverses the estate while cognitively mapping out the inside of the house and Darcy’s location in it. Though the heroines’ thought processes and positioning inside or outside are reversed, it nevertheless achieves the same result of the protagonist essentially experiencing both the indoors and the outdoors simultaneously.
dichotomies still plague Catherine. 17 When Mr. Lockwood travels from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights to meet his new neighbors, poor weather conditions prevent him from returning home that night and he is forced to stay at Wuthering Heights in Catherine’s old room. Delirious in a dream, Lockwood imagines punching through the window, creating a literal and threatening gateway between the indoors to the outdoors. He grabs onto the “importunate” tree branch to put an end to its incessant scratching on the windowpane and is immediately alarmed to discover the branch is actually Catherine’s arm. Lockwood “pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes” (Brontë 25). Yet again, this intermediate space between indoors and outdoors becomes a place of brutal torture for Catherine, who only seeks to return to Heathcliff.

Interestingly, Catherine disrupts our previous understanding of Edgar as a representation of domestic interiors and Heathcliff as a manifestation of outdoors in her announcement of her return, as she cries, “Let me in, let me in…I’ve come home now, I lost my way on the moor” (Brontë 25). Though Catherine’s desire to enter the house suggests that she finally settled her heart on Heathcliff, the name she introduces herself with suggests otherwise. She calls herself “Catherine Linton,” using Edgar’s last name. Brontë even specifically makes note of this last name, as Lockwood contemplates, “why did I think of Linton? I had read Earnshaw twenty times for Linton” (Brontë 25). And yet, as the phrase “I think” reveals, Lockwood as delirious dreamer is in control of this whole scenario, just as he drags her arm through the third space of the shattered window. This episode actually prefigures some of the readings we will see in chapter three, in which we see a man actively pulling a woman into a third space, rendering her vulnerable and manipulating her idiosyncratic identity.

17 Gilbert and Gubar posit that Catherine’s death to be with Heathcliff is not “a mystical but a practical solution” (284).
As for the later generations of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine’s attraction to spaces that constitute both interiors and exteriors transfers to her daughter, Catherine Linton.\(^{18}\) Sharing the same name, Cathy also shares her mother’s inextricable attachment to spaces with both interior and exterior characteristics. For example, Cathy describes her “most perfect idea of heaven’s happiness” as “rocking in a rustling green tree…and the moors seen at a distance” (Brontë 248). However, just as her mother paced back and forth between the garden gate and the front door in a purgatorial state, Cathy faces the same liminal and purgatorial exterior space, as she is only permitted to explore the area from the house to “the end of the garden wall” (Brontë 16). Both Catherine and her daughter envision true happiness in the form of outdoor spaces that blend interior and exterior qualities, or else allow a view of open expanses from within more enclosed environments, but even when immersed in such spaces, they are not gratified.

Catherine’s and Cathy’s preferred outdoor, enclosed spaces—as well as their desires to express their independence and idiosyncrasies through such spaces—are not unlike Elizabeth and her preoccupation with third spaces in *Pride and Prejudice*. However, the perilous nature of third spaces in *Wuthering Heights* suggests that possessing such idiosyncratic ambitions and desires only results in the vulnerability of the protagonist. As ideology concerning the interiority/exteriority distinction had only intensified since the Romantic era of *Pride and Prejudice*, perhaps the Victorian novel *Wuthering Heights* necessarily delivers a narrative where this in-between third space, connoting a protective and separate space for female eccentricity and independence, has become unattainable. As Nelly tells Catherine after her idealized semi-enclosure description of Heathcliff and Edgar: “If I can make any sense of your nonsense, Miss [Catherine], it only goes to convince me that you are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying; or else, that you are a wicked, unprincipled girl” (Brontë 83). A space that blends

---

\(^{18}\) I will refer to Catherine Linton as Cathy for sake of clarity.
together the positive qualities found on both sides of the indoor/outdoor binary is impossible, suggesting that a dutiful housewife cannot move freely around the outdoors.

Chapter 3: *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* and the Paradoxical Third Space

Tess Durbeyfield, like both Elizabeth Bennet and Catherine Earnshaw, is a bold, independent-minded woman, with a temperament more distinctive and precocious than what was traditional for females in the late nineteenth century. However, unlike the other heroines we have discussed, Tess possesses an inherent and unmistakable relationship with the outdoors simply due to her class. While it was uncommon for middle-class women in the nineteenth century to traverse the outdoors or function in a role outside of their domestic responsibilities, Tess is a peasant, and her position as a dairymaid requires her to work outdoors a majority of the day and occasionally to travel from one farm to the next, either alone or accompanied by other female workers. Scholars of the novel note that Tess’s relationship to landscape is even further manifested in her behavior, social interactions and her physiognomy. Tess thus possesses a more spontaneous and developed relationship with landscape than Elizabeth or Catherine. This type of female exertion outdoors was considered acceptable for the lower strata, as, “There was much child and female labour in agriculture, probably considerably more than the census record states” (Thompson 209).

Despite the fact that female outdoor labor and activity were permissible for a woman of her class and occupation, Tess is not pictured solely in open, agricultural landscapes. Indeed, Tess is prominently featured in the same “third spaces” pervasive in *Pride and Prejudice* and

---

19 Tess believes herself to be uniquely intelligent for her class, remarking of her own aptitude for learning, “I was in the sixth standard when I left school, and they said I had great aptness, and should make a good teacher, so it was settled that I should be one” (Hardy 147).

20 Such scholars include Jules Law, who notes that Tess “rejects social law” in favor of Nature (256); Kaja Silverman, who remarks how the environment envelops and absorbs Tess’s qualities through “metonymic or metaphorical transfer” (25); and Eithne Henson, who writes that Hardy describes Tess with a vocabulary associated with all parts of nature, including “animal, fruit or flower” (189).
“Wuthering Heights”—that is, outdoor spaces that are more exposed than domestic interiors but more sheltered than open landscape. As middle class women expected to uphold primarily domestic roles, both Elizabeth and Catherine viewed these sheltered, undomesticated outdoor spaces as desired and valuable venues that combined the most attractive aspects of interiority and exteriority. Though the accessibility and habitability of the third space contrasted between Elizabeth’s and Catherine’s experiences, the same idea of such a space where one could foster independent thought and latent ambitions remained a preoccupation for both women throughout the novels. However, as a woman so closely linked to landscape both in class and profession, Tess is not upheld to these same values of domesticity, and thus does not possess this same attraction to third spaces. Instead, when Tess is depicted in undomesticated semi-enclosures, it is often against her own volition. She is figuratively planted in these spaces by other men, a violation of her free will and independence that consequently quiets her unconventional spirit and alters her confidence, and even her presence, in landscape. Thus, the “third space” in Tess of the d’Urbervilles does not represent a location for Tess to foster clear and ambitious thinking, but rather manifests the dissolution of her capacity to control her own experiences and to vocalize her own desires. Even more perplexing is Tess’s tendency to gravitate towards these spaces on her own accord, an instinct that is not completely masochistic, as her occupation as a dairymaid often requires her to work within the undomesticated yet sheltered space of the barn. Tess’s attraction to third spaces as the novel continues will reveal the complicated and unstable nature of such spaces in Tess of the d’Urbervilles, and the tension surrounding Tess’s authority and independence as a “country girl” (Hardy 8). By placing herself in certain third spaces, Tess demonstrates a limited and paradoxical form of agency. This trajectory of third spaces will lead
to Tess’s final and climatic refuge at Stonehenge, a paradoxical third space that not only alludes to the types of places where she was injured in the past, but also determines her condemned fate.

As she is described as a “fine and picturesque country girl” in the first few pages of the novel, Tess from the very beginning already possesses an inherent relationship to the country landscape (Hardy 8). The second chapter begins with an in depth illustration of Marlott, Tess’s hometown, describing its royal history, its previously wooded grounds, and specifically its ties to female tradition—for example, that of the May-Day dance, which takes place in a third-space enclosure where “oak copses and irregular belts of timber” line the dancing green (Hardy 6). Just as Elizabeth Bennet was able to contemplate her aspirations and desires while in third spaces, so too do the women taking part in the festivities reflect on their own hopes while in this copse, as “each had a private little sun for her soul to bask in; some dream, some affection, some hobby, at least some remote and distant hope which, though perhaps starving to nothing, still lived on, as hopes will. Thus they were all cheerful, and many of them merry” (Hardy 7).

However, the quietude of the female participants, Hardy explains, is due to the function of the May-Day ceremony as a procession constructed as an “exhibition for themselves” rather than a “celebration” (Hardy 6). Though sheltered and peripheralized, this third space is not private, as the women concentrate on perfecting their appearances under “this crude exposure to public scrutiny” and were “unaccustomed to many eyes” of male spectators (Hardy 7).

The procession and its location in the third space, however, have a different effect on Tess. While the other women only internally reflect on their desires, Tess projects her own sentiments and beliefs outward, and is the only female openly to speak her mind. For example, when a few townsfolk begin to mock her father, Tess reprimands them, saying, “Look here; I won’t walk another inch with you, if you say any jokes about him!” (Hardy 7).
throughout the opening chapters, Tess is frequently forthright and aggressive with her opinions. She rebukes the village boys for their constant wooing at the May-Day dance, and after learning of her father drinking at a public house she becomes so emotional that “her rebuke and her mood seemed to fill the whole room” (Hardy 13).

Tess’s outspoken disposition complicates her relationship with the third space in this scene, as she overpowers not only the other women around her, but also the very landscape itself, and in the context of the novel entails a remarkable gender-reversal and even a measure of agency. This is evinced in the opening scene when Tess is first introduced, as “she wore a red ribbon in her hair, and was the only one of the white company who could boast of such a pronounced adornment” (Hardy 7). As Kaja Silverman recognizes, this red ribbon allows Tess to stand out in relationship not only to the other woman, but also to landscape: “With the articulation of Tess, the landscape and the other women in the band recede into a background position” (Silverman 6). Later in the novel, the narrator asserts that although men stand out in a landscape, women blend in with landscape, obscuring their personality and identity: “A field-man is a personality afield; a field-woman is a portion of the field; she has somehow lost her own margin, imbibed the essence of her surrounding, and assimilated herself with it” (Hardy 68-9). Thus, while the typical “country girl” assimilates into her natural surroundings, in this episode Tess breaks this mold and instead mimics the more dominant role of a field-man, with a pronounced and articulated personality that allows her to retain her “margin” in the third space surroundings.

---

21 While Silverman attributes Tess’s conspicuity to the male gaze, I believe it is Tess’s independence and agency—specifically, her decision to wear a red ribbon she can “boast” of—that causes her to stand out.

22 Kathleen Blake notes that “a woman’s release from personality to become a portion of the field, an ‘essence of woman,’ or ‘a soul at large,’ is the most significant mode of marginlessness treated [in the novel]” (207).
That said, even if Tess achieves unusual force and delineation within the third space, she does not primarily gravitate toward such environments. Accustomed to the outdoors, Tess chooses the open landscape rather than enclosed or domesticated spaces as the outlet for her independence and ambitions. For example, returning home after the May-Day dance, Tess feels an “unspeakable dreariness” and would rather be “indulging herself out-of-doors” than “help(ing) her mother in these domesticities” (Hardy 11). At the Talbothays dairy farm, Tess toils outdoors on a landscape “encompassed by the vast flat mead which extended to either slope of the valley—a level landscape” (Hardy 85). When she walks the open “horizontal lands” (Hardy 82) of the valley, Tess “had never in her recent life been so happy as she was now…she was, for one thing, physically and mentally suited among these new surroundings” (Hardy 101).

Though Tess may possess a perceptibly comfortable and intimate relationship with open landscape in an era and class where women were already afforded more freedom outdoors, her access to open landscapes is frequently impeded and prevented. In fact, as Tess possesses “a personality afield,” a quality Hardy attributes only to field-men, this impetuous spirit is often quieted when the novel depicts her in more enclosed, outdoor spaces, often placed there by other men. In order to “put her in her place,” Tess’s male peers repeatedly and literally place her in semi-enclosures rather than allowing her full domain of the open landscape. For example, on a carriage ride through the Chase, a densely wooded forest in South Wessex, Tess’s companion Alec d’Urberville purposefully loses his way and stops to reevaluate his surroundings in the midst of a heavy fog. While Alec explores the Chase, he makes a “couch or nest” out of dead leaves accumulated on the ground, and orders Tess, “Now sit down here, and wait till I come” (Hardy 56). When Tess realizes Alec’s fervent passion for her, and suspects her imminent danger, she initially resolves to return to the main road and out of the enclosed wood, saying
“Please set me down, and let me walk home” (Hardy 55). However, as they travel farther into the woods, Tess loses her confident, determined spirit, and instead can only articulate what Alec wants to hear. Her own desires are muffled, and instead she thanks him for his “kindness,” but “with a painful sense of the awkwardness of having to thank him” (Hardy 56). As Alec’s manipulation causes Tess to relinquish control over her voice, so much so that all she can do is weep (Hardy 56), Tess loses the capacity by which she once stood out vibrantly against the natural environment and instead cedes her “margin” by blending into her surroundings. Alec again orders her to sit, and Tess eventually submits, “passively [sitting] down” (Hardy 56) and immersing herself in the couch of leaves that is sheltered by surrounding “bushes” and “boughs” (Hardy 56)—a site of enclosure, characteristic of a third space. As the word choice suggests, Tess becomes passive in this moment, and when she relinquishes her resolve and obeys Alec’s orders, she immediately blends in with the third space he created for her: “With the setting of the moon the pale light lessened, and Tess became invisible as she fell into reverie upon the leaves where he had left her” (Hardy 56). Tess becomes like the other field-women, “imbib(ing) the essence of her surroundings, and assimilat(ing) herself within it” (Hardy 69) as she surrenders her unique voice and relationship to landscape.

The third space in this episode, then, is not a form of refuge for idiosyncratic desires or thoughts, but becomes a structure in which Tess is unable to articulate her desires at all. Just as the women in the May-Day dance possess aspirations and goals but do not express them under the scrutiny of male bystanders, Tess is silenced by “the patriarchal hegemony within which she is constructed” (Goode 124). Thus, Tess’s submersion in the nest not only intensifies the peripherality of the third space, but it also envelops her dominant spirit, giving Alec the opportunity to take advantage of her. As Jules Law argues, Tess does not behave as her true self
in this moment, but rather as a tempered version of herself: “Her body becomes the object to which random events happen, and upon which random acts of violence and domination are inscribed—her real self remains beyond” (Law 251).

After her sexual assault by Alec in the Chase, Tess is frequently portrayed as not only traversing semi-enclosures but also receding into them, further ceding her agency and independence.23 It is evident that Tess is aware of this, as she often reflects on her own obscuration when meditating on the night of her sexual assault. For example, when she takes evening walks in search of “mental liberty” on the open “hills and dales,” she eventually comes across third spaces, enclosures lined by bushes and tree boughs, that serve as a reminder of her impurity: “Walking among the sleeping birds in the hedges, watching the skipping rabbits on a moonlit warren, or standing under a pheasant-laden bough, she looked upon herself as a figure of guilt intruding into the haunts of Innocence” (Hardy 67). Even when in search of “mental liberty,” the novel repeatedly pulls Tess back into third spaces that challenge both her mental freedom and her physical presence. Rather than stand out from the third space as she once did in the wooded enclosure at the May-Day dance, Tess again becomes assimilated into the landscape, as “her flexuous and stealthy figure became an integral part of the scene” (Hardy 66-67).

Later in the novel, after learning of Tess’s rape, her husband, Angel Clare, repeats Alec’s act of placing Tess in a third space. One evening, in the midst of sleepwalking, Angel carries Tess out of her bed, crossing rivers and hills in order to ultimately lay her down in “the empty stone coffin of an abbot” (Hardy 195). This coffin is an overdetermined third space, as it is submerged in the ground and nestled in a garden surrounded by “the north wall of the Abbey”

---

23 Tess’s assimilation into third spaces behaves as a type of third space in itself, as Tess straddles the line of presence and nonexistence.
This layered effect, in addition to Tess’s submersion in the ground, even heightens the act of absorbing Tess into the landscape, rather than allowing her to remain a distinctive figure. In his determination, Angel walks a “half-hour” (Hardy 195) to place Tess in this submerged space, even willing to bound over rivers in his sleep. Angel’s sleepwalk curiously resembles Alec’s rampage in the Chase, in which Alec had “ridden quite at random for over an hour, taking any turning that came to hand in order to prolong companionship with her” (Hardy 56). Just as Alec used a semi-enclosure to subdue Tess in both body and mind, Angel too is in complete control of both Tess’s body and her mind in this scene. Tess, emotionally drained after considering their marriage broken, surrenders to her feelings of vulnerability and inferiority—and enjoys it: “so easefully had she delivered her whole being up to him that it pleased her to think he was regarding her as his absolute possession, to dispose of as he should choose” (Hardy 194). Even when she yearns to express herself and to be released, “the impulse stirred in her, yet she dared not indulge it” (Hardy 195). Thus, Tess again relinquishes her self-expression in the third space, and allows Angel to take control.

This burial presents another method of assimilating Tess into landscape, absorbing not only her body, but her atypical identity as well. Still, whereas Silverman argues unilaterally that “environmental absorption marks her demise as emphatically as the black flag does at the end of the novel” (27), this metaphorical death of the “impure” and subdued Tess, culminating in her immersion in another third space, also paradoxically marks the reemergence of the confident, intelligent and independent Tess from the chapters preceding the rape. The moment Angel returns to a passive slumber, Tess does not stay in the third space, but immediately “[sits] up” and “steps out of her stone confine” (Hardy 195-6). Once out of the coffin, she regains her

24 The empty stone coffin is an actual location in Bindon, England. Hugh Brasnett describes the coffin as a “watery grave” surrounded by “damp grass,” and supplies a photograph depicting the submerged grave near a vined wall and with a shallow pool of water collected at its base (Brasnett 40-1).
strong, independent character, as she persuades Angel to return to the house with her, and “whispered in his ear, with as much firmness and decision as she could summon: ‘Let us walk on, darling’” (Hardy 196). This brief passage marks a turning point in Tess’s plot, as she has not only regained her precocious, independent-minded character, but also now controls Angel’s passive state and relationship with the outdoors, as she “conduct(s) him” across the landscape (Hardy 196). Tess, from here on in the novel, will recapture some of the willfulness and spirit she exhibited in the May-Day glade, seeking or even producing other third spaces in which to recover some independence and maintain her “margin” in her relationship with landscape.

Revealingly, then, the next time Tess appears in a semi-enclosed space, she deliberately places herself there. While traveling to another dairy farm, Tess meets a strange man who frightens her to such an extent that “she suddenly took to her heels with the speed of the wind” towards the woods (Hardy 217). Once safely hidden in the woods, she finds herself immersed in a third space surrounded by “the foliage of some holly bushes which grew among the deciduous trees [and] was dense enough to keep off draughts” (Hardy 217). Unmistakably reconstructing the very “nest” where Alec previously violated her, Tess creates a bed for herself by “scrap(ing) together the dead leaves till she had formed them into a large heap, making a sort of nest in the middle” (Hardy 217). Here, too, Tess’s emotions are similar to the night of her rape—a man frightens her, and she conceals her true emotions as “a spasm of anguish shot through her; and she returned him no answer” (Hardy 217). However, in this episode Tess selects this third space shelter herself, not pausing in the woods “till she was deep enough in its shade” (Hardy 217). The term “nest” even lends this secluded spot an aspect of shelter or domestication.

While in the copse, Tess discovers several wounded pheasants surrounding a nearby tree and attempts to put them out of their misery: “With the impulse of a soul who could feel for
kindred sufferers as much as for herself...with her own hands she broke the necks of as many as she could find” (Hardy 219). While killing the birds, she reflects on her past hardships and suffering, which suggests that the seemingly merciful act of killing the birds is actually an expression of anguish and frustration. Just as the copse provided Lady Catherine De Bourgh the opportunity to berate Elizabeth in *Pride and Prejudice*, so too does it allow Tess to convey her torment and indignation in a private setting. However, the constant repetition throughout the novel of these tormenting third spaces underscores them as a more purgatorial environment, similar to what Catherine Earnshaw experienced in *Wuthering Heights*. Though *Tess of the d’Urbervilles’* repetition of third spaces lends them an ostensibly inescapable quality, Tess’s mercy-killing does reveal a regained form of agency and control. Rather than blending into the third space, Tess’s display of aggression renders her a prominent and somewhat masculinized figure in the landscape; Goode argues that Tess kills the birds as a consequence for her “field-men” behavior, and that, “feeling ‘hunted’, she takes refuge in a copse where wounded partridges take refuge and she has to kill them to put them out of their misery” (Goode 128).

Since Tess has been docile, at least initially, in every other third space environment prior, it is notable that she feels such strong desire to take matters into her own hands here. Tess’s mercy-killing therefore can be interpreted as a metaphor for her regained capacity to control her experiences in these spaces. However, after experiencing trauma and victimization in similar third space environments throughout the novel, Tess does not merely regain a form of agency, but recasts herself in a similarly traumatic scene—and in a similarly enclosed space. This time, though, she reimagines herself as the agent rather than the victim. Tess conveys, then, a paradoxical agency that does not fully emancipate her from trauma within the third space, but at least reveals a role reversal in which she has regained some control.
When Tess finally accepts her imminent death in the final pages of the novel, her selected place of refuge shows that she does not relinquish her headstrong personality, but insists on partly determining *her own* fate—and that she specifically opts to do so within a third space of her own choosing. On the run with Angel after murdering Alec d’Urberville, Tess and Angel traverse the countryside in search of refuge. Even while evading a manhunt, Tess exudes confidence and joviality, explicitly regaining her assertive relationship with nature from earlier in the novel: “to walk across country without much regard to roads was not new to Tess, and she showed her old agility in the performance” (Hardy 309). When they come across Stonehenge, Tess requests to stay not because she is incapable of going farther, but because she elects not to. Stonehenge is perhaps the superlative example of a third space; its large, stone slabs form a circular semi-enclosure that blends together aspects of exteriority and interiority, an anomalous refuge in an otherwise vacant field. Angel, however, realizes that Stonehenge is not a protective refuge, but a spot “visible for miles by day,” and he attempts to relocate and “find shelter further on” (Hardy 310). However, Tess asserts her authority by refusing Angel’s entreaty, instead placing *herself* in this third space, as she “flung herself upon an oblong slab” (Hardy 310).

Despite its visibility, Tess cherishes Stonehenge as a venue for experiencing a form of refuge and for focusing her aspirations and desires, which are similar reasons the third space was cherished in *Pride and Prejudice* and sought after in *Wuthering Heights*. Tess has yearned for peaceful, liminal spaces before, such as in her attempt to prolong the engagement period with Angel, or in her search for a particular, temporal state: “She knew how to hit to a hair’s breadth that moment of evening when the light and the darkness are so evenly balanced that the constraint of day and the suspense of night neutralize each other, leaving absolute mental liberty” (Hardy 66). Thus, Tess selects a liminal space that provides an opportunity to peacefully
commune with nature, as she describes the structure as “solemn and lonely” (Hardy 311). However, the third space here poses a paradox. In taking shelter at Stonehenge, Tess knowingly exposes herself. She feels both “solemn” and possessed of “great happiness,” and Stonehenge is both her “home,” yet also a space of incarceration with pillars that “stood up blackly against the light” (Hardy 312). In this way, Stonehenge resembles other third spaces where Tess has previously been assaulted or enfeebled. The fact that Stonehenge presents such paradoxes only heightens our understanding of this space as “third,” as the “heathen temple” disrupts binaries other than simply indoors and outdoors.

However, it is significant that Tess does not select a shelter that engulfs her, but instead knowingly resides in a third space where she will be discovered. No longer does Tess blend in with her surroundings, but she now stands apart and finishes her own story with her renewed independence and agency. Goode argues, “As she is absorbed more and more into the landscape, becoming a documentary case, as she becomes more and more the object of a text whose concern is less ‘with’ her than with the social process she represents, she emerges contradictorily as a woman capable of telling her story in her own voice” (Goode 129). Rather than conceal her emotions, Tess openly admits about the third space of Stonehenge that “[she] like(s) very much to be here” and notes that she likes standing out rather than blending in, saying, “It is so solemn and lonely…with nothing but the sky above my face” (Hardy 311). Tess’s agency in this space is so unparalleled, that when the pursuers finally obtain her while she is sleeping, her serene state captivates the men and delays them in waking her, as they “[stand] watching her, as still as the pillars around” and allow Tess the independence to wake on her own (Hardy 312).

When Tess finally does awake, she is ready to die, saying, “Angel—I am almost glad—yes, glad!” (Hardy 312). Crucially, Tess describes her imminent death as, “It is as it should be!”
These words do not just foreshadow her forthcoming death—they highlight her victory in deciding her own fate. Tess’s language also mimics the phrase the townspeople of Marlott used to comment on Tess’s sexual assault; the narrator describes, “As Tess’s own people down in those retreats are never tired of saying among each other in their fatalistic way: ‘It was to be’” (Hardy 58). Hardy’s repetition, and slight variation, of this phrase emphasizes a connection between Tess’s subdued nature in the Chase and her renewed resolve at Stonehenge. Tess twists the words of the townspeople, and her fate is no longer described as “it was to be,” but “it is as it should be” (my italics). Tess may select her own third space and regain her impetuous character, but Stonehenge, it seems, afforded Tess the opportunity to choose her own fate—and not just, as Goode confirms, through the words Tess speaks there but, as I have highlighted, through her very selection of this “liminal” locale for simultaneously taking a stand and giving herself up. As Lucille Herbert describes it, “When Tess comes ‘home,’ as she says, to Stonehenge, we understand that her fate is to return to her beginnings” (Herbert 91). Thus, Tess begins and ends the novel not only a strong, self-determining woman, but also situated in a third space—and all “is as it should be.”

**Conclusion**

Scholarship on *Pride and Prejudice*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Tess of the d’Urbervilles*, three 19th-century canonical novels often recognized for their depictions of females amid natural landscapes, commonly resorts to examining such depictions through a binary lens. With such intrepid middle class protagonists as Elizabeth Bennet and Catherine Earnshaw, critics have a propensity to examine the heroines’ experiences as dichotomized between indoors or outdoors, often framing domesticity as a form of incarceration and the outdoors as a type of freedom or
liberation. Critics rarely, if at all, associate peasant and dairymaid Tess Durbeyfield with indoor settings, even further intensifying a divide between interior and exterior space.

However, beyond recognizing the varying frequencies and degrees to which these heroines traverse and explore the outdoors, scholars and readers alike profit from observing the exact locations of such excursions, which reveal in turn that any interior/exterior distinction is overly simplistic. As this thesis has argued, our protagonists are often drawn to, placed in, or even trapped in landscapes that constitute undomesticated, sheltered semi-enclosures in the outdoors. Elizabeth frequently gravitates towards third spaces to focus her independent thoughts and activate latent desires. Catherine is often caught in purgatorial landscapes that are neither “interiors” nor “exteriors” in the strictest sense. Furthermore, she is physically and mentally tortured in third spaces even when she expects the kind of solace that Elizabeth often finds in them. Tess frequents these same enclosed outdoor spaces, first by being forced into them but later reconstructing, seeking out, and holding fast in such spaces on her own volition.

Though the character, significance, and effect of these spaces on the protagonist may vary from novel to novel, and even within the novels themselves, this does not deny the significance or the distinctiveness of such spaces in landscape. As Elizabeth, Catherine, and Tess are unique in their own way, it is natural that their experiences in third spaces are portrayed as diverse rather than uniform. Nonetheless, regardless of the novel’s publication date or of the heroine’s social standing, this thesis highlights the repeated presence of these spaces during a time period of highly dichotomized ideals and expectations for women. As all three novels were written in an era when interiors and exteriors were increasingly demarcated by the industrial boom, agricultural reforms, and ideological expectations linked to both, the repeated portrayal of protective yet undomesticated spaces representing elements of both indoors and outdoors in itself
collapses such a binary. For the female protagonist, however, these enclosed spaces provide much more than a collapsed binary. Third spaces are intermediary dimensions, a middle ground not only between exposure and enclosure, but also between other pervasive dichotomies at the time, including inflexible social class structures and the binary nature of gender. Though each heroine experiences a different degree of gratification—be it fulfilled, unfulfilled, or paradoxical—from their excursions in these spaces, the general motivation to inhabit such a space remains the same. Females that depart from the traditional, obedient, and domestic mold of the nineteenth century tend to exhibit an affinity for such spaces, locations where the traditional expectations and rules of gender behavior may operate more ambiguously.

Notably, even today, when these three novels are translated from the page to other mediums and contexts, the traditional dichotomy between inside and outside is ironically often re-established rather than conveyed as a mere ambiguous spectrum. In the most recent film adaption of *Pride and Prejudice*, director Joe Wright transplants Lady Catherine’s chastisement of Elizabeth from the secluded copse to the living room, a space that is undeniably domesticated and interior. In the conversation’s relocation indoors, we as viewers lose the copse’s inherent associations with Elizabeth’s independent thinking and with her newfound appreciation for Darcy. Lady Catherine’s charge on Elizabeth’s impetuous character possesses more complexity and vigor in the copse, previously a place of refuge and comfort for Elizabeth, rather than the living room, a space with which she does not commonly associate. In fact, Wright’s film consistently categorizes interiors as spaces of confrontation, constraint, and coercion, whereas the outdoors becomes a location of happiness, such as Darcy’s ardent marriage proposal or Elizabeth’s reunion with him at the end of the film.  

---

25 Darcy’s marriage proposal in the pouring rain in Wright’s film is a dramatic departure from the episode’s original location in the living room in the novel.
the resonances of third spaces found in Austen’s novel, but reinforces a polarized understanding of interior and exterior space, with negative and positive associations attached, respectively.

Interiors and exteriors are divorced, unambiguous spaces in literary tourism as well. The marketing of *Wuthering Heights* walking tours, for example, highlights the explorations of the “Brontë Moors” and a hall resembling Thrushcross Grange, thereby associating Catherine with either vast open landscapes or domestic interiors. Tess’s trek to and occupation of Stonehenge cannot be repeated today. The structure is now roped off as an inaccessible, precious monument, recognized for its elusive meaning and distanced—quite literally, by tourist shops and by a winding rope—from the vast landscape that, for Tess, enhanced its purpose and attraction as an anomalous, third space refuge. This thesis, therefore, resists a commodifying trend whereby these novels' associations with open landscape or domestic interiors only become more pronounced over time. Unfortunately, then, translating these novels into non-literary contexts does not preserve the complex spaces I have just delineated that so pervade these novels.

The third space as I have described it is not limited to the three novels examined by this thesis. As we have studied the representation and effects of third spaces in three novels spanning the nineteenth century, I believe this concept can be mobilized as a lens for reading and reassessing other novels of the era. 19th-century British fiction consistently presents us with representations of “third spaces” that are neither clearly domesticated interiors nor undomesticated nature. Whether it be a copse or a sheltered grove, an open window or a shattered one, the wooded Chase or the mysterious structures at Stonehenge, these spaces that blend together aspects of interiority and exteriority are distinguishable and significant locations for our female protagonists. Their diverse effects and characteristics, then, dictate how these women operate and experience this middle ground.
Works Cited


Wright, Joe, dir. Pride and Prejudice. Studio Canal and Working Title Films, 2005. Film.