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The Architectural Subject: Space, Character, and Gender in Four Eighteenth-Century Domestic Novels

by

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To Bruce Stovel
(1941–2007)
in memoriam

Abstract

This dissertation examines the impact of space, specifically domestic architecture, on the representation of female subjectivity in four eighteenth-century British domestic novels, Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747–48), Frances Burney's *Cecilia* (1782), Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814). I bring together theories of space, architectural histories, social histories of houses, eighteenth-century architectural treatises, and analyses of contemporaneous buildings and floor-plans to argue that spatial representations and metaphors in these novels test the composition and boundaries of female subjectivity. This testing is accomplished by treating subjects as spaces, specifically as houses whose exteriors are supposed to indicate their interior character. In other words, I examine what happens when an increasingly interiorized subject is represented as a literally interiorized structure, the house. For many heroines of eighteenth-century novels, this representation is dangerous because it could lead to the misinterpretation or misconstruction of character. One way of resisting such misrepresentation is found in the subject's movement, particularly movement that evades attempts at fixing. The novels trace an increasing discomfort with constructions of the subject as divided along interior and exterior lines. At the century's end, there is a shift away from questions about how space does or does not indicate character towards how space can facilitate the subject's personal experiences and feelings, a shift that corresponds to the growing acceptance of the interiorized subject. But as this project demonstrates, until this shift occurs,

attempts to fix character (particularly the character of women) exposed how uncertain and unstable the notion of the subject was for most of the eighteenth century.

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Introduction

Spaces, Subjects, Fixed, Moving

Making Space Visible

This project takes something unobtrusive—space—and makes it visible. The effects of architecture and space are so pervasive that they can go unnoticed and become nearly invisible; the forces they enact are likewise so. This dissertation makes space visible by exploring the relationship between space and its occupants, demonstrating that the association is dialectical, with space sometimes dominating the individual and at other times the individual exerting influence upon space. Space not only influences the perception of character, but is the means through which character is created. My analysis takes up two different ways in which spaces and subjects interact. First, I examine the metaphorical conception of the individual as house and how that formulation affects understandings of interiority and character in the eighteenth century. The concept of character changed over the course of the eighteenth century in England, with the idea of fluid and flat identity giving way to more rigid concepts of interiorized character capable of deception. The change in character conception is reflected in the novels of the period, which engage with questions about the relationship between space, the interiorized body (including the gendered body), and the dangers of reading only exteriors. Working from the premise that relationships between interior and exterior (of a house and of an individual) exist, I argue that mapping houses onto a subject or seeing the subject as house becomes a way of determining and fixing character. Second, I explore the response to fixity that is indicated by a subject's movement through interior and architectural space, especially subversive movement that could evade or frustrate attempts at 'fixing'. Movement becomes increasingly important as eighteenth-century theories of the picturesque revise the relationship between space and the individual, with the individual controlling and using space for his or her own personal and emotional reasons, thus also reworking the definition of subjectivity. Overall, this dissertation is guided by questions about women's subjectivity in the eighteenth century; the issues I examine are particularly pertinent to subjects who are less powerful and therefore more vulnerable, those who are more likely to encounter anxieties about identity and fixed character. My examination of domestic spaces in domestic novels (whose readers are traditionally considered women) likewise lends itself to a study of female subjectivity. By analyzing the eighteenth-century subject architecturally, I argue that interiorized gendered subjects' engagement with spatial representations of themselves demonstrates the continued instability of the internal/external construction of character in eighteenth-century England. Attempts to fix character betray anxieties about how unstable and mutable subjects are.

Theories of Space

This dissertation brings together a range of spatial theories, specifically theories concerned with the role of space in the dissemination of power and ideology. The foundational premise of this dissertation is that space is inherently ideological, acting upon subjects in ways that are unidentified and unnoticed. Henri Lefebvre ties ideology to space, a claim evident in the double meaning of the title of his seminal work in geography, *The Production of Space* (*La Production de l'Espace*), which grammatically positions space as simultaneously the initiator and result of a productive process.[1] Lefebvre argues that space is the site from which dominant ideology emanates. It is also, however, where resisting forces come from. The relationship between ideology and space is one of dependence: "What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies?" (44). In other words, ideology requires space. Other geographers and anthropologists also argue for a dialectical relationship between space and society in which each continuously influences the other. For example, Doreen Massey suggests that space is a part of the process through which social forces are enacted: "Spatial distributions and geographical differentiation may be the result of social processes, but they also affect how these processes work. The 'spatial' is not just an outcome; it is also part of the explanation" (4). Space is not static; it is a process.

The interdependent relationship between space and ideology is perhaps best exemplified by the Panopticon, a prison model proposed by Jeremy Bentham. Michel Foucault vividly employs the Panopticon in *Discipline and Punish* as a model to illustrate how the disciplinary gaze can operate on subjects (prisoners) without being visible. The Panopticon demonstrates that power relies on space to be effective and is an example of architecture enacting ideology. The structure of the Panopticon, with its glass fronted and backed cells that render prisoners visible to the guard but not each other and its central watchtower in which the guard is concealed by a series of screens, enables the disciplinary gaze that imposes the ideological function of the state. The structure of the Panopticon means that the guard could be watching any number of prisoners at any given time. It is the state of being perpetually, possibly watched that makes the Panopticon effective. The *possibility* of being subject to a disciplinary gaze causes the prisoners to internalize that gaze and regulate their own behaviour. This gaze requires space to function.

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[1] The theories of space that are pertinent to my argument are those that deal with social spaces. For more on a phenomenology of space that constructs the home as an oneiric, primitive site, see Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space.*

That said, I do not wish to overstate the power of space over the subject. Though the Panoptic model offers no means of resistance for the prisoners, Lefebvre argues that, while social space is where power emanates from (including the forces that create and maintain bourgeois capitalism), it is important that "social and political (state) forces which engendered this space now seek, but fail, to master it completely" (26). Edward W. Soja elaborates Lefebvre's ideas, introducing the potentially problematic issues of time and repetition to explain how space reinforces ideology. For Soja, repetition engenders "an appearance of stability and persistence" (94), but each repetition is also a chance for space to be "substantially restructured and radically reconstituted, invoking again its origins and grounding in social practice" (94). Soja invokes social practice as one way that space is initially ideological while simultaneously being the means of disrupting the ideologies that emanate from spaces. The power exerted from repetition becomes a vulnerability, an opportunity for subjects to resist or even to recalibrate their spatiality. Time enables repeated opportunities for the reproduction of ideology, but simultaneously provides opportunities for resistance and destabilization.

Soja's emphasis on social practice and repetition suggests the resistant capacity of the everyday, bringing me to Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau borrows terminology from the military (strategy and tactics) to create a model of a dominant, hegemonic space as a grid imposed on the land, such as a map on a city. De Certeau defines a strategy as something that "assumes a place that can be circumscribed as *proper* (*propre*) and thus serve as the basis for generating relations within an exterior distinct from it" (xix). Strategies are employed by organizations that have power, that wish to disseminate knowledge or information and therefore require a space from which to operate. These organizations include educational institutions, communications companies (TV, radio, print), political institutions, cultural institutions (museums), and financial centres (95). In terms of engagement with a space (in this case, a city), de Certeau compares the operation of strategy to a voyeur who surveys an entire city from the observation deck of a skyscraper: "His elevation … transforms the bewitching world by which one was 'possessed' into a text that lies before one's eyes" (92). Surveillance from a great height, in which the expanse of a city can be viewed, transforms the city into a readable text.

In addition to conceptualizing the ways that space can impose itself hegemonically, de Certeau describes how this hegemony can be challenged through the everyday. Opposing strategy is the tactic, which emanates from no place. While de Certeau invokes a bird's eye view of the city when discussing strategies, tactics occur at ground level. Whereas strategies exist in space or draw power from space, tactics exist for brief moments in time within the space of strategy. Tactics do not have a 'home' space; subjects deploy tactics within spaces of strategies. A tactic's 'place' is that of another: "A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance" (xix). Tactics are rooted in time while strategies are based on space. De Certeau categorizes the practice of the everyday as tactical, providing as an example the act of walking in the city. He argues that walking can be considered an utterance, a "pedestrian speech act" which can "initiate, maintain, or interrupt contact" (99). Echoing Soja's argument about repetition and time, de Certeau argues that because a tactic is rooted in the present, it possesses rhetorical, discursive power. For example, a pedestrian negotiating the spatial order of pathways and obstacles follows physical markers and guides, thus "actualiz[ing] some of these possibilities" offered to him (98), but he "also moves them about and he invents others, since the crossing, drifting away, or improvisation of walking privilege, transform or abandon spatial elements" (98). Moments of resistance occur spontaneously; tactics arise from opportunity. Taking a shortcut through a park or away from a marked path or stopping to window shop are examples of tactical manoeuvres: "the walker transforms each spatial signifier into something else" (98).

De Certeau's model of space and resistance differs from that of Lefebvre and Soja in how little these tactics effect change. Lefebvre and Soja argue that space has the revolutionary potential to overthrow bourgeois capitalism. De

Certeau's conception is more subtly subversive and sometimes even playful, and the contention that tactics exist only in the realm of strategy precludes the overturning of a dominant ideology. De Certeau's conception of space is more compelling and relevant to this dissertation for its lack of revolutionary fervour. The eighteenth-century novels I examine are domestic novels in which the status quo (whether in terms of mercantilism or patriarchy) is not overthrown, though it might be challenged. De Certeau's tactic of the "pedestrian speech act" also helpfully encapsulates how negotiation of space can have discursive potential and meaning. Tactics such as an individual's movement will contribute significantly to the analysis in this dissertation.

The theorists I have discussed so far do not differentiate between exterior and interior spaces, a distinction that is key to my thinking about character and spaces. For Lefebvre, the term "space" encompasses anything from a town square to a factory to a housing development, and de Certeau focuses on the outdoors. On the other hand, Jürgen Habermas consciously distinguishes between public and private spaces in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, in which he analyzes the development of a public sphere and, logically, the attendant development of a private one. While public and private do not necessarily correspond to exterior and interior, Habermas's formulation is useful to this project because the house is frequently considered the boundary between public and private. Analyzing the bourgeois public sphere in eighteenth-century Europe (and using England as the prime example), Habermas emphasizes the closeness of the operations of the public and private spheres. Habermas demonstrates the interdependence that existed between spheres even as the separation was developing. He argues that a man's status in the public sphere of business impacted his standing in the private sphere of his conjugal family: "private autonomy in the former realm was transferred into authority in the latter" (47). The interrelationship between private and public is evident in the house, as in, for example, the co-existence of a public space (the *salon*) alongside the private family apartments. As Habermas explains, "The line between public and private spheres extended right through the home. The privatized individuals stepped out of the intimacy of their living rooms into the public sphere of the *salon*, but the one was strictly complementary to the other" (45). And while a distinction between private and public is maintained within a home, the house can shift to accommodate the two spheres within one room, complicating boundaries. As an example, Habermas points to the creation of a "reception room in which private people gather to form a public" (45). In this example, the people who comprise the public create a space that is also public, even if the space itself could be a part of the private sphere. While Habermas conceives of a house that contains complementary public and private parts, the formulation also suggests that the house could be a contentious site where opposing ideas—such as public or private, social or intimate, exposure or concealment—come into conflict.

The Subject, Interiority, and Gender

This dissertation combines two ways of approaching subjectivity: the Althusserian interpellated subject and the historically interiorized subject. My foundational assertion that space is ideological means that I take the 'subject' to be the Althusserian interpellated subject who is hailed and in the moment of hailing becomes subject to the prevailing ideology. Considering that architecture often stands (in) for repressive state apparatuses (see: the prison, the legislature) and ideological state apparatuses (schools, the country house), Althusser's conception of the subject as inexorably entwined in ideology is a useful and particularly applicable way to think about how architecture and space interact with an individual. In addition to the Althusserian concept of the subject, I also approach the eighteenth-century subject historically. My project locates its analysis of the architectural subject in the context of the changing concept of subjectivity over the course of the eighteenth century. The development of the modern subject was predicated on the interiorization of the individual. Donald E. Hall traces the emergence of a rational, self-actualizing subject to the early modern and Enlightenment period, one which rejected the notion of the subject's conformity with the laws and ethics of the world at large in favour of the concept of a thinking subject who sees him- or herself as being apart from the world and who values being a discrete self (19–20). According to Charles Taylor, late seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke argued for the most extensive disengagement between self and the world, developing the idea of disengagement and rational control "to its full form" (160). Taylor traces a gradual "inward turn" (177) in how the subject was conceived of in the early modern period, concentrating on Descartes and Locke. In a section titled "Inner Nature", he argues that the individual came to be seen as capable of changing itself through force of will, regardless of outside authority or custom (167).

Taylor's emphasis on Locke indicates the importance of the eighteenth century to the development of the subject as interior, an assertion that by this point has become common. In literary studies, perhaps the most famous and influential argument about the interior eighteenth-century subject is Ian Watt's *The Rise of The Novel*, in which Watt links the increased popularity and development of the form with the genre's philosophical realism and novelists' ability to render acutely psychological interiors. For Watt, the novel represents the individual's experience of the world, and the eighteenth-century novel, starting with the works of Daniel Defoe, emphasizes originality and individuality. Recent challengers to Watt's argument about interior character include Dror Wahrman, Terry Castle, and Deidre Lynch, who, in separate studies, argue that identity in the eighteenth century was more fluid than we would think and that it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that rounded, interiorized subjects were a desired or even accepted concept. In *The Making of the Modern Self,* Wahrman, a historian working from a range of sources, argues that England during most of the eighteenth century was dominated by notions of unfixed identities, a lack of rigid boundaries between different classes of individuals in categories as significant as gender, race, and even the distinction between human and animal. For Wahrman, the cultural moment in which underlying anxieties about identity coalesced was the American Revolutionary War, in which the English were confronted with and rejected the idea that they were engaged in a war against themselves.

For Wahrman, then, the idea of a self with a fixed essence takes precedence in England in the 1770s, decades into the century. In her study of the eighteenth-century masquerade, *Masquerade and Civilization,* Terry Castle echoes Wahrman in her treatment of the masquerade as a form of engagement with self and subjectivity. Castle notes that part of the allure of the masquerade was the way that putting on a disguise flirted with the dangerous pleasure of disrupting notions of self (4) and that one reason for the masquerade's decline in the late eighteenth century was a changing world view that favoured the "rational individualism" espoused by Descartes and Locke (103). Finally, Deidre Shauna Lynch examines representations of subjectivity in her book *The Economy of Character*, contending that until the late Georgian and Regency periods, the process of reading character in England involved reading surfaces, reading for types rather than individual characteristics (6). For Lynch, the concept of characters as psychological beings with inner lives did not take hold until late in the eighteenth century, and this consideration of inner character developed alongside forces related to the market economies of meaning and self-fashioning:

> What changes as the eighteenth century unfolds are the pacts that certain ways of writing character establish, at given historical moments, with other, adjacent discourses—discourses on the relations between different sectors of the reading public or discourses that instruct people in how to imagine themselves as participants in a nation or in a marketplace or as leaders or followers of fashion. (11)

When focusing solely on eighteenth-century England, Lynch and Wahrman most explicitly position themselves against the critical narrative in which the eighteenth century is defined by interior subjects.

Wahrman devotes an entire section of his book to questions about gender, using a vast number of sources and examples to explain how understandings of gender categories become more rigid over time. As the separation between genders became stronger and as gender roles were increasingly solidified, women went from being viewed as inferior versions of men to being considered distinct from them, occupying another category altogether. As Elaine M. McGirr argues, creating a separate category for women led to certain characteristics being treated as feminine (13–14). Women came to be defined as much by acquired traits as by biology (13). McGirr's claim that the eighteenth century saw a "new understanding of the sexes" (12) is echoed by Felicity Nussbaum, who likewise posits that eighteenth-century England is where "the construction of a female subjectivity or character is given widespread public articulation for the first time" (xxi). And the subject that is constructed is an interiorized one with an inside and outside, with particular importance placed upon the inside, the source of authenticity. Nussbaum points out the dangers that the division between interior and exterior caused for women:

> The split is even greater for women than for men. The key to real character is the construction of a secret interiority, and true character is difficult to ascertain. That is, it becomes increasingly important for women to produce

> a private subjectivity that corresponds to public perceptions of character.… (152)

While Nussbaum is writing about women's autobiography in the passage above, her point about the higher stakes for women in the eighteenth century stands as a general statement about how women faced pressure to make their inner selves conform with expectations about outer selves. The moment that the self is considered in terms of inside and outside is the moment that a deceiving self that conceals the inner truth comes into existence.

The notion that interiorized subjectivity would create split and deceiving subjects is acknowledged in the eighteenth century. For example, in "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men" (1743), Henry Fielding advises readers on the best ways to determine the true character of men. The essay is based on the premise that many men hide their true selves, concealing vices and cultivating virtue. Fielding uses the metaphor of masks to describe a world filled with so many dissemblers that it "becomes a vast Masquerade, where the greatest Part appear disguised under false Vizors and Habits" (139). Fielding's major concern is a man's deceptive public appearance. He spends eight pages discussing the hypocritical saint, whose character he divides into inside and outside:

> I shall take some pains in the ripping it [the character] up, and exposing the Horrors of its Inside, that we may all shun it; and at the same Time will endeavour so plainly to describe its Outside, that we shall hardly be liable, by any Mistake, to fall into its Snares. (155)

While Fielding makes much use of mask imagery in his essay's introduction, what he sees as the "outside" component of character includes facial expression ("countenance"), a man's words, and a man's actions (both amongst intimates and in public life). Fielding purposely declines to delineate the characters of women, "the Knowledge of the Characters of Women being foreign to my intended Purpose; as it is in Fact a Science, to which I make not the least Pretension" (146). Alexander Pope demonstrates no such (false) modesty when he declares in "Epistle to a Lady" that "every woman is at heart a rake" (216). Pope's much quoted epigram establishes that women could be suspected of dissembling as much as the men that Fielding analyzes. Eighteenth-century conduct books play on these anxieties about women's character, warning their target readers to modify their exterior appearance and behaviours lest their inner selves be misunderstood. For example, Wetenhall Wilkes, in his *A Letter of Genteel and Moral Advice to a Young Lady* (1740), warns against giving encouraging looks, no matter how innocent, for "We look upon a woman's eyes to be the interpreters of her heart" (qtd. in Jones 32). In addition to regulating her countenance, a woman must take care to avoid dressing ostentatiously: "let your dress always resemble the plainness and simplicity of your heart" (qtd. in Jones 30). Wilkes's connection of dress to character is echoed a few decades later by John Gregory in *A Father's Legacy to his Daughters* (1774). In his instructions, Gregory uses the connection between dress and character to encourage his daughters (and other readers) to be always neatly dressed, no matter what the time of day: "You will not easily believe how much we consider your dress expressive of your characters. Vanity, slovenliness, folly appear through it. An elegant simplicity is an equal proof of taste and delicacy" (qtd. in Jones 48). In this example, Gregory treats an external attribute, dress, as an indicator of character, voicing societal expectations for conformity between the two.

This dissertation engages with eighteenth-century anxieties about interiorized gendered subjects through a specific metaphor of interiority, that of architecture. I investigate what occurs when interior subjectivity is metaphorically constructed in architectural terms, that is, when the interior/exterior separation is literalized by the inside/outside division of a house. While varying metaphors can and have been used to describe interior character (including that of masks, of dress, and of the heart, as we have seen above), architecture, which comprises literal and bounded interiors, is one that has received less attention despite seeming to be the most apt. By virtue of dealing with space, reading through architecture also requires placing the subject, locating it in buildings or urban landscapes, but also within a nexus of competing ideologies. In other words, the architectural approach to subjectivity is one that takes into account the Althusserian interpretation of subjectivity in addition to the historical development of the rational Enlightenment subject. These conceptions of subjectivity conflict with each other; Locke's rational, responsible self would not acknowledge the power exerted by invisible historical and cultural forces or their primacy over his free will. On the other hand, Althusser's conception of an always-interpellated subject leaves no room for resistance or escape. This dissertation explores the tension between space and the gendered subject in four eighteenth-century novels, examining the material conditions of architecture during the time that these novels were written and set and the negotiations that characters (treated here as representations of subjects) must make with their surroundings. When read architecturally, the Enlightenment subject ceases to be fully independent or set apart from the world. Being defined architecturally becomes a problematic counterpoint to the eighteenth-century concept of an autonomous thinking, feeling individual.

Methodology

This project close-reads the representation of domestic spaces and domestic subjects in a selection of eighteenth-century British novels through the lens of contemporaneous architectural discourse. It draws from a range of material related to eighteenth-century architecture, including architectural treatises (English and French), floor plans, letters, and eighteenth-century houses themselves. I treat the materials as discourse, as examples of eighteenth-century thinking about architecture and domestic spaces. This treatment also applies to the houses, which I consider both as the result of thought processes about space (by architects, owners, and builders) and as the impetus for renewed engagement with space (by occupants).

That I am treating buildings and architecture in the same manner as novels would seem unusual, but buildings can be read and interpreted. Buildings mean; they stand for other things. For example, Roman-style architecture was popular during the Palladian movement (1710–1750) because it invoked the lofty reputation of Augustan Rome, thus granting credibility to the Whig politicians, most notably Lord Burlington, who built in the style. The Palladian style of building stood for enlightened authority and politicians who built in the Palladian style were trying to associate themselves with that authority. The literary trope in which one thing stands for a different kind of thing is metaphor. I contend that buildings mean metaphorically, taking metaphor to be "an implicit comparison between two things" ("Metaphor" 119). Meaning arises from the interaction between the tenor and the vehicle of the metaphor. As I.A. Richards explains, "In the simplest formulation, when we use a metaphor we have two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction" (51). Richards's emphasis on thought rather than language (he argues that metaphor is not "a verbal matter" [51]) is supported by Max Black, who similarly argues for what he terms an "interaction view" of metaphor, in which the two parts of the metaphor interact as a way of "selecting, emphasizing, and organizing relations in a different field" (293). Black stresses that metaphor is a "distinctive *intellectual* operation" (293, emphasis original). Richards' and Black's assertions that metaphor operates at a level other than verbal suggests that buildings and architecture should not be automatically precluded from being thought of as having metaphorical potential. In the example of Palladian buildings, then, Burlington's villa at Chiswick stands for political ambition and attempts to maintain power and influence. The shift in how buildings mean from the (literally) concrete to the abstract is analogous to how metaphor functions, proceeding "from the literal to the figurative, and in doing so creat[ing] meaning" (Moore 82). The metaphorical nature of buildings has also been noted by geographers and architectural scholars including Gwendolyn Wright, Abigail Harrison-Moore, and Dana Arnold.[2] Lee Morrissey draws attention to the shared discursive characteristics of literature and architecture, pointing out how architecture is accorded meaning in the same way that literary texts are, that both buildings and literature do more than merely portray or describe. Morrissey describes both architecture and literature as "historical construction[s] organized according to rhetorical criteria" (10). Architecture and literature are two types of texts, constructions that can be read, interpreted and accorded meaning.

At the same time that a building and its space can be considered as text, written texts can affect spaces. The relationship between text and space is dialectical. As a text represents a space in a certain way, that space then engages with its own representation through the space's social history, architectural development, or contemporaneous usage. A space can thus take up, reject, or modify its representation. At the same time, representations of spaces are influenced by the usage and popular understandings of those spaces. Because the "mechanisms that define the house cannot be divided into those that are spatial and those that are representational" (Wigley 37), the relationship between spaces and representations of spaces is dynamic. Writing about the house, Mark Wigley argues that transformations of representations of space produce changes in understandings of space, and vice versa (37). The dynamic relationship between space and representation suggests that buildings are themselves representations, the execution of ideas conceived in treatises and plans.

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[2] See: Wright's *Moralism and the Model Home: Domestic Architecture and Cultural Conflict in Chicago, 1873–1913*, p. 1; Harrison-Moore and Rowe's *Architecture and Design in Europe and America, 1750–2000*, p. 71; and Arnold's *The Georgian Country House: Architecture, Landscape and Society*, p. 16.

Of course, a finished building is by no means a finished space; spaces change depending on how they are used. It is for this reason that I also employ architectural and social histories of space, which are concerned with the uses that spaces were put to as well as the uses for which they were intended. As architectural historian Mark Girouard notes, "although to some extent architecture follows its own rules it is also conditioned by the society to which it caters" (*English Country House* 12). Usage is thus an additional discursive level at which to interpret space. Henrietta Moore argues that space can be read as a text in which the actors accord it meaning: "the truth of the text resides in practice" (96). Moore's emphasis on practice echoes the importance of the everyday established by de Certeau and Soja.

This project and my analysis are set within a certain scope. In terms of genre, my focus is the novel. The potential for everyday practice to engage with space suggests that the novel is an ideal form through which to explore the ramifications of spatial organization. A cultural text, the novel is a genre concerned with what John Richetti calls "the ordinary and the specifically and concretely experiential" (4), and has the potential to illuminate the details of everyday practice and spaces. I treat the novels not as mimetic records of space in the eighteenth century, but as records of thinking about space. Because this is a literary project, I perform sustained close readings of novels, exploring how each novel engages with a different aspect of architectural or spatial theory. This dissertation examines four eighteenth-century novels in detail: Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747–8), Frances Burney's *Cecilia* (1782), Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801), and Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814). They are all domestic novels set in England, in keeping with my focus on English domestic spaces. These four novels engage with houses and rooms to a deeper extent than other novels of the period, making them not representatives so much as outliers, as extreme examples of how novels engaged with space. While the novels might not typify the way that other eighteenth-century texts engage with space, the selected novels make visible and explicit what is latent or assumed in other books.

This project shares Habermas's emphasis on the bourgeoisie and is limited to the narrow range of social classes encountered in architectural history. This limitation is due to the availability of resources about eighteenth-century architecture. Only upper-class and aristocratic homeowners could afford to hire architects to perform large-scale construction or renovation. When architects published the plans and elevations (that is, floor plans and side views of the house) of their commissions in books that doubled as portfolios and professional calling cards, the houses included were often those of titled patrons. Though architecture was a popular topic in the eighteenth century, those whose records remain had already attained a level of social, economic or political importance that ensured that the related texts would be preserved.

In this dissertation, theories of space and histories of architecture converge, for architecture defines spaces, whether these spaces be domestic, private, public, civic, or social. Eighteenth-century architectural discourse exhibits the ideological imperatives uncovered by theorists of space. In this project, I use the term 'space' to describe three categories of spaces as informed by my readings of spatial theory and architectural history. First, I use 'space' to refer to the areas that are enclosed by the structure of a house. This includes the area in its entirety (the house's interior) and the individual rooms that a house is divided into (such as a ballroom, a bedroom, *etc*.). Secondly, I use the term to describe the general associations or conventional meanings of certain rooms. For example, when I discuss the space of the boudoir, I refer not to any specific, historical room, but to commonly received ideas about all boudoirs or about the overall functions of a boudoir. In these cases, I will often refer to 'the' boudoir rather than merely 'a' boudoir. Finally, I will sometimes label spaces according to their defining characteristic or function, such as intimate spaces or theatrical spaces. In my use of the term, there will be overlaps (the boudoir, for example, is considered an intimate space), which is the point. I aim to demonstrate that space is palimpsestic, that one recognized space can contain many spaces.

In addition to exploring different resonances of the word 'space', I also use two specific approaches to the term 'character'. For the most part, I use 'character' to denote the attributes that an individual possesses (such as his or her appearance and personality), with the additional meaning of reputation. This being a literary dissertation, I will also refer to novels' literary characters in my analysis. I trust that context will render the distinction in usage clear. My discussion of character relies upon the concept of convenience. I examine two subcategories of convenience:

architectural and character. By architectural convenience, I mean the idea that a building (civic or private) should reflect its function, its status or the status and character of its owner. Character convenience is the concept that an individual's exterior, which consists of appearance and manners, corresponds to his or her interior character. I will expand on both concepts in the next section of this introduction.

Eighteenth-Century English Architecture: Convenience and Character[3]

Urban British architecture in the eighteenth century is characterized by growth—the population of London grew from 575,000 at the beginning of the eighteenth century to 900,000 in 1801 (Porter 131). Stylistically, uniformity developed. Houses built to accommodate the increased population were subject to strict Rebuilding Acts after the Great Fire of 1666. In addition to fire-prevention mandates such as the use of certain building materials and the thickness of the party walls separating houses, the Rebuilding Acts also influenced the appearance of houses, recommending minimum ceiling heights (to prevent the spread of fire) and certain styles of windows (Cave 188–94). As a result, London houses became standardized in appearance and organization. The standardizing of houses was also a result of a common method of construction in Restoration and eighteenth-century London: speculative real estate building. In the system, real estate speculators would lease tracts of land from aristocrats (who, because the property had to stay with the family, could not legally sell the land), divide the land into narrow plots, and build houses on the plots that would be leased in turn for profit (Summerson, *London* 38–43). Because re-using house designs and plans reduced costs, speculative building—coupled with the restrictions imposed by the Rebuilding Acts—produced urban squares filled with similarly structured townhouses with similar looking façades (Heyl 14). The transferable nature of the Rebuilding Act regulations also meant that the London townhouse style of building became prevalent in other cities in the country (Cave 192).

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[3] My brief overview of English architectural history only hints at the wide-ranging and thorough field of research. The definitive history of English architecture is still John Summerson's *Architecture in England, 1530–1830*, which chronologically traces the development of various architectural styles using important houses as case studies. While Summerson is biased towards the Palladian style, the breadth of his survey is unmatched. Summerson's *Georgian London* is a useful supplement with a narrower focus. Mark Girouard's *Life in the English Country House* presents an important social history alongside its architectural overview and remains required reading. Rachel Stewart's *The Townhouse in Georgian London* offers a well-rounded analysis of the townhouse from the client's point of view rather than solely as a static entry in an architect's portfolio. John Archer's *The Literature of British Domestic Architecture, 1715–1842* is a thorough bibliographic resource about the architectural publications of the time period while Hanno-Walter Kruft reviews the major architectural texts of the western world in *A History of Architectural Theory*. In *Sir John Soane: Enlightenment Thought and the Royal Academy Lectures*, David Watkin traces the main threads of architectural theory in eighteenth-century England in more detail than Kruft does, drawing heavily from contemporaneous documents in the archives of the Sir John Soane's Museum. Finally, Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar offer an important corrective to the architect- and classical-heavy focus of established studies in their edited volume *Articulating British Classicism: New Approaches to Eighteenth-Century Architecture*. Arciszewska and McKellar point out that the study of eighteenth-century British architecture has been long dominated by Summerson's history and argue for fresh approaches, including removing the focus from solely the architects, and examining trans-Atlantic cross-fertilization of styles.

Architecture as a discipline received more recognition over the course of the eighteenth century. At the beginning of the century architecture was a profession that could be entered by those who had some drawing skills but little or no formal training. Christopher Wren, for example, was an astronomer before becoming the king's chief architect as the Surveyor of Works and Colen Campbell was a lawyer by trade. Richard Boyle, third Earl of

Burlington, whose Palladian-style villa Chiswick is praised in Pope's "Epistle to Burlington", was another famous amateur gentleman-architect. The shift towards professionalization occurred mid-century, as architects began accepting students rather than employing clerks (Summerson, *Architecture* 368). Most importantly, the establishment of the Royal Academy in 1768, with architect Sir William Chambers as a founding member, accorded the profession credibility and prestige. The Academy also created a formal educational program for aspiring architects (Saumarez Smith 291). Architecture's increased professionalization indicates its growing importance and acceptance in the English establishment.

Public interest in architecture was promoted by several factors, including the increased attention paid to the decades-long rebuilding of London after the Great Fire, which destroyed four-fifths of the medieval city, a total of 13,200 houses (Porter 88). The development of print culture facilitated the dissemination of architectural treatises and builders' handbooks through the city, across the country, and even across the ocean to America (Saumarez Smith 76; Harrison-Moore 31; Curl 31). Books published about architecture fell into three types: general treatises that discussed the practice and theory of architecture at large, including translations of Classical and Renaissance treatises; more technical treatises on architectural orders (style defined by proportion); and, in the late eighteenth century, books of cottage and villa designs (Archer 23). Technical treatises included handbooks for builders, a genre that proved popular. One handbook, Batty Langley's *The Builder's Jewel, or the Youth's Instructor, and Workman's Remembrancer. Explaining Short and Easy Rules, Made familiar to* *the meanest Capacity, for Drawing and Working…*, went to at least thirteen editions between 1741 and 1774. As the title of Langley's book suggests, many eighteenth-century books about architecture were more practical than theoretical, providing charts of measurements, dictating proper proportions and distances, and sometimes including ornamental patterns that poorly trained builders could copy for clients' mantelpieces, doorways, or windows. Books of finished or planned house designs for clients were a popular and effective way for working architects to publicize their projects. Eighteenth-century writing about aesthetics, such as Lord Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, also contained short sections about buildings and architecture.

The two most influential architectural treatises in the eighteenth century were from earlier periods: from ancient Rome, M. Vitruvius Pollio's *Ten Books on Architecture* (*De architectura libri decem*) and from the Renaissance, Andrea Palladio's *Architecture in Four Books* (*I Quattro libri dell'architecttura*). Vitruvius's influence extended throughout Europe from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century, partly because of the treatise's extensive scope and partly because it survived intact (Kruft 21). Palladio's text went through numerous translations and editions to the end of the eighteenth century (Kruft 88), heavily influenced Lord Burlington, and in 1735 even appeared as a bastardized English edition that was plagiarized from two other treatises.[4] Drawing from the past conferred credibility on those who subscribed to the theories found in these two major works: "Vitruvius stood for the fundamental validity of the antique and the value of archeological inquiry. From Palladio came the general mode of expression of a modern architecture—principles of planning and proportion" (Summerson, *Architecture* 359). This dissertation takes up two related yet distinct phenomena found in Vitruvius's and Palladio's works and in eighteenth-century architectural treatises. The concepts are the formulation of the house as a body (and vice versa) and the concept (which I call architectural convenience) that a house should reflect the status and character of its owner.

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[4] Publisher Benjamin Cole and architect Edward Hoppus released *Andrea Palladio's Architecture in Four Books* in 1735. Cole and Hoppus were clearly trying to ingratiate themselves to the politically powerful Burlington, the most famous of the Palladians and had the audacity to dedicate their plagiarized publication to him. The work is an amalgam of Colen Campbell's aborted translation of *Four Books* and Giacomo Leoni's English-language translation of 1715 (Kruft 240).

Vitruvius introduces the analogy of the house as a body in the section about proportion and beauty. Vitruvius argues that buildings should exhibit proportion in the same way that the different parts of the human body are proportional to each other and to the whole: "for a building cannot be well composed without the rules of symmetry and proportion; nor unless the members, as in a well formed human body, have a perfect agreement" (45). Though Vitruvius's eighteenth-century translator, W. Newton, cautions that the Roman's extended definition is "confused and unintelligible" (45 n.1), the analogy between the body and the house is clear. Leon Alberti makes a similar analogy in the preface to his 1452 treatise *De re aedificatoria*, presenting the house in terms of the body: "We consider that an Edifice is a Kind of Body consisting, like all other Bodies, of Design and of Matter" (13), adding that "as the Members of the Body are correspondent to each other, so it is fit that one Part should answer to another in a Building" (13). A more explicit parallel between the body and the house can be found in the second of Palladio's *Four Books*. While Vitruvius's comparison rests upon the concept of proportion (one best demonstrated by Leonardo da Vinci's illustration of the Vitruvian Man), Palladio introduces an interior/exterior divide. Invoking the common trope of God as the Architect of the universe, Palladio divides the body, and thus also the house, according to the beauty of its parts:

> But as our blessed Lord has order'd our members, so as to make the finest of them to be the most expos'd to sight, and concealing them that are not seemingly so: just so we must contrive a Building in such a manner, that the finest and most noble parts of it be the most expos'd to publick view, and the less agreeable dispos'd in by-places, and remov'd from sight as much as possible; because thither ought to be carried the refuse of the house, and whatever may produce any ill effect or embarrassment. (II, 2–3)

Palladio calls for the less pleasant-looking spaces, such as cellars, kitchens, and servants' halls, to be "placed in the lowest part of the Building" (II, 3). Palladio's continuing influence is evident in Henry Aldrich's 1750 treatise that likewise advises that "in a house as in the human body, there are parts which though of use are yet of inferior dignity to the rest" (46). Whether it is used to advocate for proportion in building or the proper arrangement of rooms, the metaphor of the house as a body recurs again and again as a way of envisioning buildings.

As is evident in Palladio's writing about the disagreeable parts of the house, the metaphor of building as body can also become the analogy of body as a building, rendering the subject likewise interior. As Wigley argues, "It is not that the building is being thought of as a body with the classical analogy. Rather, the body is thought of as a building" (357). Wigley traces the notion of the body as house (and the attendant interiorization of the subject) to a fourteenth-century treatise by Henri De Mondeville (358). Two centuries later, an early seventeenth-century English translation of Pliny's *Natural History* frames its description of the human face in terms of the interior/exterior separation: "In the ascent or rising of the forehead, man hath Eye-brows set, like to the eaves of an house" (I, 333). The architectural feature, the eyebrows which are like eaves, becomes a conduit for meaning as the eyebrows move up and down: "in them [the eyebrows] is shewed part of the mind within" (I, 333). The analogy suggests two possible points of view: that of the subject whose features (architectural/facial) communicate "the mind within" and that of the observer who perceives the movement of the eyebrows. The metaphor of body as house enables communication and evaluation of the self through a crossing of the boundary between interior and exterior. The metaphor becomes more complex later in the same section, which seems to mix two variations of the same metaphor. The translator compares eyes to windows (335) and describes them as "the very seat and habitation of the minde and affection. … When wee kisse the eie, we thinke that we touch the verie heart and soule" (334). While referring to the now tired aphorism that the eyes are the windows to the soul (with the "window" as the conduit), the passage also suggests that the eye, as "seat and habitation", is in a position of power as the country house is on a great estate. That the passage operates at both an intimate level (kissing the eye) but also at the level of landscape indicates how evocative architectural metaphors can be.

The interiorized, architectural subject is also evident in eighteenth-century English writings ranging from the philosophical to the popular. Spatial similes and metaphors permeate John Locke's *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, as Simon Varey points out: "Locke employs an architectural and spatial vocabulary, 'fabric' and 'frame' being two of his most trusted words" (58). Charles Taylor notices how Locke "*reifies* the mind to an extraordinary degree" (166, emphasis original). For example, Locke refers to memory as a "storehouse" and "repository" of ideas, (II.x.2), and refers to the mind as the place where knowledge is "lodged" (II.i.5). One extended simile compares sensation to "the windows by which light is let into this dark room" of the understanding (II.xii.17):

> For, methinks, the *Understanding* is not much unlike a Closet wholly shut from light, with only some little openings left, to let in external visible Resemblances, or *Ideas* of things without; would the pictures coming into such a dark Room but stay there, and lie so orderly as to be found upon occasion, it would very much resemble the Understanding of a Man, in reference to all Objects of sight, and the *Ideas* of them. (II.xii.17)

The autonomous nature of human subjectivity is highlighted by a metaphor that creates a defined boundary between inside and outside. By employing the metaphor of mind as house (in this case, understanding as storeroom), Locke creates a thinking, understanding human subject whose interiorization is presented architecturally. Joseph Addison owes a debt to Locke for this analogy, which he repurposed in his *Spectator* essay on the Pleasures of the Imagination (No. 411). Writing about sight, he notes that "It is this sense which furnishes the imagination with its Ideas… We cannot indeed have a single Image in the Fancy that did not make its first Entrance through the Sight" (387). The *Spectator*'s interest in interior subjects is also evident in the issues describing the Dissection of a Beau's Brain (No. 275) and the Dissection of a Coquette's Heart (No. 281). In these essays, Mr. Spectator describes a dream in which a beau's brain and a coquette's heart are cut open. In the dream, the Beau's brain is compared to a house, and the brain's various compartments to a house's apartments: "When we had thoroughly examin'd this Head with all its Apartments, and its several kinds of Furniture, we put up the Brain, such as it was, into its proper place" (531).[5] The brain itself proves to be "not a real Brain, but only something like it" (529), being packed full of ribbons, love letters, and mirrors. The underlying assumption of Mr. Spectator's inventories of the beau's brain and the coquette's heart (which is "stuffed with innumerable sorts of Trifles" [534]) is that interiors indicate character. This point leads me to my second, related argument about the architectural subject in the eighteenth century, that of architectural and character convenience.

By 'convenience', I mean the concept that a house should reflect the status and character of its owner and/or occupant. I take my definition of convenience from Simon Varey, who in his book *Space and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* defines convenience as the "matching of external appearance to the status or temperament of the owner" (20). The term is a translation of the French word

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[5] In this dissertation the term "apartments" refers to an older usage that denotes "a portion of a house or building, consisting of a suite or set of rooms, allotted to the use of a particular person or party" ("Apartment," def. 1a).

convenance, which in an architectural context meant "decorum or suitability by which each building type had its special character" (Watkin, *John Soane* 204). The concept that a building could have character was evident from the beginning of the century: "Early in the eighteenth century British architects and poets were aware of the expressive potential of architecture, particularly in its ability to reveal the personality or position of its inhabitant" (Archer 47). The criticisms of public buildings (such as prisons, theatres, orphanages) that did not possess convenience often contain underlying class prejudices. Writing about Paris's new foundling hospital in 1750, Marc-Antoine Laugier complained about its lack of convenience: "Houses designed to lodge poor people, ought to taste something of it. The new Foundling-hospital has more the air of a palace than a hospital" (191). In his 1750 treatise on civil architecture, Aldrich reminds his readers that "Men of ordinary fortune want not houses either large or magnificent… Men in office and noblemen demand houses large, lofty, ornamented, and in short princely" (45). Writing about his work on Syon House, Robert Adam, in a gesture that also flattered his client, claimed that he "endeavoured to render [the house] a noble and elegant habitation, not unworthy of a proprietor, who possessed not only wealth to execute a great design, but skill to judge of its merit" (2). The concept retained currency throughout the century. By 1762, Lord Kames was still insisting that "every building ought to have an expression corresponding to its destination" (3: 338). Convenience was also important to major architects such as Adam, who was active from 1760–80, and late eighteenth-century architect and Royal Academy president John Soane (Watkin, *John Soane* 204). The close relationship between a building and its owner is indicated by the word that replaced ‘convenience’ in 1759: character (Varey 20).

The origin of convenience can be traced, as with many things architectural, to Vitruvius. What Varey calls convenience Vitruvius calls *distributio*, a term that encompassed the management of a building site as well as suitability. In a passage from a 1791 second edition English-language translation of Vitruvius’s *Ten Books*, the term “convenience” appears in an explanation of *distributio*, which is defined as

> adapting the building to the convenience of the owner, his fortune, rank, or dignity; it is also found to be necessary to construct the dwelling house, different from the rustic buildings destined for the preservation of the fruits of the earth. The houses of traders, different from those of the rich and delicate. (9) [*sic*]

A 1715 translation of Palladio’s *Four Books* provides a similar definition, explaining that “we commonly call a House convenient, when it is suitable to the quality of its Master” (1). The idea that a building could express character was based on how the different Classical orders (styles) of architecture were associated with varying personality traits. The Orders were classified according to the differences in proportion between the diameter and height of the segments of columns built in each style. In Roman architecture, there were five orders in total (Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, Composite/Compound), some of which were characterized as more masculine or feminine, more or less appropriate for different occasions. Vitruvius recommends, for example, that temples to the goddess Venus follow the Corinthian order to achieve “propriety; for by reason of the delicacy of these goddesses, the graceful gay manner [of the Corinthian order], with foliage, and ornamented volutes, gives a due decorum to the work" (8). Henry Wotton's 1624 treatise summarizes the characteristics of the orders, calling the Tuscan order the simplest, the Doric order masculine, the Ionic order feminine, the Corinthian-style column "laciviously decked out like a Curtezane" (37), and the Compound order the unsatisfying combination of all the others (35–39).

Convenience could be exhibited by both private residences and individual rooms in private houses, both of which were judged on how well they conveyed their function. Individual rooms were defined by function more than by the owner's character. In Germain Boffrand's 1745 *Livre de l'Architecture* (*Book of Architecture*), he advises that a music room or a salon for company "must be cheerful in its planning, in its lighting, and in its manner of decoration" (11). In the aforementioned section about Syon House, Robert Adam compares English and French dining rooms, arguing that because the English dining room is an "apartment of conversation in which we are to pass a great part of our time," it should be "fitted up with elegance and splendor" unlike its lesser-used French counterpart, in which "little attention is paid to beauty or decoration" (3). In the previous two examples, the most important person involved in determining a room's character is not the owner so much as the occupant. Conversely, a space can lend character to its occupant. As we will see in the chapter on Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*, the boudoir was a space charged with anxieties about female sexual transgression and in that novel the boudoir's occupant is unjustly defined in that context.

If convenience is a way to convey character, it is simultaneously a means of evaluating character. As Boffrand notes,

> If the master's character is modest and sublime, his house will be distinguished by more elegant proportions than by rich materials. If the master's character is wayward and eccentric, his house will be full of disparities and parts out of agreement. In short, judge the character of the master for whom the house was built by the way in which it is planned, decorated, and furnished. (6)

Boffrand encourages his readers to evaluate the architectural 'face' in the same way that the eyebrows/eaves of the face in Pliny's *Natural History* encourage reading the face to determine emotions. Both kinds of evaluation/reading are predicated upon the concept of correspondence, a concept whose origins can be traced back to the writings of Vitruvius and Palladio. Casting the building as a God-created body means that the building should be likewise proportional and decorous. Both body and house are considered to be perfect because they follow the natural, God-mandated laws of proportion and harmony; therefore, there should also be a perfect correspondence between a man's house and his character and, accordingly, a man's public character and his personal self.

Fixation and Movement

This dissertation examines the tension between two overarching modes: fixation and movement. Under the rubric of fixation, I place convenience. Taken together, the metaphor of the body as house and the concept of convenience are attempts to determine meaning, to fix (a) character in place. If a body can be considered a house and if a house can indicate character, then using architectural language to describe a person is also a means of describing—and possibly determining—someone's character. If architectural convenience is the idea that houses should express character, then character convenience expands and refines the concept to the notion that a person's exterior, consisting of appearance, clothes, comportment and manners, should correspond to their interior. Simon Varey cites Henry Fielding's description of Sophia Western in *Tom Jones* as an example of character convenience. In the novel, after a passage enumerating Sophia's many physical graces, the narrator adds that "Such was the outside of Sophia; nor was this beautiful *frame* disgraced by an *inhabitant* unworthy of it. Her mind was in every way equal to her person" (123, emphasis added). Sophia inhabits her body in the same way that an occupant would inhabit a house. If buildings mean metaphorically, then the metaphor of body as building creates meaning based on an interpretation of the exterior and the assumption that said exterior corresponds to the interior. Of course, complete correspondence between the two, while desirable, is not always achieved. As Varey notes, the plot of *Tom Jones* is driven by characters' inability to recognize the lack of convenience in others, for example, the duplicitous Blifil. Likewise, as I will illustrate, Lovelace's quest in *Clarissa* stems partly from his belief that no woman, not even Clarissa, exhibits character convenience.

The structure of convenience is predicated on an observing interpreter, someone who scrutinizes and evaluates exteriors in order to ascertain whether correspondence exists. I argue that this act of observation and evaluation is aligned with the point of view of de Certeau's strategic observer; it is an act in which the observer imposes meaning upon another. Following de Certeau's construction, the strategy of convenience can be evaded by a tactic, in this case, by movement. By movement I mean an individual's motion—physical and figurative, horizontal and vertical, linear and circular—through and between spaces. Movement also became increasingly important in the later eighteenth century with the development of the picturesque, an aesthetic concept that emphasized flowing visual interest as an observer moves through a landscape. Movement was also important in architecture, such as in the work of Robert Adam, who designed rooms with picturesque variation in mind, creating different colour schemes and shapes for connecting rooms. While Adam's concept of movement still privileges an observer, his individual is immersed in the space being observed, stressing the experience of moving through space rather than just gazing upon it.

My dissertation is structured around these themes of fixedness and movement, with chapters organized according to whether the subject or the space is fixed or moving, going from fixed subject to moving subject to moving space to fixed space. Chapter one establishes the importance of convenience in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* and demonstrates how Clarissa's status as a fixed, interior object makes her vulnerable to deceptions and misconstructions. Clarissa is a fixed subject in the sense that others attempt to 'fix' her character. The insistence on her fixation is reflected by her physical restriction; her movements are curtailed by her family and controlled by Lovelace. Clarissa's triumph at the novel's end is only possible once she takes up a different mode of movement, vertical rather than horizontal. In this chapter I argue that when considered architecturally, Clarissa's much-celebrated interiority makes her more vulnerable. The novel shows how convenience can be dangerous for female subjects because the concept introduces the possibility of hidden character. Chapter two examines the moving subject's failure to evade the strategy of convenience in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*. Even though Cecilia is constantly on the move (from town to town and through the spaces of London, particularly the townhouse), her movement is always predetermined and prescribed by her status as an heiress. Cecilia's agency is facilitated by the power her inheritance grants her, but her movement follows a circular path that leads to a series of losses, including that of her property and her fortune. The novel demonstrates anxieties about women's freedom of movement; its sombre ending becomes an indictment of the patriarchal ideology that requires Cecilia to lose all her power before she can stop suffering.

While chapters one and two establish the power of convenience, chapters three and four examine two later novels that illustrate the weakening influence of the architectural subject and the interior/exterior divide. Chapter three analyzes the boudoir in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*, presenting the boudoir as a moving space in how it recedes in importance. In the novel, the boudoir is treated as an example of architectural convenience, as an indicator of Lady Delacour's character. However, not only does the room prove to be unstable (because it lacks convenience), but so does Lady Delacour herself, who undergoes a significant transformation. The room that is supposed to represent character instead repudiates the notion that character can be known. The novel's representation of the boudoir, in concert with contemporaneous treatments of the room as more than solely an erotic space, challenges the basic notion of convenience—that an interior is necessary to understanding character. *Belinda* features the breakdown of convenience, the disintegration of the connection between inside and outside. In my final chapter, I explore how Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* uses other spatial concepts in addition to convenience. By examining three ways that fixed space is used (as coping, viewing, and reading mechanisms), the chapter demonstrates a shift in the power relationship between space and character, one where the subject uses or repurposes space for his or her own means rather than being imposed upon. Even though Fanny Price is marginalized in the novel, her ability to "harmonize by distance" paradoxically indicates her power over space; she takes the emotional distance at which she is kept and uses it to soften her memory of Mansfield Park. The novel emphasizes that space serves the self, whether as a means of re-creating a pleasant memory of the titular estate, reframing the views of landscape from a house or a viewpoint, or re-assessing the novel and its problem heroine.

This study situates itself within an emerging critical conversation about literature and architecture in eighteenth-century England, doing so by synthesizing a range of contemporaneous discourse about space and using the results to inform sustained, focused literary analyses. One of the critical touchstones of this admittedly specific field is Simon Varey's 1990 book *Space and the Eighteenth-Century Novel,* which establishes how space can be political and social and that spatial thinking is evident in the novels of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding. Varey's book was preceded by Phillipa Tristram's *Living Space in Fact and Fiction*, which provides background information about specific houses in literature and history (and covers the eighteenth through nineteenth centuries), but is more descriptive than argumentative. More recent studies have taken two main critical approaches to the overlap between literature and architecture. One treatment of space is psychoanalytic, an approach that encompasses Lorens Holm's *Brunelleschi, Lacan, Le Corbusier: Architecture, Space and the Construction of Subjectivity*, and the explicitly Jungian lens of Bettina L. Knapp's older study, *Archetype, Architecture, and the Writer*. Steven Gores's *Psychosocial Spaces: Verbal and Visual Readings of British Culture, 1750–1820* examines the ways that spaces are mentally constructed by the individuals located within them, and includes readings of visual art alongside literary analysis. More pertinent to this dissertation is interdisciplinary scholarship that takes a cultural materialist approach. Lee Morrissey, in *From the Temple to the Castle*, analyzes Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature by authors who were also architects or made contributions to the field. Morrissey does not address issues of gender, and by virtue of an approach that examines architect-authors, he limits his study to men. Two recent studies offer depth over breadth, focusing on specific spaces. These include Tita Chico's *The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century English Literature and Culture*, which takes a gendered approach to what becomes an increasingly gendered space in the eighteenth century, and Rachel Stewart's *The Town House in Georgian London*, which examines the townhouse from the client's perspective. Though the latter book does not include literary analysis, Stewart's drawing together of a variety of primary material and her sociohistorical approach exemplifies the most current approach to architectural history and spaces. Nicole Reynolds's *Building Romanticism*, while focused on a different historical period, draws from a range of cultural materials and treats space as a mutable site of contestation. The significance of interiority is evident in Julia Prewitt Brown's *The Bourgeois Interior,* which treats space as the medium through which meaning is gleaned in a range of novels and film over a 300-year period. This dissertation and my analysis are most in dialogue with the last four aforementioned texts, those by Chico, Stewart, Reynolds, and to a lesser extent Brown. These volumes work from the premise that space is ideological. All four are also attuned to the significance of gender (Chico in paticular) and the construction of gendered subjectivities through space. The intersection between architectural spaces and the construction of identity is also examined in Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin's edited collection *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. An early inspiration for this project was Cynthia Wall's *The Literary and Cultural Spaces of Restoration England,* which establishes how close reading cultural texts such as ballads and proclamations can illuminate the meanings of spaces. Julie Park's recent book about things in the eighteenth century, *The Self and It: Novel Objects and Mimetic Subjects in Eighteenth-Century England,* examines the construction of the subject (one which she argues was gendered female) through the objects of a developing consumer culture, one that counted novels amongst the new things to be owned. Finally, an analysis of a variety of art forms is found in *Conjuring the Real: The Role of Architecture in*

Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Fiction (edited by Rumiko Handa and James Potter), which examines representations of architecture in literature, film, visual art, and theatre.

The dissertation makes a contribution by bringing together a historical, materialist approach to space, which includes reading buildings as texts, with the question of how the gendered interiorized subject is constructed in the eighteenth century. It argues that, through the concept of convenience (architectural and character), discourses related to space are also discourses related to the subject. This project then uses this spatial construction of a gendered, interpellated subject to inform sustained close-readings of eighteenth-century novels that deal with contested female subjectivity. These novels all demonstrate that spatial organization and architectural thinking are ways of testing the boundaries of the emerging female subject, with the space at first seeming overpowering, as in *Clarissa* and *Cecilia*, then becoming negligible, as in the case of *Belinda*, until finally being repurposed by the heroine in *Mansfield Park*. Overall, my analysis demonstrates that eighteenth-century England saw the solidifying and then deterioration of the explicitly architectural subject, as metaphors of individuals as houses become less powerful and influential by the end of the century, ceding importance to representations of individuals' emotional experiences of spaces. Even though the idea of architecture and domestic space seems literally solid and concrete, the application of architectural metaphors to the gendered subject uncovers how unstable the concept of an interiorized subject still was for women in the eighteenth century. Rather than being used to reify identity, architectural metaphors exposed the unstable notions of self that still existed beneath.

Chapter One

“One of those genteel, wicked houses”: Convenience and the Brothel in Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa*

This chapter establishes the importance of the connection between architectural thinking and character in Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747–48).[6] It does so by analyzing the significance of the brothel and the implications of the brothel’s split structure on the heroine. Focusing on one of the first interiorized female characters in English fiction allows me to examine how the emerging model of the subject as interior applied to women. *Clarissa*’s status as an eighteenth-century masterpiece—and Richardson’s reputation as the progenitor of a new style of realist fiction—is based on the novel’s depiction of interiorized character through the minute descriptions of personal thoughts and feelings. Many critics hail Richardson’s novel as a “new representation of inner experience” (Erickson 172), calling Clarissa a “totally interior being” (Braudy 192). For scholars, the successful depiction of inner lives results from the epistolary form’s ability to convey private thoughts and emotions. As Tom Keymer notes, writing the novel enabled Richardson to access “a psychological realism unprecedented in prose fiction, and it is for this achievement above all that his novels have always been known” (5). Keymer’s invocation of the phrase ‘psychological realism’ alludes to Ian Watt’s seminal study *The Rise of the Novel*, which constructed a history of the novel where increased interiorization was the new genre's defining feature. For Watt, Richardson's development of the novel relied on several key aspects endemic to the epistolary form, including the minute delineation of time and the copious amount of detail provided to the reader (175). Also important is the focus on interiors, one that indicates a "re-orientation of the narrative perspective which gives Richardson his place in the tradition of the novel" (175). According to Watt, Richardson's narratives move inwards, "towards the delineation of the domestic life and the private experience of the characters who belong to it: the two go together—we get inside their minds as well as inside their houses" (175). Watt's analogy between entering a domestic space and entering a psychological space draws a parallel between the development of character interiority in the novel and the attendant depiction of architectural interiors.

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[6] I am using Angus Ross’s Penguin edition of *Clarissa* because it is based on the first edition of the novel. Richardson’s changes in the third edition eliminated some nuances in the representation of Clarissa and Lovelace, solidifying their characters as more virtuous and villanous, respectively. The first edition’s more complex depictions of its characters makes for a richer reading experience.

The way that architectural interiors parallel and engage with concepts of character interiority in *Clarissa* is the focus of this chapter. My overall concern in this dissertation is the relationship between character and architecture, and in this chapter I use Richardson's novel to investigate the way that domestic spaces indicate character and the way that dividing a character along architectural boundaries makes female subjects more authentic and vulnerable. The focus is not on how a character's domestic space reflects his or her psychological state of mind; rather, it is on how character, in this case Clarissa, is constructed in two ways: *from* architectural space (architectural convenience) and *as* architectural space (character convenience). In terms of architectural convenience, I examine the ways in which the space of the brothel exemplifies yet inverts the concept that a house should reflect the character of its owner or (if a public building) its function. The reason Clarissa does not realize that she is trapped in a brothel is partly due to the lack of architectural indicators and partly due to the brothel's appearance, which is as domestic as an ordinary London townhouse. In terms of character convenience—that is, the concept that a person's exterior (comportment, appearance) reflects his or her interior self—the main conflict in *Clarissa* lies in whether character is truthful, as Clarissa would maintain, or inherently deceitful, as Lovelace does. The conflict between Lovelace and Clarissa is based upon a fundamental disagreement about how to read the other's character. Clarissa reads for harmonious character convenience where the interior and exterior match, while Lovelace hypothesizes that Clarissa's virtuous exterior does not accurately indicate her true character.

In the novel, Clarissa and Lovelace engage in a battle of wills that plays out in conjunction with a battle over interior spaces—the architectural ones of Mrs. Sinclair's brothel and the corporeal one of Clarissa's body. Clarissa Harlowe's engagement with the different spaces and spatial representation of character make her both the investigator and the test subject of questions about the authenticity of appearances. This chapter illustrates the ways that space and architecture are used in *Clarissa* to objectively fix meaning, whether it is in Clarissa's attempts to ascertain the characters of the houses she occupies or how Clarissa's and Lovelace's efforts to fix each other's meanings is represented architecturally. For much of the novel, Clarissa's movements in domestic spaces are either restricted by her family or pre-determined by Lovelace. In *Clarissa*, the process of fixing spaces (and therefore character) can be evaded by moving along a vertical axis. By tracing her vertical movements, which are aligned with moral worth, we can see how Clarissa finally escapes spaces of containment, even if she does so while enclosed in yet another space, her coffin. The necessity of evading character convenience suggests how vulnerable interiorized character makes Clarissa. In this chapter I complicate Richardson's use of interiority in *Clarissa* (and the critical praise of said interiority) by examining the damaging and violent aftermath of interiorization, damage so painful that in the end, the novel's heroine must reinstate her own inviolate boundary between inside and outside.

The Brothel and Convenience

Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* is a novel of interiors. Though Clarissa's movement through London is a key part of her development, her imprisonments, first at Harlowe Place and then at the Sinclair House, are the most intensely rendered parts of the novel. As Simon Varey puts it, "The action of *Clarissa* occurs almost exclusively in enclosed spaces; the language of Clarissa and Lovelace, as they write their streams of letters, teems with spatial images; Clarissa's moral struggles are fought continually in spaces that have become her prisons" (184). Spatial themes are prevalent not only in the psychological interiority that Richardson strives for, but also in the portions of the novel that evoke the space of the stage in their depiction of exits and entrances, specifically Clarissa's two interviews with Solmes in her parlour, the penknife scene (which itself began with a staged trial of Dorcas), and Lovelace's literal transcription of his "trial" at M. Hall. But interiors are more than mere setting and even more than the private place upon which the writing of letters depends. Spaces in *Clarissa* mean—expressing patriarchal ideologies, reflecting social prejudices, indicating moral worth, revealing character, shaping occupants' behaviour—in ways that go beyond what occurs in them.

My argument is predicated on concepts that associate houses and character, those of convenience, both architectural and character. Architectural convenience, in which a house is expected to express the character of its owner or occupant, is best exemplified by the most vividly rendered space in *Clarissa*, the Sinclair brothel. It is the place that reifies the concept's dividing of inside and outside, being two houses connected by a passage. It also complicates the concept since the outer house, being where prostitution occurs, is the more truthful, while Clarissa remains oblivious in the more respectable inner house. Anna Howe's description of the house as "one of those genteel, wicked houses which receive and accommodate fashionable people of both sexes" is apt, for the house is simultaneously wicked and genteel (745). The Sinclair brothel is also significant in terms of character convenience, in which a person's exterior is expected to match his or her interior self, by being the place where Clarissa and Lovelace attempt to discern the other's character. The brothel is thematically central because it establishes the difficulties of determining character and the ways that reading for architectural and character convenience are fraught throughout *Clarissa*. Determining the character of the Sinclair House means understanding that exteriors can hide rather than indicate interiors, that when character is divided between inside and outside, correspondence does not always occur. The moment that the interior subject is realized is also the moment that the deceiving subject comes into being. The difficulty in distinguishing between the two proves to be Clarissa Harlowe's downfall.

A novel that depicts its heroine as trapped in a series of confining spaces, *Clarissa* has given rise to a fair share of scholarly work about its depiction and use of spaces. The urban space of London (particularly Clarissa's negotiation through it) is examined by Edward Copeland, Serge Soupel and James How. How expands his analysis into the present by comparing the novel's epistolary space with contemporary conceptions of cyberspace, while Christina Marsden Gillis also examines the importance of epistolary space in *Clarissa*, placing it in the context of emerging notions of privacy in the eighteenth century. Janet Butler examines the importance of an outdoor space, the garden, as an indicator of Clarissa's complicity. Among those focusing on interior spaces, Margaret Anne Doody in *A Natural Passion* compares physical space to psychological space, noting how the various barriers that Clarissa experiences reflect the barriers between herself and her family (J.W. Fisher takes a similar approach in his analysis of the closet in Richardson's *Pamela*). Simon Varey emphasizes the interior nature of the spatial power struggle in *Clarissa* and reads her final act of shutting herself up in her coffin as a radical act of self-determination. Lately, criticism has shifted to examining specific rooms in cultural contexts. In her article "Gendering Rooms: Domestic Architecture and Literary Arts", Cynthia Wall places Clarissa's triumph in the pen-knife scene within the context of eighteenth-century architectural history. Wall argues that Clarissa's triumph is heightened by its location in the dining room, a room that was increasingly being gendered male (367). In three different articles, Karen Lipsedge examines three significance spaces in *Clarissa*, the parlour, the dairy house, and the summer house, locating all her analyses within historical and cultural uses and perceptions of the spaces. Surprisingly, for all the critical attention paid to space in *Clarissa*, one of the most important spaces in the novel remains under-examined. Though Laura Rosenthal thoroughly analyzes the importance of the eighteenth-century prostitution trade in *Infamous Commerce*, she merely mentions the Sinclair house's front/back divide when discussing *Clarissa*. Only Judith Wilt, in 1972, addresses the importance of the brothel's function as a space in *Clarissa*, suggesting that the women of the Sinclair house are more involved in the rape than Clarissa can even acknowledge. Wilt argues that Lovelace is impotent and is aided in the rape's execution by Mrs. Sinclair and the prostitutes. She reads the dynamics of the Sinclair House as not Clarissa vs. everyone, but Clarissa and Lovelace vs. the other women. For Wilt, Clarissa's experience at the Sinclair brothel emphasizes her betrayal by members of her own sex; no matter where she turns for protection (female relatives, Mrs. Moore, *etc.*), she is let down. As for the brothel, Wilt notes that a shift occurs in its psychological dimensions once Clarissa enters it, going from inner/outer to above/below, with Lovelace likewise being besieged and teased by the women below.

The Sinclair house's deceitfulness is aided by its architecture. First, it is duplicitous because is it literally two houses, even if they are connected by a "large, handsome passage" (470). It can be surmised that the outer house that faces the street is mostly likely a Georgian-era townhouse comprising at least three above-ground storeys and a basement (Lovelace's manservant at one point goes "down into the kitchen" from the entrance [739]). The brothel is hidden from Clarissa not only because of its double structure, but also because its exterior easily blends in with those of its neighbours due to its being a typical townhouse in London. When Lovelace rages against Sinclair and her prostitutes, threatening to burn down the house, he confesses that "*Had the house stood by itself*, I had certainly done it" (1430, emphasis added). The relevant detail is that the house is connected to others, indicating that the Sinclair House is part of a row of houses. The townhouse (also called a terrace house) was a popular style of housing in the eighteenth century: "Practically the whole population lived in one version or another of such houses" (Summerson, *Georgian London* 65). Therefore, the townhouse offers Mrs. Sinclair's establishment anonymity, especially since many builders used the same designs for different projects to save costs (Summerson, *Architecture* 384–86). While the Sinclair house's exterior is never described, the novel's readers would have been familiar with the ubiquitous London townhouse style.

The Sinclair house's architectural identity aligns it with the London townhouse and therefore with a domestic space. The association between domesticity and prostitution became dominant in the later eighteenth century. Randolph Trumbach argues that after 1750 bawdy-houses were increasingly managed by women (127–29) and that the mid-century development of houses where prostitutes lived as well as worked reflected a sentimentalization of the prostitute and domestication of the brothel (175).[7] But as *Clarissa* demonstrates, domesticating the brothel makes it easier to hide the brothel behind a domestic cover, something that Mrs. Sinclair and Lovelace both do. Clarissa opts to lodge at the Sinclair house due to its out-of-the way location (especially compared to another house near Covent Garden) and its appearance of domestic gentility, which includes a "handsome" front parlour and "little garden, in which the old gentlewoman has displayed a true female fancy, and crammed it with vases, flower-pots and figures, without number" (470). The house also offers a different kind of cover for the brothel, for townhouses also contained businesses as well as residences, legitimate businesses which brothel owners could use as fronts for their establishments. Millinery, for example, a trade that employed young girls, was a popular front in both reality and the public imagination (Olsson 96). Trumbach notes that milliners and servants were often recruited into prostitution because they were most likely young, unmarried girls (152). Millinery establishments also appear as fronts for prostitution in popular publications. In *The London Tradesman* (1747), which lists the "trades, professions and arts" practiced in London, readers are warned that "nine out of ten of the young Creatures that are obliged to serve in these [millinery] Shops, are ruined and undone" (209) and that private milliners who deal with a few select customers "are Decoys for the Unwary; they are but Places for Assignations, and take the Title of Milliner, a more polite name for a

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[7] Trumbach unearths likely architectural analogues to Mrs. Sinclair's fictional brothel, namely bawdy-houses "connected to each other by a back door" (129). Since bawdy-houses were often clustered in the same neighbourhoods and could be managed by the same person, quick access between the two would be desirable. Trumbach also suggests that connected houses facilitated quick getaways whenever keepers robbed the clients (129).

Bawd, a Procuress, a Wretch" (209). The use of millinery shops to hide prostitution is also found in the conduct book *Old Heads on Young Shoulders* (1774), which contains a chapter wherein a young man is taken to "a house kept by an old bawd, who, under pretence of being a milliner, kept seduced girls for attornies and merchant clerks" (171), and *The Cherub* (1792), which features a story about a disreputable milliner who forces two sisters into prostitution (47-52). One of the best known books which features a millinery-fronted brothel is John Cleland's *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748-49). Like Mrs. Sinclair's brothel, Mrs. Cole's establishment is one that exhibits bourgeois domesticity; it has "an air of decency, modesty, and order" (131). Unlike Mrs. Sinclair's brothel, the brothels in Cleland's novel depart from the front/back divide. When compared to *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*, *Clarissa* emerges as a novel that emphasizes divisions, divisions between front and back, interior and exterior, the walls and the floors. *Memoirs*, on the other hand, represents a brothel that is more palimpsestic than divided.

The brothel in Cleland's *Memoirs* demonstrates the power of space. It is a space that acts upon the subject, in this case, corrupting it. As Fanny tells it, her presence in the house makes her susceptible to its immorality: "Conversation, example, all, in short, contributed *in that house* to corrupt my native purity" (60, emphasis added). One reason Fanny is corrupted is because she is deliberately shown only the "fair side" of the prostitution trade, that is, the fun that the prostitutes in the house have: "all that frolic and thoughtless gaiety in which those giddy creatures consume their leisure made me envy a condition of which I only saw the fair side" (60). The phrase "the fair side" suggests that the spatial organization of Mrs. Brown's brothel is front and back, especially because Fanny is brought into the back-parlour when she enters the house. Fanny's immediate placement at the back, in the lesser parlour that is more hidden than one would be in the front, suggests that the work she has been hired for is likewise to be hidden. The front and back division is also present in the second brothel that Fanny works in, Mrs. Cole's establishment, in which the "outer parlour" is a millinery shop where young women pretend to make women's hats (131). The "cover" (131), as Fanny calls it, enables the house to ally a "necessary outward decency with unbound secret liberty" (131). Like Mrs. Sinclair's house as described in Lovelace's letter, Mrs. Cole's house is characterized by its domestic virtues, breathing "an air of decency, modesty, and order" (131).

Despite the millinery front, however, the locating of a business in a domestic space in *Memoirs* blurs the boundaries between the domestic and the business spheres, organizing the space palimpsestically rather than along a front and back divide. Not only does the front parlour evoke both domesticity and commerce, but it contains two kinds of commerce, the sale of women's sexual favour under the guise of the sale of hats. Mr. Norbert, for example, obliquely inquires after Fanny while "bespeaking some millinary ware" (166). The millinery shop is quasi-legitimate. For example, as Mr. Norbert departs, he purchases "some goods that he had paid for liberally, for the better grace of his introduction" (166). In addition to the overlap of the two businesses with a domestic parlour, the Cole brothel is also palimpsestic in the way that certain rooms take on the function of other kinds of spaces, specifically theatrical spaces and the ballroom. The brothel's theatricality is most explicitly demonstrated in Fanny's initiation orgy, where the events are watched by not only a hidden Mrs. Cole (162, 185), but also by the other participants. Theatrical terms are applied liberally: each couple's performance in the "scene of action" (152) is openly watched and applauded by the other members of "the company" (158) and the "troop" (159). The way that furniture is deployed is likewise theatrical. In eighteenth-century houses, furniture was not arranged throughout a room, but instead kept against the walls until needed. As Ralph Dutton explains, "there was a tendency to range the furniture round the walls, leaving clear the central space which would be covered with a rug, an island in the midst of an extensive sea of boards" (140). This type of room arrangement, with the empty space in the middle, resembles a stage. The initiation orgy in *Memoirs* uses the common eighteenth-century furniture arrangement to further the metaphor of theatricality. The drawing room first functions as a dining room before becoming a make-shift stage, with the table and couch effectively becoming props to be used or taken away as necessary: "the table was removed from the middle and became a sideboard; a couch was brought into its place" (150). The domestic drawing room in the hidden brothel becomes a performance space, albeit an unusual one in which all of the spectators (save Mrs. Cole, who is hidden) are also participants. But another type of public, spectatorial space permeates Fanny's account of the orgy, a space whose unspoken function as a marriage market is underscored by the brothel's explicit selling of female sexuality: the ballroom. The metaphor of sex as a dance is applied to the evening's proceedings: "The first that stood up to open the ball were a cornet of horse and … Louisa" (151), and while one of the other women composes herself, “Emily’s partner had taken her out for her share of the dance” (155). The orgy doubles as Fanny’s coming-out ball in this specific society. During dinner, the metaphor is even employed ironically by Fanny’s prospective gallant: “My particular’s proposal for beginning the country dances was received with instant assent: for, he laughingly added, he fancied the instruments were in tune” (150). The ballroom and the brothel interact with each other, with one space illuminating what the other hides. The ballroom is exposed as site of equally economically motivated matches usually covered by a genteel veneer of respectability. On the other hand, couching Fanny’s introduction in terms of a ball normalizes the brothel’s unusual initiation ceremony.

Drawing room, dining room, ballroom, stage: the drawing room in Mrs. Cole’s brothel is multivalent, one physical space capable of becoming many spaces simultaneously. Like a palimpsest, all the spaces co-exist at once, with one space occasionally materializing temporarily but never permanently legible. The relationship between the different types of spaces is ever shifting: spaces inform one another (the stage and the drawing room), complement one another (the ballroom and stage) or undermine one another (the ballroom and the sexual space). Mrs. Cole’s house in *Memoirs* conflates domestic and sexual spaces, illustrating the multiple uses of one space, the drawing room. Moreover, the generally smooth shifting from one type of space to another in *Memoirs* suggests an unproblematic approach to the character of its heroine—Fanny Hill never suffers for being a prostitute and in fact gains higher and higher classes of clients until she comfortably retires. On the other hand, the spaces and the heroine of *Clarissa* are much more compartmentalized and contested. The overlapping, palimpsestic spaces of Cleland's novel highlight just how divided the spaces in *Clarissa* are, and the contrast between the novels' heroines emphasizes the extent to which Clarissa is besieged, particularly at the Sinclair brothel.

The division of the Sinclair house in *Clarissa* is particularly perverse. Situating a brothel within a domestic structure (townhouse) perverts the emerging domestic ideology of the eighteenth century. The domestic aspect of the London townhouse is associated with Clarissa's own skill as a domestic manager. That domesticity is undercut in the Sinclair house bodes ill for Clarissa. The Sinclair household is also a perversion of a typical family: mannish Mrs. Sinclair, a "Mother Damnable" (739), employs two sisters of different last names, Polly Horton and Sally Martin, who pose as her nieces (524). Moreover, the house's "genteel" nature, with its sarcastic undertones, perverts the class concept of gentility. The representation of the Sinclair House women contrasts starkly with the representation of Mrs. Cole's family of happy whores in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*. Mrs. Sinclair is particularly threatening due to her masculine appearance; Clarissa fears her more than she seems to fear Lovelace (935).

Lovelace places Clarissa in a brothel because it is a site that he can control. In the same way that he can pay the prostitutes for sex, he can pay Mrs. Sinclair and her prostitutes to deceive Clarissa and be assured of their cooperation.
In terms of Clarissa's reaction to the brothel, Lovelace has two contradictory motives, both of which indicate his belief in the influence of space. First of all, he understands that Clarissa needs to be in a space that exudes domestic

propriety and believes that the respectable behaviour of Mrs. Sinclair, Sally, Polly, and Dorcas will lull Clarissa into a false sense of security. Wondering about Clarissa's taking precautions to guard her letters, Lovelace is sure that the source of Clarissa's anxiety is not the house, "the behaviour of the women so unexceptionable; no revellings, no company ever admitted into this inner-house; all genteel, quiet, and easy in it" (570). Despite the domestic appearances, however, Clarissa remains cautious. Secondly, Lovelace seems to suggest that being in a brothel will somehow corrupt Clarissa, much in the same way that Mrs. Brown's bawdy-house corrupts Fanny Hill in *Memoirs*. Lovelace likens the effect that the space has upon him to an illness and calls the Sinclair House itself a site of impurity. Having returned to the Sinclair House after his escapades at Mrs. Moore's in Hampstead, he notes the impact of place on his letter writing:

> I imagine, that thou wilt be apt to suspect, that some passages in this letter were written in town. Why, Jack, I cannot but say, that the Westminster air is a little grosser than that at Hampstead; and the conversation of Mrs. Sinclair, and the Nymphs, less innocent than Mrs. Moore's and Miss Rawlins's. And I think in my heart, that I can say and write those things at one place, which I cannot at the other; nor indeed any-where else. (870)

Lovelace is susceptible, not only to the "conversation" of the women of the brothel, but also to place itself, to "Westminster" as well as "Hampstead". Belford agrees, urging Lovelace to remove himself and Clarissa from the brothel: "Hardened as thou art, I know that they are the abandoned people in the house who keep thee up to a resolution against her" (713). Belford fears for Clarissa not only because she is in Lovelace's control, but because of where she is, because of her location. Because he is so intensely and consciously affected by the space of the Sinclair brothel, Lovelace does not consider that others would not be. Writing more nobly than usual of Clarissa's worth while he is in Pall-Mall, he asks, "Whence, however, this strange rhapsody?—Is it owing to my being *here*? That I am not at *Sinclair's*? But if there be infection in that house, how has my beloved escaped it?" (735). The infection metaphor suggests that the influence of space is invisible and pernicious.

Lovelace's conjecture that space affects character echoes the effect of Mrs. Brown's brothel on Fanny in *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*. However, Lovelace's plan is flawed, for it presupposes that Clarissa, with her more sheltered upbringing, is as susceptible to the space as he is. He also does not consider how the space could act upon Clarissa when she is hermetically closed off from the business of the house and refuses to socialize with its inhabitants. Moreover, even if Clarissa were to feel the effects of the brothel, the brothel's influence seems to be one of exacerbating pre-existing character traits rather than of engendering new ones. The brothel makes Lovelace coarser; it would make Clarissa more cautious. Lovelace's very presence in the space is a factor, for Clarissa mistrusts him most of all and would therefore be most guarded when he is there. His presence restricts her; she only successfully escapes when he is away from the house (Wilt 24). Lovelace's lodging in the same space as Clarissa serves only to increase her vigilance, and therefore also her vigilance against the entire house.

The Sinclair house defies spatial expectations, being neither a site of domestic happiness that the townhouse suggests it would be nor a site that corrupts its occupants as the brothel does. Instead, the Sinclair brothel turns space inside out. Common sense dictates that a brothel would ideally be hidden behind a front, like a millinery shop, but the Sinclair House's "genteelest" house is the inner house, where Clarissa lodges (470). Moreover, its "cover" business and actual business are similar: Mrs. Sinclair is in the business of admitting men and women into her house for one purpose or another, either as lodgers or clients. As in *Memoirs*, one type of business hides another; unlike *Memoirs*, the businesses are almost identical. In addition to the front and back divide, the relationship between "inside" and "outside" is also important. Clarissa's liberty of movement within the house is of little consequence, for it is her movements outside the house which cause Lovelace consternation: "a chair to carry her to the next church from Mrs. Sinclair's, her right name not Sinclair, and to bring her back thither, in the face of people who might not think well of the house! There was no permitting that" (540). Only by leaving and trying to find the Sinclair House will Clarissa realize that not only is the house not to be found on Dover Street, as Lovelace has told her (472), but also that it is a brothel whose identity is widely known by many, easily uncovered after brief inquiries (745).

The problem of keeping the Sinclair house's true identity from Clarissa introduces one of the novel's central issues, that of architectural convenience, the concept that a house's exterior should reflect the status or character of its owner, or its function. A concept found in architectural treatises of the eighteenth century, architectural convenience as applied to private residences required that the character of the owner be reflected in the character of his house. When it came to public buildings, convenience was still to be maintained, but in these cases the appearances of public buildings were to reflect their functions. The Sinclair brothel in *Clarissa* cannot adhere to the concept of convenience because, due to the illicit nature of prostitution, the house must avoid indicating its function. Instead, the brothel's townhouse structure provides architectural camouflage and takes advantage of architectural convenience by presenting a false exterior. The Sinclair house's lack of distinguishing marks is crucial to Lovelace's plot; it is the house's identity that gives him away when Clarissa is seen entering it (745). Considering the ease with which the identity of the house is known, Clarissa's naiveté about being imprisoned in a brothel seems improbable. Bruce Stovel contends that Clarissa is bound so tightly by her strict "feminine code" that she, "intent upon delicate moral discriminations and justifications, cannot see that she is a prisoner in a brothel" (100). The house itself contributes to Clarissa's ignorance. As Terry Castle notes in *Clarissa's Ciphers*, the brothel is stripped of all identifying marks: "There is apparently nothing in Clarissa's immediate surroundings, nothing on the house itself, nothing in the view from her 'closet' of adjacent buildings, to let her know the true location" (101). It is crucial for the plot (both Richardson's and Lovelace's) that Clarissa never knows that she is in a brothel, since that knowledge would precipitate an escape attempt.

Through the concept of architectural convenience, the Sinclair brothel in *Clarissa* brings together issues of space, character, and knowledge. Space and character are intricately linked; to know the space is to know the character of its occupants, and vice versa. For Clarissa, knowing the identity of the Sinclair house also means knowing the character of Lovelace. For Lovelace, however, knowledge takes on an additional meaning. While Varey argues that Clarissa's enclosing herself in her bedroom in the brothel is a gesture of self-determination (192), her gesture also spatially reflects and reinforces Lovelace's sexual quest, to penetrate, to 'know' Clarissa. For Lovelace, his conquest will determine what kind of woman Clarissa really is, that is, whether she actually is as virtuous as she seems. Lovelace sees rape as a necessary test of her character: "For what woman can be said to be virtuous till she has been tried?" (430). The double meaning of the word 'know' alludes to the epistemological issue that Clarissa and Lovelace face in the novel, the question of the other's true character. Space becomes a metaphor for knowledge, both sexual and epistemological. Clarissa's constantly denying Lovelace access to her architectural spaces is analogous to her denying him access to her body; proximity can precipitate rape. Clarissa becomes aware of the danger of proximity in the fire scene, when Lovelace takes her back into her room, places her in bed, and remains there. Stovel points to the fire scene as the turning point when Clarissa experiences her epiphany regarding Lovelace's actual character (104), while William Warner argues that it is the rape that finally fixes Lovelace's meaning as pure evil for Clarissa (73). Stovel also notes the importance of Clarissa's lack of self-knowledge because it leads her to behave in ways that exacerbate rather than placate her situations, and Castle mentions her inability to understand that others read her differently than she reads herself. On one side, we have Clarissa, theoretically informed about the evil that lies in the world yet grossly inexperienced and lacking in self-knowledge.[8] On the other side, we have the rake Lovelace, whose project of sexual dominance is inextricably linked with his constant weaving of plots. For Lovelace, the climax (narrative and sexual) is the rape. As Warner argues, "The rape is also to be a moment of knowing—the moment when Clarissa will be undressed, seen, penetrated, and known… Lovelace's interpretation of Clarissa is dependent on the prestige, or the mystique, of these sexual metaphors for 'knowing'" (50). Frances Ferguson also reads the rape as Lovelace's attempt to know Clarissa, his attempt to know what his plots mean after all (101–102). The epistemological questions stack up thus: Lovelace's plots depend on his knowing Clarissa well enough to manipulate her, with the final stage of his program of knowing to be sexual knowledge, with or without Clarissa's consent. Clarissa knows in theory what rakes are like but does not fully comprehend the extent of Lovelace's cruelty until she experiences it for herself, until he rapes her. What happens is unexpected: the rape, the moment of Lovelace's expected sexual 'knowing' of Clarissa's body, becomes a moment of revelation for Clarissa instead, in that she finally understands Lovelace's character, whereas Lovelace finds the experience incomplete. The rape of Clarissa is not about Lovelace, but about Clarissa, who, in a moment of narrative cruelty, knows the truth about Lovelace the moment that she is 'known.'

At the root of Clarissa and Lovelace's epistemological crisis is a concept related to architectural convenience, a concept that I term character convenience.

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[8] For more on Clarissa and epistemology see Stovel, "Clarissa's Ignorance" and Cornett, "The Treachery of Perception: Evidence and Experience in *Clarissa*". Stovel, Cornett and Warner all emphasize the experiential vs. theoretical model of knowledge that Lovelace and Clarissa represent.

While architectural convenience deals with the relationship between a house and its owner, in character convenience the individual is him/herself metaphorically constructed as a house with an interior and exterior. Character convenience, like architectural convenience, calls for a correspondence between interior and exteriors. It is the concept that a person's exterior (appearance, manners, comportment) should reflect his or her interior 'true' character. The definition presumes a spatial conception of the self predicated upon an inside and outside. While the interior is assumed to be the 'true' self, the question that permeates *Clarissa* is whether the exterior corresponds. As Clarissa notes of Lovelace, his pride in outward attributes is suspicious: "Proud of *exterior* advantages!—Must not one be led by such a *stop-short* pride, as one may call it, in him or her who has it, to mistrust the *interior?*" (141, emphasis original). The OED entry for the word 'convenience' defines it as an agreement or accordance between two things ("Convenience" def. 1). In *Clarissa,* the development of an interior character leads to the more important question of whether the exterior corresponds. The novel is concerned with what exists behind exteriors, behind the facades, behind the mask that Belford accuses Lovelace of wearing (714).

In keeping with their opposing natures, Clarissa and Lovelace approach character convenience in divergent ways. Clarissa is invested (I would argue over-invested) in character convenience, while Lovelace believes that people are always hiding their true characters. One reason that Clarissa is not sufficiently skeptical of Lovelace is her expectation that he displays character convenience. As Clarissa exemplifies a new model of interior subjectivity, she is also testing that model in others, including Lovelace. For Clarissa (and others in the novel), the 'true' self is associated with that innermost of organs, the heart. Clarissa declares at one point that she has an "open and free heart" (531) and her mother demands the truth from her by declaring that "The heart, Clary, is what I want" (103). Christine Roulston locates the heart as the source of authenticity, since it is the feeling organ (xviii), and Clarissa treats it in the same manner. But the heart can also be authentically unfeeling, as Clarissa declares at Mrs. Moore's house in Hampstead Heath once she realizes that Lovelace has deceived her: "He can put on the appearance of an angel of light; but has a black, a very black heart!" (791).[9] For most of the novel, however, Clarissa is ambivalent towards Lovelace, an attitude that stems in part from her inability to fully comprehend his character. Though she knows in theory that appearances can deceive, she never imagines the extent of Lovelace's deception. Clarissa also relies too much upon outward indicators such as speech and manners to judge character, assuming that exteriors correspond to interiors: "for what are *words* but the *body* and *dress* of *thought*? And is not the mind indicated strongly by its outward dress?" (543, emphasis original). In her initial opposition to Solmes, Clarissa minimizes her repulsion to his physical appearance, claiming that she would be more reasonable had he been more generous and good, for "whatever had been the *figure* of the man: Since the *heart* is what we women should judge by in the choice we make, as the best security for the party's good behaviour in every relation of life" (181). Clarissa objects to not only Solmes's repulsive appearance, but also to what the appearance indicates—that his external ugliness is "the true representative of his mind" (91). Clarissa's belief that the interior and exterior should agree leads her to be swayed by appearances more often than not. She describes the false Captain Tomlinson as "a genteel man, of great gravity, and a good aspect" (697) whom she likes "as soon as I saw him" (697). In addition to being swayed by words, "the dress of thought" (543), Clarissa is also won over by dress, most notably the clothing of the false Lady Betty and Miss Montague: "I had not the least suspicion that they were not the ladies they personated; and being put a little out of countenance by the richness of their dresses, I could not help, fool that I was! to apologize for my own" (998). It is beyond Clarissa's realm of consideration to think that the characters are disguised cohorts of Lovelace; she also cannot interpret the awkwardness that arises as the inhabitants of the Sinclair House pretend to be respectable: "Mrs. Sinclair herself (for that is the widow's name) has an odd winking eye; and her respectfulness seems too much studied, methinks, for the London ease and freedom" (525).

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[9] For more on the significance of the heart, see Julie Park, " 'I Shall Enter Her Heart': Fetishizing Feeling in *Clarissa*" and Katherine Binhammer, *The Seduction Narrative in Britain, 1747–1800*.

Clarissa's difficulty with interpreting what she notices, coupled with her trust in character convenience, makes her a bad reader of signs, which points to how signs, especially the ones that Lovelace presents to her, are unstable. The semiotics of *Clarissa* is a common topic for many Richardson scholars, most notably Castle and Warner. Castle's argument that Clarissa exercises (and is an exercise in) interrupted reading is based on the fractured nature of the sign in the novel: "Clarissa's basic linguistic assumption is that words embody, absolutely and transparently, the inner life of the speaker" (*Ciphers* 67). Castle's argument, particularly the reference to the speaker's "inner life", indicates that language is yet another external indicator of internal character. When words are "transparent" they support character convenience, but unstable signs result in a lack of character convenience. If words are the basis upon which Clarissa tries to determine Lovelace's character, no wonder she is confused: Lovelace is a verbal master who, to use a modern phrase, spins any situation to his advantage. Lovelace knows how to modulate his language; in his early addresses to Clarissa, she finds nothing untoward in his "always unexceptionable" conversation (182). Other examples of Lovelace's verbal dexterity include his ability to charm the company and secure an audience with Anna Howe at Col. Ambrose's gathering (1135). His skill is most evident in his deft handling of the situation at Mrs. Moore's. In spite of Clarissa's insistence to the contrary, he manages to convince Mrs. Moore and Miss Rawlins that theirs is merely a domestic misunderstanding (779–80).

In addition to being fooled by Lovelace's language, Clarissa reads the character of the Sinclair house and its inhabitants incompletely. She notices that Mrs. Sinclair's manner is "too much studied" (525) and that Dorcas is "too genteel… for a servant" (524), but her suspicions are not aroused. Only when she escapes after the staged fire does Clarissa realize that the women are colluding with Lovelace:

> [T]he people of the house must be very vile: for they, and that Dorcas too, did hear me (I know they did) cry for help. If the fire had been other than a villainous plot […], they would have been alarmed as much as I; and

> have run in, hearing me scream, to *comfort me*, supposing my terror was the fire; to *relieve me*, supposing it were anything else. But the vile Dorcas went away, as soon as she saw the wretch throw his arms about me… And she to go away, and never to return, nor anybody else: and yet I heard women's voices in the next room; indeed I did—An evident contrivance of them all. (756)

But even after the revelation that the household is complicit with Lovelace, Clarissa's interpretation of the house's character is incomplete. She does not make the final mental leap to conclude that a house of women colluding with a man to rape another woman could be a house of prostitutes, despite consistently employing the adjective "vile", indicating moral baseness, to describe it and the women. Moreover, her insistence about hearing women's voices in the next room ("I know they did", "indeed I did") seems overdone, considering she is writing to the ever-trusting Anna. Her insistence is a way of making her words so strong that they shape the facts. Clarissa attempts to mould reality through her account, to make her version the true version. That she calls the episode a "contrivance" suggests that Clarissa might be aware of how unlikely her version of events is, which could also explain her emphasis on its veracity.

Clarissa's uncertainty about the character of the Sinclair house and household also extends to her attitude towards Lovelace. The insistent tone Clarissa employs regarding the women is mirrored in her tone when describing Lovelace. After she has been forced to spend an evening with his friends at Mrs.

Sinclair's, she is disgusted with the general company's manners and conversation. Of Lovelace, however, her ambivalence is evident:

> It must, indeed, be confessed that there is in his whole deportment a natural dignity, which renders all insolent or imperative demeanour as unnecessary as inexcusable. Then that deceiving sweetness which appears in his smiles, in his accent, in his whole aspect and address, when he thinks it worth his while to oblige, or endeavour to attract, how does this show that he was *born* innocent, as I may say; that he was not *naturally* the cruel, boisterous, the impetuous creature which the wicked company he may have fallen into have made him! For he has, besides, an open and I think, an honest countenance. Don't you think so too?—On all these specious appearances, have I founded my hopes of seeing him a reformed man. (545)

Clarissa's overemphasis of Lovelace's natural goodness and innocence, her near-begging of Anna for agreement ("Don't you think so too?"), the confession of her hopes of reforming the rake, all undermine her understanding of Lovelace's character, pointing to how, as Judy M. Cornett notes, her attraction to Lovelace clouds her judgment of him (186). Moreover, earlier in the same letter to Anna Howe, she contradicts herself. Rather than being led astray by "wicked company", for example, Lovelace (along with Belford) seems "capable of leading the other three [men] as they please" (544). Clarissa's very syntax seems to undermine her, as the positive attributes she puts forward are then undermined by the attributes that follow. Lovelace's "natural dignity" is negated in quick succession by four words that begin with prefixes (“in-”, “im-”, “un-”) that imply opposites (“insolent”, “imperative”, “unnecessary”, “inexcusable”). Of Lovelace’s “deceiving sweetness”, which he employs to manipulate others, Clarissa concentrates on the existence of any sweetness as a sign of his innocence rather than the deception, though she is perceptive enough to notice it. Moreover, the claim of sweetness is followed by the harsh-sounding words “cruel”, “boisterous”, “impetuous” and “wicked”. That her observations are “specious” and his sweetness “deceiving” further points to Clarissa’s ambivalence. Despite her insistence on Lovelace’s goodness, Clarissa’s very words contradict her, indicating the unstablity of words, even when employed by someone who has unerring faith in them.

In the same way that Clarissa reads others as possessing character convenience, she believes that she exhibits convenience herself, that she is an exemplar of the perfectly convenient subject. Clarissa’s naive insistence that Lovelace has “an open and I think, honest countenance” (545) parallels an earlier claim she makes to Anna, that she herself is what Castle calls a transparent sign: “You know my dear, that I have an open and free heart, and naturally have as open and free a countenance; at least my complimenters have told me so” (531). Clarissa’s claim is built upon layers of openness and correspondence, starting with the comparison between the heart and the countenance (“have *as* open and free”), an analogy which parallels the connection between interior and exterior that character convenience depends upon, with the countenance being the external manifestation of the heart. Yet even Clarissa’s own comment about her legibility is itself undermined, playfully in her reference to her admirers, but also seriously by repeated references to openness, heart and countenance. Like her insistence about hearing the women in the next room, Clarissa's insistence about her openness is overstated; if her countenance and heart were sufficiently open and free, she would not need any words to point that out to Anna. Moreover, the heart, the source of feeling, is also constructed as a vessel that can be opened.[10] The open heart is a spatial metaphor used to describe Clarissa's character, which is rendered through character convenience as another spatial metaphor, a house. Despite (and as a reaction to) her family's accusations of dissembling, Clarissa believes she is doubly open (countenance and heart), manifestly transparent to the highest power.

Lovelace, on the other hand, does not conceive of character as transparent, arguing instead that exteriors mask true inner feelings. Lovelace's understanding of character is informed by architecture; he often compares people to houses. Lovelace reverses the metaphor used by architectural theorists, who drew on the human body to explain how a house should be arranged. Instead, he asserts that a person is built like a house; his conception of character convenience posits the exterior as a mere shell for the "true" inner self. Writing of Belton's unfaithful Thomasine, Lovelace describes her eyes as windows, and inner emotions as the inhabitants that peek out, betraying her: "I always suspected her *eye*: the *eye*, thou knowest, is the *casement* at which the *heart* generally looks out. Many a woman who will not show herself at the *door*, has tipped the sly, the intelligible *wink* from the *windows*" (1099, emphasis original). Reading Clarissa's mood from her look,

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[10] Arabella uses a similar metaphor to refuse Clarissa's suggestion that as the older sister, she should marry Solmes herself, since "that would be to leave the door open in your heart for you know who, child; and we would fain bar him out, if possible" (193).

Lovelace understands that the eye is an indicator of Clarissa's thoughts: "Well did I note her eye, and plainly did I see that it was all but just civil disgust to me and to the company I had brought her into… And her eye never knew what it was to contradict her heart" (558). For Lovelace, then, the inner self hides itself away, occasionally betraying itself to a discerning observer such as himself. True character's hiding place is the house, and in one instance, a house that is also a prison that contains the personified emotions grief and joy:

> Grief mollifies and enervates. The grieved mind looks round it, silently implores consolation and loves the soother. Grief is ever an inmate with joy. Though they won't show themselves at the same window at *one* time, yet have they have the whole house in common between them. (521)

In this passage, figurative devices pile upon one another, as the mind is personified, casting about for consolation, and then grief and joy are likewise personified as inmates in a bodily prison. The body itself is a prison and a house that is shared between the two opposing emotions. As the related metaphors shift, the focus remains on the interior, on what occupies or is trapped in the interior. The emphasis on the interior reduces the body to a mere container. For Lovelace, the inner self is discrete from the body; the body is a shell, a "for-time-built tenement" that is temporarily home to the soul (1433).

Lovelace's representation of people as temporary houses is in keeping with his callous attitude towards female bodies, since for him the metaphorical houses are ultimately worthless. As argued above, Lovelace's rape of Clarissa is the culmination of a test of her character, a means of testing the external (the house) for authenticity to see if it matches what is internal, the true self. In this case, Clarissa has become the standard against which all women should be judged. Lovelace believes that Clarissa hides her true self behind a façade (architectural and otherwise) of virtuousness. Each time she employs dishonesty to escape, he gloats because he considers her lies examples of her true character, one as devious as his own: "will not her *feints* justify mine? … And is it not now fairly come to *Who shall most deceive and cheat the other*?" (759). The rape, then, is not only a violation of Clarissa spurred by revenge, but it is also a test of Clarissa's integrity in both a moral and structural sense. Lovelace tests the body for the deception that the interiorized female subject is suddenly capable of. While Clarissa's expectation of character convenience is one result of the subject's interiorization, Lovelace's alternate theory acknowledges the instability and mutability of such a subject.

In the context of Clarissa's and Lovelace's epistemological crisis, one that is played out over the spaces of the brothel and of her body, Clarissa's being semi-conscious, drugged, during the assault lessens Lovelace's triumph because her interior character could not be adequately tested. As he later complains to Belford, "nor did Lovelace know what it was to be gloomy, till he had completed his wishes upon the charmingest creature in the world… And yet say I, *completed?* when the *will*, the *consent*, is wanting—and I still have views before me of obtaining that?" (888). The ability to consent (or not) was lacking; the triumph is incomplete. What is for Lovelace a moment of incomplete knowing is for Clarissa an epistemological blank that she cannot bring herself to describe: "And then such scenes followed—Oh my dear, such dreadful scenes!—fits upon fits (faintly indeed, and imperfectly remembered) procuring me no compassion—but death was withheld from me" (1011). During the rape she is not fully conscious, her memory imperfect and faint. The fits that mark her experience are echoed in the fragmented sentences and dashes in the passage. Clarissa's lack of knowledge becomes lack of reason as her trauma and the continued application of drugs render her almost mad afterwards. And yet, amidst her refusal to describe the experience, the irrationality of the mad papers is where she comes closest to articulating the rape, and she does so using an architectural metaphor.

While Lovelace uses character convenience as the basis of his test of Clarissa, conceptualizing the individual from an external observer's perspective, Clarissa provides the view from inside. While Clarissa understands character in terms of interior and exterior, she rarely uses architectural metaphors as Lovelace does, such as his comparing eyes to windows. In one instance, however, she does, when she compares the rape to an act of breaking and entering:

> Oh! Lovelace! if you could be sorry for yourself, I would be sorry too—but when all my doors are fast, and nothing but the key-hole open, and the key of late put into that, to be where you are, in a manner without opening any of them—Oh wretched, wretched Clarissa Harlowe! (894)

Considering how often her movements through and within spaces are restricted in the novel, Clarissa's representation of the rape in architectural terms is fitting and poignant, a spatial rendering of powerlessness. The passage constructs Clarissa's body as a room which Lovelace has invaded. That she chides Lovelace for being "where you *are*" in the present tense stresses the immediacy of Lovelace's physical presence in her space (894, emphasis added). That Clarissa mentions only barriers (doors, keys, locks) speaks to her sense of violation. Her reference to increasingly small spaces—the door and then the keyhole which is recently locked ("the key of late put into that")—suggests that Lovelace has violated the most intimate aspects of her self. Clarissa's description of the rape is not a direct reference to the act, but because she does not distinguish between interiors and exteriors and because she does not treat bodies like mere shells as Lovelace does, using a spatial metaphor to describe sexual violation is not a means of avoiding what has occurred, but rather of coping with it. Spatial thinking is the process through which she tries to understand the traumatic act that has been done to her.

Clarissa's rape reveals ways that the interiorization of women exposes them to new risks. Clarissa's misunderstanding of Lovelace's character harms her more than it harms him, yet the misunderstanding of her character, by Lovelace and the Harlowe family, damages her. That the misreadings and misinterpretations are frequently couched in spatial terms, specifically in terms of convenience and the lack thereof, suggests how dangerous it is for women to be considered as interior subjects. As the representative of the emerging domestic, female subject, Clarissa becomes both the examiner of what it even means to be an interior subject as well as the subject of such inquiries herself. Her examination, however, is clouded by her trust in architecture convenience (of the brothel) and her over-adherence to character convenience (of Lovelace). In *Clarissa*, the interiorized female subject is vulnerable in a new, more acute way; possessing an interior nature means also possessing a boundary (between internal and external) that can be violated.

Movement and Verticality: Evasive Manoeuvres

I am reading convenience, both architectural and character, as a way of determining meaning about an individual, that is, as a way of fixing meaning. The word 'fixing', in the sense of securing in place, is particularly apt for my discussion about convenience, which connects an individual to a particular kind of space, the house. The project of fixing Clarissa's character is, as I have argued, one of Lovelace's motives. But Clarissa's family and friends also assign character to her, attempting to fix her as disobedient, fallen, or virtuous. Clarissa is, in a sense, besieged by the various attempts to 'fix' her. Against all the attempts to determine or define her character, Clarissa resists. And because the continuous attempts to fix Clarissa's character occur as she is also physically fixed in space, either in her bedroom at Harlowe Place or imprisoned in the Sinclair brothel, movement becomes an important aspect of her resistance. In this section, I examine movement as a possibility for resisting character fixing in *Clarissa*. Ultimately, by moving in a specific way—vertically—, Clarissa avoids being fixed in space or in character.

The significance of verticality in *Clarissa* is evident in the arrangement of the Sinclair brothel, in which characters are located in metaphorically significant positions. Wilt has noted the way that the psychological dimensions of the brothel shifts from inside/outside to above/below once Clarissa enters, with the women below goading Lovelace into acting above. The living arrangements support Wilt's reading, with the brothel's spaces divided along similar lines. The ground floor of the house is mainly the domain of Mrs. Sinclair, who uses the ground-floor parlour in the inner house (964), which is also referred to as the back-parlour (966), while the front parlour is ceded to Clarissa and Lovelace but is seldom used.[11] The breakfast room is also downstairs, as Clarissa "went down" from her room to breakfast with Lovelace and the other ladies (530). Clarissa and Lovelace stay on the first storey, above Mrs. Sinclair's rooms. Clarissa's location is indicated in part by the number of times Dorcas comes "up" to give notice of a caller (see the Capt. Tomlinson charade on 680 and 682, for example). The dining room is also on the first floor; on one occasion Clarissa rushes by her own room into the dining room (935) and on another Lovelace and the bawds noisily pass Clarissa's door while making their way to the dining room (947). Lovelace's location on the first storey is evidenced by how he paces amongst the three sets of rooms (his apartments, Clarissa's apartments, and the dining room) after Clarissa first escapes (740). Clarissa and Lovelace's shared occupation of the first floor suggests that neither dominates the other in their struggle. And because the boundary between above and below is so strongly defined, movement between the floors becomes significant. For example, Lovelace often descends to the ground floor to dine or play cards with the women (528, 538) and when Clarissa and Lovelace dine in Mrs. Sinclair's parlour with the other women, Lovelace interprets it as a positive development (541). Ascending or descending takes on greater meaning as the act of going up or down implies deigning or condescending, capitulating or triumphing. Clarissa is displeased with Lovelace, for example, because he "obliged her to pass the rest of the night with the women and me, in their parlour, and to stay near one" (633). Contravening the boundary between above/below and inner/outer is what precipitates Clarissa's escape. In her successful escape, Clarissa takes advantage of the location of Mrs. Sinclair's back-parlour, which is further away from the entrance. Positioned as she is, facing away from the back-parlour, Clarissa's face is not visible to anyone approaching from the inner house. As she moves along the passage in Mabel's clothes, Will and Dorcas "whipped to the inner hall door and saw her, but taking her for Mabel" (967), let her go. The brothel's perverse structure—with Mrs. Sinclair taking all the rooms in the outer house except the front parlour—assists in Clarissa's final escape.

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[11] To be consistent with British convention (since I am examining British novels and architecture), I follow the British usage of the terms ground floor, first floor, second floor to describe the first three storeys of a building. What I call the ground floor would be considered the first floor in North America, the first floor would be considered the second floor, *etc*.

The difference between Clarissa's voluntary movement in her final successful escape and the movement that she is compelled into when Lovelace convinces her to stay up with Mrs. Sinclair and the other women is the difference between de Certeau's strategy and tactics that I discussed in the introduction. While strategy emanates from a specific place and enacts a proper space, the opposing tactic is temporary, spontaneously occurring. In *Clarissa* the heroine is subjected to the strategies of others, who, from places of authority, aim to control her position in space by either curtailing her freedoms or predetermining her movements. The Harlowe family, for instance, limits Clarissa's access to various parts of the house and grounds, dictating where she can walk (she must take only the back-stairs to avoid accidentally encountering her relations [121]), what spaces she can occupy (Clarissa is restricted to her bedroom [121], ordered to the breakfast room or her parlour), and what spaces she can keep to herself (she is forced to surrender the keys to her "cabinet, library, and drawers" [313]). Lovelace not only limits Clarissa's movements by imprisoning her in the brothel, but also influences where she does or does not go. For example, when Clarissa is about to be sent to her Uncle Antony's, Lovelace plants a report about his plans to abduct Clarissa while she is en route, thus ensuring that she stays at Harlowe Place (414). He engineers Clarissa's decision of where to stay in London by describing Mrs. Sinclair's house as domestic and retiring, even setting up a comparison with a more public option in a busier part of London (469–71). Even his not removing Clarissa's letter that retracts her promise to meet him, leading her to believe that he has not received it, effectively forces her to approach and breach the boundary that is the Harlowe garden wall.

If the methods by which Lovelace and the Harlowe family curtail or control Clarissa's movements are considered strategy, Clarissa's second escape from the brothel is akin to a tactic, defined by de Certeau as a practice that arises spontaneously, exists temporally rather than spatially, and subverts strategy while still existing in the space that strategy enacts. Clarissa's second escape is tactical because she takes advantage of an unforeseen opportunity arising from the weather. As Belford surmises, "The contrivance by which she effected her escape seems to me not to have been fallen upon till the very day; since it depended partly upon the *weather*, as it proved" (965). Because it rains, Clarissa advises Mabel to "put on her hood and short cloak" before running errands for her (966). Mrs. Sinclair and the others see Mabel wearing the hood and cloak, the same outfit that Clarissa will later don to make her escape. Establishing the cloak and hood as Mabel's is the key detail, since both Will and Dorcas mistake Clarissa for the maid when they later see her in the hallway (967). Clarissa's final successful escape is one that arises from an opportunity, subverting the watchful nature of the brothel by literally misdirecting Will and Dorcas: "Without turning her face, or answering, she held out her hand, pointing to the stairs; which they construed as a caution for them to look out in her absence" (967). Clarissa's redirection of her guards' surveillance and the fact that the escape arises from a chance opportunity suggests that the escape is a tactic, and that Clarissa is capable of moving tactically. If the project of fixing Clarissa's character is one rooted in issues around space, then for Clarissa to evade such projects requires her to engage in tactical manoeuvres.

The rest of this chapter examines what happens when the question of strategy and tactics is mapped onto vertical movement—both literal and figurative—in *Clarissa*. Throughout the novel, Clarissa negotiates a series of figurative vertical axes, starting with the social ladder. In terms of class, no unit is more obsessive about moving up the social ladder than the Harlowe family. Engaged in the never-ending project of "raising a family" (77), the Harlowes understand the connection between money and rank, hoping that James will accumulate enough money from various inheritances to buy a peerage. The family also understands the importance of marrying well, as demonstrated by James Harlowe Sr.'s marrying a woman (Clarissa's mother) of aristocratic background (188). Lovelace is initially a tantalizing marriage prospect in part due to his noble lineage and prospects of inheriting the heir-less Lord M.'s title (666). Lovelace is aware and proud of his position on the social ladder, fuming that his surveillance of Harlowe Place forces him to "basely creep about—not her proud father's house—but his paddock" (146). The desire for upward social movement is also evident in the lower classes. Joseph Leman expects Lovelace to set him up at the Blue Boar inn and with sufficient start-up capital in return for his help (496–97). In terms of society, the only acceptable way to go is up.

While the Harlowe family as a whole intends to move up, it expects the individual members of the younger generation to lower themselves appropriately, often with the objective of raising the family. Clarissa subscribes to a specific code of familial protocol in bowing or kneeling before her older relatives. Clarissa considers bowing a demonstration of her respect for those older than her; to her mind, the act acknowledges seniority, but nothing more. On the other hand, her parents, aunt and uncles misinterpret her bows as signs of a willingness to obey and capitulate to their commands. Mrs. Harlowe commands her to kneel only "with knees of duty and compliance" (89). At other times, Clarissa's continuation of the practice despite her refusal to marry Solmes is considered a sign of hypocrisy, a moment when the interior does not match the exterior. As her mother says, "Mock me not with outward gesture of respect. The heart, Clary, is what I want" (103). And of course, physical gestures can be rendered ironic, as Bella notes when Clarissa sarcastically curtsies to her (196), or as Clarissa realizes when she arrives home and her brother "bowed very low… I thought it in good humour, but found it afterwards mock-respect" (58). Lovelace likewise understands the impact of bowing when the occasion calls for it, such as during one of his many proposals to Clarissa: "And here, on my knee, I renew my vows, and my supplication, that you will make me yours" (652). But Lovelace also changes what should be a gesture of respect to a means of physically obstructing Clarissa when he stops her from ending their chance meeting in the garden: "I commanded him to leave the place that moment: and was hurrying from him; when he threw himself in the way at my feet, beseeching my stay for one moment" (166). Lovelace uses what should be a sign of respect to his advantage. "This man, you know, has very ready knees" (166), Clarissa wryly writes to Anna. While Lovelace's falling on his knees conceals other motives, Clarissa's falling to her knees is represented as more genuine. Her emotional outbursts are often accompanied by acts of physical prostration, as she frequently falls to her knees when agitated. She throws herself at her mother's feet when they argue about duty (103) and clasps her hands around Aunt Hervey's knees to prevent her from leaving her room (205). As Clarissa is treated worse and worse, the incidents where she falls to her feet escalate. At the second parlour meeting with Solmes, for example, Clarissa attempts to reach her father through a communicating door that her brother is holding shut: "Oh my papa!—my dear papa, said I, falling upon my knees at the door—admit your child to your presence!—Let me but plead my case at your feet!" (312). The acts of prostration differ from bowing or curtsying in their spontaneity, registering on an emotional scale rather than one based on status. Clarissa becomes increasingly desperate as her options diminish; falling at her father's feet is an act of capitulation, of powerlessness, of asking for mercy. Yet all her bowing and falling is for naught; Clarissa's movement is met by the stony resistance of her unmoved family. James is the most cruel in his lack of compassion, sarcastically calling Clarissa a "fallen angel" not once but twice (161, 306).

James Harlowe's mocking addressing of his sister alludes to one of the major categories of verticality in the novel, that of religious redemption. From Belford's hyperbolic claim that Clarissa is a "paragon of virtue" (713) who has "the merit of a saint, and the purity of an angel" (1076) to Lovelace's dream of seeing Clarissa rising to heaven surrounded by cherubim and seraphim while he falls through the floor into a bottomless hole (1218), the novel's spiritual dimension is also a spatial one. Clarissa's belief in her spiritual superiority is sometimes the only way that she has the upper hand over Lovelace: "You, sir, I thank you, have lowered my fortunes: but, I bless God, that my mind is not sunk with my fortunes. It is, on the contrary, raised above fortune, and above you" (797). Clarissa's most adamant claims to superiority over Lovelace are based upon the essence of the spiritual self, the soul: "My soul is above thee, man! … Urge me not to tell thee how sincerely I think my soul above thee!" (646). Considering Lovelace's constant references to Clarissa as "divine" and "angel", he agrees. Reflecting on her declaration that her soul is above him, he muses that "How poor indeed was I then, even in my own heart!—So *visible* a superiority, to so proud a spirit as mine!—" (658). Lovelace and Clarissa both agree on her superior spiritual status, that she is above him in soul and mind. The basis of their struggle is his attempt to lower her to his level.

Lovelace's awe of Clarissa, of her almost transcendental superiority, renders his rape of her more triumphant. James Harlowe's reference to his sister as a "fallen angel" suggests not only her Eden-like spiritual fall from grace (the grace of her earthly father, at least) but also echoes the "fallen woman" status that Clarissa occupies in the eyes of her family. She is considered no more than "the disgrace of a good family and the property of an infamous rake" when she first runs off (510) and the presumed sexual nature of her relationship with Lovelace (living with him "at bed as well as board" [1195]) leads her family to ask whether she is pregnant (1192). The ground floor location of Mrs. Sinclair's personal parlour, associated with the bawds, is positioned below both Clarissa's and Lovelace's rooms, and suggests how much further either could descend. As Lovelace exclaims while at the brothel, "And *here* from below, from BELOW indeed! I am so goaded on!—" (658). Rosenthal suggests that Lovelace and Sinclair might have struck a deal in which Clarissa would become a prostitute herself once Lovelace tired of her (146). Sally and Polly's taunts about the two sympathetic gentlemen willing to pay off Clarissa's debt (a ploy to put her in their service) supports Rosenthal's reading and suggests that by falling in one sense, Clarissa has become vulnerable to other ways of descending (1057).

There is an inverse relationship between Clarissa's vertical movement (or lack thereof) and the movement of others. As others attempt to move higher along various figurative vertical axes, Clarissa is forced downwards. For the

Harlowe family, Clarissa's debasement is in the name of their own advancement. For Lovelace, Clarissa's superiority is supposed to render his rape more triumphant because of how far Clarissa must fall as a result. Belford, Mrs. Lovick and the Smiths praise her ability to graciously, virtuously die, rising above her circumstances and suffering. But as the novel progresses, Clarissa begins to move at others' expense and even controls others' movement. Lovelace, for example, goes from crawling around the Harlowe Place walls to being restricted to half of M. Hall after Clarissa's second escape. He is shunned by his family for his offences against Clarissa: "Lord M. has forbid him ever more to darken the doors of the apartments where he shall be" (1811). As Miss Montague writes to Clarissa, "one part of the house holds *us*, another *him*, the remotest from each other" (1182). Clarissa actively controls Lovelace's movement when she sends him to M. Hall with her "my father's house" letter (1233), an assertive gesture that seems all the more agential when compared to her defensive attempts to prevent Lovelace from visiting her at the Smiths' by moving herself away (1246–47). As the novel progresses, the movement of characters from earlier volumes becomes more limited; Clarissa's death is notable for the absence of any people from the earlier volumes who for one reason or another are immobilized, who cannot arrive in time.

If Clarissa's movement along metaphorical vertical axes is of great import to others, strikingly, her position on the spatial vertical axis remains the same for almost the entire novel. In all the spaces that she occupies, from Harlowe Place to the Sinclair House to Mrs. Moore's house, the Smith House and even the debtor's prison, Clarissa is in a room (often a back room) on the first floor. It is as if Clarissa remains at the same coordinates while the settings change around her. Metaphorical axes do not align with the physical axis; for example, Clarissa reaches her spiritual apex at a place where she is not at the vertical apex, the Smith house where Mrs. Lovick lodges in the second floor apartments above her. There is a correspondence between Clarissa's stasis and others' attempts to determine her character; as long as others attempt to fix her character, Clarissa remains in a fixed physical position. At first Clarissa's stasis is entrapping, as the limiting of her movement at Harlowe Place and the Sinclair brothel indicates her lack of freedom and independence. Set against the attempts to elevate or lower her, however, Clarissa's stasis can also be read as a form of passive resistance. And when Clarissa finally does move willingly and intentionally, the movement ironically occurs when she herself is figuratively at rest, that is, when she is dead.

The movement of Clarissa's coffin—and her corpse in it—is the most significant movement that she makes in the novel because it occurs over a sustained period of time (the course of a day) and is of her own volition, the result of her desire, made in her will, to "be deposited in the family vault … [and] placed at the feet of my dear and honoured grandfather" (1413). The coffin's vertical movement (the coffin is removed from her first-storey apartments at the Smith house and ultimately taken "down into the vault" located beneath the parish church [1408]) aligns it with the other significant physical descent that Clarissa makes, the dash down the stairs when she escapes the Sinclair brothel permanently. While, I have argued, the brothel escape is an example of a tactic (as per de Certeau), Clarissa's final journey in her coffin is likewise tactical in its attempts to escape having any final meaning attached to her. Since character in *Clarissa* is associated with space, fixing a person in space is aligned with fixing that person's character. Moving, specifically vertical movement, thus becomes a form of evasion because it is a rejoinder to others' attempts to raise or lower her on metaphorical axes. Moreover, the coffin itself is an example of failed architectural convenience. The coffin is the final space that Clarissa occupies, one that she refers to in architectural terms as her "house" (1250) in one instance and as a "palace" that will be "furnished" in another (1305). Clarissa's metaphorical house reflects her ultimately inscrutable character; she designs a coffin lid inscribed with various emblems and inscriptions, symbols which, as Terry Castle points out, are interpreted by other characters in indeterminate ways since Clarissa, having died without leaving behind a gloss of the inscriptions, cannot confirm or deny their meaning (*Ciphers* 139). If architectural convenience dictates that a house should reflect its owner and if character convenience assumes that the exterior reflects the interior, Clarissa's cryptic coffin lid is the ultimate frustration of attempts to accurately determine character.

Finally, the lid's inscrutability means that the coffin can be Clarissa's final, undisturbed "house" for her violated body. Many scholars have noted that Clarissa denies or destroys her body after the rape as way to return to a virtuous and therefore inviolate state (Braudy 197, J. Harris 104, Gilliam 103). As Braudy puts it, "the response… to the threat of penetration, whether physical, mental, or spiritual, is to become impenetrable" (199). I would add that in addition to denying her body, which she describes architecturally in her post-rape mad letter to Lovelace, Clarissa replaces it with another metaphorical house, her coffin. The coffin becomes a new boundary that replaces the house that has been broken into, one that re-encloses her self and renders her once again inviolate. Clarissa's need to restore the boundary and to make herself unreadable, thus rendering herself impenetrable, demonstrates the dangers of considering character and the self in architectural terms. Lovelace tests Clarissa because he assumes that since character is interiorized, the body can conceal or betray the true self. The Harlowe family persecutes Clarissa because they believe she is hiding the innermost desires of her heart from them. For Clarissa, being an interiorized subject makes her vulnerable. Ironically, the heroine of a novel celebrated for its rendering of interior beings is most in danger when interiorized herself. That she can only avoid the hazards of interiorization when she is dead testifies to the anxieties surrounding female subjectivity and the frequency with which the terms of subjectivity were still being interrogated.

In Richardson's *Clarissa*, the concepts of architectural and character convenience are simultaneously established and problematicized, thus questioning the status of the female subject. The confusion about inside and outside is best exemplified by the Sinclair brothel, which obfuscates its identity partly due to its architectural façade (as a townhouse) and partly by inverting its structure so that Clarissa, who must remain hidden inside, sees only respectability. Architectural framing is also applied to character as Clarissa and Lovelace clash over how to discover the other's true self based on whether exterior attributes correlate to interior ones. Finally, the brothel's moral, psychological dimensions of above and below offer a way for Clarissa to evade others' attempts to fix her character: vertical movement. Richardson's representation of a female, interior subject was revolutionary, yet *Clarissa* also demonstrates how vulnerable interiorization could make female subjects. Though Lovelace is described in terms of failed character convenience, he does not suffer for it. Clarissa, however, is read as lacking character convenience when she believes herself to possess it, and this discrepancy between perceptions leads to the novel's conflicts. Belief in the existence of an authentic inner self also means a belief in the possibility of a deceptive external self. By representing character architecturally, *Clarissa* demonstrates that the creation of a rounded individual introduces new ways of being unstable and vulnerable.

Chapter Two

"The Fair Traveller": The London Townhouse and the Limitations of Movement in Frances Burney's *Cecilia*

Chapter one established how representing women as metaphorical houses is dangerous for women in *Clarissa*. In Richardson's novel, the heroine is fixed in space and in meaning, and the representation of Clarissa (and Clarissa's body) as a house renders her vulnerable, a vulnerability that she evades by sealing herself off and employing vertical movement. While Clarissa's vertical movement is a type of evasive manoeuvre, not all movement is necessarily evasive. In this chapter, I continue to investigate the relationship between women and space by examining a moving subject, the eponymous heroine of Frances Burney's *Cecilia* (1782). Cecilia and Clarissa are both heroines whose moral integrity is tested. *Clarissa* addresses the violation of the boundaries of its female subject, whereas *Cecilia* explores whether its heroine can maintain her integrity as a unified moral being whose external actions mirror her internal values, despite social and personal pressures. *Cecilia* illustrates what happens to a female subject when she has agency and examines where that agency leads her. Cecilia's movement, which is linked to her agency, is opposed by different kinds of fixation—others attempt to fix her meaning and her motives, and her fortune attracts men who do not want to secure her, but her fortune. Ultimately, Cecilia is trapped by and in the domestic London townhouse, unable to move as she wishes, suggesting the power of the forces that act upon moving female subjects, power that is exerted spatially.

Described early in the novel as a "fair traveller" (5), Cecilia Beverley is a woman who moves and who treats movement as an expression of her will. Cecilia's movement is a sign of her independence, an independence that threatens those who would control her. For example, Mr. Monckton becomes upset when Cecilia leaves his London townhouse, where she has been staying, without telling anyone where she is going, because it indicates that his influence over her has not turned into dependence. Cecilia is blithely unaware of Monckton's attempts to gain power over her, and "preserved uncontrolled the right of acting for herself, however desirous and glad of occasional instruction" (730). That Cecilia has come of age at this point further reinforces the connection between movement and agency. Throughout the novel, Cecilia exercises her independence by moving, for example, by traversing the circuit between the houses of her three guardians early in the novel. On this particular trip, Cecilia departs from the Harrel house in Portman Square for Mr. Briggs's house in the city and then travels to Mr. Delvile's house in St. James's Square (177–88). However, Cecilia's movement is often subject to failure. In this case, Cecilia is disappointed in her errands of getting an advance on her inheritance and finding a different place to live. And as a final insult for daring to venture out on her own, Cecilia returns to the Harrel house only to be accosted for money and forced into her first loan from a Jewish moneylender (191–92).

The tension between Cecilia's attempts to exert her will (her "uncontrolled right of acting for herself") and the resistance and obstacles that she meets illustrates the opposition between movement and fixation that occurs in Burney's novel. Cecilia's traversing the city of London is only one of the paths that she traverses in the novel, including the literal ones created by architectural floor plans and city streets, but also metaphorical ones related to her purpose in life (whether to live a life of purpose doing good or to get married) and to her narrative progress in the novel. Narratively, her navigation leads to an ambiguous, somber ending in which the heroine, after suffering a series of indignities and losses that results in madness and near death, becomes fixed in a certain space (the townhouse) and within a certain spatial ideology (domestic). The problematic nature of Cecilia's movement(s) is suggested by the novel's initial critical reception. The ambiguous ending, with the heroine regretting the loss of her fortune, was criticized from its first publication; reviewers wanted a happier, more traditional ending in which virtue was rewarded and vice punished. The critic in the *English Review* wishes the Egglestons "had been represented as more worthy of their good fortune" or that "a flaw in the Dean's will enabled Miss Beverley to enter again into possession of her estate" (16), and the *Critical Review* believes "that the pride and ostentation of old Delvile ought, in justice, to have been punished" (420).

Centuries later, Burney scholars also grapple with the novel's ambiguous ending, especially its implications about the novel's gender politics. *Cecilia* challenges feminist readers because the fulfillment of the heroine's oft-repressed feminine desire comes at the expense of her fortune and power. For example, in *Masquerade and Civilization*, Terry Castle criticizes the novel's "discontinuous, confused narrative structure" (269) that consists of a "retrograde plot of female disenfranchisement" (283). Castle cannot reconcile the novel's beginning with its end: “Its ending—with its intimations of anguish barely surmounted—seems profoundly at odds with its bright beginnings and the essentially hopeful narrative topos of the heroine’s ‘entrance into the world’” (269). In her influential *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works*, Margaret Anne Doody likewise acknowledges that the novel ends on a “sober middle note” and that “Cecilia may be a survivor after all, but she is hardly a success” (142). Though Julie Park argues that the marriages at the end of Burney’s first three novels “can only provide weak and ambiguous closure, as each of them demands subservience or self-sacrifice from the heroine, or both” (“Pleasures and Pains” 28), Cecilia’s sacrifice is what brings about the novel’s resolution. The criticisms of *Cecilia*’s ending (and Cecilia’s ending) seem to suggest that the novel’s resolution is inconsistent with the rest of the novel. I argue, however, that the novel’s ending, when read as the end of Cecilia’s movement through the novel, illustrates the necessity of her series of losses and how she must lose everything in order to cease being vulnerable.

When Cecilia moves, it is usually in a circular pattern. Circularity is one of the novel’s major themes, established through repeated and escalating events. Unlike Clarissa, when Cecilia moves she does not evade oppressive forces, but rather becomes even more exposed and exploitable. Like Clarissa, Cecilia is vulnerable to conjectures based upon architectural convenience in which she is compared to space. However, unlike Clarissa, whom Lovelace compares to a generic house, Cecilia is inexorably tied to a specific space, the estate that she inherits. It is Cecilia’s close association with her estate that makes her vulnerable, especially when she moves. In *Cecilia*, Burney works through two spatial metaphors. In the first, through architectural convenience, Cecilia is compared to a besieged estate whose physical decay is aligned with moral decay; in the second, the path that the London townhouse maps out parallels the similarly circular path that Cecilia navigates through the novel, one that presents conflicted courses related to work and to love. While the two metaphors—fixed character vs. movement—might initially seem opposing, they reinforce how Cecilia's powerlessness stems from what should be a source of agency: her inheritance. Cecilia ceases to be vulnerable only when she is no longer associated with her estate, which also means the loss of her agency. Burney's *Cecilia* demonstrates the destructive power of convenience and how, when movement cannot resolve conflicts about what a character should or should not do, the female subject becomes confined and motionless. The source of Cecilia's power and the basis for her exploitation are the same (her estate and inheritance). Burney's novel suggests that the only way to be rid of the latter is to be also rid of the former. In order for the novel to end, the heroine, whose movement is an expression of her agency, must stop moving.

Convenience: Women, Estate and Duty

In *Cecilia*, the moving heroine is exposed to the conjectures and misconstructions of others as they attempt to interpret her actions and fix her meaning. This fixation occurs through architectural and character convenience. In terms of architectural convenience, Cecilia's inherited estate determines her economic and social status. Not only is she a woman of means, but as an heiress, she is also then exposed to others' demands, especially regarding charity requests, loans, and her hand in marriage. Cecilia is inexorably associated with her inheritance, a connection stressed by the novel's subtitle (*Memoirs of an Heiress*). The most explicit comparison between Cecilia and her estate is made by Mr. Gosport when he accidentally meets Cecilia as she travels to London on her first, failed attempt to marry Delvile. Suspecting her true reason for travelling to London, Gosport obliquely questions Cecilia using two metaphors that align her with space. The first metaphor plays on Cecilia's evasive answer that she is going to London on business. Seizing the opportunity, Gosport questions Cecilia about marriage under the guise of continuing to speak of business, suggesting that she take on a steward (that is, a husband) to manage her estate, claiming that there would be many "who will freely undertake the management of your estate, for no other reward than the trifling one of possessing it" (597). Gosport asks whether Cecilia has received any "applications" (that is, marriage proposals), assuming that claimants "assault you by dozens" (597). The most explicit connection between Cecilia and the estate is Gosport's speculation that Cecilia has had no applicants because the position has already been filled: "the place, they conclude, is already seized, and the fee-simple of the estate is the heart of the owner" (597). Gosport's use of the term "fee simple" strengthens the estate metaphor; the OED defines the noun "fee simple" as a legal term indicating property or land "belonging to the owner and his heirs forever" and the act of being in fee simple as being "in absolute possession" (def. a). In the passage, Gosport is implying that the hiring of a metaphorical steward involves the permanent ownership of Cecilia's heart, an obvious reference to marriage that represents matrimony as a real estate transaction in which Cecilia's estate stands for her heart. That a fee-simple belongs to the owner's heirs further solidifies the association with marriage.

Gosport's second metaphor likewise compares Cecilia to a house, in this case, Delvile Castle. The castle is a fitting choice for illustrating how Cecilia's character can be vulnerable since it is the home of the man whom she plans to marry secretly. Gosport combines architectural and character convenience, comparing the castle's inside and outside to the way that the self has interior and exterior elements. Gosport warns Cecilia that the appearance of safety can conceal a compromised interior, and does so by likening moral character to a building:

> "The internal parts of a building are not less vulnerable to accident than its outside; and though the evil may more easily be concealed, it will with greater difficulty be remedied. Many a fair structure have I seen, which, like that now before me," (looking with much significance at Cecilia), "has to the eye seemed perfect in all its parts, and unhurt either by time or casualty, while within, some lurking evil, some latent injury, has secretly worked its way into the *heart* of the estate, where it has consumed its strength, and laid waste to its power." (598, emphasis original)

The main concern is not the correspondence between interior and exterior attributes, but rather how the lack of correspondence can hide whether or not Cecilia's character has been compromised. Once again, as in *Clarissa*, the interior (the heart) represents the authentic, true self, in this case a true self whose integrity might be compromised unknowingly by "some lurking evil, some latent injury". A compromised interior is more serious than external damage, because it "will with greater difficulty be remedied". In fact, the separation of inside and outside makes discerning internal destruction more difficult. Cecilia has already understood Gosport's metaphor, but his significant look at her when mentioning a "fair structure" emphasizes his point.

The two spatial metaphors (Cecilia as her estate and Cecilia as a decaying Delvile Castle) emphasize the importance of integrity (structural and otherwise), demonstrating that the intersection of character and architecture in *Cecilia* elucidates the moral aspect of character. Cecilia's morality is defined by her overdeveloped sense of duty, one which stems from her inheritance. Even before she comes of age, Cecilia already feels the claims that the less fortunate will have upon her, and expresses these claims in financial terms:

> A strong sense of DUTY, a fervent desire to ACT RIGHT, were the ruling characteristics of her mind: her affluence she therefore considered as a debt contracted with the poor, and her independence, as a tie upon her liberality to pay it with interest. (55)

Charity work is Cecilia's way of discharging to society her moral debt for being an heiress. Her sense of duty is not limited to financial assistance to the poor. It includes loyalty to old acquaintances who can claim the tie of friendship. Cecilia's two women friends from Bury, Mrs. Charlton and Mrs. Harrel, still have a claim on Cecilia due to their early acquaintance even though she has outgrown them in different ways, leading her to treat them more leniently than they deserve: "though sometimes, perhaps, conscious she should not have chosen them from many, she adhered to them with sincerity" (713). Though she repays her obligations to her old friends with loyalty and leniency, Cecilia sees her relationships with Mrs. Charlton and especially Mrs. Harrel as a debt that must still be honoured, maintaining friendships that might have—or should have—lapsed long ago.

The dual obligations of debt and friendship that Cecilia feels meet in Mrs. Harrel, who uses the claims of friendship to help her husband extort money from Cecilia. When deciding whether to lend the Harrels the final £1,000 pounds they need to go to the continent, Cecilia weighs the options, acknowledging that "Mrs. Harrel was her earliest, and had once been her dearest friend" (386). When Mrs. Harrel learns that Cecilia has advised Mr. Arnott to stay away from Portman Square to avoid being pressed for more money, she reproaches her: "O Miss Beverley, how could I have thought to have had such an office from you?" (391), asking Cecilia to "let not your poor Priscilla leave her native land without help or pity" (391). Unable to resist, Cecilia initially agrees to write to Mr. Arnott, but her sense of duty is so strong that she believes asking him to return after ordering him away for his own benefit is "a notion of treachery" (392). Instead, Cecilia reluctantly agrees to give them the money herself, a decision she regards with ambivalence: "now soothed by the purity of her intentions, and now uneasy from the rectitude of her principles, she alternately rejoiced and repined at what she had done" (394). When Monckton chastises her about the loan, Cecilia argues that loaning Harrel the money was the correct course of action, especially given Harrel's suicide at Vauxhall: "I might then have upbraided myself with supposing that my compliance would have rescued him" (434). Her argument is that Mr.

Harrel's second, successful suicide attempt makes it less likely that the first was an inauthentic ploy to convince her to loan him money.

When Cecilia does entertain doubts about her actions, she expresses her reservations in terms of interior and exterior, further associating the moral and the architectural. Cecilia understands that her behaviour reflects her sense of morality. After having agreed to marry Delvile in secret, "her delicacy and her principles revolted against a conduct of which the secrecy seemed to imply the impropriety" (566). Wracked with guilt, she writes to Delvile to retract her promise, explaining that "I have yielded to the exhortations of an *inward monitor*, who is never to be neglected with impunity" (585, emphasis added). Cecilia's "inward monitor" is an internal manifestation of conscience, one which Erik Bond contrasts favourably against her negligent or corrupt guardians, whom he calls external conductors. The contrast between internal and exterior once again favours the interior, with Cecilia's sense of duty represented as operating inwardly. In order to be a moral being, Cecilia's exterior must accord with her interior.

Cecilia's inward monitor, however, is as compromised as Mr. Gosport fears it is. The word "inward" is directional and suggests a perspective from the outside, that is, that Cecilia is evaluating herself from an external point of view. Her values are, after all, determined by her upbringing and learned principles. Moreover, Cecilia's actions are influenced by how others will perceive them. When she finally arrives in London to call off the wedding with Delvile, he convinces her to go through with it because their having been seen travelling to London creates the expectation of a wedding: "ought not every objection to our union, however potent,… give way, without further hesitation, to the certainty that our intending it must become public?" (620). The way to minimize scandal would be to do what the public expects, that is, to get married. Mrs. Charlton agrees with Delvile, and Cecilia is "Struck with a truth which she could not controvert" (620). Delvile's argument echoes Mr. Harrel's expectations that Cecilia will eventually be worn down enough to wed Sir Robert Floyer. As Mr. Monckton explains, "By assuring you that the world thought the marriage already settled, he hoped to surprise you into believing there was no help for it" (370). Mr. Harrel hopes that the appearance of an engagement is sufficient to bring about an actual engagement; in other words, he hopes to create a correspondence between the appearance of an event and the actual event. The slippery connection between appearance and actuality is also why Mr. Monckton advises Cecilia against spending Easter at the Harrels' suburban villa, since Sir Robert will also be present as an invited guest: "the knowledge that a connection is believed in the world, frequently, if not generally, leads by imperceptible degrees to its real ratification" (231–32). External forces influence Cecilia's internal monitor by playing on her fears of being misconstrued or misunderstood. Cecilia is influenced by the perception of others to the point where she cannot determine whether her own principles are correct. The inward monitor is more internalized than internal. The external pressures on Cecilia's inward monitor demonstrate the way that convenience (as exemplified by Gosport's comparing Cecilia to Delvile Castle) is used to control Cecilia. Because Cecilia is driven by the "fervent desire to ACT RIGHT" (55), she is also influenced by what others consider to be right. Cecilia becomes like the model prisoner in the Panopticon, internalizing the forces that attempt to control her to the point where she begins policing herself. The separation between interior and exterior can become more difficult to discern as the external gradually asserts itself upon the internal.

Maps and Courses: The London Townhouse and Circularity

One significant space that imposes itself upon Cecilia is the London townhouse with all its attendant associations of social pressure, intimacy, and public exposure. The townhouse in the novel, such as the Harrels' late eighteenth-century townhouse, stands for London society in particular and the world in general, including the surveying forces that influence Cecilia's "inward monitor". The townhouse also represents the novel's narrative structure because they both encourage circular movement (through spaces and through the story). The theme of circularity is established early by the townhouse and determines Cecilia's movement through the architectural interiors and exterior streets of London, as well as her progress through the novel itself. But circularity also suggests inevitability, and it is in this respect that the townhouse echoes the narrative, which is the story of the series of losses Cecilia sustains and the necessity of eventually being rid of all her estate and fortune before she can marry Delvile. By examining the layout, design, and social history of the London townhouse, this section explores how, by encouraging circular movement, the townhouse determines Cecilia's path through the novel, demonstrating the nearly destructive power that space has on the moving subject.

Despite the importance of what occurs there (the masquerade, Harrel's attempted suicide, the extortion of Cecilia's fortune), the house in Portman Square is a building that has received little critical attention. Instead, the most discussed edifice in *Cecilia* is Delvile Castle, an old gothic pile which symbolizes the aristocratic, patriarchal Delvile family's crumbling relevance and importance.[12] Yet the guardians' houses in London are equally if not more telling, beginning with their locations within the city's geography. Addresses in *Cecilia* are used carefully, with the long-established Delviles residing in St. James's Square, an address that indicates the family's long-founded respectability, and the miser Briggs living in the city of London proper in an area associated with finance and trade (Bond 201; Doody, *Cecilia* App. III, 948). The Harrels' address is equally significant. The Harrels reside in the *nouveau riche* neighbourhood of Portman Square, an area whose historical development reflects the less established nature of its inhabitants' social statuses. Portman Square was a new real estate project begun in 1761, though building on the north side did not start until 1774 (Marshall 31). Construction in the development was slow and was not fully completed until 1784, two years after *Cecilia*'s publication (Bolton 91).

The Harrel townhouse indicates the importance of movement, particularly circular movement, first because its spatial plan and room arrangement encourage social circulation. Historically, eighteenth-century houses began changing to accommodate increased at-home entertaining in the middle of the century.

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[12] For more on Delvile Castle, see Doody, *Life*, p.140–41 and Barbara Zonitch, *Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in the Novels of Frances Burney*, p. 61–62. Zonitch examines Mr. Briggs's house on p. 69.

According to Mark Girouard in *Life in the English Country House,* women were inspired by public gatherings at assembly rooms and pleasure gardens to begin hosting their own parties at home (for instance, the Harrels' pre-masquerade masque) (194). The once-popular axial arrangement of a house, in which rooms were stretched out along a line, was no longer adequate to accommodate a large number of people or to facilitate sociability. Instead, "What was now needed was a string of reception rooms for entertaining, with dancing, cards, collations, billiards, etc." (Thornton 93). Promoting frequent social gatherings required "a series of communal rooms for entertaining, exclusive of the hall and all running into each other" (Girouard 194). The solution was to arrange the rooms in a circle (or a half circle, if space was limited) around a staircase, forming what Girouard terms a "circuit" arrangement, one that he dates from 1750 (194–95). Even the presence of a corridor (which first appeared in English architecture in the seventeenth-century) could not disrupt flow, as most eighteenth-century houses used a floor plan that combined interconnected rooms with a small central passage that could also access all rooms (Evans 267–78).

The circuit became a popular layout that later architects would revise and refine over the next few decades (Girouard 198). One such architect was Robert Adam, a Scot who established a practice with his brothers in London in 1758 and was appointed one of two Architects to the King's Works in 1761 (E. Harris 2–3). In addition to building houses, Adam designed and remodeled interiors, and was in such demand that he could not keep up with requests for commissions (E. Harris 3). Adam was known for his attention to detail and his careful organization of space, conceiving of his houses as social spaces which were, according to John Summerson, "devised for the conduct of an elaborate social parade… a life of continual entertaining in drawing-rooms and ante-rooms and 'eating-rooms'" (*Georgian London* 144). Adam's interest lay not in individual rooms, but in the harmonious relation of each room to the others: "The handling of spaces, the relation of one to another and the placement of elements within each space was Adam's genius" (E. Harris 5).[13] Adam's signature was to contrast adjoining rooms, providing those who moved through them with a sense of progression. Contrast was often achieved by giving each room a different shape, colour scheme, and style: "Adam planned these interiors as sequences of individual rooms, with concave shapes and engaged and detached columns, to provide highly dimensional spatial effects" (Molnar and Vodvarka 122). In his book *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam*, Robert Adam termed the progression from room to room "movement," that is, "the rise and fall, the advance and recess, with other diversity of form, in the different parts of the building" (1). Adam drew a direct comparison between "movement" and the picturesque in that they both "serve to produce an agreeable and diversified contour, that groups and contrasts like a picture, and creates a variety of light and shade, which gives great spirit, beauty and effect to the composition" (1). Adam's comparing "movement" to the picturesque suggests that his aesthetic concern was coupled with an experiential one; he was interested in how his spaces would be experienced by those moving—or even flowing—through them. Describing Adam's work at Kenwood House on Hampstead Heath,

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[13] See also Summerson, *Georgian London,* p. 143.

London, Charles Samaurez Smith appreciates how Adam "articulated the physical experience of moving through the house, the transitions between the rooms, the different room shapes, and the contrasting temperatures of their decoration" (219).

Considering the fashionable nature of Portman Square, which one contemporaneous guide book described as a "very elegant quadrangle" whose inhabitants included the "Nobility and Gentry" (*London Guide* 146)[14], it is no surprise that the much sought-after Robert Adam would be called on to work there. In 1775, Adam was hired by the Duchess of Home to build her house at No. 20 Portman Square. Though the ground floor had already been laid out according to the plans of a previous architect, James Wyatt, Adam's influence is apparent. His signature 'movement' is evident in the various colour schemes of the ground floor rooms: the front parlour is done in shades of blue, the back parlour in yellows and golds, and the library in greens (Bolton 86). The first floor, arranged as a half-circuit with a stair case in the middle of the east side, demonstrates Adam's characteristic variation of room shapes and sizes, with flow accomplished in the variation between large and small rooms and between rooms of different shapes, as evidenced in the floor plan provided in A.T. Bolton's *The Architecture of Robert and James Adam* (81). The circuit (fig. 1) begins as one ascends a grand, top-lit circular staircase and moves south into a square ante-room with one curved wall. The ante-room leads west to a large music room at the front of the house whose rectangular shape is mediated by three semi-circular apses (recesses) in the long front wall, shapes mirrored in the opposing wall by the corresponding positions of two doors (to the vestibule and to the central corridor) and a fireplace in between them. The music room features an organ in the far wall that acts as a focal point, attracting attention and drawing people from the ante-room. From the music room, one moves through an oblong vestibule into a rectangular drawing room. The drawing room leads eastward, via a small, circular ante-room, to a room decorated in an "Etruscan" style, which is square with two large semi-circular apses on opposite sides. The Etruscan room leads southward back to the staircase, and thus the circuit is complete (Bolton 86–89).

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[14] No. 22 Portman Square, next door to Home House, was the residence of the recently widowed Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, who began building her house in 1775 and moved in December 1781. Montagu employed architect James Stuart for the work. For more information, see Kerry Bristol, "22 Portman Square: Mrs. Montagu and Her 'Palais de la Vieilliesse'".

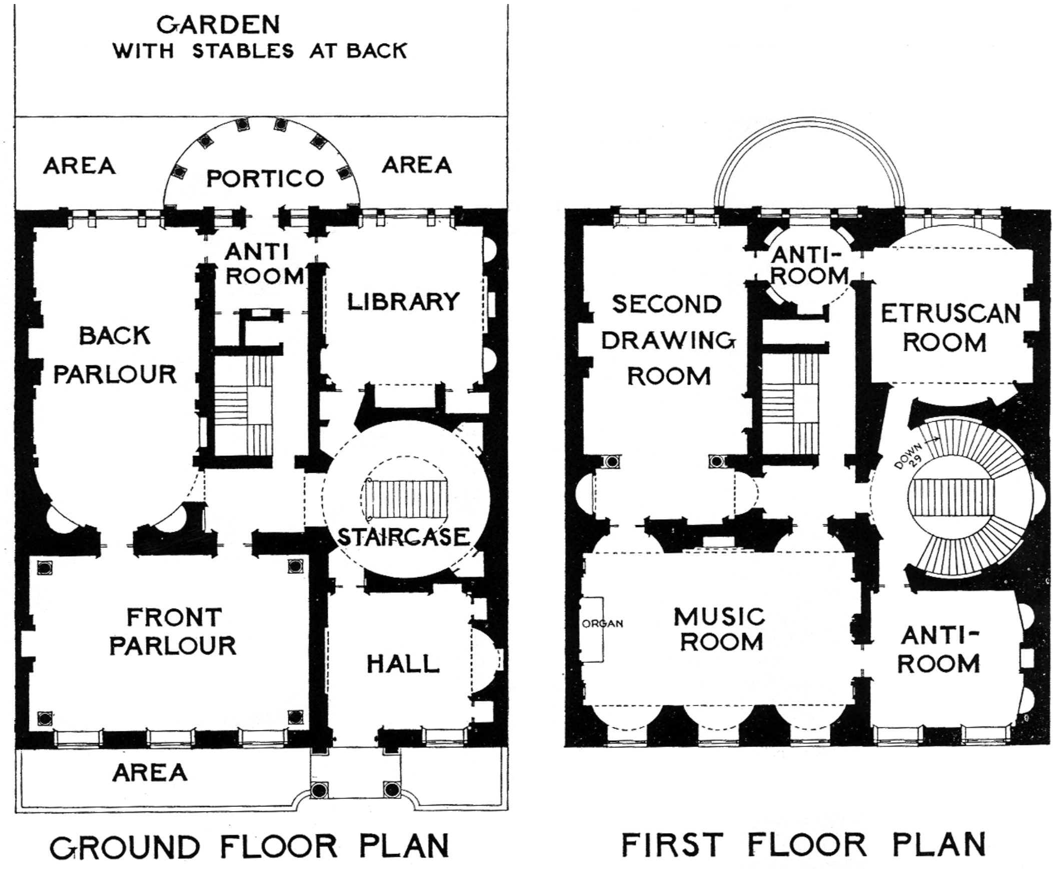
GARDEN
WITH STABLES AT BACK
AREA
PORTICO
AREA
ANTI ROOM
BACK PARLOUR
LIBRARY
STAIRCASE
FRONT PARLOUR
HALL
AREA
GROUND FLOOR PLAN
ANTI-ROOM
SECOND DRAWING ROOM
ETRUSCAN ROOM
DOWN 29
ORGAN
MUSIC ROOM
ANTI-ROOM
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Fig. 1: Home House floor plan. From Bolton, p. 81.

While it is doubtful that Burney modeled the Harrel domicile after a specific residence, it is immediately identifiable as a fashionable, elegant London townhouse that would have been common in the neighbourhood. The townhouse is "one of the most elegant houses in Portman-square" (33) and features a drawing room that is "spacious, lighted with brilliancy, and decorated with magnificence" (21). Characters' room-to-room movement suggests that the house is organized in a circuit. For example, at the masquerade, Cecilia escapes the black devil (a disguised Mr. Monckton) by running directly into the next room (110). Soon after, the White Domino and Harlequin fend off the black devil by "pursuing him from room to room" (111), and an accidentally darkened room is "illuminated from the adjoining apartments" (124). The townhouse's circular organization is echoed in the language used to describe the repeated social obligations that Cecilia must endure. Cecilia quickly wearies of "eternally running the same round" (53) and the "irksome repetition of unremitting yet uninteresting dissipation" (53). She sees her time being consumed by "the endless succession of diversions, the continual rotation of assemblies" (131). The social nature of the townhouse is presented disapprovingly: Mr. Harrel "seemed to consider his own house merely as a Hôtel" (53), and Cecilia is surprised that Mrs. Harrel, though more at home, is likewise occupied: "her acquaintance were numerous, expensive, and idle, and every moment not actually spent in company was scrupulously devoted to making arrangements for that purpose" (53). In *Cecilia*, then, the social and the circular act reciprocally upon each other—social rounds perpetuate more social rounds, all of which are echoed in the circular arrangement of the townhouse.

In addition to setting its heroine on a circular path, the London townhouse in *Cecilia* represents the collapse of architectural convenience. After the Great Fire, housing had to be built expediently and to code. As a result, rows of townhouses had uniform appearances, exemplifying what Christoph Heyl terms "urban anonymity" (14): "their façades lacked any individualized architectural or decorative features distinguishing them from their neighbours" (14). Rachel Stewart argues that the London townhouse challenged conventional relationships between external and internal because houses' bland exteriors, designed en masse by builders rather than individual architects, could no longer indicate anything about the status or character of their owners; profitable building practices effaced any traces of individuality on the outside, thus decoupling the relationship between interior and exterior (129–30). The exteriors of a row of townhouses came to represent the builders while residents (who in actuality were long-term tenants rather than owners) controlled only interiors. The townhouse is no longer just an example of architectural convenience, then, but of the unreliability and riskiness of evaluating character based on exteriors.

In the same way that the London townhouse reduced the importance of exteriors, in the novel the townhouse's social setting renders external indicators, such as manners, unreliable. A breakdown of character convenience occurs because external comportment and manners are taken as evidence of an intimacy that does not exist. Intimacy in London is not what Cecilia expects. Whereas she seeks "private meetings and friendly intercourse" (131), she instead experiences over-familiarity and impudence. The morning after Cecilia arrives in London, Miss Larolles is "announced as a visitor to Cecilia, to whom she advanced with the intimacy of an old acquaintance" (28). Cecilia in turn is "amazed at this warmth of civility from one to whom she was almost a stranger" (28). Mr. Morrice's familiar behaviour at his first visit leads to another misunderstanding: "Mrs. Harrel, naturally concluding from both his visit and behaviour, that he was an acquaintance of some intimacy, very civilly offered him a seat" (46). The differences between Cecilia's and Mrs. Harrel's reactions are edifying. Mrs. Harrel does not know that Morrice is not on visiting terms with Cecilia, and as hostess she offers him hospitality. Yet Mrs. Harrel does know that Cecilia has met Miss Larolles only the previous night and it is clear that she is not slighted that Cecilia, and not herself, is Miss Larolles's designated visitee, when she seconds Miss Larolles's invitation to visit the latter's milliner (29). Mrs. Harrel seems to believe that gestures of intimacy are as good as—perhaps, in fact, the same as—intimacy itself. That she "naturally" deduces an intimacy from Morrice's behaviour suggests that for her (and the majority of London society), form and manners take the place of actual intimacy. Intimacy in London is an example of broken character convenience where the only important aspect is an individual's external comportment; whether or not true intimacy exists is unimportant.

The townhouse is dangerous to Cecilia because the space's social nature broadcasts intimacy. After all, admittance to a house (being on visiting terms) is a public sign of intimacy. Mr. Morrice the social climber, for example, is delighted at "the prospect of gaining admission into such a house as Mr. Harrel's" (51). However, Morrice's social intimacy, publicly announced by his admittance to

Portman Square, is not the kind of intimacy that Cecilia seeks. Cecilia is not the retiring sort; she has "a heart formed for friendship and affection" (130) and enjoys "the comfort of society, and the relief of communication" (130–31). However, the society she encounters is superficial and insincere. Cecilia eventually sees through fine manners and effusions of partiality:

> upon every first meeting, the civilities which were shewn her, flattered her into believing she had excited a partiality that a very little time would ripen into affection; the next meeting commonly confirmed the expectation; but the third, and every future one, regularly destroyed it. She found that time added nothing to their fondness, nor intimacy to their sincerity; that the interest in her welfare which appeared to be taken at first sight, seldom, with whatever reason, encreased, and often without any abated; that the distinction she at first met with, was no effusion of kindness, but of curiosity, which is scarcely sooner gratified than satiated… (53–54)

In the space of London society, Cecilia the heiress is a novelty, but eventually novelty wears off and no substantial connections are made.

The public nature of acts of intimacy—genuine or not—exposes Cecilia to conjecture and gossip. Cecilia, heiress and novelty, is the topic of much conjecture in the novel regarding whom she will marry. As the examples of Miss Larolles and Mr. Morrice have demonstrated, to be on visiting terms is a mark of intimacy, which includes the intimacy of courtship. Mr. Monckton, hoping eventually to secure Cecilia for himself, is attuned to signs of intimacy from others, and is thus surprised to see Morrice at the Harrel house, concluding that he must be there to see Cecilia (60). Monckton is also wary of another rival, Sir Robert Floyer, whose presence and behaviour at dinner at the Harrel townhouse "gave abundant employment to his penetration" (59). Mr. Harrel's late-game ploy of inviting Mr. Marriot to dinner likewise indicates to Cecilia that something is afoot (383), and Mr. Monckton later confirms that for £2,000 Harrel had agreed to encourage Cecilia to accept Mr. Marriot (434). Sharing a space—whether a drawing room, a house, or a carriage—becomes an indicator of intimacy, wanted or not. The closer and more frequent the visitor, the higher the risk. Mr. Monckton initially worries that Mr. Arnott, Mrs. Harrel's brother, will be his main rival for Cecilia, for "he dreaded the effects of intimacy, fearing she might first grow accustomed to his attentions" (58). Moreover, the house itself can be used to facilitate intimacy as well as being the site of it. Monckton uses the pretence of showing Cecilia some alterations to the grounds of his Bury estate to gain a private moment with her (534), echoing to a certain extent Sir Robert Floyer's more brazen ploy of getting the ladies' opinion on a house he is "about" in Harley Street (81–82). Soliciting Cecilia's opinion demonstrates a regard for her; for Monckton to do so as an old family friend is not unusual, but Sir Robert's claiming Cecilia's opinion is a more forward attempt to flatter her and gain her favour.

The public nature of intimacy is particularly difficult for Cecilia, who must avoid slighting acquaintances while still behaving according to her own code. Avoiding awkward social situations is particularly difficult because Cecilia does not control the space she lives in; she is essentially a long-term guest of Mr.

and Mrs. Harrel, and it is Mr. Harrel who allows suitors such as Sir Robert and Mr. Marriot access to Cecilia. Cecilia's solution is to avoid, as much as possible, being in the same space as other men by frequently excusing herself from social functions and retiring to her own apartment. When the Harrels invite Sir Robert to join them at their suburban villa, Violet Bank, for Easter, Mr. Monckton warns Cecilia of the dangerous appearance of intimacy that will result if she also goes:

> If, after what has passed, you are included in the same party with Sir Robert, you give a sanction yourself to the reports already circulated of your engagements with him: and the effect of such a sanction will be more serious than you can easily imagine, since the knowledge that a connection is believed in the world, frequently, if not generally, leads by imperceptible degrees to its real ratification. (231–32)

That Monckton is using Cecilia's sense of propriety for his own ends does not blunt the effectiveness of his warning. Here, "reports" and "knowledge" are precursors to reality; in the same way that behaving like an intimate friend is enough to be an intimate friend, surmises about being engaged are almost as good as being engaged. Moreover, the vagueness and insidiousness of the terms "reports" and "knowledge" suggest that Cecilia will never escape the gossip and conjecture about her, that the world (London's social scene, in this case) cannot be escaped.

Cecilia also encounters problems in other London townhouses, usually centered on her proximity to another eligible bachelor, Mr. Belfield. Mrs. Belfield and Mr. Delvile Sr. both attribute Cecilia's calling at the Belfield family's lodgings as interest in Mr. Belfield rather than friendship with Henrietta, suggesting the impossibility of platonic female intimacy when the presumption of romantic—or even sexual—intimacy is available. Illogically, Cecilia's very presence in the same space as Belfield (though also in the same space as Henrietta) indicates guilt, especially for Compton Delvile, whose discovery of all three in the same room justifies his suspicions (785–86). Mortimer proves himself his father's son when he likewise jumps to conclusions upon finding Cecilia and Belfield alone in a room, even though he is by that point married to Cecilia (885). Mortimer's jealously renders him suspicious even when Cecilia occupies a marginal space tangentially related to Belfield; he assumes Cecilia is inquiring after Belfield when he accidentally meets her in the doorway of Belfield's surgeon's house (176). For Cecilia, there can never be a neutral location; her presence in any space incriminates her.

Plots, Loss, and Inevitability

The literal courses that Cecilia traverses (through the townhouse, through the city) are rife with difficulties, paralleling the metaphorical courses that she must also navigate through the novel. Cecilia's narrative progress is defined by two competing plots, one in which she searches for independence and one in which she finds love. Margaret Anne Doody and Jane Spencer have both noted how *Cecilia* consists of two conventional plots—a courtship plot and a quest plot where the heroine seeks a meaningful life without regard to love. In her book *Divided Fictions*, Kristina Straub terms the second plot the "course in life" plot, one defined by work (110). In Straub's reading, both plots are bound to fail: "The plot of love and the plot of searching for a course of life interfere with and frustrate each other in Burney's second novel because of the specific social conditions of femininity in mid-eighteenth-century culture" (111). Doody sets the courtship plot against a quest narrative, arguing that though Cecilia searches for "friendship and independence[,] she does not know (as the reader does) that she is searching for love, and in Cecilia's case, love will prove to be a bar to other hopes and plans" (*Life in the Works* 111). As Spencer notes, the conflict between the course-in-life plot and the love plot arises because Cecilia attempts to contravene gender expectations: "*Cecilia* poses the question of how a young woman makes the choice of life in a world that does not expect her to be independent or in control" (36). Cecilia's movement—the obstacles it meets with, the rumours it generates—reflects the difficulties she experiences whenever she attempts to exert control. In *Cecilia*, then, the circuit arrangement of rooms also becomes a metaphor for the novel's plots as the heroine's course-in-life plot is worked out while she traverses the circuits of London society.

As Cecilia attempts to work out her course in life, the novel's narrative reveals that circularity is also elaborated through repetition. Spatially Cecilia moves through circuits; narratively she moves through repeated plot details, particularly repeated difficulties. Such repeated moments include but are not limited to: Mr. Harrel's thrice extorting money from Cecilia; Harrel's two suicide attempts; two visits to the opera (one rehearsal, one performance); two interviews with Mrs. Delvile and her son; two attempts at a secret marriage; two duels between rivals (Belfield and Floyer; Delvile and Monckton); two mad women who become still (young Albany's lover and Cecilia); Cecilia's multiple rejections of marriage proposals (to the unnamed suitors in Bury, to Floyer, to Lord Ernolf for his son); her repeated denials of her engagements to numerous suitors; two Delviles, Sr. and Jr., finding an embarrassed Cecilia in the same room as Mr. Belfield; and finally, Cecilia twice getting encircled on London streets (176; 895). The many examples of Cecilia's being misunderstood or imposed upon demonstrate a truism about all Burney heroines: they suffer, and they suffer repeatedly. As a result of all the repetition, the novel sometimes seems to circle back on itself. Just when the reader believes an issue, such as Cecilia's renunciation of Delvile, has been settled, it resurfaces, leading to yet another long, painful interview.

The protracted nature of Cecilia's multiple meetings and discussions points to another attribute of her movement—that the path is often impeded. The concept of a circuit implies a smooth, forward motion. The townhouse's architectural circularity was intended to facilitate socializing, ushering partygoers from one room to another. Yet in *Cecilia*, the heroine's physical movement is frequently hindered. For example, she is prevented from moving by the black devil at the masquerade (111) and encircled by the mob on its way to Tyburn (176). The difficulties of circular movement are also evident at the level of narrative, where repeated difficulties impede momentum, suspending the action. As Doody notes, the chapter where Mr. Harrel commits suicide at Vauxhall does not end with his death, but continues by describing Cecilia's predicament of dealing with the body and getting home. The chapter does not flow as the reader would expect: "The episode illustrates Burney's use of counterclimax, frustration and retardation; what should be urgent forward movement gets caught up in this wild eddy" (*Life* 133). Doody's description of the narrative momentum as a "wild eddy" suggests that even impediments can become circular if each repetition increases in intensity (which we will see soon with Cecilia's stupors). How often Cecilia is impeded also indicates the little control she actually has on her movements. She is often carried along, either by others or by the narrative.

Cecilia's lack of control leads to a series of losses, all of which seem inevitable when considered in terms of repetition and circularity. *Cecilia*, I contend, is a novel of loss, a novel where the heroine loses everything over the course of 900 pages. One of the major losses Cecilia incurs is the loss of her fortune. As Copeland posits, the "unhappy fantasy of the novel might be stated: 'If you were a woman and had an enormous fortune, how would you go about losing it?'" (28–29). Copeland's grammatical construction suggests that Cecilia is actively responsible for the loss, whereas Catherine Gallagher contends that Cecilia "gradually loses her fortune through a series of painful extortions" (238). Indeed, Cecilia loses her fortune in increments ranging from £200 to £7,500, parting with almost all of it unwillingly.[15] The repetition of the extortions (and of Cecilia's futile remonstrating with the Harrels afterwards) produces a sense of circular déjà vu for the reader, one overshadowed by the more prominent feeling of dread engendered by the same repetition. The repetition that creates a sense of circularity also creates a sense of inevitability. The question is not whether Cecilia will lose her fortune—it is how and when.

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[15] In her first usury transaction, Cecilia borrows £600 but intends to keep £250 for her own uses, including discharging a debt to her bookseller. However, Harrel convinces her to loan him another £200 at breakfast the following morning (190–92). For a detailed breakdown of where Cecilia's money goes, see Appendix IV of the Oxford World's Classics edition of the novel.

Yet her fortune is not her only loss, nor is it the most important one. In addition to gradually losing her fortune, Cecilia also loses her name (when she marries), her country house (as a result of the marriage), and ultimately, her mind. The novel's catalyst is also a loss, the death of Cecilia's uncle the Dean, her last surviving relative. The Dean's death sets in motion all of the novel's events, with Cecilia's status as an heiress defining her for so much of the novel that she herself laments her lost status at the very end. Appropriately for a novel characterized by tension and narrative suspense, Cecilia's losses are never sudden, but foreshadowed and anticipated. The narrator casually mentions the name clause in her uncle's will on page six and its importance is repeatedly mentioned by Delvile and his mother, with Mrs. Delvile shaming her son by reminding him that his future married name would be "*Mr. Beverley*" (677). When Cecilia is unceremoniously forced from her home, she leaves after two visits from Mr. Eggleston's lawyer roughly one week apart. In all the listed examples, losses are introduced and delayed before they are actually experienced.

The novel of loss culminates in the loss of its heroine's sanity, a significant loss for the rational, thoughtful Cecilia. The situation leading up to her madness stems from losses of varying kinds. Cecilia has lost the presence and protection of her husband Delvile, who she believes is in France to care for his ailing mother and to avoid being prosecuted for injuring Monckton in an illegal duel. Cecilia has also lost her architectural protection and the control associated with it, having permanently left her house, now legally owned by Mr. Eggleston. Mr. Delvile Sr. is ignorant of her and Delvile's secret marriage, thus depriving her of any place to call her own. Secretly married, she cannot identify herself by her new legal name (Cecilia Delvile) yet also cannot fall back on her maiden name, Beverley. Placeless and nameless, Cecilia exists in limbo; she is an heiress without money, a wife without a husband, a woman without a domestic space of her own. She is, in short, on hold. Her suspended status anticipates her madness, which can be similarly described as a "state of suspended identity" (Gallagher 247).

Lacking a space of her own, Cecilia decides to resolve her situation by moving. Dismissing most of her servants (another loss), she goes to London, seeking Belfield's advice before traveling an even greater distance to France to find Delvile. However, movement in this case solves nothing. Her journey is abruptly truncated when Delvile unexpectedly comes across Cecilia and Belfield alone in the house on Portland Street and reacts jealously. An angry Mortimer Delvile puts Cecilia in her chaise with instructions to wait for him at his father's house on St. James's Square, thus launching Cecilia on her final, frustrating journey through London's streets, a journey of missed connections and increasing panic. The journey can be broken into three sections: Cecilia traveling in a chaise or a coach, a mob scene at the coffee-house, and then the mad dash on foot that ends in the pawnshop. This climactic journey is the most intense rendering of Cecilia's circular movement. With each successive section, Cecilia incurs more losses, from shelter and protection to her very mind, suggesting the pointlessness of her attempts to act for herself and the difficulties inherent in expressing female agency.

The first section is a tense description of Cecilia's first forays into the London night. She is afforded the sheltering protection of either her own chaise or a hired coach, which creates a physical barrier between herself and London's streets, as well as the personal protection of Simkins, for whom Cecilia is grateful because "her dread of being alone, at so late an hour, in a hackney-coach, was invincible" (890). The structured nature of the section is reinforced by the rough circuit that Cecilia travels between three points: Mrs. Belfield's rented lodgings on Portland Street, a nearby coffeehouse where Delvile and Belfield go, and the Delvile house on St. James's Square. The first section takes Cecilia from Portland Street to the coffee-house in a failed search for Delvile and Belfield, and then to St. James's Square where Delvile Sr. refuses to allow her to wait inside his house. Cecilia goes back to Portland Street where Mrs. Belfield reports sending Delvile back to the coffee-house. Cecilia hastens to the coffee-house where she learns that Delvile has just left (894). Tantalizingly close, Cecilia exhorts her hired coachman to chase after Delvile. However, the coachman balks, claiming that his horses are tired, and Cecilia finds herself stuck in front of a London coffee-house at night.

The first section occupies over six pages in the novel and is propelled not only by Cecilia's heightened emotional state but also by Burney's language, such as in the paragraph after Mrs. Belfield implies that she led Delvile to believe Cecilia has been searching for Belfield instead of him:

> Cecilia listened to this account with the utmost terror and misery; the suspicions of Delvile would now be aggravated, and the message he had left for Belfield, would by him be regarded as defiance. Again, however, to the * * coffee-house she instantly ordered the coach, an immediate explanation from herself seeming the only possible chance for preventing the most horrible conclusion to this unfortunate and eventful evening. (894)

While the first sentence in the paragraph is typical of Burney's syntax and punctuation (a semi-colon, multiple commas), the second sentence deploys only three commas, all within the first third of the sentence, and the rest of the sentence is free from any punctuation, thus propelling the reader forward much as Cecilia is propelled by the coach and by her anxiety. Key words such as "terror", "misery", and "aggravated" increase both Cecilia's and the reader's anxiety, while "immediate" and "instantly" suggest how quickly the events are occurring—or rather, how quickly Cecilia would like them to occur. For despite all the tension and propulsion evident in the writing, Cecilia spends a good part of her vehicular journey waiting. In addition to pausing to read Delvile's letter at the end of Portland Street (888), Cecilia must also wait for Simkins to return from the Belfield lodgings before she can know where the men have gone, and even when he returns, it is only "after various interruptions from Mrs. Belfield, and much delay from his own slowness and circumlocution" that Simkins provides the information (889). After Mr. Delvile Sr. denies Cecilia permission to wait inside the Delvile House, the coachman drives to a corner of the square where Cecilia waits “near half an hour” (893), and she must again wait as Simkins inquires at the coffee-house a second time (894). Cecilia’s start-and-stop pattern of movement resembles the novel’s narrative movement. Much like the Vauxhall episode, which “illustrates Burney’s use of counterclimax, frustration and retardation” (Doody, *Life* 133), Cecilia’s fruitless chase of Delvile demonstrates the tension between the heroine’s and language’s forward momentum and the plot’s stalling obstacles, a tension that suggests that Cecilia’s movements are once again driven by others, that she cannot exert control, especially not over the movements and motives of men.

The section leading up to Cecilia’s mad dash exposes the limitations of male guardianship and protection that has been demonstrated throughout the book, while also pointing to the necessity of this stewardship. After having found all three of her guardians lacking (four if one includes the treacherous Monckton), Cecilia is saddled with the hapless Simkins, willing and able to do her bidding until, as we shall see, his frugality intervenes. Simkins’s very presence makes him Cecilia’s protector, but his company is tiresome and his conversation ceaseless (894). The hired coach seems to offer physical protection, but Cecilia ultimately cannot control it, cannot make it go when she needs it to most. Both Simkins and the hackney-coach allow and hinder Cecilia’s movement; they enable through their presence but counter Cecilia’s demands by exerting their own power. In the same way that Cecilia’s earlier venturing out on her own into London is met with miscontructions about her motives (her visits to the Belfield lodgings) and with physical obstructions (the crowd going to the execution), Cecilia’s urgent circling through the streets of London will once again place her in a position of gendered powerlessness against both sexual male prerogative and an encircling mob.

The next section, the short scene in which Cecilia goes mad in front of the coffee-house, locates the source of Cecilia's madness in her powerlessness against gendered restrictions on female agency. Frustrated by the delay over the horses, Cecilia decides to set out on foot for Delvile, but the belligerent, drunk coachman physically detains her, demanding payment. When Cecilia would give over the contents of her purse, Simkins, ever the careful businessman, insists on negotiating the fare. Simkins's condescending paternalism and misplaced priorities recall those of Mr. Delvile and Mr. Briggs, and likewise exacerbate the patience of Cecilia, who by this point is in "the utmost agony of mind" (895). A crowd forms: "a mob was collecting; Cecilia, breathless with vehemence and terror, was encircled, yet struggled in vain to break away" (895). Surrounded and still held by the arm, Cecilia reaches her limit when a stranger who had earlier offered assistance accosts her physically: "the stranger gentleman, protesting, with sundry compliments, he would himself take care of her, very freely seized her hand" (895–96). The stranger's claim that he will take care of Cecilia echoes the gentleman who attempts to help Clarissa when she is arrested for debt (Richardson 1052), who later becomes the "gentleman who saw you taken, and was so much moved" who Sally Martin claims wants to pay Clarissa's bail (1057). In all three examples, the underlying implication is that the man would be buying the woman's sexual favour by helping her. Read in this context, the gentleman's seizing Cecilia's hand is more than an impudent exercising of male prerogative, it is also a sexual threat. And so, physically detained, sexually threatened, and worried about Delvile, Cecilia goes mad:

> she was wholly overpowered; terror for Delvile, horror for herself, hurry, confusion, heat and fatigue, all assailing her at once, while all means of repelling them were denied her, the attack was too strong for her fears, feelings, and faculties, and her reason suddenly, yet totally failing her, she madly called out, "He will be gone! he will be gone! and I must follow him to Nice!" (896)

In this passage, Burney writes with an ear for parallel structure and tension, as echoed phrases ("terror for Delvile", "horror for herself") and alliteration ("fears, feelings, and faculties") allow readers to relinquish control with the heroine as they are buoyed over the commas towards Cecilia's exclamation (point). Abstract concepts such as terror, horror, hurry (a succession of slant rhymes) are reified and personified, becoming members of the mob that are "assailing" her, an indicator of just how "overpowered" Cecilia is. The simultaneity of all the attacks (they come "all at once") suggests that Cecilia is as powerless against the mental attack as against the physical jostling of the crowd around her, thus comparing going mad with being a woman who is subject to men's power. Cecilia's madness is not caused only by physical restriction but also mental impediment.

The mob scene in front of the coffee-house revises an earlier urban mob scene in the novel. On her walk to call a coach to visit Mr. Briggs, Cecilia sees a mob gathering to gawk at prisoners en route to being executed at nearby Tyburn.

Cecilia initially wishes to avoid the malefactors but finds that the merely curious are as much of a hindrance:

> Alarmed at this intelligence from the fear of meeting the unhappy criminals, she hastily turned down the next street, but found that also filling with people who were running to the scene she was trying to avoid: *encircled* thus every way, she applied to a maid servant who was standing at the door of a large house, and begged leave to step in till the *mob* was gone by. (176, emphasis added)

The parallels between the two mob scenes are evident. In both the narrator calls the crowd a "mob" and describes Cecilia as "encircled". The spectre of dead men (the prisoners in the first case or Delvile in the second) haunts both. Narratively, Cecilia is encircled not only by the mobs but by the repetition of the incidents. The coffee-house scene is in some ways a macabre reworking of the first mob scene, a nightmare, nighttime version in which Cecilia cannot take shelter under the structural protection of a surgeon's house. Cecilia, in fact, cannot enter the coffee-house at all, and twice must remain in the coach while the coachman and Mr. Simkins go into the coffee-house to bring out the manager and a waiter, respectively (890, 894). The additional steps required to gain any information are another example of the delays that Cecilia faces and further illustrate how curtailed Cecilia's movement really is and how vulnerable she becomes.

Cecilia's attempts to move have thus far been obstructed. She can only move when she loses control entirely. Ironically, her madness, caused in part by her being encircled, is what enables her to break free: "with a strength hitherto unknown to her, she forcibly disengaged herself from her persecutors" (896), and then, obsessed with the thought that Delvile is dying, "springing forward, was almost instantly out of sight" (896). Cecilia runs through the streets of nighttime London searching for Delvile:

> She called aloud upon Delvile as she flew to the end of the street. No Delvile was there!—she turned the corner; yet saw nothing of him; she still went on, though unknowing whither, the distraction of her mind every instant growing greater, from the inflammation of fatigue, heat, and disappointment. (897)

Cecilia's movement through the streets is swift and, unlike the circuit between fixed points that characterized the first section of the journey, her path has no plan and no fixed destination. She finally moves freely, but at a price.

Cecilia's madness is an expression of powerlessness, powerlessness stemming not only from the immediate frustration of being detained in front of the coffee-house, but also from the continuing obstacles she experiences whenever attempting to assert her own will. The frustration is very much grounded in Cecilia's status as a woman with money, an heiress who is still answerable to three male guardians. For Julia Epstein, Cecilia's madness "is distilled from the frustration of unbearable powerlessness, the frustration of always having to enlist another's authority" (168) and Cynthia Klekar argues that Cecilia's "crazed, amnesic, and penniless state is a precise metaphor for the dependent condition of married women" (126). Barbara Zonitch reads a class dimension in the madness, arguing that the late eighteenth-century shift in ruling classes from aristocratic to mercantile left women vulnerable, without adequate protections or rights (82). Madness for Zonitch is "an internalization of violence" (82), which leads her to suggest that Cecilia's madness is a form of self-defence: "Because she cannot assert her will in her society, she is forced, like Harrel and Mrs. Delvile, to destroy herself" (82). Madness is more than just a result of powerlessness in this case; it is also a reaction against it.

In addition to being tied to her gender and her status as a heroine, Cecilia's madness also speaks to her over-developed sense of duty. As I have already noted, Cecilia's sense of duty stems from her fortune, and she frames it in terms of another kind of loss, a debt; she considers her wealth a "debt contracted with the poor" (55). Yet Cecilia internalizes her sense of duty so intensely (as figured by her "inward monitor") that when presented with a situation where she cannot reconcile duty and desire, she becomes inactive, unable to resolve the conflict. Cecilia's inactivity takes the form of moments where she becomes still, sinking into mental and physical stupors. A full examination of Cecilia's mad dash requires analyzing the instances of her falling into stupors that lead up to the dash. The dash, I argue, is a culmination of these stupors, and in the next section of this chapter I explore how the stupors are a means of resisting movement and a way by which Cecilia deals with the pressures she is under.

Stillness and Confinement

The interior conflict Cecilia experiences between doing what she desires (based on her desires) and doing her duty (what she believes is right) manifests itself in four instances where her mental reasoning becomes suspended and Cecilia becomes still, all instances that lead up to and function in dialogue with her mad dash. All the instances of Cecilia's stupors present the condition as an interior one that manifests itself physiologically as stillness. Another example of plot repetition creating circularity, each stupor occurs when Cecilia is faced with a decision that might contravene her sense of duty, and each subsequent instance intensifies the extent of her mental suspension. In the first instance, Cecilia has agreed to the secret marriage, and, finally left alone, remains in a dream-like state in which "her faculties seemed all out of order, and she had but an imperfect consciousness… all was darkness and doubt, inquietude and disorder" (576). In the next instance, after Mrs. Delvile bursts a blood vessel and Cecilia and Mortimer renounce all claims to each other, Cecilia is left alone:

> Cecilia for a while remained almost stupified with sorrow; she forgot Mrs. Delvile, she forgot Mrs. Charlton, she forgot her own design of apologizing to one, or assisting the other: she continued in the posture in which he had left her, quite without motion, and almost without sensibility. (684)

While the cause of the first semi-daze is Cecilia's conflict about the secret marriage, the second stupor is a "lethargy of sadness" stemming from Cecilia's final break from Delvile (685). In addition to the mental lethargy displayed in the first example, the second instance explicitly describes a physical reaction, namely Cecilia's sitting "quite without motion and almost without sensibility" (685). She does not move and almost cannot feel. While Cecilia slips out of her first stupor without external stimulus, the second daze is stronger and Cecilia does not emerge from her stupor until she is "awakened" by the surgeon's return (685).

The penultimate instance of Cecilia slipping into a daze again escalates the intensity of her condition while also anticipating the frantic movement of her mad dash. In this instance, Cecilia has an agitated meeting with Delvile in her dressing room. Delvile has seriously injured Monckton in an illegal duel and their situation is exacerbated by Delvile's rejection by his father and the still-secret status of their marriage. The meeting takes place over a number of pages, throughout which Cecilia's level of mental alertness fluctuates. During the interview, Cecilia becomes "mentally affected" (844), "start[s] from her reverie" (846), and is "oppressed beyond the power of thinking, beyond any power but of an internal consciousness of wretchedness" (847). All this occurs while Delvile ironically asks for Cecilia's rational "counsel" and "instructions" (846), adding that "I am scarce able to think for myself" (846). Cecilia's encroaching stupor manifests itself physically as a tightness in her heart, a sign of the extent that the romance plot has strained her life. The imagery used here is that of suffocation; though not physically enclosed, Cecilia physiologically reacts as if she were: "putting both her hands to her heart, [she] said, 'Oh yes!—but I have an oppression here,—a tightness, a fullness,—I have not room for breath!'" (847). The internal oppression Cecilia experiences is a precursor to the external, physical oppression that occurs later, when Cecilia will similarly "have not room" in front of the coffee-house and in the pawnshop. Delvile is finally able to exhort Cecilia to bring "back her scattered senses" and

Cecilia cathartically bursts into tears (847). After Delvile leaves, however, Cecilia slips into a stupor:

> Grief and horror for what was past, apprehension and suspense for what was to come, so disordered her whole frame, so confused even her intellects, that when not all the assistance of fancy could persuade her she still heard the footsteps of Delvile, she went to the chair upon which he had been seated, and taking possession of it, sat with her arms crossed, silent, quiet, and erect, almost vacant of all thought, yet with a secret idea she was doing something right. (851)

Unlike the previous instances, Cecilia's stupor is caused not only by sadness, but also a mixture of fear, apprehension and uncertainty. Character convenience breaks down in her confusion: her inner state (she is "almost vacant of all thought") does not match the protective pose of her external state, "arms crossed, silent, quiet, and erect". The disjunction between interior and exterior indicates the impossibility of being the unified moral entity that Cecilia expects herself to be. The language in the passage suggests that Cecilia is somehow empowered by "taking possession" of Delvile's chair, yet she does so automatically; it is a subconscious act (she has limited mental capacity) that suggests a desperate attempt to assert control and express her agency. Despite Cecilia's seemingly defiant posture, she does not emerge from her daze until the arrival of Henrietta (851). The stupor is caused as much by Cecilia's attempts to control her conflicting emotions as by the emotions themselves; her senses are "scarce more stunned by the shock of all this misery, than by the restraint of her feelings in struggling to conceal it" (847). In a moment of failed character convenience, Cecilia's attempts to still an inner tumult result in an external stillness instead. The settings of each instance (a space inside the house) also suggests the interior quality of the stupor. Being architecturally withdrawn in her space is conducive to withdrawing mentally as well.

Cecilia's withdrawing mentally is a form of relinquishing her power. The most significant moral quandary that Cecilia faces is whether to agree to Mortimer Delvile's request for a secret marriage. In London the night before the first wedding attempt, Cecilia is faced with a decision that "duty" cannot make for her because the request requires contravening her sense of propriety. As a result, the agency she had craved becomes a burden:

> It seemed once more in her power to be mistress of her destiny; but the very liberty of choice she had so much coveted, now attained appeared the most heavy of calamities [. . .] She was to be responsible not only to the world but to herself for the whole of this momentous transaction, and the terror of leaving either dissatisfied, made independence burthensome, and unlimited power a grievance. (621–22)

The passage suggests that Cecilia has not yet learned that her independence is qualified and her power limited. The two bodies she feels responsible to ("the world" and "herself") conflict, undermining Cecilia's trust in her own agency. Cecilia capitulates to the world in the same way that she will later volunteer to obey Mrs. Delvile regarding Mortimer: "As my own Agent I regard myself no longer" (646–47). While Cecilia's willing ceding of control to another woman could be construed as a criticism of male authority in the novel (and certainly, male authority is hapless at best and corrupting at worse), Mrs. Delvile is an even more effective emotional blackmailer, persuading Cecilia to renounce Mortimer (Gallagher 245). The novel is remarkable for its utter lack of appropriate mentors for its heroine, who is failed by all who would presumably guide her. In moments of stress, Cecilia cedes control in a novel where she really cannot afford to.

Cecilia's status as an heiress means that she has power, but it also means that she is a more exposed figure for being worthy of the world's notice. As a response to the world's attempts to fix her meaning and identity, Cecilia enters her own state of fixed stillness. In this case, the stupors are an example of a suspended mental state. She is stuck in a psychological limbo, a temporary escape facilitated by intense interiorization. Yet each time Cecilia pulls inside, she is called back. Cecilia's mental movement, like the novel's other patterns of movement, is a circular one, a pattern of retreat and reluctant retrieval. Her preferred mental movement is one where she has no control whatsoever, where she moves but not of her own volition. When debating whether to go through with the secret marriage, Cecilia is uncharacteristically "uncertain even what she ought to do, she rather wished to be drawn than to lead; rather desired to be guided than to guide" (621). Here, Cecilia uses metaphors of motion to describe the decision-making progress. It follows that mental stillness would be the opposite of making a decision, a way to avoid the responsibility.

Cecilia's need to relinquish responsibility in the face of extreme oppression is what links her stupors and her mad dash. Her mental pattern becomes her physical pattern. Her wish to be "drawn rather than to lead" and "to be guided than to guide" parallels her pattern of movement as she runs through London, seeking the path of least resistance:

> She scarce touched the ground; she scarce felt her own motion; she seemed as if endued with supernatural speed, gliding from place to place, from street to street; with no consciousness of any plan, and following no other direction than that of darting forward where-ever there was most room, and turning back when she met with any obstruction…. (897)

Like the stupors, Cecilia's mad dash features intense withdrawing into herself because her senses are dulled (she does not touch the ground nor feel her motion). Yet as a result of her unawareness of her physical surroundings, Cecilia's mad dash is characterized by a sense of lightness and swiftness; it is a lightness resulting from having lost everything. Her forward movement is always towards "where-ever there was most room" and she only moves backwards when "met with any obstruction". What could become interruptions, the obstructions, are merely ignored, not accorded the importance the novel's obstructions receive. Madness "marks the divorce from social reality" (Greenfield 60), including a break from social pressures. No longer tied to a particular circuit or to particular points in the city, Cecilia moves with no specific destination in mind. The mad dash is a moment of freedom for Cecilia, whose mad status frees her from any rational debates about the propriety of her behaviour. It is not that Cecilia moves because she is free (from the coachman, the mob, Simkins), but she is free because of how she moves, without specific destinations, without a pre-determined path. During the dash, she is not acted upon by anyone; like a perpetual motion machine, she is propelled "by the velocity of her own motion" (897). Yet it is her "velocity", not any intrinsic part of herself, that drives her, as indicated in a striking phrase that suggests two possible causes for Cecilia's speed, herself and her motion: "she forced herself along by her own vehement rapidity" (897). Cecilia is free to act for herself ("she forced") and yet she also seems to be free from acting at all ("by her own vehement rapidity"). She is simultaneously, doubly free (to act and to not act) as well as doubly driven (by herself and her speed). Cecilia's mad dash is so fast, so powerful that her own movement gives rise to more movement. That the heiress who supposedly wielded so much power can only experience freedom when she is mad is a striking condemnation of all the forces that have brought her to this point. No woman, the novel seems to be saying, could endure the extortions, abuse, and violence that Cecilia has been subjected to and stay sane. Moreover, for her madness to be connected with her moments of stupor suggests that in the novel, relinquishing agency is the equivalent of madness, that what Cecilia should decide is the impossible—to never give up control. Her mad dash reveals the paradox at the root of Cecilia's status. As an heiress she was restricted in how she could assert the power accorded to her status; as a madwoman she can finally move freely.

Cecilia's freedom, though, is based on "supernatural" movement (897); it does not belong in her world. Indeed, Cecilia's mad dash ends when, "quite spent and exhausted, she abruptly ran into a yet open shop, where, breathless and panting, she sunk upon the floor, and, with a look disconsolate and helpless, sat for some time without speaking" (897). The narrative becomes focalized through an external observer, no longer using free indirect discourse to present Cecilia's thoughts as she runs ("She called aloud upon Delvile as she flew to the end of the street. No Delvile was there!" [897]) but rather describing what only another character could see, the "look disconsolate" on Cecilia's face. The shift in point of view coincides with the beginning of Cecilia's most trying experience, the confinement in the pawnshop. Being locked up in a pawnshop and advertised as an object is fitting for the heiress heroine of a novel concerned with the question of worth (moral and financial), a novel that exposes the cruel gap between credit and payment in an emerging credit economy, and one that illustrates societal anxieties over single women who control money. Cecilia's confinement in the pawnshop is also significant because it dramatizes the shift that occurs in the spatial relations of the novel, the ending of Cecilia's circular movement and the beginning of an increasing enclosure that foreshadows Cecilia's eventual marriage and re-integration into the world.

The pawnshop exemplifies how space works on Cecilia to shape her identity, imposing itself upon her. At the beginning of Cecilia's stay at the pawnshop, heroine and space correspond; as Gallagher notes, Cecilia belongs in the pawnshop because, like pawned objects, she is characterized by displacement and placelessness, existing in a state of uncertainty (247). Like an object, Cecilia is advertised for and like pawned possessions Cecilia is homeless and exists in a suspended state of being, no longer a Beverley but not recognized as a Delvile. As Cecilia's stay continues, she becomes more narrowly identified. She is described as a "crazy young lady" in the advertisement (901), when Albany finds her he twice calls her "Cecilia" (902), and when Delvile sees her calls her his "wife" (905), thus identifying her more accurately as Mrs. Mortimer Delvile. With Cecilia's increased defining, the spaces that she occupies become more confining. At first, the space is a prison. When Cecilia recovers from her mad dash, she "arose to feel for the door, and succeeded, but it was locked, and no effort she could make enabled her to open it" (899). The space is further turned into a specific kind of prison, a madhouse. The transformation to a madhouse occurs when the wife of the pawnshop owner, Mrs. Wyers, believes Cecilia is mad and treats her thus, bringing her straw for a bed, "having heard that mad people were fond of it" (900). In an example of the power that space can have on its occupants, the room itself changes Cecilia from a prisoner to a madwoman. Locked in the room, Cecilia begins to remember the events of the evening, but the recollections agitate her again and she becomes mad: "her reason, so lately returned, could not bear the repetition of such a shock" (899). Because she is believed to be mad, she is imprisoned; finding herself imprisoned, she goes mad. Yet Cecilia needs neither a mad house nor a prison, but a hospital. As Jane Kromm notes, Cecilia's madness is accompanied by physiological symptoms ("a high fever" [900]) and direct contradictions of the amateur diagnosis of madness (Cecilia shows no interest in straw). It is not until Delvile finds Cecilia that doctors are consulted (907). With Cecilia finally sleeping in a bed (903) and doctors present, the prison/mad house takes on its final incarnation as a sick room, complete with weeping visitors (Henrietta), prayers (Albany) and treatments of "very severe discipline" (909). It is in the sickroom, in fact, that Cecilia experiences her final loss, that of movement.

She is motionless on a larger scale because she is prevented from leaving the room, in addition to being "senseless, speechless, motionless" during her stupor (918), the repeated "-less" suffixes emphasizing the extent of Cecilia's loss. Once Cecilia has lost everything (fortune, home, name, speech, wits, will, mobility), there is a shift in who is allowed to move in the novel. Cecilia's confinement in the room above the pawnshop signals that the heroine is no longer the moving subject. An episode that begins with Cecilia running into a pawnshop ends with her husband taking to the streets nearby, roaming in frustration when he cannot see her (909, 910, 911, 913, 916). It is as if all the pent-up frustrations of Cecilia's mad dash have been transferred to Mortimer; only he is allowed to traverse freely. Mortimer's free movement further emphasizes Cecilia's stillness and enclosure.

Cecilia's illness, a stupor that falls over her once she stops raving, is her final stillness, the culmination of all the other instances where she falls into a stupor when faced with difficult decisions. After she has been confined in different ways, in a space that has been a prison, madhouse, and sickroom, Cecilia is finally mentally confined. Her movement has become stillness, her mental flow is as much impeded as her physical flow. Cecilia's mental status during her confinement reflects how she negotiates the pressures exerted on her over the course of the novel: first by taking action and then by relinquishing agency. In the same way that she wishes to be guided rather than to lead, Cecilia's raving mania (exhibited both in her attempts at physical escape and her mental activity where "her fancy roved" [900]) gives way to an eerie stillness, "a state of such utter insensibility, that she appeared unconscious even of her existence; and but that she breathed, she might already have passed for being dead" (911). If Cecilia's previous lapses into a stupor are an attempt to avoid the impossible task of making a decision that satisfies both herself and her sense of duty, then the final stillness—longer and more intense, with its comparison to death—is an attempt to escape altogether, suggesting that to live in the world is likewise impossible. The ideal reaction to this impossibility seems to be escape. As in the mad dash, the moment of relinquishing responsibility becomes a moment of freedom, freedom in this case from any kind of feeling: in this "unconscious" state, she is "apparently as free from suffering as from enjoyment" (913). The lack of middle ground between the two extremes of madness and stillness suggests the extremes to which Cecilia's methods of coping lead: she either goes mad or she becomes a hollow automaton of her former self.

Final Convergence

The novel's ending further stresses how powerless Cecilia has become by putting her in yet another confining space and suggesting that the convergence of Cecilia's architectural and narrative paths results in stasis rather than movement. In terms of the conflict between the course-in-life plot and the romance plot, romance triumphs as Cecilia's marriage to Mortimer is acknowledged. Convergence becomes more significant, as marriage is the joining of two entities (legal, moral, spiritual). Moreover, Cecilia's marriage is particularly inward because she is joining a family that practices intermarriage in order to maintain the bloodline. The Delvile family tree, in which cousins Compton and Augusta produced Mortimer, exemplifies familial convergence; Mortimer is the single end of a "Y", the heir—in fact, the sole heir—of a family that has branched inwards instead of out. The romance plot also wins out over the course-in-life plot because Cecilia's marriage, the acceptable result of the romance plot, disinherits her, thus effectively removing her ability to pursue an independent course in life. Straub persuasively demonstrates that *Cecilia* consists of two plots that conflict and rub up against each other. I add that the novel itself, with its conflicting plots, rubs up against its heroine, testing her with repeated conversations and episodes until she breaks by going mad and then going still. The ultimate resistance against narrative momentum, Cecilia's final stillness suggests an alternative ending in which Cecilia dies, an ending that directly contravenes the rules of the courtship plot. Instead of exploring the ramifications of killing off a heroine at the end of what is ostensibly a comic novel, Burney brings Cecilia to the brink of death only to have her recover and be reintegrated into the world of the novel. A heroine who set out so harmoniously with the novel is ultimately forced to capitulate, albeit ambivalently, to the exigencies of the courtship plot.

The ambivalent ending poses many challenges to critics anxious to uncover some kind of feminist underpinnings in *Cecilia*. Katherine Sobba Green reads the ending in a patriarchal context, arguing that because Mr. Delvile's "authority is clearly diminished" (90), the ending is sufficiently subversive in the context of the genre of the courtship novel (90). Many critics examine how *Cecilia*'s treatment of money could give rise to subversive readings, particularly regarding Cecilia's unexpected inheritance bequeathed from Mortimer's aunt. For example, Catherine Keohane stresses that the inheritance reinstates Cecilia into the public world of charity work where a woman can control her money (396), even though Barbara Zonitch believes the inheritance is a “flimsy, even awkward, conciliatory gesture” (84) and Castle dismisses it as a “blatant afterthought” (*Masquerade* 283). Indeed, the extra inheritance’s restorative power is tempered by the source of the inheritance (the family for which she sacrificed everything) and by its being gained at a loss to Mortimer, for it had been designated for him “almost from his infancy” (939). Catherine Gallagher argues that the third inheritance differs from Cecilia’s earlier inheritances because Cecilia cannot dispense with the money as freely as she could while unmarried: “the book can finally end because it has found a restrictive principle with which to stop the hemorrhage of expense that began with Cecilia’s longings for a transcendental ethical position” (248). For the most part, critics read the ending, with Cecilia exchanging her name, fortune, and independence for Delvile, as ambiguous: “To gain a husband, she loses a self, and it is not at all clear in the novel’s denouement that Burney believes this to be a good bargain” (Epstein 173).

Cecilia’s monetary inheritance, however, must be read in conjunction with Mortimer’s inheritance of a townhouse. Critics taking up a feminist reading emphasize Cecilia’s inheritance while completely ignoring Mortimer’s equally significant inheritance from his uncle, Lord Delvile, “who bequeathed to his nephew Mortimer his town house, and whatever of his estate was not annexed to his title, which necessarily devolved to his brother” (939). The dual inheritances (his house, her money) are oddly symmetrical, presented in consecutive paragraphs and falling along a gendered divide as Cecilia's inheritance comes from Mrs. Delvile's sister and Mortimer's, from Mr. Delvile's older brother. While Gallagher argues that Cecilia's gaining the fortune at Mortimer's expense "reverses the sexual norm" (249), Mortimer's gaining an estate through patrilineal inheritance re-establishes the traditional gender balance of the marriage, with the townhouse replacing the house that Cecilia lost when she married. Cecilia is dispossessed when she marries; she can only restore her house through her husband. Initially, the pair of inheritances seems to underscore the mercenary nature of what would have been their ideal marriage, in which her large fortune would have rejuvenated his faltering family whose waning importance is so clearly symbolized by another piece of property, the decaying Delvile Castle. Yet the neat symmetry is too neat, too perfect to be read completely unironically. Taken together, the inheritances signal a narrative fissure because they ironically reward the novel's hero and heroine with what they each should have contributed to their marriage before the union actually took place. The paired inheritances indicate a moment of dual accumulation that counters Cecilia's narrative of loss, but only retroactively, when it no longer matters. The inheritances, with their fairy-tale-like structural overtones, are an ironic, limited reward for the couple's disobedience of patriarchal dictates, rewards whose symmetry exposes the inadequacy of compensating for Cecilia's losses. The irony plays against what Doody calls the ending's "sober middle note" (*Life* 142), a discordant—because it is happy—note amongst an ending of minor chords.

Architecturally, *Cecilia* also ends on a scene of confinement, one that further emphasizes how its heroine no longer moves. By the novel's end, Cecilia's living arrangements have been established. Cecilia will split her time between her husband's house (formerly his uncle's house) and her husband's castle (formerly his father's castle). That Cecilia, who had dreamed of a house of her own and the independence that it stood for, should have to settle for a house her husband inherits demonstrates that there is no space in the novel for an independent woman who exercises her agency. Moreover, the novel's final domestic scene (in the chapter aptly titled "A Termination") takes place in a London townhouse that is the opposite of the circular, social space of Portman Square, Mr. Delvile Sr.'s house in St. James's Square. In the small social gathering of family (Mr. Delvile, Mortimer, a still convalescing Cecilia, Lady Honoria Pemberton) and close friend (Dr. Lyster), it is clear that Cecilia has still not found the intimate "private meetings and friendly intercourse" that she craves (131). Her new father-in-law receives her in a manner that is "formal and cold" (931), and most of the visit consists of Lady Honoria taunting her uncle and teasing Mortimer. The meeting is static, with participants remaining in the drawing room and not circulating elsewhere. The final scene also draws a parallel between Cecilia and Mrs. Delvile, whose absence is not noted but instead alluded to by the presence of Cecilia, who is now also a Mrs. Delvile. The two women's overlapping spatial positions (presiding over the drawing room at St. James's Square) suggest that Cecilia will become a younger version of Mrs. Delvile and be subjected to the same friendless fate as the woman who admits to finding "few who have any power to give me entertainment… Yet to live wholly alone is chearless and depressing" (236). Cecilia's final drawing room visit at St. James's Square reinforces Mrs. Delvile's point, especially when compared to her first encounter with the London drawing room at Mrs. Harrel's.

The scene setting, in a Delvile residence, combined with Honoria's presence, reintroduces the metaphors that Delvile Castle invoked earlier in the novel, including Gosport's comparisons of Cecilia to the castle and Honoria's comparison of the castle to a prison. Honoria's earlier playful suggestion that Mr. Delvile "take out these old windows, and fix some thick iron grates in their place, and so to turn the castle into a gaol" (505) insults Mr. Delvile (the desired effect) and introduces yet another way that Delvile Castle becomes a metaphor, this time for a space of constraint and imprisonment. This final metaphor, which relates to what is now Cecilia's family home, emphasizes how character convenience can be restricting and damaging. The building that Mr. Gosport compared to Cecilia's moral integrity is also compared to a prison, suggesting how limiting and constricting all the tenets of Cecilia's character—her sense of duty, her goodness, her public status as an heiress—have been. Moreover, the overlapping metaphors (Delvile castle as decaying structure and as prison) suggest that the forces that constrain Cecilia (patriarchy, marriage, the domestic setting) are morally compromised; they are a critique of Cecilia's marriage and her relinquishing of her independence. Additionally, Gosport employs a siege metaphor when warning Cecilia about a secret marriage, calling Delvile Castle a "fortress" (598) and later surmising that Cecilia has "escaped a siege" when she denies that the

Delviles plan to marry her to Mortimer (601). The siege imagery further suggests stasis, with Cecilia (the "fair structure" [598]) surrounded and enclosed. Cecilia's marriage to Delvile terminates the course-in-life plot of the novel. Through her association with Delvile Castle and the various metaphors of confining spaces that it engenders, Cecilia's marriage also demonstrates her architectural enclosure and the end of her movement.

The ending of *Cecilia*, in fact, requires a reconsideration of circularity and her movement. Cecilia often moves in circles because she is dissatisfied with her current situation. Beginning with a journey to London commanded by her guardians, Cecilia moves away from places rather than towards a destination of her choice. The mode of her movement is escape; she leaves rather than goes. Cecilia seeks to leave the Harrel townhouse, worries about how to leave Vauxhall, and is forced out of her own house by Mr. Eggleston. The escapist mode is most evident in Cecilia's mad dash, which lacks any destination whatsoever. Cecilia's movement is an attempt to exercise her agency, but the circular nature of such movement (resulting from her repeated attempts to escape) suggests instead her helplessness. Each time Cecilia attempts to move according to her interior self (her "inward monitor"), she is stymied by external pressures. Cecilia's movement ends in Mr. Delvile's drawing room, a space symbolically associated with convergence and linearity—all paths lead to the Delviles. Cecilia's constant motion suggests that as long as she is an heiress, with all the power that status grants her, the novel has no space for her, nowhere to rest until she reaches her final space, the drawing room that ambivalently offers shelter and protection but also strips her of her motion and agency, that relegates her to a lifetime of tiresome social gatherings in lieu of the personal intimacy she craves. Cecilia's final space is therefore convergent, linear, and fixed. For a heroine characterized by her movement, the "fair traveller" (5), the final space resembles the prison that Honoria suggests Delvile Castle could be. In fact, Cecilia's circular movement has also simultaneously been linear movement. She believes she has choices about where she moves, but instead society has made her choices for her and only waits until she makes the "right" choice, love. Cecilia moves as if in a maze, a puzzle where a choice of paths is presented, when she has always been moving in a labyrinth, a puzzle with one path that ends in the centre, with the mover more entrenched than ever. Therefore, Cecilia is not only limited by character convenience, in which she is held to expectations of behaviour associated with her inherited estate, but she is also limited in her movement. Like Clarissa in the brothel, Cecilia is unaware of how confined she is. Unlike Clarissa, Cecilia cannot escape by moving, and in fact becomes even more confined the more she moves. My first two chapters demonstrate the power of space to render women vulnerable through character convenience and how even movement can lead to—and in fact be—further confinement. Of all the novels I examine, *Cecilia* is the most pessimistic, demonstrating the destructive power of space on a subject. What is perhaps most damning of all is the inevitability of such loss and destruction. It is not only that Cecilia never has a choice; she never has a chance.

Chapter Three

The Mysterious Boudoir: The Breakdown of Character and Architectural Convenience in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*

This dissertation's first two chapters have examined the power of space over the individual, a power exerted through metaphor—with women especially being rendered exposed and vulnerable when compared to houses and estates—and through the way that spatial arrangements direct movement, removing its subversive potential. Taken together, the chapters demonstrate that space can determine the female subject. This third chapter examines what happens when the spatial construction of convenience ceases to be effective, when the correspondence between interiors and exteriors falls apart. This chapter analyzes Maria Edgeworth's 1801 novel *Belinda*, a novel that contains two examples of the breakdown of convenience. First, Belinda rejects the impositions of character convenience by controlling her blushes, thus stymying others' attempts to 'fix' her character. Secondly, Lady Delacour exemplifies failed architectural convenience because the meaning of her boudoir is unstable; the room comes to stand for a proliferating series of different spaces, almost none of which are accurate. Belinda's and Lady Delacour's treatments of spaces and spatial constructions suggest that female character is mutable. The novel demonstrates ways in which female subjects can resist imposed character fixation by becoming inscrutable, illustrating how the manipulation and breakdown of convenience expose the artificiality and credibility of women's social roles and the characters that they play.

My larger concern about the relationship between space and subject is particularly relevant to *Belinda* because of the scholarly reaction to the novel that is based upon the success or failure of its two major characters, Belinda Portman the ostensible heroine and Lady Delacour her vivacious guardian. Belinda as a fictional character has been much maligned by scholars and critics. Her adherence to prudence over emotion has led to scholars calling her a "lifeless character" (Fitzgerald 823) who "fails to achieve its fullest dimension" (Kowaleski-Wallace 137). Faced with the prospect of revising the novel years after its publication, Edgeworth herself was frustrated by the insipidness of her own creation: "I really was so provoked with the cold tameness of that stick or stone Belinda, that I could have torn the pages to pieces: and really, I have not the heart or the patience to *correct* her" (F.A.B. Edgeworth 229–30, emphasis original). On the other hand, Lady Delacour, according to critical consensus, practically runs away with the novel. Atkinson and Atkinson declare that "Lady Delacour grew somewhat beyond the author's control into a charming woman and a sympathetic character" (94), MacFadyen refers to Lady Delacour as "scintillating" (424), and Douthwaite calls her the novel's "real heroine" (43). As Kowaleski-Wallace puts it, "*Belinda* is not about Belinda" (110). This chapter raises the stakes of the critical reaction to Belinda and Lady Delacour by examining how the differing relationships between characters and space influence our readings of them. I argue that Belinda's failure as a character is ironically tied to the ease with which she adjusts to and then frustrates expectations about character convenience, whereas Lady Delacour's success as a character rests upon her resistance to the architectural convenience imposed upon her through her boudoir.

The first part of this chapter examines the characters (literary and personal) of Belinda Portman, the novel's protagonist, and how her failure as a fictional creation elucidates the novel's subversive questioning of women's roles and domesticity. The maintenance of Belinda's character convenience in the name of achieving a desired domestic femininity is undermined because such maintenance comes at the expense of her likeability. By regulating her blushes, which are an unwanted sign of female desire, Belinda initially conforms to and then thwarts expectations about how she is supposed to appear. Belinda wills her exterior to give away as little as possible about her interior. Because character convenience as a concept sets up a relationship between interior and exterior, erasing any exterior indicators that could be misinterpreted makes Belinda an inscrutable subject. Belinda's inscrutability is so complete that she exudes a blank calmness, a blankness that makes her less engaging. Ultimately, as an example of frustrated convenience, Belinda demonstrates the ways that the principles of character convenience can obfuscate as much as illuminate. In the second half of my chapter I examine another, more explicit example of failed convenience, in this case, of architectural convenience. While the example of Belinda Portman functions as a critique of character convenience by pointing out how exteriors can be misinterpreted and obfuscating, the case of Lady Delacour and her boudoir establishes the complete breakdown of architectural convenience, the connection between subject and space. In the case of Lady Delacour, the space in question is her mysterious boudoir. One reason that the boudoir loses the power to determine character is because its own identity is unstable. The room's complex and contradictory architectural and social history, one that destabilizes our conception of this stereotypically feminized space, suggests instead the difficulty of using space to determine Lady Delacour's character since the character of the space itself cannot be ascertained. In other words, the instability of space undermines architectural convenience; the connection between space and occupant cannot be determined if we do not know what the space itself means. After tracing the fixed subject in *Clarissa* and the moving subject in *Cecilia* (and demonstrating how subjects can be entrapped by both space and movement), in this chapter I examine a moving space, that is, a space (the boudoir) that recedes in importance in the novel until it is rendered irrelevant. The fading influence of convenience in *Belinda* demonstrates the limits of the power of space and of spatial metaphors, and the power that these metaphors have to influence gender roles. Female subjects in *Belinda* still engage with space and within the dichotomy of interior/exterior, but do so by manipulating spatial concepts for their own purposes.

Belinda, the Blush, and the Thwarting of Character Convenience

Different meanings of the word 'character' come into play in my analysis of Belinda Portman. She is a novelistic character who is ostensibly the heroine of her eponymous novel. We are told early in the novel (in the first chapter, titled "Characters") that Belinda has a character "yet to be developed" (7), which suggests that the development of her character will be one of the novel's major concerns. One of the ways that Belinda's character (the fictional entity and her individual disposition) is formed is through her reaction to another subcategory of character, her reputation. This reputation is one which is presented in terms of architectural convenience. Early in the novel Belinda discovers that her public character has been misconstrued, that her character has been fixed as that of a husband-hunter. This misconstruction is achieved through the metaphor of Belinda as house being auctioned off on the marriage market. Disguised at a masquerade ball, Belinda learns that she has been "hawked about everywhere" by her Aunt Stanhope (25), who is determined to marry off all her nieces advantageously, and as a result she has been over-advertised on the market. As Belinda listens, Clarence Hervey and other men crudely compare her to a piece of property to be gawked at purely out of curiosity: "Girls brought to the hammer this way don't go off well. It's true, Christie himself is no match for dame Stanhope—many of my acquaintance were tempted to go and look at the premises, but not one, you may be sure, had thought of becoming a tenant for life" (25). The mercenary, economic nature of marriage (and Belinda's objectification in the marriage market) is established not only by the reference to Christie's auction house, but also by the phrase "tenant for life", which alludes to the leasing a house for one's lifetime while never owning the house or the land that it is built on. The speculative style, as I note in my introduction, was driven by an economics of volume in which it was more profitable for builders to erect multiple residences with the same floor plan and façades rather than pay for multiple plans. The interchangeability of houses built this way aptly refers to Aunt Stanhope's stable of married nieces (who have been catalogued for us during this conversation) and indicates the men's assumption that Belinda is just like them. Belinda cannot remove herself from the hurtful conversation. She is "encompassed so, that she could not retreat" (25), as physically fixed as her character seems to be fixed as a husband-hunter of the "Stanhope school" (26).

As a result of what she overhears, Belinda begins to regulate her public behaviour, resolving that "never more will I expose myself to be insulted as a female adventurer" (28). Her correction of her public character begins days later, when she refuses Lady Delacour's invitation to play the harp for Clarence Hervey, pointedly repeating his words about being "as well advertised as Packwood's razor's strops" (73). Belinda uses character convenience to change her reputation, using an exterior feature (her behaviour) to signal that she is not the husband hunter that her aunt has trained her to be. Clarence is persuaded: "I am convinced, that though she is a niece of Mrs. Stanhope's, she has dignity of mind, and simplicity of character" (77). As a reaction to being fixed as one kind of character, Belinda tries to fix (that is, repair) her character by establishing it as something more substantial and less affected.

Belinda's distancing herself from one kind of character at the beginning of the novel establishes the question of what kind of character she will eventually become. Instead of being the economic character the men at the masquerade assign to her, Belinda gradually emerges as an advocate for domestic femininity, thus reworking the metaphor of a house for sale into one of the house as a stable site of comforts. Over the course of the novel she is exposed to different models of femininity that she accepts or rejects. As others have noted, Belinda's exposure to various gender roles and decisions about her character are done in the name of domesticity: "deviant and exemplary women serve as models of behavior among which Belinda must chose rightly if she is to marry successfully" (Harvey 1). Amongst the deviant women is Lady Delacour before her reformation. After Lady Delacour has revealed her diseased breast and told her story of dissipation and ruin, Belinda "reasoned for herself upon what she saw and felt. It is sometimes safer for young people to see, than to hear of certain characters" (69) and the "results of Belinda's reflections upon lady Delacour's history was a resolution to profit by her bad example" (70). Other disruptive models of femininity include Harriet Freke, who dresses in man's clothes and engages in unladylike behaviour (such as dueling and attending sessions of parliament), and Virginia St. Pierre, who "hovers at the edge of propriety and brings to the novel the exoticism of the colonial isle" (Egenolf 91). Douthwaite argues that Belinda is presented with models of a specific kind of domestic femininity, that of motherhood (42). The novel's ideal exemplar is Lady Anne Percival, who is the perfect mate for her husband and mother to her children: "the partner of his warmest affections was also the partner of his most serious occupations; and her sympathy and approbation, and the daily sense of her success in the education of their children, inspired him with a degree of happy social energy" (216). Belinda's stay with the Percival family at Oakley Park does not last a week before she realizes "that domestic life was that which could alone make her really and permanently happy" (217). Lady Anne becomes the domestic ideal to which Belinda aspires.

Belinda's transformation into a domestic ideal is tracked by how well she controls a personal attribute: her blushes. Blushes are significant in this novel because they question the correspondence between interior and exterior that is so critical to the operation of character convenience and therefore to the establishment of character. The blush's strong association with women means that its function as indicator of character is particularly crucial for women. A common trope in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British literature (Halsey 228), the blush's involuntary nature makes it seem reliable: "the involuntary blush exceeds the voluntary smile in uncovering a truth yielded against one's well-behaved will" (O'Farrell 127). The blush's reliability as an indicator of interior character is predicated on the existence of character convenience. The blush is particularly telling because it originates from inside. Comparing blushes to rouge, Ruth Yeazell in *Fictions of Modesty* notes that if "the natural complexion figures truth, then a blush seems truer still—since even natural coloring remains literally a superficial matter, when the sudden rush of blood reveals an inner reality" (73). The rush of blood to the cheek is a literal example of the interior coming to the fore and externally displaying an internal attribute.

As the novel begins, Belinda's blushes are taken as an honest sign of her thoughts or feelings. Belinda's blush at Oakley Park betrays to Lady Anne a previous romantic attachment: "Perhaps I can spare you the trouble of telling me in words what a blush told me, or at least made me suspect, yesterday evening" (243). In another example, Belinda's "deep blush" of shame during the Elizabeth/Raleigh court chess game flirtation is what first alerts Hervey to the inappropriate nature of his and Lady Delacour's behaviour (114). Belinda's countenance is likewise considered to be truthful. Upon hearing rumours that Clarence Hervey might have a mistress, Belinda turns pale in spite of herself. As Lady Delacour remarks, "It is a pity that your countenance, which is usually expressive enough, should not at this instant obey your wishes and express perfect fidelity" (149). Lady Delacour's reference to fidelity again demonstrates that blushing (or turning pale) operates within a system of a divided self, with the exterior presumed to indicate the interior's authenticity. While Belinda wishes she would not turn pale, her countenance indicates her emotions rather than obey her will. Belinda's transparent nature is reinforced by how often she is referred to as the embodiment of truth. Lady Delacour calls her "truth itself" during the episode of the *sortes Virgilianæ* (175). Belinda's association with truth is also established when she shows Dr. X—— the boudoir to verify her and Lady Delacour's innocence: "I am not too proud to give positive proofs of my speaking truth" (132). In this particular example of character convenience, the blush becomes the conduit through which truth about interior character is established.

However, even when Belinda's blushes indicate her emotions or state of mind, others can still misinterpret her. During his failed marriage proposal, Sir Philip Baddely describes Belinda's blush as "heavenly" (153), even though she is obviously about to reject him. More seriously, a major misunderstanding occurs because Lady Delacour (almost willfully) misinterprets Belinda's blush. Her suspicions aroused by a strong hint from Sir Philip Baddely and spurred by her own imagination, Lady Delacour has begun to suspect that Belinda is angling to marry Lord Delacour after she herself has died from her illness (181–82). During a breakfast conversation, she glances pointedly at Belinda while mentioning that she is not yet dead and Belinda is not yet married, and is rewarded with a blush. However, this blush is an unreliable indicator of Belinda's guilt or shame; ironically, Lady Delacour's seeking out a sign of guilt is what leads to the blush: "if Belinda blushed, it was merely from the confusion into which she was thrown by the piercing glance of lady Delacour's black eyes—a glance, which neither guilt or innocence could withstand" (185). Belinda blushes because she believes Lady Delacour is still angry about an argument from the previous night while Lady Delacour reads the blush as an admission of guilt. In this case, Belinda's blush indicates nothing about her internal state (her guilt or innocence), especially not about accusations she is unaware of. Instead, Belinda's blush conveys a confusion caused by an external factor, Lady Delacour's glance. What Lady Delacour assumes to be character convenience is actually a mirror for her own suspicions rather than Belinda's guilt. Instead of seeing character convenience, Lady Delacour imposes it.

The blush's effectiveness at conveying character is compromised by the difficult process of interpreting its meaning. One way that the blush is confusing lies in how it can indicate both modesty and shame, connecting the two inextricably. According to Yeazell, eighteenth-century conduct literature invoked the blush as a sign of innocence while denying how that innocence was paradoxically founded in the shame of knowing that something untoward had been mentioned (*Fictions* 71): "No doubt a more or less tacit awareness of how equivocally the blood could speak lay behind so much insistence on a blush at once modest and innocent" (67). Edgeworth demonstrates an awareness of the paradoxes of the blush during a conversation that occurs when Harriet Freke visits Oakley Park. Harriet asserts that women would be better off without shame and then solicits Belinda's opinion:

> "What say you, miss Portman? Silent—hey? Silence that speaks!"
>
> "Miss Portman's blushes," said Mr. Vincent, "speak *for* her."
>
> "*Against* her," said Mrs Freke. "Women blush because they understand."
>
> "And you would have them understand without blushing?" said Mr. Percival. (229, emphasis original)

The discussion takes place in a chapter titled "Rights of Women" and points to questions about women's propriety. Mr. Percival espouses the view of traditionalists like Fordyce, who in his *Sermons* calls blushing "the precious coloring of virtue" (qtd. in Atkinson and Atkinson 110). To Mr. Percival and Fordyce, a blush indicates innocence; a woman blushes when she hears or sees something indelicate. But for Harriet, if a woman blushes, it means that she knows what is inappropriate and what is not—the blushing woman understands something shameful. The difficulties of ascertaining the meaning of the equivocal blush show that blushes can make women vulnerable to misinterpretation as often as they can testify to their inherent truthfulness. As a method of determining female character, reading the blush is a process fraught with anxieties and uncertainties.

Though Harriet ultimately loses the argument and the debate is evidently intended to undermine radical feminist notions about female judgment and rationality, her point about the conflicted nature of blushes reverberates throughout the novel. Belinda blushes when Lady Delacour teases her about Hervey because she is not supposed to show preference for any man until after he has declared himself, a subject that Harriet confronts with the abrupt question, "why, when a woman likes a man, does not she go and tell him so honestly?" (230). Lady Delacour's teasing means that she has noticed Belinda's exhibiting partiality and her ladyship's further teasing over blushing only exacerbates Belinda's embarrassment. Belinda's embarrassment has two sources: shame over showing her feelings for Hervey and shame about being ashamed of it, because blushes betray her romantic desires, desires opposed to modesty and innocence. For Belinda, blushing draws unwanted attention to herself. The blush, while a testament to her modesty, also makes her modesty a part of her outward, public persona, since blushing cannot be hidden. As an indicator of authentic feeling, the presence of a blush exposes Belinda to the conjectures of others. Because it is the means of conveying interior truth to exterior view, the blush actually invites more scrutiny instead of deflecting it. The blush exposes her as much as Aunt Stanhope did with the marriage market.

Belinda deals with the exposure of her character by doing the impossible: controlling her blushes. Over the course of the novel, as Belinda progresses through the marriage market and towards domesticity, her blushes become more cryptic. Discussing her possible engagement to Mr. Vincent, Belinda still blushes, but in ways that are more difficult to parse. Belinda is at her most evasive when Lady Delacour questions her about loving Mr. Vincent:

> 'You may marry his [Mr. Percival's] ward, and welcome, without being in love with him.'
>
> 'But not without loving him,' said Belinda.
>
> 'Absolutely you blushed, my dear, as you pronounced those words. And you *can* blush about loving Mr Vincent?'
>
> 'I hope, and I believe, that I shall never have any reason to blush *for* loving him,' said Belinda.
>
> 'A deeper crimson! Good Heavens! Can I believe my senses? Was it the blush of anger or of love?'
>
> 'Not of anger,' said Belinda. (338)

The exchange is a dialogue without narrative interruptions and is a part of a larger, three-page conversation almost entirely comprised of direct quotations. The narrative, rather than being focalized from her point of view, is now distanced from Belinda, presenting an external point of view rather than an interior one. Belinda's thoughts are not represented and it is not entirely clear what she means by her claim that her blush is not one "of anger". Though the implied answer is that she blushes because she loves Mr. Vincent, her negative declaration (she replies "Not of anger" instead of "Of love", which is what Lady Delacour's question rhetorically sets up) is evasive rather than assertive. It is also a declaration that follows her equally prevaricating claim that she loves Mr. Vincent but is not in love with him. While Belinda's first blush (occurring as she says that she loves Mr. Vincent, again by using a negative construction) could be attributed to embarrassment at having to declare something personal, her blushing deeper when declaring her hope that she "shall never have any reason to blush *for* loving him" is more difficult to interpret. It could further indicate the depth of her love towards Mr. Vincent, but the emphasis on "for" suggests that Belinda is thinking about a case where she did blush for loving someone, that is, Clarence Hervey, who she believes has set up Virginia St. Pierre as his mistress.

Over the course of the novel, the blush changes from being a reliable indicator of Belinda's internal state to being increasingly difficult to interpret. Belinda the transparent, "unaffected" subject becomes opaque (15), especially after she stays with the Percivals and becomes engaged to Mr. Vincent. Control of her blushes happens in conjunction with control of her feelings. If ever a heroine could be said to have been reasoned out of being in love, Belinda Portman would be that heroine. Subject to Mr. Percival's lectures on first attachments and becoming accustomed to Mr. Vincent's presence, Belinda eliminates her romantic feelings for Hervey through sheer force of will. Significantly, the first sign of her success is the absence of a blush:

> She could now praise Clarence Hervey *without blushing*, and she could think even of his generosity without enthusiasm, though not without pleasure. By strength of mind, and timely exertion, she had prevented her prepossession from growing into a passion that might have made her miserable. Proud of this conquest over herself, she was now disposed to treat Mr. Vincent with more favour than usual. (254, emphasis added)

The passage is littered with words that connote effort and force ("strength of mind", "exertion", "prevented", "conquest"), suggesting the strength of the feelings that had to be overcome. Her self-control is further demonstrated by her later assertion that she was never in love with Hervey because he never declared his love for her: "Had Mr. Hervey addressed me as a lover, I should certainly have loved him; but he never did declare any attachment to me, and therefore, I have not permitted my imagination to dwell upon his good qualities; nor do I now ever look back upon them" (360–61). Here, Belinda demonstrates the extent to which she has internalized the doctrine of not showing partiality before the other does, but her language also indicates how much effort is required to follow that doctrine. Rather than not think of him, she has not "permitted" herself to do so.

Belinda avoids being misread by repressing any signals that can be read at all. She thus eschews even being a part of the visual system in which blushes are evaluated as indicators of authentic interiority. Yeazell demonstrates that even though the blush was considered an indicator of concepts as varied as innocence, modesty, knowing shame, self-consciousness, and encroaching sexuality, the predominant way it was read in the eighteenth-century courtship novel was as a sign of romantic or erotic interest (Yeazell 76–77). Lady Delacour reads Belinda's blushes in this vein, attempting to fix Belinda's character by casting her and reading her as the heroine of a novel. As MacFadyen notes, Lady Delacour is an avid reader of a range of literary texts; it follows that she might read Belinda as a literary heroine. However, Belinda falls short of Lady Delacour's expectations, refusing to play the part of the blushing ingénue. The assumption (of both Lady

Delacour and of the novel's reader) is that Belinda's blushes will betray her preference for Clarence Hervey. However, once Belinda becomes engaged to Mr. Vincent, she develops a remarkable ability to control her countenance and her blushes. When Marriot recounts the story of discovering Hervey's supposed mistress, Lady Delacour expects Belinda to feel "utter dismay and confusion" (328) and is instead "disappointed to see, by her countenance, that she approved of Marriott's philosophy" that things were as they should be. (331). Lady Delacour also expects Belinda to be embarrassed when they learn about Hervey's engagement and contrives to shield her face with the fire screen, but Belinda declines: "'I do not want—I do not wish for a screen, I thank you,' said Belinda, putting it aside, with gentle composure" (354). Belinda's calmness stymies even the narrator. While Belinda's earlier blushes under Lady Delacour's "piercing glance" are explained, later instances of Belinda's lack of blushing are not accounted for. On the news that Clarence Hervey has married Virginia, Lady Delacour "was provoked by Belinda's self-possession" (456). Even the narrator cannot explain Belinda's countenance earlier when Lady Boucher mentions that Clarence is engaged: "The inquisitive dowager … immediately fastened her eyes upon Belinda's face; but from that she could make out nothing. Was it because she had not the best eyes, or because there was nothing to be seen?" (355). The narrator's question is unanswered; Belinda's face has become inscrutable.

Belinda gradually becomes the model of ideal domestic femininity, a transformation linked to her control of her blushes. From being able to think of Clarence Hervey without blushing to calmly explaining how she can marry Mr.

Vincent without being in love with him, Belinda molds herself into her ideal and fixes her own character. Belinda's calm attitude towards Vincent and her unregretful consideration of Hervey are too much for Lady Delacour, who declares that "I never wish to be as cool as you are, Belinda!" (361). If Belinda's blushes demonstrate self-consciousness, her lack of blushes—her coolness—demonstrates self-control. Belinda has successfully learned to regulate herself according to the dictates of femininity, subsuming any indicators of interior individuality: "Belinda's solution is to cling to a cautious reverence for decorum that ultimately prevents her from taking any action at all, or of adopting any personality traits that set her apart as an individual" (Fitzgerald 822). Belinda's public character changes from being a mercenary pupil of her Aunt Stanhope to being the model of controlled femininity, but through Lady Delacour's criticisms, the novel suggests that this change is not necessarily desirable.

Belinda, then, goes from being misunderstood to using character convenience as a way of correcting her reputation to denying others the chance to interpret her countenance and attempting to circumvent the system of external judgment. Yet her success at being a blank character—of her coolness—comes at the price of her liveliness and her success as a fictional character. Lady Delacour's frustration with Belinda echoes that of readers who are likewise primed to see Belinda Portman as a heroine of a courtship novel. Because she has successfully regulated herself, Belinda's cool exterior seems to correspond to a cool interior. Our expectations of Belinda as a heroine are disappointed not by Belinda's outward declarations of indifference towards Clarence, but by how any suspicions about her true, interior feelings remain uncorroborated by involuntary actions such as blushes. Belinda's unified character (as in personality) results in an unengaging fictional character on the page: "one of the novel's major flaws is the complacency of the main character, for such complacency leaves little room for tension… she experiences little self-doubt and rarely any convincing inner conflict" (Kowaleski-Wallace 109). While I agree that Belinda exhibits little tension within herself, readers' reactions to Belinda suggest an abundance of tension between how she, as a novel's heroine, is expected to behave and how she actually behaves. Belinda stymies attempts to uncover her inner self; this frustration is another source of dissatisfaction about the character. In *Belinda*, the use of the tenets of character convenience to thwart access to character compromises the experience of reading the novel. Belinda illustrates how the underlying premise of character convenience—that there is a relationship between inside and outside—can be manipulated to conceal rather than reveal character. If there is nothing to read outside, then the inside cannot be discovered. The representation of Belinda and her blushes subverts the operation of character convenience in order to render it ineffective. While Clarissa Harlowe must move to evade the fixing of her character, Belinda merely closes herself off and presents a blank exterior. Finally, once Belinda becomes that ideal domestic subject, she ceases to be interesting, to possess any fissures between appearance and truth to make her engaging. The very project of attaining domestic happiness is criticized by how it smooths out Belinda's character. The representation of Belinda Portman as a blank domestic subject undercuts her accomplishment of achieving such domesticity in the first place.

Lady Delacour, the Boudoir, and Theatricality: Failed Architectural Convenience

If Belinda Portman exemplifies the cost and ultimately rejection of character convenience, then Lady Delacour demonstrates the breakdown of architectural convenience, the concept that a space has a character that corresponds to the personality of its owner or occupant. In the first volume of *Belinda*, Lady Dealcour is defined by her boudoir and all the attendant associations of sexual transgression. However, by examining the history of the boudoir and the way that the room's powers are undercut and eventually denied in the novel, we will see that the boudoir ultimately demonstrates the breakdown and failure of architectural convenience. In *Belinda*, the space of the boudoir loses power, shifting from being a room that dominates the narrative to one whose eventual absence is unacknowledged. Ultimately, the instability of the boudoir and its sexualized occupant suggests how understanding of female subjectivity was solidifying to the point where spatial representations were unnecessary.

The word "boudoir" conjures up specific associations—sex, seduction, femininity, privacy. Originating in France, where the term "boudoir" existed as early as 1730 (Lilley), the boudoir was, according to Robin Middleton, "the first room designated specifically for women—different from, though no doubt distantly related to, the harem" (190 n.31).The eroticism associated with the boudoir is for the most part a feminine one, an association that begins with the room's etymology from the French verb *bouder*, to pout or to sulk. In the *Dictionary of Furniture and Decoration*, Henri Havard defines the boudoir as a small room used by women ("Petite pièce essentiellement à l'usage des femmes" [363]).[16] A small, private room that evolved from the French *cabinet* (a room similar to the versatile English closet), the boudoir in France gradually took on more transgressive meanings over the course of the eighteenth century. By 1780, it is evident that "the boudoir was firmly associated with luxury and sexual intrigue" (Lilley 193) and "its tactile decoration and elaborate character became identified with the quintessentially feminine" (Troutman 299).

Middleton, Lilley, and Mark Girouard (in *Life in a French Country House)* all point to the significance of an otherwise minor French story by Jean-François de Bastide called *La petite maison*, which develops the concept of the boudoir as an erotic space. The story, possibly published as early as 1753 and certainly by 1758 (Lilley 197, n. 19), is set in a *petite maison*, a type of building that functioned as a suburban retreat for sexual assignations (el-Khoury 20).[17] In the story, a young woman named Mélite bets a marquis that he can show her around his *petite maison* without her submitting to his advances. Mélite only half succeeds. She overcomes the effect of one boudoir only to be seduced by (and in) a second one. The first boudoir is luxuriously decorated, calculated to set a romantic mood:

> The walls of the boudoir were covered with mirrors whose joinery was concealed by carefully sculpted, leafy tree trunks. The trees… were heavy

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[16] Translations from Havard are mine.

[17] According to Meredith Martin, architect Jacques-François Blondel assisted de Bastide in the writing of the story (22).

> with flowers and laden with chandeliers. The light from their many candles receded into the opposite mirrors, which had been purposely veiled with hanging gauze. . . . . In a niche was an *ottomane*, a sort of resting bed that lay on a parquet of checkered rose wood. . . . . The walls and ceiling of the niche were also covered with mirrors; the wood-work and the sculpture were painted in hues appropriate to the scenes they depicted. (75–76)

In addition to being an optical illusion ("the boudoir could have been mistaken for a natural woods, lit with the help of art" [76]), the boudoir also appeals to Mélite's other senses. The room's paint has been mixed with "the fragrances of violet, jasmine, and rose" and a screen conceals a "spacious corridor, where the Marquis had arranged for musicians to play" (76). Mélite reacts with delight, though she maintains her caution. When the marquis presses his case too urgently, a frightened Mélite escapes the first boudoir, but a second boudoir puts her in a more vulnerable position because the marquis has become less patient and the house more enticing. The second boudoir is decorated more heavily than the first, with "thick green gourbouran" (silk), engravings, and furniture such as ottomans and upholstered chairs (106). De Bastide does not describe the décor of the second boudoir at the same level of detail as the décor of the first. Instead, the novella concentrates on the marquis's pressuring Mélite, who eventually "shuddered, faltered, sighed, and lost the wager" (110). Taken together, the two boudoirs are the means as well as the site of seduction, even if the marquis's triumph in the second boudoir is more disturbing than erotic.

The representation of the boudoir as an erotic space is also evident decades later, in an architectural treatise by French architect Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières titled *The Genius of Architecture: The Analogy of That Art with Our Sensations*. In it, Le Camus gives his advice about how to build and organize an *hôtel*, that is, an upperclass or noble town house. Le Camus devotes three entire pages to the boudoir, a sign of the room's significance, especially when compared to the two paragraphs he sometimes spends on other spaces. Le Camus owes much in his description of the boudoir to de Bastide's *La petite maison*, borrowing heavily from de Bastide's description of the first boudoir to describe his own ideal of the room, including mirrors whose joints are hidden by "carved tree trunks artfully arranged and leafed and painted to resemble nature" (116), candlelight "softened by gauzes" (116), and an alcove (containing a daybed) that "must be decorated with looking glasses all around, even on its ceiling" (116–17). Le Camus's description of the boudoir emphasizes its erotic potential; he recommends furnishing the room with paintings that depict erotic encounters in Greek and Roman mythology, which "all suggest compositions apposite to the character of the room" (116). The objective is clear: "enjoyment is close at hand" (116). The erotic potential of the boudoir is not limited to activities depicted and anticipated, however. The language Le Camus uses is more sensitive and evocative than the matter-of-fact tone employed for other rooms, including the dressing room, where his concerns lies mainly with building materials and furniture organization.

In their texts, de Bastide and Le Camus both describe a certain type of architectural convenience, the concept that a space (in this case, one room) corresponds not to its owner's status or character, but rather, its function. In *La petite maison*, this subcategory of architectural convenience is evident when Mélite enters the second boudoir, sees its décor, "recognized her error and wanted only to leave" (108). Le Camus's assertion that erotic paintings would be "apposite to the character of the room" also exemplifies how space and function converge, with the erotic nature of the paintings pointing to the erotic nature of the space. The boudoir also follows character convenience by corresponding to the character of its occupant. For example, Le Camus advocates a parallel between the shape of the room and its occupant, advising that the boudoir be in the form of a circle because

> The form is *appropriate to the character of the room*; it is sacred to Venus. Consider a beautiful woman. Her outlines are gentle and well rounded; the muscles are not pronounced; the whole is governed by a simple, natural sweetness… (117, emphasis added)

In fact, in Le Camus's treatise, the correspondence is so strong that the space becomes the subject. At one point, he calls the boudoir "a lady of fashion to be adorned" (115). The personification of the room as a woman is an example of architectural convenience writ small, at the level of a single room, with the space expressing the character of the woman. But Le Camus also blurs the distinction between space and occupant when he uses a metaphor made ambiguous by the imprecision of its pronouns: "The boudoir is regarded as the abode of delight; here she seems to reflect on her designs and to yield to her inclinations" (115).

The sentence's ambiguity lies in the vagueness of the pronoun "her". If the "her" of the sentence refers to a woman, then the pronoun lacks a referent. If the "her" refers to the boudoir, then the boudoir becomes a feminized entity which reflects and yields. Le Camus description suggests that the woman and the boudoir have become so identified with each other that it is impossible to separate them any more.

By employing architectural convenience in his discussion of the boudoir, Le Camus suggests that a certain type of woman—beautiful, ornamental, erotic—would be its occupant. What is most striking about his description is the need for 100% correspondence to the point of total unity between the woman and the room. The importance of unity is most evident in Le Camus's writing about the mirrors in the boudoir, particularly how they must be flawless: they must lack imperfections such as scratches and curves that would create "reflections that are distorted" (118) and should be installed carefully to avoid being "out of alignment, out of square, or out of plumb" (118). Errors would result in a lack of unity: "For then the face, or any object reflected in the glass, seems fractured and divided between two complexions, which occasions the most disagreeable disparity: one does not expect to be vexed in such a manner in one's own boudoir" (118). It is a vexation rooted in a deep-seated need for a unified female subject, one that seems to bother Le Camus as much as it would his boudoir's hypothetical occupant. Disparity, the opposite of unity, is "most disagreeable" (118). As he commands, the room "must aim for the ultimate perfection" (118). Any deviation from such perfection would not be tolerated.

However, the boudoir itself is not as unified as we would think. Though it was certainly considered a seductive space, the boudoir has a rich history that complicates and goes beyond its eroticism. Instead, the boudoir originates from emerging notions of privacy in the eighteenth century. Ed Lilley and Robin Middleton both note how the boudoir developed alongside concepts of privacy and entertainment in eighteenth-century France, a time when spaces became increasingly divided and assigned specific functions (Lilley 193, Middleton 41). Le Camus's treatise is an example of such diversification and specialization; he writes about the ideal make up of rooms as specific and distinct as the water closet, the baths, the ante-room to the baths, the bathroom, the vapor bath, the bedroom adjacent to the bath, and the closet for the bath (8). The result of such diversification was not necessarily more privacy, but more intimacy:

> in the eighteenth century, with the opening up of the realm of feeling and especially individual sentiment, privacy took on a new value. Rooms were more often set aside for personal use, which meant, of course, that intimate relationships could be more successfully explored. (Middleton 41)

Increased privacy creates opportunities for closer relationships since *limited* access means more significant access. Privacy is dangerous not only because it privileges individuality and personal feeling, but also because it creates new opportunities for intimacy.

One result of such privacy was the opportunity for reading alone. Lilley argues that in upper-class French houses, the boudoir could have been a place of female study, the feminine counterpart to the man's cabinet (that is, a small room), and one that was also private: "It now seems evident that education for aristocratic women became at least tolerated if it was confined to the private world of the home" (195). As Nicole Reynolds points out, Le Camus and other male architects do not specify what activities actually occurred in the boudoir, though some activities, including novel reading, took on the negative tinge associated with sexual transgression (51). Both Lilley and Reynolds argue that the rise of female reading could have engendered the creation of a space for female reading, though, as Reynolds notes, the private reading of novels was itself often considered erotic (52). The erotic nature of private female reading suggests that the boudoir was a place where transgressive behaviour of all sorts occurred, or at least, was thought to have occurred.

Moreover, the boudoir was not exclusively a woman's space. Some examples of men's boudoirs were no less erotic, and in fact, could have been designated as solely erotic since they already had other spaces in which to read and work (the *cabinet*). While Le Camus advocated only that the boudoir contain paintings of erotic encounters from mythology, in the mid-eighteenth century the Marquis de Marigny wanted his boudoir to be very small and very warm ("*fort petite et fort chaude*") and decorated with nothing but nudes (Havard 366; Girouard, *French* 153). In the 1770s the boudoir of Louis XVI's brother the Comte d'Artois was described as "'displaying every variety of voluptuous painting by our modern masters […] A rose-coloured bed, and mirrors all round, to reduplicate the attitudes of the lovers'" (qtd. in Girouard, *French* 153). Across the channel, in 1748, the fourth Earl of Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, was also decorating his boudoir. For Chesterfield, however, the boudoir was not so much an erotic space as a sanctuary. Referring to its origins as a pouting room, he writes that the boudoir "is so cheerful and so pleasant, that there will be no such thing as pouting in it when I am alone" (90). Chesterfield refers to his boudoir as a subcategory of the general term for a small room, a "closet", suggesting that the boudoir's identity, especially in English architecture, was still being developed at mid-century. Indeed, though Chesterfield fills his boudoir with "a great deal of glass [mirrors]" over the chimney and a "picture of a very fine woman", he gives the impression of a space that is more powerfully charming than erotic: "many a fool, who would tire me to death in a dismal room, may chance to amuse me in a pleasant and ornamented closet" (90). The boudoir's connotations of sexual dalliance opens up linguistic avenues by which Chesterfield tentatively flirts with his French, female correspondent, joking, "How I long for your arms, madam!" when referring to the light sconces (*l'armes*) that she is sending him for the boudoir (94). However, he immediately qualifies his statement, undercutting his sentiment: "The expression appears rather warm and tender; I must explain it, in case the letter should be opened" (94). Chesterfield's relationship to his boudoir is drastically different from the relationship that Le Camus envisions between his boudoir and its occupant. Whereas Le Camus emphasizes how it would feel to be inside the boudoir, to be admiring oneself in the various mirrors, Chesterfield's boudoir is a social space populated by people. Lord Chesterfield's boudoir is far removed (literally and figuratively) from the boudoirs of *La petite maison* and Le Camus's treatise.

The boudoir, then, had an unstable identity, being not only a site associated with transgression, particularly women's sexual transgression, but also a place associated with women's privacy and intellectual pursuits, a place for her to read and to be educated. It was also sometimes a man's space, erotic or otherwise. One reason for the boudoir's multiple incarnations is its historical evolution from other rooms that had multiple and varied uses. Lilley traces the development of the boudoir as "a subspecies of the *cabinet*" (194) and as quoted above, Chesterfield calls his own boudoir an "ornamented closet". The development of the entresol system of antechambers in French houses also indicates that the physical space itself could take on a variety of uses and identities. In French houses, apartments were clustered around a main room rather than arranged linearly. The main room would often be two storeys high, meaning that the attached antechambers could be divided into two rooms, one above the other, each set having its own connecting staircase. The entresol was the additional upper-level room (Girouard, *French* 149–50). Even though the entresol had a private entrance and was secluded, it was often not used as just a boudoir (or *cabinet de niche*, as it was also called). Instead, "The main advantage and attraction of the arrangement was that it was flexible, and could be put to all kinds of uses" (150). Girouard lists a number of functions for the entresol, including acting as servants' bedrooms, a small library, children's rooms, and storage rooms (150). Even though the term 'boudoir' had certain connotations in literature and culture, the architectural history of the space in France (and to a lesser extent England) suggests that the rooms themselves were more flexible in the specific functions they fulfilled.

The history of the boudoir and its unstable identity illuminates our understanding of the room and women's identity in *Belinda*.[18] The boudoir in *Belinda* lies at the nexus of many issues surrounding the boudoir, specifically those regarding the fluctuations in the room's (and the occupant's) identity and whether they reflect the fluctuating identity of the novel's most riveting character, Lady Delacour. The boudoir in *Belinda* is most strongly associated with Lady Delacour, a married woman of fashion who is a leader of London society. Lady Delacour's big secret is her mysterious, locked boudoir, to which only two people (herself and a trusted servant) have keys. The secrecy gives rise to a gamut of speculation about what the room could be used for, all of which is based on the concept of the boudoir as a space of sexual transgression. For example, her husband assumes that a lover is hiding in the room when a servant prevents him from entering (128), and when Belinda swears that that is not the case, he immediately concludes that it is "a lover of miss Portman's" instead (128). A smear letter also casts the boudoir as a site of sin, hinting that "The person who used to be let up the private stairs, into the boudoir… is now more conveniently received at Twickenham" (334). The rumours surrounding Lady Delacour's boudoir exploit the concept of architectural convenience to disparage her character, being premised on a direct correspondence between the erotic space and its occupant.

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[18] Tita Chico, in *Designing Women: The Dressing Room in Eighteenth-Century Literature and Culture*, helpfully traces the dressing room in private houses to their historical antecedents in Restoration England, including the dressing/retiring rooms in Restoration theatres. However, in her analysis of *Belinda*, Chico does not differentiate between the dressing room and the boudoir, treating quotations describing the boudoir as if they applied to the dressing room. I see the separation between the rooms as significant, especially since the boudoir's position as the most interior of Lady Delacour's suite of rooms (consisting of, in order, the dressing room, bedroom, and boudoir) forms a key part of my argument.

The question of Lady Delacour's character speaks to the novel's concern with developing, determining, and ascertaining character. The novel is ostensibly about the formation of its titular heroine's character, for as we have already seen, Belinda's is a character "yet to be developed by circumstances" (7). The rest of the novel supposedly outlines this process. Belinda herself tries to read Clarence Hervey, who is as mutable as Lady Delacour: "His chameleon character seemed to vary in different lights, and according to the different situations, in which he happened to be placed" (14). Belinda and Clarence's eventual romantic rapprochement is indicated by their mutual discoveries of each other's good character: "Belinda was touched by the candour and good sense with which Clarence Hervey spoke. His character appeared in a new light" (116). The uncovering of one good character leads to the reinforcement of another, with each treating their discovery as a positive reflection upon themselves. Belinda "was proud of her own judgment, in having discerned his merit" (116) and Clarence, for his part, is "absolutely enchanted with her, and with his own penetration in having discovered her real character, notwithstanding she was Mrs. Stanhope's niece" (117–18). As Michals notes, "Belinda and Clarence fall in love as much with their own ability to read character as with each other" (16). Ironically, in a novel where Belinda's character is presented as unformed, the major reformation falls to someone else. Belinda and Clarence bond over their efforts to improve the character of Lady Delacour, further suggesting the importance of good character to not only self promotion, but to the promotion of others' happiness. More often than not, however, the novel depicts failed attempts to determine character. Clarence Harvey initially believes Belinda to be like her other cousins, who have been ushered into marriage by Aunt Stanhope. Belinda doubts her understanding of Clarence's character when she discovers Virginia's strand of hair, and Clarence's hesitance to explain his experiment in education delays their final pairing. Virginia St. Pierre's social character requires almost inhuman levels of resuscitation on the part of Mrs. Margaret Delacour, Lady Delacour, and Belinda so that Virginia is no longer viewed as Clarence Hervey's ruined mistress. Clarence's own character depends upon Virginia's identity. Mr. Vincent's predilection for gambling, which mars his character, is discovered in time for Belinda to break off the engagement. The servant Champfort's character is discovered only after he has caused sufficient mischief in the Delacour house.

The most fascinating character (in the fictional, literary sense) in the novel is Lady Delacour, and one of the novel's central concerns is the nature of her 'true' character. She is introduced as a society woman, "admired as a fashionable *bel esprit*" whose "company was courted by all the gay, the witty, and the gallant" (10). Edgeworth presents the question of whether Lady Delacour will remain a woman of fashion in terms of a reference to Marmontel's *Tales,* the figure of *la femme comme il y en a peu*. The phrase means a 'woman like few others', but its usage in the novel suggests that it denotes a woman as she always was (491, n. 105). Lady Anne Percival is the first to use the phrase, in her defence of Lady Delacour:

> lady Delacour was not always the unfeeling dissipated fine lady that she now appears to be. This is only one of the transformations of fashion—the period of her enchantment will soon be at an end, and she will return to her natural character.—I should not be at all surprised, if lady Delacour were to appear at once, '*la femme comme il y en a peu*.' (105)

Lady Anne asserts that Lady Delacour, in reverting to being *'la femme comme il y en a peu'*, will also "return to her natural character", an interesting declaration that implies that Lady Delacour will continue to be singular no matter what her character. Lady Anne assumes that Lady Delacour's dissipated life is all an act, a "transformation", and that she will eventually transform into something else, in this case, something domestic: "when she is tired of the insipid taste of other pleasures, she will have a higher relish for those of domestic life, which will be new and fresh to her" (105). Lady Delacour's "natural character" is presumed to be a domestic one, meaning that *la femme comme il y en a peu* is a domestic woman. And yet there are fissures in Lady Anne's claim. If Lady Delacour's natural character is to be a domestic woman like few others, then why would domestic pleasures appeal to her because they are "new and fresh" rather than familiar or innate? If she can so easily transform into a dissipated woman of fashion, how can the sincerity of a second transformation, this time into a domestic character, be trusted?

In fact, Lady Delacour is hiding another transformation—from a lady of fashion to a sick woman. Her secret is that she is dying of an unspecified injury to her breast (possibly cancer) and the boudoir is where her doctor treats her.

Rather than being a space of sexual transgression, the boudoir is a sickroom that is described with gothic dread:

> The room was rather dark, as there was no light in it, except what came from one candle, which lady Delacour held in her hand, and which burned but dimly. Belinda, as she looked round, saw nothing but a confusion of linen rags—vials, some empty, some full—and she perceived that there was a strong smell of medicines. (31)

Lady Delacour's boudoir, then, confounds expectations. Its status as a sickroom rather than a space of seduction challenges architectural convenience. However, the boudoir turns out to be even more unreliable, for Lady Delacour is not actually dying. What she believes is fatal cancer is instead a minor injury that her quack doctor has exaggerated for financial gain. The boudoir, supposedly a site of treatment, has been a site of falsehood and exploitation.

The shifting identities of the boudoir demonstrate the difficulty of pinning down character, a difficulty elucidated by the novel's theme of theatricality and its representation of space as having stage-like mutability. The social spaces of Lady Delacour's London townhouse are explicitly theatrical, associated with both a performance area and backstage. When compared to larger London society "abroad", home is a backstage space characterized by dissatisfaction and discomfort: "Abroad, and at home, lady Delacour was two different persons. Abroad she appeared all life, spirit, and good humour—at home, listless, fretful, and melancholy" (10). Lady Delacour's double identity as "two different persons" is explicitly compared to the dual identity of an actress who plays a part: "[at home]

she seemed like a spoiled actress off the stage, over stimulated by applause, and exhausted by the exertions of supporting a fictitious character" (10–11). In the novel, the "fictitious character" is Lady Delacour—woman of fashion, social leader, and wit—and Edgeworth suggests that it is all an act.

Lady Delacour at home is equally dramatic, and her house also becomes a theatre where acknowledged performances occur. These performances include the literal ones of Lady Delacour's at-home theatricals. Private in name only (to distinguish themselves from the public theatres), private theatricals mounted with friends and family were particularly popular in England from 1780 to 1810 (Rosenfeld 15) and encompassed everything from putting up a curtain between two rooms to building an entire theatre on a country estate.[19] Lady Delacour's private theatricals are extravagant; Lord Delacour uses them against her during an argument about overspending. When she reminds him of his costly "newmarket blunders", he counters with, "My lady, your cursed *theatricals*" (39, emphasis original). And while no actual plays are produced in the novel, Lady Delacour's other entertainments remain theatrical in nature. Lady Dealcour takes centre stage as the main actress, playing a character who draws on the energy of the set:

> When her house was filled with well-dressed crowds, when it blazed with lights, and resounded with music and dancing, lady Delacour, in the character of the mistress of the revels, shone the soul and spirit of pleasure

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[19] For more information about private theatricals in the eighteenth century, see Sybil Rosenfeld's *Temples of Thespis: Some Private Theatres and Theatricals in England and Wales, 1700–1820.*

> and frolic. But the moment the company retired, when the music ceased, and the lights were extinguishing, the spell was dissolved. (11)

The passage is filled with theatrical metaphors, including Lady Delacour's being "in the character of the mistress of revels", the music stopping and lights going down, and the double meaning of the word "company" (social and theatrical).

The theatrical nature of the Delacour townhouse is further developed to become two specific kinds of theatrical spaces: the stage and backstage. This overlap is the first of many palimpsestic spatial arrangements in *Belinda*, and the theatrical aspect of the house lends itself to yet more incarnations. Lady Delacour's reference to the Queen's drawing room where Belinda will be presented conflates the royal court and the domestic home (72). The conflation of different spaces is furthered by the chess-playing episode of the novel, in which Lady Delacour impulsively dons an old masquerade costume and appears "dressed in the character of queen Elizabeth" (114), turning the room into a stage and the royal court. The novel's disapproval of Lady Delacour's dissipated life is evident in this episode, as Lady Delacour as Queen Elizabeth and Clarence Hervey as Sir Walter Raleigh flirt inappropriately: "The characters were well supported; both the actor and actress were highly animated, and seemed so fully possessed by their parts, as to be insensible to the comments that were made upon the scene" (114). The incident's moral is clear: acting is improper because actors get carried away, or rather, because it becomes unclear where false character ends and actual character begins. Acting gives the performers license to be less circumspect; the space that enables such license becomes dangerous.

The incident of the chess game features an additional, subtler spatial metaphor: space as chess board. The chess board construction teases out the political ramifications of the court comparison, one which has been established during the discussion about the importance of chess to the Spanish court (113). In the larger chessboard, the novel's heroine, Belinda Portman, becomes a moving piece. At the beginning of the match, Belinda stands behind Hervey's opponent to observe the game. She is, for Clarence, poorly positioned: "Clarence made an errour in his first move, for his attention was distracted by seeing Belinda behind his adversary's chair. [. . .] Belinda changed her place—Clarence recovered his presence of mind" (113–14). Clarence's success depends upon Belinda's physical position in the room; her move strengthens his game. Obviously, her ability to distract him also indicates her important position in Clarence's affections.

It is not clear in which room the chess game takes place, but whichever room it is, it is palimpsestic, containing a stage, a royal court, and a chess board. All three spaces act in dialogue with one another, highlighting underlying motives or bringing forward latent desires. The evening party begins as a theatrical space, one prompted by Lady Delacour's costume. That the costume is of Queen Elizabeth then turns the room into a political space, as court politics is demonstrated in her flirtatious behaviour towards Clarence Hervey as well as in the rules of the chess game. The (geo-) political nature of the chess match has been foreshadowed by Clarence's dazzling display of knowledge about the game while conversing with an expert, his opponent from Spain: "Till he appeared, the foreigner was the principal object of attention, but he was soon eclipsed by Mr

Hervey" (113). The friendly chess match is also a show of social one-upmanship, as the Spanish gentleman attempts to win back the attention of the room he so captivated before Clarence's arrival. In the palimpsestic space of Lady Delacour's reception room, the social, political, and sexual are exposed as being closely related, and all three kinds of spaces are associated with the performance of the stage.

The room, however, contains one space that cannot productively co-exist with the others. While the stage, court, and chessboard are all spaces designed to command attention, the room also becomes the wing of a theatre, an off-stage space. After the chess match, the party moves to an adjoining room and Belinda, Clarence, and Dr. X—— remain behind. Dr. X—— is concerned about Lady Delacour's unusually high spirits and laments that he cannot take her pulse to determine if she is feverish. Clarence hits upon a clever solution: "Look through the door at the shadow of queen Elizabeth's ruff—observe how it vibrates; the motion as well as the figure is magnified in the shadow. Cannot you count every pulsation distinctly?" (115). The reference to the Elizabeth costume and the lights suggest that the other room is now the stage and that the recently vacated room has become a wing, a side area with a view of the stage. Theatricality permeates the public spaces of *Belinda* to the extent of transforming the rooms into off-stage spaces.

Together, the two major spaces in *Belinda*—the boudoir and the theatrical spaces—undermine the concept that one's 'true' character can be determined. The palimpsestic nature of theatrical spaces (the court, the stage, the wings) suggests that the characters who traverse the stage are likewise ever-shifting and mutable. Lady Delacour is the most variable of the characters, since her identity is constantly being revised. She is not merely a witty woman of fashion, but a dying woman who feels compelled to continue in her role as a woman of fashion. Because she is not truly ill, as Katherine Montwieler argues, "her appearance at home is another fictional role, that of the suffering fallen woman" (351). But if Lady Delacour's dissipated life stemmed from an illness that she never had, then her identity as the suffering woman collapses. Her recovery also calls into question what would constitute a return to her "natural character" if she indeed has always been her natural character, *i.e.*, not ill. Lady Delacour has never been sick; is there then any need to cure her at all?

As for the boudoir, attempting to determine character using that room relies on the assumption that the interior is inherently truthful by virtue of being interior, that the revelation of the interior is equal to a revelation of the truth. Belinda demonstrates this precept when she shows Dr. X—— the boudoir, thus giving "positive proofs of my speaking truth" (132), and he is too much a scientist to take her at her word only: "demonstration is unanswerable even by enemies" (132). The boudoir is the innermost room of not only the house but also of Lady Delacour's suite of apartments, which consists of the dressing room, the bedroom, and then finally the boudoir, all in a row (31). The connection between being architecturally interior and architectural convenient is clear. If we were to map a house onto Lady Delacour's body, the boudoir—the innermost sanctum—would align with the most important part of her anatomy, her (ostensibly) diseased breast, which, though a visible part of a woman's anatomy, is aligned with the heart, the site of authentic feeling and true character. For a substantial part of the novel, Lady Delacour defines herself by her breast, seeing it as a symbol of not only punishable transgressive gender behaviour (she receives the initial injury dueling) but also of inadequate motherhood (the child she breastfeeds dies; her daughter's sudden embrace causes her to cry out). Other examples where the interior is defined as truthful include Lady Delacour's cabinet where she locks away her letters from Clarence Hervey (271).

The connection between the boudoir and theatricality is established in a pivotal episode where Lady Delacour tells her husband the truth about her boudoir and her illness. It is a key moment for the development of her character, a turning point that will signal her eventual, problematic transformation to a more domestic version of herself. After teasing her husband in her dressing room, where they have been breakfasting with Belinda, Lady Delacour offers to take him to the boudoir and reveal the truth, to give him "the most irrefragable proof that… you have had no serious cause for jealousy" (268). Her revelation (of her illness and one assumes her diseased breast) would seem to transform the boudoir from a place of secrecy to one of openness. And the boudoir is not just the site of the revelation, but proof of it as well, since it contains the medicines, vials, and rags used to treat her.

However, the boudoir is not wholly open. First of all, though we do not yet know this, Lady Delacour is not truly dying and her injury looks worse than it actually is. Therefore, the revelation only furthers the fiction of the disease, a fiction compounded by the quack doctor's deceit. And, more importantly, this revelation, the key turning point in the story, is elided in the narration. The incident is told through Belinda's point of view—or, rather, her point of hearing. While Belinda remains in the dressing room, Lady Delacour takes Lord Delacour from the dressing room, through the bedroom into the boudoir. The revelation occurs off-stage, or rather, off-page, focalized through Belinda's aural point of view in a mere two sentences: "Belinda heard the boudoir door unlock. In a few minutes they returned" (268). That is it. The gap between the two sentences where what transpired should be described is insufficiently filled by Lady Delacour's account, which focuses on Lord Delacour's reaction rather than her revelation: "Poor man! he was shocked beyond expression" (268). The reader is denied the cathartic moment of not only Lady Delacour's revelation but also her vindication in the eyes of her husband. And even though the narrative is focalized through Belinda, describing what she hears, her reaction as she waits is likewise unnoted. One of the novel's major incidents has been compressed into a tiny space of its own, the space between the two sentences where the boudoir door is unlocked and when Lord and Lady Delacour return. If the boudoir has indeed become a site of openness, a site where Lady Delacour's character can be honestly assessed and accessed, this access is denied to the reader. Space can no longer be interpreted, in much the same way that Belinda's refusal to blush obscures meaning. It is not evident what space revealed.

Le Camus's treatise conceptualized the boudoir as a site of architectural convenience where the space literally mirrored its occupant. However, the odd moment of narrative elision in *Belinda* suggests another approach to thinking about the boudoir. While the room's innermost placement in a set of rooms could suggest truthfulness, in this case the architectural location more convincingly suggests deferral. The boudoir continually presents different iterations of Lady Delacour's character, all of which successively prove to be false—it is a site of seduction, until it is a sickroom; it is sickroom until it is a site of openness; it is a site of openness until it is no site at all, compressed to the point of near invisibility, reduced to not just the lock on its door but to the sound of the lock. The project of determining Lady Delacour's character becomes increasingly complicated as the space with which (and through which) she is most identified loses its authority. Meaning becomes constantly deferred like the receding images that proliferate when two mirrors are held facing each other. The boudoir becomes a receding space. Ultimately, Lady Delacour's character development has an inverse relationship with the power of her boudoir—when the boudoir takes on near-mythic importance at the novel's beginning, Lady Delacour's character seems fixed. As she develops, the boudoir becomes increasingly unreliable. By the novel's end, the boudoir has practically disappeared, barely mentioned in the final third of the novel, except in a smear letter whose accusations are quickly and easily dismissed (333). The reduced power and importance of the boudoir demonstrate that architectural convenience is ineffectual when the space itself is unstable. The connection between the space and the subject collapses; Lady Delacour ceases to be defined by a space.

Acting the Part, Becoming the Part: Theatricality and the Ending of *Belinda*

The ending of *Belinda* brings together the themes of theatricality, female role models and the formation of identity to demonstrate the limitations of convenience—both character and architectural. The theatrical theme that runs through the novel obviously undermines the authenticity of character and even the process of attempting to form a character. The instability of female identity is emphasized by the ending's blatant theatricality, specifically in the way that Lady Delacour arranges all of the novel's characters into a tableau and then steps forward to give "a formal curtain speech" that announces a mischievously opaque moral (M. Butler 314). The artificiality of the theatrical tableau is compounded by the series of coincidences that have enabled Lady Delacour to piece together the mystery of whom Virginia is in love with (Helena's finding the bullfinch, Captain Sunderland happening to intervene in the fight with Juba, Dr. X—— happening to know Virginia's father and introducing him to Hervey), and of the obvious contrivances that she has arranged for her big revelation (arranging for Capt. Sunderland to sit for a painting, summoning everyone to Mrs. Delacour's house, unveiling the painting behind the curtain, bringing in Mr. Hartley and the captain at the appropriate point). While MacFadyen reads Lady Delacour's manipulations as a way of using "a previously disruptive theatricality to highlight the importance of domestic order" (438) and argues that the "theatrical tableaux … display[s] the harmony made possible by domesticity" (438), the ending's coincidences and contrivances are too outlandish to be taken as a full endorsement of lasting domesticity (not to mention that the Percivals, paragons of domestic bliss, are absent from the final scene). Montweiler more convincingly reads the novel's ending as subversive, arguing that "the artificiality of this denouement" suggests that Lady Delacour's conversion to a domestic woman is "a sham" by "a great character actress" (361). As we shall see, the ending of *Belinda* reinforces the novel's stance on the unknowability of character while also illuminating how theatricality suggests a new way of constructing a subject—one from the outside in.

While the theme of theatricality in *Belinda* is employed most heavily at the beginning and end of the novel, references to the stage are sprinkled throughout, demonstrating how thoroughly entrenched issues of acting are in the novel. That the metaphors about make-up and stages are introduced by a female character, Lady Delacour, further suggests how the novel interrogates the process by which acceptable female character is formed. For example, when Lady Delacour prepares to meet a returned Belinda, she notes that no amount of rouge will deceive her, since she "has been behind the scenes, she knows the truth too well!" (265). I have noted the theatrical nature of Lady Delacour's revealing her injured breast to her husband. When Lady Boucher remarks that Lady Delacour's reconciliation with her husband has not altered her behaviour, Lady Delacour distances herself from overly artificial transformations by comparing herself to a bad actress: "Did you think, that, by way of being exemplarily virtuous, I should, like lady Q——, let my sentences come out of my mouth only at the rate of a word a minute?" (353). For a woman who is so infamously heavy-handed with her rouge, Lady Delacour starts to eschew identifying herself with acting, adding later that "at present my poor head is running upon something else, and I have left off being an accomplished actress, or I could talk of one subject, and think of another, as well as the best of you" (461). The "something else" that occupies Lady Delacour's thoughts are the machinations she has set in place to bring about the novel's ending. Lady Delacour seems to have decided, like many actors, that she would rather direct. The theatrical theme, in fact, not only calls attention to the instability of character, but also how Lady Delacour can emerge from attempts to fix her character through a spatial metaphor and instead take control of a space itself. The power dynamic between space and subject shifts as Lady Delacour directs the ending of the novel.

The artifice of the theatrical theme and ending undercuts any moments of authenticity in the final chapter, especially regarding Belinda. When Hervey returns to the main reception room after his illuminating conversation with Virginia (the text does not identify which room it is), he declares his love for Belinda. Her response is a sustained blush; her cheek becomes "for some moments permanent crimson" (472). Her blush might be a moment of authenticity, but it also occurs in the midst of a highly staged ending, suggesting that it is an act, a signal that Belinda has finally accepted the role of heroine in her own novel. Moreover, the triumph of Belinda's emerging humanity is minimized by the limited role (and lines) that she has in the ending. Belinda does not speak in response to Hervey's declarations or comment on any of the action, but instead utters one sentence to stop Lady Delacour's teasing. Lady Delacour even speaks for Belinda, interrupting Hervey's declaration of love to warn him that he is "in a vast hurry to offer your whole soul to a lady who has for months seen all your merits with perfect insensibility" (471). Lady Delacour's power in the ending is not merely one of a director, but also a playwright, one who slots Belinda into a courtship plot that presumably leads to marriage. In fact, even though Belinda's blush could be a moment of authenticity in which her true feelings are revealed, the theatrical context for that blush suggests instead the difficulty of discerning authentic from inauthentic feeling and thus authentic from inauthentic self.

Belinda's character is in fact even more theatrical than Lady Delacour's. Her evaluating different models of femininity and selecting the example of domestic femininity is analogous to an actress taking on a role. As Montwieler persuasively demonstrates, Lady Delacour's transformation into a domestic woman might well be another role, and if Lady Delacour is an actor, then "perhaps more unnervingly, … Belinda, Lady Anne, and even the naïve waif, Virginia St. Pierre, are as well" (358). I would add that not only is Belinda an actress like Lady Delacour, but she is the most superior actress of all—instead of merely taking on the part, she becomes the part, and does so to the point where she disappears into it. Belinda's coolness and self-control indicate how thoroughly she has immersed herself into the role of the prudent, moral young lady on the marriage market. As I have already argued, by controlling her blush, Belinda obfuscates efforts to determine her interior self, thus hindering the accurate discerning of character. The theatrical theme in *Belinda* further undermines the integrity of character, questioning whether it even exists, much less whether it can ever be known. Belinda further undercuts the integrity of character by making it impossible to distinguish between a true self and the role that she plays. The authentic and inauthentic become indistinguishable.

Belinda's exemplifying how the female domestic subject cannot be distinguished from the part that she plays suggests a new way of treating character, one that does away with interiority entirely. Belinda and Lady Delacour demonstrate the limitations of reading a character according to their externals, whether these external attributes be their reputation and behaviour, or the spaces that they occupy. But when the external and internal cannot be distinguished, observers are left with only externals. Lady Delacour alludes to the importance of appearances when she sets up the final tableau, because "What signifies being happy, unless we appear so?" (478). The statement would seem to be a reinstatement of character convenience, except that it occurs while she is setting up an explicitly artificial and theatrical tableau. Instead, the question dwells on the importance of exteriors, an odd emphasis for a novel in which external appearances have proven to be unreliable. But by pointing out the necessity of appearances, the question highlights the novel's contention that character overall is unreliable, often indistinguishable from the role that we take on, and that in fact the external parts that are played are often all that remain as a basis for identity, that the external becomes the internal. The question inverts the relationship between exterior and interior associated with character convenience, in which the occupant's character presumably comes before the space's expression of said character. Through her question, Lady Delacour playfully yet sharply advocates for approaching character from the outside in. It is as if the breakdown in character convenience that the novel details leads us back once again to the problematic process of evaluating character based upon externals. However, by the novel's end, it is not that the process of determining character based upon convenience is flawed. Instead, what *Belinda* demonstrates is that after the breakdown of convenience—character and architectural—there is nothing left but to read for the surface, and that reading for the surface is as effective (or ineffective) as reading for interiors. Character changes from something three-dimensional to one-dimensional. It is perhaps this final shift that suggests why Lady Delacour succeeds as a fictional creation—her playfulness and sense of irony always hint at something held back, something hidden, a further dimension to her character. Belinda Portman, on the other hand, gives away so little that it is impossible to peer behind her external façade and eventually, by fusing together internal and external, she lacks further dimensionality.

Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda* illustrates that convenience (both character and architectural) can break down and be rendered ineffective. In Belinda's case, the inscrutability of her countenance and regulation of her blushes demonstrate how convenience can be used to obfuscate the determination of character by rendering external factors unreadable. For Lady Delacour, her association with her boudoir initially paints her character as a transgressive and frivolous woman. It transpires, however, that the boudoir's identity is unstable and it loses its power to determine Lady Delacour's character as the novel progresses towards an overtly artificial ending that emphasizes the difficulty of determining character when character can be as changeable as the roles that actors play on stage. In my first two chapters I demonstrated how space can control and fix a character in Richardson's *Clarissa* and Burney's *Cecilia*. What happens in *Belinda*, however, is that the subject becomes indifferent to the power of space. It is not that Belinda and Lady Delacour subvert the power dynamics of convenience and take full control over their spaces. Instead, the power of convenience itself is rendered ineffective, with Belinda's making her exterior opaque enough to prevent her character from being ascertained and with Lady Delacour's no longer being defined by her boudoir. *Belinda* demonstrates a change in the dynamic between space and subject, one where space loses its power to determine or express character through convenience. The loss of power stems in one case from Belinda's own control over her self and her body, and in the other case from the fractured social history of the boudoir and the multiple identities it takes on in the novel. In the example of Belinda, the subject ceases to be affected by a spatial construction of character and in the example of the boudoir, space becomes ineffective when it takes on a series of false identities, thus losing its integrity. The rejection of spatial constructions of character suggests that by the end of the eighteenth century, gender roles had solidified to the point where female subjectivity was no longer a source of anxiety and no longer had to be constantly tested. Space's power to shape the subject had lessened.

Chapter Four

Beyond Convenience: Subjective Uses of Spatial Mechanisms in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*

In the previous chapter, I examined the breakdown of convenience in Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*, which occurs as Belinda Portman defies character convenience by controlling her blushes and Lady Delacour asserts the superiority of exteriors and the insignificance of interiors. In *Belinda*, the conception of character as interior and exterior is challenged. In this chapter, I examine another significant shift in the relationship between space and the subject, one which emerges as the importance of convenience wanes. Space still influences character (and vice versa), but in *Mansfield Park* it does so in a way that is more subjective (that is, as something that facilitates evaluation and experiences) than objective (as something to be evaluated). The main difference between what I am terming subjective and objective treatments of space is that objective uses (such as convenience) involve others acting upon a subject to varying extents, therefore treating space and the subject as objects to be determined. For example, in character convenience the exterior aspects of an individual are evaluated to discern his or her inner self. The operation of convenience presumes another (or multiple others) who is observing. Objective treatments of space and character are not necessarily objective in the sense of being impartial and certainly not in the sense of being neutral. As I have already demonstrated, female subjects in particular are vulnerable to being imposed upon as others attempt to fix women's characters. On the other hand, subjective approaches to space involve the subject using space for his or her own purposes, and usually personal or selfish ones. The key aspect of subjective treatments of space is that space works for the subject, functioning in a way beyond expressing or concealing character. Subjective space is about usage and facilitation, about eliciting experiences and feelings. Space becomes a tool for evaluating character rather than an indicator thereof. So far this dissertation has dealt with fixed subjects, moving subjects, and moving spaces. This last chapter is concerned with what happens when spaces become fixed, whether emotionally, visually, or narratively, for subjective use.

Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* offers a way of reconceptualizing space and character that is not as dependent on constructions of an interior/exterior subject, moving this analysis beyond the concept of convenience. In Austen's novel, space and the house determine character, but they do so differently, serving the subject by facilitating judgements rather than being the basis of them. Objective employments of space still exist in *Mansfield Park*, but new ways of using space are coming to the fore. Space becomes the basis of mechanisms which are internalized by characters and then deployed. *Mansfield Park* demonstrates three ways that space can be used subjectively, as mechanisms for coping, for viewing, and for reading. First of all, the heroine repurposes the space of marginalization into a coping mechanism to deal with her isolation through the process of harmonizing by distance, that is, by incorporating pleasant and unpleasant memories into one balanced entity. In this case, Fanny Price takes the (emotional, architectural) distance at which she is kept and uses her peripheral position to soften the ill-treatment she has received. Secondly, the subjective experience of space in

Mansfield Park is informed by the aesthetic of the picturesque, specifically in its application to landscape gardening and estate improvement. The picturesque is founded on the idea of fixing landscapes from prospects, but the published works of landscape gardener Humphry Repton also demonstrate that the house itself can be used as a mechanism for viewing landscape. Finally, by reading for narrative space in the novel, by identifying ironic distances between narrator and heroine and between reader and heroine, I address *Mansfield Park*'s status as the problem novel of Austen's canon. In *Mansfield Park*, Austen tells the reader how to approach the novel using the same concepts that inform viewing from a distance. *Mansfield Park* demonstrates that space in the eighteenth-century novel changes from being a means of testing female subjects to being a way for marginalized subjects, viewing subjects, and reading subjects to manage distance.

Constellations and Satellites: The East Room

A novel titled after a place, *Mansfield Park* is concerned with space, with placement, with location. The novel is spatially conceived, beginning with the way Austen precisely notes the distances between Mansfield house and other key residences. For example, it is half a mile to Mansfield parsonage (78), ten miles to Sotherton Court (89), and eight miles to Edmund's prospective living at Thornton Lacey (288). Significantly, the precision of the distances is provided through the perspective of characters. Distances are meaningful, at times personal, and ultimately subjective. Sir Thomas believes Edmund's going "though only eight miles" to Thornton Lacey "will be an unwelcome contraction of our family circle"

(288), Edmund is surprised to find Mary Crawford still at Mansfield parsonage when he had thought her "seventy miles off [in London], and as farther, much farther from him in inclination than any distance could express" (386). Accused of taxing Fanny by making her walk to and from the White house in hot weather, Mrs. Norris defensively points out that the distance is "not much above a quarter of a mile" (86), though the qualifying "not much above" undermines her claim.[20] The main house of Mansfield Park is the point of reference for all these distances; its geographic location accords with its narrative importance.

While many critics are interested in the demarcation of in and out as introduced by Mary Crawford's question about Fanny Price's social status ("Pray, is she out, or is she not?" [56]), the heroine of *Mansfield Park* is better considered in terms of near and far, of how close to the novel's centre she is.[21] The rooms and floors of Mansfield house are presented in terms of the heroine's marginalization. Fanny's place, literal and figurative, at the estate is established from her arrival when she is ten years old. Determining where the young Fanny will sleep, her aunt Norris immediately infantilizes her by putting her in the "little white attic" which is "much the best place for her" (10–11). Not only is the attic location the most remote, furthest from the house's central spaces, but it is also associated with an earlier, more immature state due to its proximity to other spaces; it is "*near* the old nurseries" (10) and "*near* Miss Lee" the governess (11, emphasis added). Once Fanny is at Mansfield Park, the spaces of the house overpower her: the "rooms were too large for her to move around in with ease" (16) and she often "retreat[ed] towards her own chamber to cry" (16).

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[20] Mrs. Norris has reason to be defensive. John Wiltshire notes that the actual distance between Mansfield house and the White house must be more than one-quarter of a mile, since Mrs. Norris's house is located in the village beyond the parsonage, which is half a mile from Mansfield house (Austen, *Mansfield Park* n. 14).

[21] For more on the boundaries between 'in' and 'out' in *Mansfield Park*, see Laura Mooneyham White, "Traveling to the Self: Comic and Spatial Openness in Jane Austen's Novels" and Julie Choi, "The Domestication of Authority; or In and Out of Mansfield Park."

Fanny's retreat to the margins of the house introduces one of the novel's major spatial models, that of constellations and satellites, with the constellation scheme elucidating Fanny's marginalization. The conception is established early in the novel, in the description of the estrangement between the branches of the Price/Bertram family. After Mrs. Price has broken with the rest of her family over an imprudent marriage, little contact remains: "Their [the families'] homes were so distant, and the circles in which they moved so distinct, as to almost preclude the means of ever hearing of each other's existence during the eleven following years" (4). The theme of distance and circles is developed in the star-gazing scene which begins with Fanny, Edmund, and Mary Crawford conversing at the drawing-room window while the others are at the piano. The scene, in which Edmund moves incrementally towards the piano, leaving poor Fanny alone at the edge of the room, sets up an opposition between Fanny and the others in terms of astronomy. The contrast between the twilight at the window and the others being "busy with candles at the piano-forte" (126), the way that Fanny shyly turns "farther into the window" when complimented by Edmund (131), and the way that Mary trips off to the piano when the Bertram sisters invite her to join them (131) make the spatial relations clear. Though everyone else is at the centre of the room (and the centre of attention), Edmund and Fanny stay at the window admiring the stars and speak of going out on the lawn for a little star-gazing (132). Instead of going outside, however, Edmund is himself drawn to the others, pulled as if by some invisible gravitational attraction:

> The glee began. "We will stay until this is finished, Fanny," said he, turning his back on the window; and as it advanced, she had the mortification of seeing him advance too, moving forward by gentle degrees towards the instrument, and when it ceased, he was close by the singers, among the most urgent in requesting to hear the glee again. (132–33)

The star-gazing episode establishes that the pattern of Fanny's marginalization and isolation, one already suggested architecturally by her placement in the little white attic, is orbital and circular.

The star-gazing episode's reference to the candles by the piano introduces the novel's thematic preoccupation with fire and hearth, a preoccupation that uses nearness and distance to further establish Fanny's marginalization. Fanny spends almost the entire novel deprived of a fire, whether in her East room or upon her awkward return to Portsmouth where her father monopolizes the parlour's sole source of light: "The solitary candle was held between himself and the paper, without any reference to her possible convenience" (442). The hearth, traditionally the centre of the house, is denied to Fanny, who is also deprived of any warmth or comfort at the end of the star-gazing scene, sighing "alone at the window till scolded away by Mrs. Norris's threats of catching cold" (133). Despite her penchant for star-gazing, Fanny herself is not one of a cluster of shining stars;

rather, she is a far-orbiting satellite, removed from the warmth at the centre of a system of celestial bodies.

That *Mansfield Park* can be read spatially is not a new idea. Kenneth L. Moler glosses the basic parallels between Fanny's spatial understanding of Mansfield Park and of Portsmouth, Ruth Yeazell in "The Boundaries of Mansfield Park" takes a more anthropological approach in her examination of how the novel maintains boundaries against kinds of pollution, and John Skinner explores the different kinds of spaces the novel features. Most influential of all readings of space and *Mansfield Park* is Alistair Duckworth's *The Improvement of the Estate*, published in 1972. Duckworth argues that for Austen, the estate represented a traditional social order that required cultural renewal from only trusted individuals, one of whom is Fanny. Duckworth tracks Fanny's gradually changing position in Mansfield house as a sign of her increased value:

> As the novel progresses, Fanny moves closer to the center of the house, her inward journey marking her rising worth…. From a childhood without prospects in Portsmouth, via the little white attic and the East room, to a ball at which she is treated 'just like her cousins'—this is Fanny's journey from circumference to center, from limited to primary significance. (75)

Duckworth's spatial organization of the novel is explicitly circular, with the centre representing importance. For him, when Fanny is sent to Portsmouth, "she is expelled from the center to the circumference" (77). More recently, P. Keiko Kagawa has built on Duckworth's reading to incorporate an explicitly architectural approach. Kagawa is interested in how architecture can reify power hierarchies, noting that at Mansfield Park, rooms

> are coded signs for placement, spaces once interpreted or decided indicate how much Fanny has insinuated herself into the hierarchy of family relations. The closer Fanny moves to the central rooms of the house, the nearer she is to spheres of influence and power both cultural and economic. (137)

Like Duckworth, Kagawa traces Fanny's movement from her little white attic to the East room and ultimately to the "family's central rooms—the drawing room and the ballroom" (136).

Despite her gradual movement towards the centre of the household, however, Fanny is most associated with her East room, a room which I will now examine in some detail. My reading challenges the line of criticism about space in *Mansfield Park* evident in Duckworth and Kagawa, one which assumes that Fanny moves unproblematically towards the centre of the house. Instead, Fanny becomes somewhat stuck in the novel, keeping herself at a distance as much as she is being kept at a distance. The East room is the space where Fanny's uncertain status is most evident. Architecturally, the room is liminally located in between the main floor and the attic floor of Mansfield house, placing it in between the margin and the centre.[22] The old school-room, it has become Fanny's *de facto* sitting room, a dominion established by two factors, the time that she spends there and the number of her objects that she keeps there:

> The room had then become useless, and for some time was quite deserted, except by Fanny, when she visited her plants, or wanted one of the books, which she was still glad to keep there, from the deficiency of space and accommodation in her little chamber above; —but gradually, as her value for the comforts of it increased, she had added to her possessions, and spent more of her time there; and having nothing to oppose her, had so naturally and so artlessly worked herself into it, that it was now generally admitted to be her's. (177)

If one of the ways that Fanny takes possession is through her possessions, what *are* her things in the room? We can surmise with confidence that Fanny has introduced her plants, a drawing by her brother William, and her books, "of which she had been a collector, from the first hour of her commanding a shilling" (178). Kagawa reads Fanny's taking over and re-arranging of the East room as an act of architectural independence, interior decoration as self-realization (138): "The way she has fixed her furnishings adds to the room's stabilizing ambiance in addition to her quotidian social practices making the East Room a sanctuary, both secure and stable" (141). But the East room is hardly secure or stable. It is Fanny's room and acknowledged to be so, but the comfort that Fanny derives from its things is tempered. Mixed in with Fanny's plants and books are discarded objects such as a "faded footstool of Julia's work, too ill done for the drawing-room" (178) and "three transparencies, made in a rage for transparencies, for the three lower panes of one window" (178–79). Fittingly, the room that belongs to the underappreciated Fanny Price features over the mantle-piece "a collection of family profiles thought unworthy of being anywhere else" (179). Apparently, the East room is Mansfield house's unofficial graveyard of rejected items.

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[22] In her attempts to avoid an interview with Henry Crawford, Fanny dares not venture further from her East room than "the head of the great staircase" (350). That puts the East room on the first floor, at least. On a previous occasion, Fanny accidentally meets Edmund "across the lobby" at the top of the main stairs, just as Fanny has reached the floor and mused about meeting Edmund in her East room again (311). They proceed up one more flight of stairs, "their rooms being on the same floor above" to get ready for the ball (311). This must be the little white attic, to which Lady Bertram belatedly sends Chapman to help Fanny dress (315).

The reason for Fanny's limited power in her space can be traced to her relatives, especially Mrs. Norris, who stipulates that there should never be a fire in the East room (177). However, not only does Fanny's most antagonistic family member deprive her of a fire, but the one who is most sympathetic to her cause is also culpable in her continued deprivation. At one point in the novel, Edmund leaves the East room, telling Fanny, "I admire your little establishment exceedingly… But do not stay here to be cold" (183). Edmund has noticed that Fanny has no fire and therefore no heat, but rather than remedy the situation, he merely advises her to move to a warmer room.

If Fanny's family members have thwarted ways of making her East room accommodating, the things in the space fail her as well. Fanny uses the objects in the East room not only to stake a claim to it, but also as psychic balms to ease daily indignities. The objects become more valuable for being associated with other people:

> … she could scarcely see an object in that room which had not an interesting remembrance connected with it.—Every thing was a friend, or bore her thoughts to a friend; and though there had been sometimes much of suffering to her—though her motives had been often misunderstood, her feelings disregarded, and her comprehension undervalued; though she had known the pains of tyranny, of ridicule, and neglect, yet almost every recurrence of either had led to something consolatory; her aunt Bertram had spoken for her, or Miss Lee had been encouraging, or what was yet more frequent or more dear—Edmund had been her champion and her friend;—he had supported her cause, or explained her meaning, he had told her not to cry, or had given her some proof of affection which made her tears delightful—and the whole was now so blended together, so harmonized by distance, that every former affliction had its charm. (178)

The passage, one long, controlled sentence, builds towards a startling conclusion: that Fanny Price has managed to blend the negative and positive aspects of life at Mansfield Park together so that "every former affliction had its charm" (178). 'Harmonizing by distance' is Fanny's coping mechanism, balancing the bad with the good. Harmony is reflected in the sentence's structure, which Austen builds more successfully than Fanny has built her little "nest of comforts" (179). The sentence is carefully built upon series of threes: a list of Fanny's sufferings in the passive voice (motives misunderstood, feelings disregarded, comprehension undervalued), the three types of pains she has known (tyranny, ridicule, neglect), and, in the active voice, the three people who have consoled her (Lady Bertram had spoken, Miss Lee had been encouraging, and Edmund had been her champion and friend). Presenting Fanny's negative experiences in the passive voice suggests that there is not one responsible agent, but rather than lessening the offences, it seems that there have been so many that Fanny can no longer itemize them individually. Yet this lack of distinction is also how Fanny copes. She blends together everything that happens so that the offences and encouragement together are "harmonized".

However, Fanny's objects eventually disappoint her. While Fanny can usually "go there [her East room] after anything unpleasant below, and find immediate consolation in some pursuit, or some train of thought at hand" (178), she finds no such solace after she is pressured to act in the theatricals. While Kagawa argues that Fanny's rearrangement of her space indicates her command of her own space, Lynn Festa contends that the objects in the room embroil Fanny in pre-existing social networks, "draw[ing] her into their orbit rather than vice versa" (444). And as Claudia L. Johnson points out, the networks are ones of social debt (225). After refusing to act in the theatricals, Fanny paces her room, wondering if she has made the right decision:

> as she looked around her, the claims of her cousins to being obliged, were strengthened by the sight of present upon present that she had received from them. The table between the windows was covered with work-boxes and netting-boxes, which had been given her at different times, principally by Tom; and she grew bewildered as to the amount of debt which all these kind remembrances produced. (179–80)

Instead of being a place where Fanny is in control, the East room is where she is "bewildered", where is she surrounded by reminders of her dependent status. Even when Fanny finally gets a fire in the East room, it is only at the command of Sir Thomas, who earlier that day had been accusing her of being ungrateful in refusing Henry Crawford's advantageous marriage proposal (368). The fire, one that Sir Thomas instructs should be provided every day, gives rise to the strongest debt of obligation, one that Fanny feels keenly: "A fire! it seemed too much; just at that time to be giving her such an indulgence, was exciting even painful gratitude. She wondered that Sir Thomas could have leisure to think of such a trifle" (372). But the fire is not a trifle. It is yet another gift that entangles Fanny in yet another debt of obligation, a reminder from Sir Thomas that she might not always have such ready access to her own fire.

The East room demonstrates that Fanny is caught in a web of obligations, one engendered by her dependent status and therefore one that prevents her from truly occupying a central position (architecturally and in terms of the family hierarchy) in the house. And even though Fanny temporarily cannot be consoled by the objects in her space, she eventually applies the process of harmonization by distance to Mansfield Park itself. The phrase "harmonized by distance" is highly suggestive (178). The word "harmonize" indicates that the relationship between Fanny's positive memories and the negatives ones is not confusion but rather a balanced state of simultaneous, mutual existence. The "distance" is the distance of time and of space, which can render memory unreliable. Ruminating about the power of time passing and of memory, Fanny notes that

> There seems something more speakingly incomprehensible in the powers, the failures, the inequalities of memory, than in any other of our intelligences. The memory is sometimes so retentive, so serviceable, so obedient—at others, so bewildered and so weak—and at others again, so tyrannic, so beyond controul! (243)

Fanny admires the mysterious, inconsistent nature of memory and she uses it to couple remembrances of negative incidents with an attendant positive memory.

Fanny's panegyric to the powers of memory is spurred by how much the shrubbery at the parsonage, where is she sitting, has grown in three years (243). When Fanny thinks of a place from even farther away, her memory becomes even more harmonized. While at Portsmouth, Fanny is shocked by how cramped, dirty, and noisy her parents' home is. She longs (from afar) for the more orderly environment of Mansfield house, though the house that she remembers is not entirely familiar to the novel's readers:

> At Mansfield, no sounds of contention, no raised voice, no abrupt bursts, no tread of violence was ever heard; all proceeded in a regular course of cheerful orderliness; every body had their due importance; every body's feelings were consulted. If tenderness could be ever supposed wanting, good sense and good breeding supplied its place; and as to the little irritations sometimes introduced by aunt Norris, they were short, they were trifling, they were as a drop of water to the ocean, compared with the ceaseless tumult of her present abode. (453–54)

Fanny's rebuilding of Mansfield in her mind is certainly harmonized by distance to the point of unrecognizability: "every body's feelings were consulted"? Cases of Mrs. Norris's bullying are "little irritations"? The passage is characterized by an unfoundedly charitable, retroactive inclusiveness ("*all* proceeded in a regular course", "*every body* had their due importance; *every body's* feelings were consulted") that suggests that readers should consider it skeptically. It is clear, though, that Fanny's ability to "harmonize by distance", in this case of time but also of geographical distance, is in full play. In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny Price uses the distance at which she is kept away from the central, important doings of Mansfield house as the basis of a coping mechanism. While her marginalization is established through the constellation model, harmonizing by distance is how she copes with the isolation. Distancing herself from painful memories is how she deals with being kept at a distance; she harmonizes out of necessity.

Improvements and the Picturesque: 'Fixing' Space

Fanny Price's harmonizing by distance is just one example of the novel's subjective approaches to space. The use of distance to achieve a pleasant view (whether figurative or literal) also underlies the theme of improvements, particularly because improvements are based upon concepts of the picturesque. Introduced through Mr. Rushworth's proposal to improve his Sotherton estate by hiring a landscape gardener, the process of improvements in theory and practice relies upon space, in this case the maintenance of distance between the observer and an observed scene, the space that is itself being observed, and an observer's movement through a landscape. In *Mansfield Park*, the picturesque offers another model of harmonizing by distance, one that continues the shift towards a subjective rather than objective relationship between space and the viewing subject.

While the term 'picturesque' can be traced back to the beginning of the eighteenth century in England, the pictorial picturesque emerges in the middle of the century (Andrews 25). The term and concept was popularized by William Gilpin, who in 1794 used the term "to denote *such objects, as are proper subjects for painting*" (*Three Essays* 36, emphasis original). For Gilpin, a scene is picturesque if it emphasizes roughness, irregularity and variety (26–27, 42). While the ruins of old buildings could appear in picturesque views, for the most part, Gilpin advocates searching for the picturesque "through the scenery of nature" (42). To facilitate that search, one had to travel, and the picturesque was therefore associated with tourism. Gilpin's descriptions of his tours through various parts of England, based on trips taken between 1770 and 1776 and published between 1782 and 1809 (Andrews 57), provided advice about sketching picturesque scenes as much as identifying them and contributed to the rising popularity of the cult of the picturesque (Tandon 181).[23]

The root of the term 'picturesque' indicates the importance of pictures and paintings to the movement. In *Three Essays*, Gilpin explains in great detail how to sketch picturesque scenes and then refine the sketches into more polished paintings, that is, how sketching and painting can "fix and communicate" ideas (61). Indeed, the picturesque, as historians such as Malcolm Andrews and Ron Broglio have noted, is about the process of fixing spaces, a process best exemplified by the various framing apparatuses—tinted lenses, telescopes, sketchbooks, watercolour sets—that picturesque tourists carried. The tourist was "typically a gentleman or gentlewoman engaged in an experiment in controlled aesthetic response to a range of new and often intimidating visual experiences" (Andrews 67) and therefore required a vocabulary and paraphernalia to mitigate and facilitate such responses. The most notable of these paraphernalia was the Claude glass, named after French landscape painter Claude Lorrain, whose works were considered examples of the height of the picturesque. The Claude glass was a small convex mirror with black foil backing, about four inches wide (Andrews 67). The convexity of the glass miniaturized the landscape, making it controllable. Most remarkably, using the Claude glass required the viewer to turn away from the prospect, as Thomas West explains:

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[23] For more on the picturesque in eighteenth-century England, see Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Landscape Tradition, 1740–1860* and John Barrell, The *Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730–1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare.*

> the person using it ought always to turn his back to the object that he views. It should be suspended by the upper part of the case, and the landscape will then be seen in the glass, by holding it a little to the right or left (as the position of the parts to be viewed require). (12)

Being a picturesque viewer, then, meant not only selecting and excluding objects from the scene as Douglas Murray argues (2), but could also entail turning away from the scene entirely in order to better view it. That turning away is a stark example of the emphasis on subjective experience encouraged by the picturesque;

the important part of the equation was the viewer, not the scene. As Ron Broglio explains, the picturesque experience reinforces a "privileged interiority of the individual" (27). The picturesque serves the interiorized subject: "the observer takes in and possesses the experience of viewing 'within' the self" (Broglio 60). The interiorized subject now has control over the space.

Picturesque tourism was about providing viewers "with a frame for their imaginations" (Tandon 181), but what that frame enclosed depended on the viewer. Gilpin wrote for picturesque tourists such as *Northanger Abbey*'s Catherine Morland, but also, Michasiw argues, the member of the lesser gentry who could afford to travel but who was "unlikely to possess lands sufficient to the acting out of improving fantasies" (94). The gaze of these tourists would be aspirational. Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, early nineteenth-century theorists of the picturesque, appealed to men of taste who would be able to recognize the picturesque when they came across it, having extensively studied landscape paintings (Michasiw 87). Payne Knight and Price aimed to appeal to local improvers, to landlords who could conceivably remake their estates, which is why their writings emphasize "ongoing control over an apparently free nature" (Michasiw 83). Payne Knight and Price criticized as too artificial the improvements of their contemporary, landscape gardener Humphry Repton, who adapted/imposed picturesque principles for/onto country estates. Repton, most famous perhaps for his "Red Books" that included illustrations with flaps to show the "before" and "after" effects of his proposed improvements, was a successful practicing landscape gardener and as such had other, more practical, concerns. His

Red Books acted as advertisements as well as books of aesthetic theory and his writings display a pragmatic approach to the picturesque. His "viewers" were not only tourists visiting country houses, a common practice in the eighteenth century (Tinniswood 91-112), but potential clients such as Mr. Rushworth.

Austen herself was familiar with both Gilpin's and Repton's work. According to her brother Henry's "Biographical Notice of the Author" (1818), which prefaced the posthumous edition of *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, Austen "at a very early age was enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque" (140–41). Austen's knowledge of the picturesque allowed her to make a glancing reference in *Pride and Prejudice* as Elizabeth Bennet playfully declines joining three walkers who are charmingly grouped: "The picturesque would be spoilt by admitting a fourth" (58).[24] As for Repton, Austen was familiar enough with him to correctly give his rate as five guineas per day in *Mansfield Park* (Quaintance 367), and it is likely she would have seen and discussed his ongoing work on a cousin's estate, Stoneleigh Abbey, during a family visit in 1806 (Quaintance 373; Wenner 77).

It is no surprise, then, that Austen's fiction is informed by picturesque principles or that Repton would become so thematically important in *Mansfield Park*. In *Mansfield Park* we find a variety of picturesque observers, including Henry Crawford, whose improvements to his own estate qualify him to play amateur Repton for Mr. Rushworth, and even Maria Bertram, for whom marriage to Rushworth "was a gloomy prospect, and all that she could do was to throw a mist over it, and hope when the mist cleared away, she should see something else" (125). Most importantly, the novel's heroine is also a picturesque viewer, having prepared herself to be so by mastering the art of harmonizing by distance, for that is the mechanism of Gilpin's picturesque gaze. Gilpin's type of harmonizing by distance is less the balancing of positive and negative components that Fanny's is, but like Fanny's coping mechanism, it is premised on how distance can be obscuring. Gilpin explains that it is acceptable for far-off objects in a picturesque scene to be unattractive because "the obscurity, occasioned by the intervening medium, softens each line, or tint, that is harsh or discordant" (*Observations* xxvi). Gilpin's "intervening medium" is the medium of space itself, of distance. Fanny's gaze resembles Gilpin's because it is distance itself that makes distant objects beautiful. Writing about cultivated and uncultivated lands found in England, Gilpin argues that when viewed from a distance, the mixture of the two styles can contribute to the picturesque:

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[24] Elizabeth's response is a subtle joke, for Gilpin advocated groupings of three not for people, but for cows. See Michasiw, p. 95.

> On the spot, no doubt, and even in the first distances, the marks of the spade, and the plough; the hedge, and the ditch; together with all the formalities of hedge-row trees, and square divisions of property, are disgusting in a high degree. But when all these regular forms are *softened by distance*—when hedge-row trees begin to unite, and lengthen into streaks along the horizon—when farm-houses, and ordinary buildings lose all their vulgarity of shape, and are scattered about, in formless spots, through the several parts of a distance—it is inconceivable what richness,

> and beauty, this mass of deformity, when *melted together*, adds to landscape. (*Observations* 7–8, emphasis added)

A picturesque scene requires not only exclusion via frames (imaginary or otherwise), but also a fixed space. Distance itself is required, space across which to enact a controlling gaze and also to mitigate unpleasant aspects. Objects are not excluded so much as "melted together" to form a more palatable whole. The significance of a muddled distance can be seen (literally) in a Claude glass, which, due to its convexity, blurred out most of the view: "Except in the foreground, details were largely lost, and something like a *beau idéal* emerged, freed from particularities and deformities" (Andrews 68). The space of the Gilpinian picturesque gaze, like the Claude glass and like Fanny Price's memory, is an "idealizing medium" (Andrews 70).

Fanny's skill at harmonizing by distance is picturesque in the vein of Gilpin, but the majority of the novel's concerns with the picturesque are the influence of Humphry Repton, the most popular "improver" of his time. Repton incorporated picturesque principles into his commissions at country estates, but was pragmatic about it. As he asserts, "*the landscape ought to be adapted to the beings which are to inhabit it*—to men, and not to beasts" (*Sketches and Hints* 77). Each of Repton's Red Books was devoted to the work done at one specific estate, and it is therefore no surprise that the house factors significantly in his writing. It is in Repton, in fact, that the intersection between architecture and the picturesque is most evident.

In architectural theory, the most famous incorporation of the picturesque is Robert Adam's concept of movement, which he explicitly compares to the picturesque. In his *Works in Architecture* (1778), Adam explains that the basic picturesque principles of variety and surprise could appear in architecture, and does so using the language of painting ("composition", "contour"):

> *Movement* is meant to express, the rise and fall, the advance and recess, with other diversity of form, in the different parts of the building, so as to add greatly to the picturesque of the composition. For the rising and falling, advancing and receding, with the convexity and concavity, and other forms of the great parts, have the same effect in architecture, that hill and dale, fore-ground and distance, swelling and sinking have in landscape: That is, they serve to produce an agreeable and diversified contour, that groups and contrasts like a picture, and creates a variety of light and shade, which gives great spirit, beauty and effect to the composition. (1)

Adam implemented the concept of movement by designing suites of rooms that contrasted agreeably, with each room consisting of a different shape and colour scheme. Adam's mention of a contour that "groups and contrasts like a picture" refers to the common picturesque obsession with the proper number of objects that should be grouped together, indicating the pervasiveness of picturesque theory by 1778. Other characteristics of eighteenth-century picturesque houses included irregular layouts such as zigzag floor plans, incorporating the architectural components and ornaments of castles (because the gothic style was considered picturesque), and designs where a building's asymmetrical exterior provided a different view from every direction (Watkin, *English Vision* 110–113). The overall emphasis was on the "picturesque concern to achieve a visually stimulating liveliness and movement" (97).

If architects borrowed the precepts and vocabulary of picturesque theory, architectural theory likewise influenced landscape gardeners, particularly in the issue of architectural convenience. In his *Observations on Modern Gardening* (1770), Thomas Whately objects to buildings in gardens that tend to be more ornamental than functional, ones that lack convenience: "sometimes too scrupulous an attention to the style of the building, occasions a poverty and dullness within" (117). For Whately, the important aspect of a building is its interaction with the rest of the landscape. A building can express its own character ("it may be grave or gay; magnificent or simple" [124]) as well as "raise and enforce a character already marked" by a landscape (124) or "correct the character of a scene" (125). Repton demonstrates a similar attention to buildings and convenience in the first chapter of his *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening*. Amongst the factors that determine a place's character are the traditionally established criteria of "the rank of its possessor" and "the use which he intends to make of it [the place]" (1). In the same way that Whately believes buildings have expressive capabilities, Repton asserts that different types of landscape (flat, wooded, uneven) express different emotions such as disgust or "the character of cheerfulness" (6). Finally, Repton argues for correspondence between the character of a house and its grounds:

> the *characters* of each should be in strict harmony, since it is hardly less incongruous to see a palace by the side of a neglected common, than an ugly ill-designed mansion, whether large or small, in the midst of a highly-improved scenery; to every part of which it must be considered as a disgrace. (10, emphasis original)

The concept of accordance between house and grounds was not new to English aesthetic theory. Lord Kames's section on gardening in his *Elements of Criticism* also emphasized the importance of matching the two, but Kames in 1762 advises that the house, which he assumes will appear formal and proportional, dictate to the adjoining garden: "Regularity is required in that part of a garden which joins the dwelling-house; for being considered as a more immediate accessory, it ought to partake the regularity of the principal object" (3: 305). For Repton, however, the house, a part of a larger landscape rather than the principal object, does not dictate the overall character.

Austen's use of picturesque principles, especially in her references to Gilpin and her explicit mentions of Repton, have occasioned much scholarship, although scholars often reach opposite conclusions. On the one hand, 'Repton' becomes a stand-in for vulgarity and thoughtless alterations. Jillian Heydt-Stevenson argues that we must distinguish between landscape gardeners like Repton, whom Austen "blatantly satirizes" (151), and picturesque theorists such as Payne Knight and Price, whom she endorses by default. Karen Valihora argues that Austen associates Repton and his predecessor Capability Brown with "the pretentious side of picturesque renovation" for their connection to "the accumulation of property and the naturalization of that property" (103). Alistair Duckworth sees Repton's proposed changes as "not improvements at all but 'innovations' or 'alterations' of a destructive nature" (47), even though Repton was conservative in his interest for landed gentry and maintenance of the class system. On the other hand, Kim Ian Michasiw argues that Austen "is more extreme than Gilpin in her rejection of the position taken up by Payne Knight and Uvedale Price" (96). Richard Quaintance reclaims Repton, arguing that accusations of tastelessness were overstated and demonstrating that the name "Repton" acts metonymically in the *Mansfield Park* to reveal an ambivalence towards his methods. My reading of Repton's employment in *Mansfield Park* is in line with Quaintance's; in *Mansfield Park,* Austen does not satirize Repton, but those who would follow his teachings—or rather, what they believe to be his teachings—unthinkingly. Considering the importance of Mansfield house, it is necessary to examine Repton's treatment of houses and architecture before analyzing how he contributes to our reading of the novel. In turn, through the concept of appropriation and the significance of windows, Repton offers a useful way to re-examine Fanny's picturesque gaze in *Mansfield Park*.

The main butt of Austen's satire of Reptonian improvement is Mr. Rushworth, whose dimness hinders his ability to grasp the principles of picturesque improvement and landscape gardening. In Rushworth, we find a potential improver who willingly follows fashion without moderation. Noting that "There have been two or three fine old trees cut down that grew too near the house" at Compton, a friend's estate (65), Rushworth leaps to the conclusion that "Repton, or any body of that sort, would certainly have the avenue [of oak trees] at Sotherton down" (65). It is true that Repton did not advocate building new avenues. In *Hints and Sketches* he criticized existing ones for reasons practical (they act as a "wind-spout" [22]) and aesthetic (they sometimes end at an "obelisk, temple, or any other eye-trap" [23]). However, Repton praises the avenue at Langley Park and instead of tearing it down completely, recommends "breaking an avenue" (23), that is, selectively removing sections.[25] That is in fact what has occurred at Compton, but Mr. Rushworth does not distinguish between taking down a handful of trees and felling an entire avenue.

It is Mr. Rushworth, whose very name implies hastily obtained value, who is the target of Austen's satire, not Repton. A variation of architectural convenience is at work in how we are to understand Mr. Rushworth's account of improvements, both actual and hypothetical. But instead of Mr. Rushworth's character being defined by his own house (which it is in other parts of the novel), his character is defined by his opinion of his house and the improvements he would like to make to it. In architectural convenience as I have defined and used the term, an evaluation of a house indicates something about the owner of that house, not the observer. However, in Rushworth's case, his treatment of his house is also telling. Not only does the house reflect himself (his status, taste, *etc*.) but his judgement about the house reflects on him as well. Certainly, convenience in a more traditional sense is also operating; Rushworth wishes for an estate that is updated and fashionable so that he can seem so as well. However, his proposed modifications to the house, his useless repetition of Repton's name, and continual returning to the subject would suggest that he mimics what he believes is fashionable rather than possesses fashionable taste himself.

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[25] For more about Repton and avenues, see Stephen Clarke's "What Smith Did at Compton", p. 62.

Another example of the shift towards a subjective treatment of space is Henry Crawford's suggested changes to Thornton Lacey, Edmund's prospective living and future home. It is the most significant reference to Repton, improvements, and convenience in the novel even if Repton's name is not explicitly mentioned. Henry Crawford, who has already made changes to his estate at Everingham, plays amateur-Repton for Edmund as he did for Mr. Rushworth:

> The farm-yard must be cleared away entirely, and planted up to shut out the blacksmith's shop. The house must be turned to front the east instead of the north—the entrance and principal rooms, I mean, must be on that side, where the view is really very pretty… And *there* must be your approach—through what is at present the garden. You must make a new garden at what is now the back of the house; which will be giving it the best aspect in the world—sloping to the south-east. … The meadows beyond what *will be* the garden, as well as what now *is*, sweeping round from the lane I stood in to the north-east, that is, to the principal road through the village, must all be laid together of course; very pretty meadows they are, finely sprinkled with timber. They belong to the living, I suppose. If not, you must purchase them. (281–82, emphasis original)

Henry's suggestions are very much in a Reptonian vein, even echoing changes that Repton himself made to his own cottage as detailed in his *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (1816). Where Henry suggests planting up the former farmyard to "shut out the blacksmith's shop," Repton has obscured his view of the butcher's shop with a basket of roses (604). And, most notably, Henry's suggestion of buying up the surrounding meadows so that it can "all be laid together" resembles Repton's own co-opting of the common land in front of his cottage: "I obtained leave to remove the paling twenty yards further from the windows" (603).

However, if Henry Crawford's details accurately follow Repton, he deviates regarding the big picture. While Repton advocated keeping the character of a house commensurate with the character of its owner, Henry aims to elevate Thornton Lacey beyond the status of its owner and its function. As he tells Edmund,

> From being the mere gentleman's residence, it becomes, by judicious improvement, the residence of a man of education, taste, modern manners, good connections. All this may be stamped on it; and that house receive such an air as to make its owner be set down as the great land-holder of the parish, by every creature travelling the road. (283–84)

In terms of architectural convenience, the embellishment of Thornton Lacey does not reflect upon Edmund, who denies that he can afford such "judicious improvement". Instead, Henry's proposed changes tell us more about Henry than about anyone else. His assurance that "Nothing can be easier" (282) and glib assertion that Edmund "must purchase" the meadows if they do not belong to the living (282) indicate a character accustomed to getting his own way without considering the costs, financial and otherwise. And as Murray notes, Henry's more suspicious proposals are exclusions of some sort (5), suggesting a tendency to underestimate complications. We can see this dismissal in his confidence that Maria Bertram (now Rushworth) will get over her anger when she learns that he loves Fanny: "It will be a bitter pill to her; that is, like other bitter pills, it will have two moments ill-flavour, and then be swallowed and forgotten" (344). Henry also demonstrates a dissatisfaction with small gestures. While Edmund is content to give Thornton Lacey "the air of a gentleman's residence without any very heavy expense" (282), Henry elevates it further from a "mere" gentleman's residence to that of "the great land-holder of the parish" (284). Henry's proposed improvements of Thornton Lacey exemplify how a person's opinion or judgement of another's space exposes more about his or her own character than that of the owner of the house. What Henry's proposed changes indicate is that his is a character that underplays difficulties and overplays results.

Henry's proposed changes also inspire Gilpinian musings in his sister. Mary indulges in "agreeable fancies" of a future Thornton Lacey that is a "picture" of a "respectable, elegant, modernized, and occasional residence of a man of independent fortune" (289). Mary understands the importance of convenience in terms of another kind of prospect, one related to an advantageous marriage. After all, elevating Thornton Lacey elevates clergyman and second son Edmund to a "man of independent fortune" (289). Mary's pictorial framing of Thornton Lacey echoes her earlier description of Mansfield Park proper, the only description that we have: "a park, a real park five miles round, a spacious modern-built house, so well placed and well screened as to deserve to be in any collection of engravings of gentlemen's seats in the kingdom, and wanting only to be completely new furnished" (55). Mary is an experienced country-house visitor, having seen "scores of great houses, and cared for none of them" (99). Her interest in Mansfield Park, in fact, stems not from the house itself, which she reduces to a common print in a collection of country-house prints, but as a possible future owner ready to redecorate.[26] Mary's description of the estate is itself framed, like a picture, by her musings on Tom Bertram's rights to her attentions over his younger brother's: "the reversion of Mansfield Park, and a baronetcy, did no harm to all this. Miss Crawford soon felt, that he and his situation might do. She looked about her with due consideration and found almost every thing in his favour" (55). Her description of Mansfield Park, like her brother's of Thornton Lacey, betrays more about herself than about the house. As we see in the Crawford siblings' responses to houses, the concept of architectural convenience, in which house and owner/occupant are equated, no longer applies. Instead, it is the judgement itself—often founded on the concept of convenience—that is telling. Architecture is no longer only an expression or reflection of its occupant's character; rather, judgements about architecture reflect upon the person judging. The exercise becomes subjective.

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[26] Tim Clayton estimates that by 1830 there might have been over one thousand prints of different country houses in England. See Clayton's "Publishing Houses: Prints of Country Seats" in Dana Arnold's *The Georgian Country House*.

As the concept of convenience becomes increasingly unstable, the picturesque house takes on an additional function, one that facilitates experience rather than only represents character. The house still retains its ability to create reactions, but in one key regard the house in a picturesque landscape deviates from the concept of convenience, in that exteriors did not match interiors. Picturesque houses often featured gothic-style exteriors that enclosed unexpectedly modern or even Grecian interiors (Watkin, *English Vision* 96). The house, now a part of a larger landscape rather than the landscape's principle object, no longer had to be a unified entity. Instead, it was another means of surprising and delighting the picturesque observer. The picturesque house becomes less important as an end to itself and more important as a means of creating a certain kind of experience. In other words, the importance of the house shifted from being an objectively evaluated status symbol to being a means of eliciting a subjective response. Therefore, in the same way that Fanny uses one kind of metaphorical space, psychological and temporal distance, as a coping mechanism, the picturesque uses another kind of space, the house, as a viewing mechanism, as the means by which the picturesque viewer experiences a prospect.

In *Mansfield Park*, the metaphorical way that improvements to a house reveal the characters of those contemplating the improvements suggests that the house could be a lens, that is, a way of mediating how something is seen. The house also acts as a lens for Repton, who explores how an architectural feature—the window—physically frames views from inside the house. While most scholars of the picturesque focus on the tourist's gaze, which takes in the house from afar, the views from inside the house were just as important. For Repton, the view from the inside is a view from a more powerful position, one of control and ownership. Repton uses a term appropriation to describe this ownership, defining appropriation as "that sort of command over the landscape, *visible from the windows*, which denotes it to be private property belonging to the place" (*Fragments* 601, emphasis added). Appropriation encompasses the "extent of property" seen from the windows, for "the appearance and display of such extent is a source of pleasure not to be disregarded" (*Sketches and Hints* 80). The pleasure lies in "that charm which only belongs to ownership, the *exclusive right* of enjoyment, with the power of refusing that others should share our pleasure" (*Fragments* 601). Appropriation is facilitated by the gaze, by the views of a space that is unified and unblemished: "The pleasure of appropriation is gratified in viewing a landscape which cannot be injured by the malice or bad taste of a neighbouring intruder" (*Sketches* 81). The close connection between appropriation and framing is evident in Repton's improvements to his own cottage. One of his changes was to extend his property line into a common area: "I obtained leave to remove the paling twenty yards further from the windows; and by this *appropriation* of twenty-five yards of garden, I have obtained a frame to my landscape; the frame is composed of flowering shrubs and evergreens" (*Fragments* 603, emphasis original). Appropriating more land creates a better picture.

The most important frame that facilitates an owner's appropriation is the window, and Repton devotes all of Fragment IX to the topic. As he claims, "There is no subject connected with landscape gardening of more importance, or less attended to, than the window through which the landscape is seen" (*Fragments* 435). He accords so much importance to the topic that he spends a lengthy footnote explaining exactly where to place the window's horizontal bar so that it does not obstruct the view (437 n.1). In the footnote, Repton displays an acute, almost obsessive, sensitivity to the issue, considering the perspective of both standing and sitting individuals and advising that the window extend sufficiently below the bar to provide the sitting individual with a view of the ground in addition to the sky and treetops. He triumphantly concludes that the best position for the bar is "four feet six from the floor" (437 n.1). When writing about the avenue of trees at Langley in *Sketches and Hints*, Repton pays special attention to the close-up view of the avenue achieved from inside the house, noting that removing select trees will not injure the avenue's "venerable appearance from the windows of the saloon" (23) and that when viewed from the ends of the house, "the avenue provides a necessary foreground" (24). Repton even uses a window metaphor, comparing thinning out an avenue of trees correctly like "undrawing this curtain at proper places" (23).

Repton's awareness of the impact of windows is best displayed in his description of a drawing-room window at Sherringham Bower, a window framed in ways that contain both its prospect and its viewers. First of all, the east-facing window is located in an alcove attached to the drawing room (fig.2). The "recess", as Repton calls it, architecturally limits the number of people who could experience the view to a "small company" (*Fragments* 586). The recess itself frames the window, setting it apart from the larger drawing room. The window contains

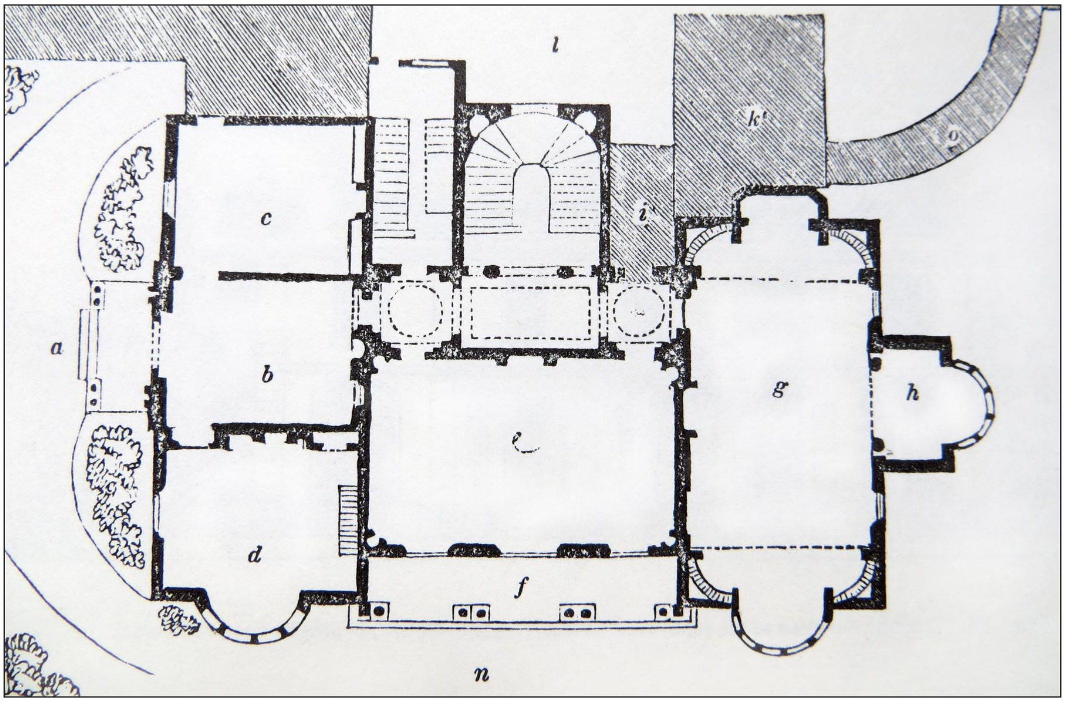

Fig. 2: Plan of Sherringham Bower. The drawing room is labeled 'g' and the recess is 'h'. From Repton, *Fragments*, p. 583.

the proper balance of foreground and background necessary for a picturesque view; the recess "command[s] a delightful view of the flower-garden, with just so much of the sea as will be sufficient" (*Fragments* 586). Not content to let the window, which juts out in a semi-circle, make a picture of the "peculiar" view, Repton suggests further adjustments: "it may, perhaps, be advisable to exclude all views from the windows on the sides, leaving only the upper part for transparent blinds, or stained glass" (586). In the design of this window, Repton reveals the framing potential of architecture, the possibilities of making the house serve the view.

That Jane Austen was aware of the effect of appropriation, carefully facilitated through windows, is evidenced in Elizabeth Bennet's visit to Pemberley in *Pride and Prejudice*. The novel's description of Pemberley indicates that it has undergone judicious improvement. The approach is winding, the house is well situated on rising ground, and a stream "of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but not without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned" (271). It is this view of good taste and management that causes Elizabeth Bennet to feel that "to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!" (271). Once inside the house, the views from the main floor windows exemplify Repton's concept of appropriation. The view from Pemberley is as lovely as the view of Pemberley, demonstrating an absence of bad taste and obstructing objects:

> Elizabeth… went to a window to enjoy its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving increased abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful object. Every disposition of the ground was good; and she looked on the whole scene, the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it, with delight. As they passed into other rooms, these objects were taking different positions; but from every window there were beauties to be seen. (272)

Though Austen does not use the term, the views from Pemberley can certainly be described as picturesque in the way that the grounds yield delightful views from a variety of prospects. Moreover, the above passage emphasizes the importance of having all the windows producing pleasing prospects, creating a fuller effect through repetition and variation. The delightful prospects, coupled with the house's tasteful interiors, cause Elizabeth to place herself in the position of mistress of Pemberley once again, in a position of offering hospitality to her relatives:

> "And of this place," thought she, "I might have been mistress! With these rooms I might now have been similarly acquainted! Instead of viewing them as a stranger, I might have rejoiced in them as my own, and welcomed to them as visitors my uncle and aunt." (272)

Elizabeth is caught between two subject positions from which to view Pemberley. On the one hand, she is a tourist, engaging in the popular activity of visiting great houses and their grounds.[27] On the other hand, as the woman who had the opportunity to be the mistress of the place, she can subjunctively take up the gaze of ownership, look out the windows and see what could have been hers. The house puts her in an appropriating position by means of the prospects through the windows, and she temporarily feels the effect of Repton's "charm which only belongs to ownership" (*Fragments* 601). Pemberley house frames Elizabeth's experience of the estate, presenting delightful pictures as she feels the conflict between touristic appreciation and the satisfaction of ownership.

If *Pride and Prejudice* demonstrates an employment of picturesque principles to elucidate character, then *Mansfield Park*, published one year later, problematizes the gazes and subject positions that seem so accessible to Elizabeth Bennet. The concept of appropriation is notable in *Mansfield Park* for how it is lacking. Sotherton is so poorly situated that it "excluded the possibility of much prospect from any of the rooms… Henry Crawford was looking grave and shaking his head at the windows" (99). And when Henry recommends changing the direction that Thornton Lacey faces because on the east side, "the view is really very pretty" (281), he is referring to the view from inside the house, not the view of the house from the east. Most of his proposals, in fact, seem to be made with appropriation in mind, including the suggestion of planting up the farm-yard to block out the blacksmith's shop and locating in the south-east a new garden that would become a part of the pleasant new view (281). By the time Henry recommends purchasing what might be public meadows, it is only the most explicit instance of appropriation that he has proposed. But while the views at Pemberley are the result of successful landscape gardening and improvement, the new views from Sotherton and Thornton Lacey remain imaginary, for neither property changes. One of the novel's greatest ironies is that even though it contains much talk about alterations and improvement, little change actually occurs.

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[27] For more on country-house visiting in the eighteenth century, see Linda Troost's "Framing Tourism, Portraying Pemberley", Adrian Tinniswood's *The Polite Tourist*, and Dana Arnold's *The Georgian Country House.*

The paucity of appropriate (and appropriated) views in the novel extends to Fanny Price and her interaction with the house's windows. Fanny, the dependent relation kept at an emotional and physical distance, can only view Mansfield Park from afar and, as we have seen, when she does so, it is through a lens that smooths out difficulties. Fanny's views from within the house indicate her outsider status. As befits a dependent relative who is hardly in any position of ownership, Fanny never sees the grounds of Mansfield Park from the house's windows. During the star-gazing scene, she observes the skies and stars. On another occasion, Fanny spies Henry Crawford approaching the house, an unpleasant sight that "astonished" her (359). This sight is not one of ownership or even of pleasure, and in fact is of someone who aims to encroach upon her by "making a small hole in [her] heart" (267).

Henry's proposal occasions the final example of Fanny's interaction with windows, one which highlights the disconnection between Fanny's harmonizing by distance and her being denied a view of appropriation. When Sir Thomas comes to the East room to relay Henry's proposal, he realizes that Fanny's room is cold and understands the significance of why she has never had a fire there. Believing that she will soon be advantageously married, Sir Thomas attempts to mitigate his family's—especially Mrs. Norris's—long-term neglect of Fanny through a combination of diplomacy and flattery:

> I am aware that there has been sometimes, in some points, a misplaced distinction; but I think too well of you, Fanny, to suppose you will ever harbour resentment on that account.—You have an understanding, which will prevent you from receiving things only in part, and judging partially by the event.—You will take in the whole of the past, you will consider times, persons, and probabilities, and you will feel that *they* were not least your friends who were educating and preparing you for that mediocrity of condition which *seemed* to be your lot. (361)

In this passage, Sir Thomas seems to be urging Fanny to view clearly by asking her to "take in the whole of the past" and to not judge "partially". In actuality the request requires Fanny to read selectively, to interpret her ill-treatment as being beneficial rather than neglectful, because it was preparing her for a "mediocrity of condition". It is a view that she can now take without umbrage in the context of Henry Crawford's proposal. In other words, marriage to Henry Crawford is the lens through which Fanny is to view her isolation and ill-treatment at Mansfield Park. Rather than viewing clearly, Sir Thomas is actually suggesting that Fanny once again harmonize by distance, the distance achieved by time and also by the distance between her present situation and the new, elevated social position she would occupy as Henry's wife.

Fanny's refusal of Henry Crawford's proposal is one of the novel's key moments, a moment where the heroine asserts her agency, even if she does so by saying no. Within this important section is a moment that brings together the issues of harmonizing and viewing discussed so far, highlighting the limits of harmonizing. As Sir Thomas provides the details of his conversation with Henry, an increasingly shocked Fanny stares at a window: "Her mind was in too much confusion. She had changed her position, and with her eyes fixed intently on one of the windows, was listening to her uncle, in the utmost perturbation and dismay" (362). Fanny's fixing her eyes "on" a window is highly suggestive. First, because she stares at it and not through it to a pleasant prospect, the action reinforces how Fanny is denied the control associated with a framed, appropriated view. It is a reminder of her marginalized status in the house, a status reinforced by Sir Thomas's taking for granted that she will accept Henry Crawford's proposal. Secondly, Fanny's not seeing what is outside Mansfield house is a reminder of how she is trapped in its web of obligations, to which is added Henry's recent favour of facilitating her brother's promotion in the Navy. Thirdly, Fanny's staring at the window draws attention to how viewing and coping in the novel occurs. The emphasis shifts from what is seen through the mechanisms to the mechanisms themselves. In the same way that Repton obsesses over windows in his designs and picturesque tourists carried Claude glasses with them, the means of seeing are accorded importance. Finally, though Fanny does not look through the window, she does see in another way. Her staring at the window stresses one way that she does see clearly, which is to distinguish Henry's true character. As Sir Thomas probes her reasons for refusing Henry's proposal, she worries that she would have to explain her objection to his character, which "was founded chiefly on observations" that also implicate her cousins (366). Fanny's observations of Henry are illuminating rather than obscuring. They also give pain rather than pleasure; her way of viewing Henry is not informed by the principles of the picturesque. That Fanny draws attention to the means of facilitating views (by staring at the window) as she prepares to reject a man whose character she sees clearly suggests a correspondence between examining mechanisms and achieving comprehension. If looking through space leads to harmonized views, then looking at the mechanisms of such a view leads to clarity. In the next section, I examine a third mechanism, one that shows how Austen uses space in *Mansfield Park* to tell readers how to read the novel.

Coping, Viewing, Reading Mechanisms: Mansfield Park's Perfect Heroine

Thus far, space in *Mansfield Park* has proven to be increasingly subjective. Its heroine takes the distance at which she is kept and reworks it to help her cope, and the improvements motif introduces the notion of fixing space and altering nature, emphasizing the viewer over the scene. The episode of Fanny staring at the window suggests that clarity comes from taking a closer examination of how space is used. If space in *Mansfield Park* is used as a means of coping and viewing, then perhaps a spatial approach is also recommended for another mechanism, that of reading. If Fanny Price can use the process of harmonizing by distance to deal with her marginalization, then employing a similar distance might facilitate coming to terms with the most difficult of Austen's novels. As this section will demonstrate, through a process of reading for distance, such as that between the reader and the heroine, the book suggests a method for reading itself.

For readers, *Mansfield Park* is difficult because of its heroine, one who is accused of being too morally upright to be sympathetic. As Lionel Trilling declares, "Nobody, I believe, has ever found it possible to like the heroine of *Mansfield Park*" (212). Nina Auerbach unleashes a venomous attack on Fanny, calling her "a charmless heroine who was not made to be loved" (221) in addition to comparing her (unfavourably) to Frankenstein's monster. The antipathy is founded on the perception that Fanny is, according to Tony Tanner, "never, ever wrong" (143). Tanner places Fanny in a position of moral certainty, at the novel's moral centre, arguing that Fanny is the "true 'inheritor'" and the "true preserver of values represented by Mansfield Park" (157). Even Edward Said, in his aligning of Austen with the values that girded the British empire, calls Fanny Mansfield Park's "final spiritual mistress" (92), placing her in a position of ownership, however qualified.

Yet Fanny's position in the novel is a tricky one and not as central as her perceived moral superiority would suggest. Architecturally, she is associated more with her East room than any other space, a room that is at the edge of the house rather than the centre, and the little white attic that remains her bedroom significantly lacks a fireplace (312). Moreover, Fanny does not ultimately end up in Mansfield house, but rather, at Mansfield parsonage, half a mile away (67). And though Fanny does move towards the centre in terms of importance to Sir Thomas, she never abandons the technique of harmonizing by distance that she has developed in the East room, thus continuing to occupy a marginalized position. In fact, Fanny applies that gaze in the novel's final paragraph, when she and Edmund move to the parsonage upon Mr. Grant's death:

> On that event, they removed to Mansfield, and the parsonage there, which under each of its two former owners, Fanny had never been able to approach but with some painful sensation of restraint or alarm, soon grew as dear to her heart, and as thoroughly perfect in her eyes, as every thing else, within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park, had long been. (547–48)

Fanny's picturesque gaze comes to encompass a residence that has eluded her, that is not visible from Mansfield house (78). It is as if finally occupying the space, staking a territorial claim, enables Fanny to bring the parsonage, that sight/site of painful memories, under her harmonizing gaze. But even that harmonizing by distance is problematic, for it only seems to make the parsonage "thoroughly perfect". The qualification is evident in the language used to describe Fanny's feelings. The parsonage is only as perfect "as every thing else, within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park, had long been," and this view exists only "in her eyes." Though Fanny envisions Mansfield Park as perfect, her vision itself is limited, as limited as the framed images of landscapes that appear in Claude glasses. Fanny's final placement in the parsonage and the lingering imperfect gaze that harmonizes by distance demonstrate how she is not always right. Her position of moral centrality in the novel is compromised by her harmonizing views. In fact, considering the range of memories and experiences that fall under Fanny's harmonizing gaze, it is difficult to view Fanny as infallible. The antipathy directed towards the character for being right is unfounded.

Fanny is a difficult heroine not only because she never seems to be wrong, but because she can be frustratingly passive. By virtue of being a dependent relation, she lacks agency in the novel and does little to change her situation. Her two key moments of asserting herself are moments of resistance expressed using negatives. When solicited to take part in the theatricals, she declines, declaring that she "cannot act" (171) and when Henry Crawford proposes, she refuses. Spatially, she barely encroaches on the spaces in Mansfield house, taking over the East room in a gradual, imperceptible fashion. When Fanny does move, it is usually at the request of someone else and almost never of her own volition. Her major journeys (to and from Portsmouth, back to Mansfield Park at the novel's end) are facilitated by others, but many times so are the minor ones, like taking the roses to the White House (85) and being "sent into the village on some errand" (239). Her movement is also often curtailed. For a while it seems as if poor Fanny will be stuck in Portsmouth with no one willing to come get her and accompany her back to Mansfield. Fanny's spatial stasis informs her character's passivity.

Moreover, we as readers are asked to identify with Fanny's passivity because we are often placed in her position. Much of the novel is told from Fanny's perspective. She is an observer in most of volume one, literally in the case of the theatricals, but also because she sees what others do not: Maria Bertram and Henry Crawford's flirtation, Rushworth's and Julia's jealousy, Mary Crawford's faults, Edmund's blindness to these faults. Because the novel is focalized through Fanny, the reader thus also observes and experiences what Fanny observes and experiences. In addition, Austen frequently employs the narrative technique of free indirect discourse in a way that further aligns a reader with character. Free indirect discourse (FID) is a technique in which a third-person omniscient narrator presents the unattributed thoughts or speech of characters without quotation marks, thus leading to ambiguity about whose thoughts are being conveyed. D.A. Miller notes that in Austen's writing, what is significant is not that the narrator and the fictional character are opposed, but that Austen's free indirect style "performs this opposition *at ostentatiously close quarters*" (59). Miller's description of Austen's FID continues: "Narration comes as near to a character's psychic and linguistic reality as it can get without collapsing into it, and the character does as much of the work of narration as she may without acquiring its authority" (59). The nearness that Miller identifies as distinctive to Austen's style is the same nearness that frustrates readers, since in *Mansfield Park* it means proximity to Fanny Price. It is uncomfortable to be so close to Fanny, because she suffers so much and feels slights so keenly. For example, after Sir Thomas has berated Fanny for refusing Henry Crawford's marriage proposal, Fanny's distress is acutely rendered using the narrative technique: "Her mind was all disorder. The past, present, future, every thing was terrible. But her uncle's anger gave her the severest pain of all. Selfish and ungrateful! to have appeared so to him! She was miserable for ever" (370). This passage, set up by the first sentence, "Her mind was all disorder," is from Fanny's point of view. She is prone to totalizing statements ("every thing was terrible," "she was miserable for ever") and the short sentence fragments ending with exclamation points suggest the thoughts of a mind in "all disorder." In this example, free indirect discourse is used to bring the reader closer to Fanny and her distress.

Yet there are other times when free indirect discourse facilitates a separation, only it is one between Fanny and the narrator. The separation is based on the disjunction between the authority of the narrator and the authority of the character, especially regarding trivial matters. Free indirect discourse can emphasize the difference between the two kinds of authority and in doing so introduces a distance between narrator and character. For example, Fanny's reaction to an unfinished note from Edmund dwells too enthusiastically on its merits:

> It was the only thing approaching to a letter which she had ever received from him; she might never receive another; it was impossible that she should ever receive another so perfectly gratifying in the occasion and the style. Two lines more prized had never fallen from the pen of the most distinguished author. (307–308)

The structure of the first sentence—a series of phrases separated by semi-colons, the repetition of the idea that she would never receive another letter—suggests a breathless quality, mimicking Fanny's train of thought. The following sentence, however, reinstates an ironic narrator's voice, comparing Edmund's letter to the writings of a distinguished author. Taken together, the narrative authority present in the second sentence highlights the foolishness of Fanny's thoughts in the first.

In fact, irony is another method of creating distance between narrator and character in the novel, especially regarding Fanny's tendency to react emotionally to small gestures. The perfunctory, unfinished note that Fanny praises accompanies a more valuable gift, a gold chain from Edmund. Steeling herself for his inevitable proposal to Mary, Fanny resolves to cease thinking of Edmund romantically. She lapses quickly:

> She had all the heroism of principle, and was determined to do her duty; but having also many of the feelings of youth and nature, let her not be much wondered at if, after making all these good resolutions on the side of self-government, she seized the scrap of paper on which Edmund had begun writing to her, as a treasure beyond all her hopes, and reading with the tenderest emotion these words, "My very dear Fanny, you must do me

> the favour to accept"—locked it up with the chain, as the dearest part of the gift. (307)

Structurally, the passage is a lesson in anticlimax, as the rush of clauses escalates to the overwrought description of the paper as "a treasure beyond all hopes" before being deflated by Edmund's epistolary commonplace ("you must do me the favour to accept") and a dash that abruptly stops the sentence's flow. The narrator conveys this anticlimax in an affectionately wry tone, finding Fanny's weakness endearing rather than off-putting. Rather than the narrator getting close to heroine, the passage introduces an ironic distance, one between narrator and character, a space that gives rise to gentle laughter at the heroine. If Fanny is capable of being right, she is also sometimes foolish or naïve, that is, far from perfect. Reading for space uncovers the narrator's own ironic treatment of the heroine. Reading Fanny ironically addresses criticisms of her character (in both senses of the word) by suggesting that we are not supposed to consider her perfect or even likeable.

In *Mansfield Park*, space is used—both by characters and by the narrator—as a mechanism, as aids to coping, viewing, and reading. These mechanisms are not entirely compatible. Fanny's coping mechanism and picturesque viewing mechanisms use space as what Malcolm Andrews calls an "idealizing medium" (70), obfuscating instead of clarifying. Reading for rhetorical and stylistic space in the novel, on the other hand, illuminates Austen's characteristic irony towards a heroine who is difficult to consider ironically. The novel's troubling last chapter does away with any pretension to proximity by revealing the author's own mechanism, one that hurries her novel to its conclusion. Announcing at the beginning her intention to "Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can" (533), the author injects an authoritative "I" into the novel, one that wields a pen and writes fondly of "My Fanny" (533). And the pen is held by one who is "impatient to restore every body, not greatly in fault themselves, to tolerable comfort, and to have done with all the rest" (533). The declaration, along with the narration of the entire chapter, is "self-conscious to the point of brinkmanship as the author dares the reader to recognize the details of how this plot has functioned and the artificiality of her conclusion" (Douglas 157). The artificiality creates yet another space, one between the novel and the reader.

Yet another instance of artificiality is Fanny's reaction to the troubles that have befallen Mansfield Park. The author reveals the heroine's psychological, emotional interior, one comprised of contradictions:

> My Fanny indeed at this very time, I have the satisfaction of knowing, must have been happy in spite of every thing. She must have been a happy creature in spite of all that she felt or thought she felt, for the distress of those around her. (533)

It is a strikingly odd passage, in which the ever-obedient Fanny Price not only is happy in a sea of misery, but might not even feel the requisite empathy "for the distress of those around her." It is as if Fanny's ability to harmonize by distance, in which "every former affliction had its charm" (178), has malfunctioned and now every affliction, even if it is not hers, is transformed into blissful happiness. The perverse nature of Fanny's happiness is further evident regarding her attitude towards Edmund, who was miserable. Fanny

> knew it was so, and was sorry; but it was with a sorrow so founded on satisfaction, so tending to ease, and so much in harmony with every dearest sensation, that there are few who might not have been glad to exchange their greatest gaiety for it. (533)

The explanation of Fanny's sorrow as resembling gaiety is disturbing, as is the way that her sorrow is "in harmony" with every dearest sensation. Even though Fanny seems to be harmonizing effectively, the author presents a view of her in which the negative and positive do not blend. The description of Fanny's happiness is a refutation of harmonizing by distance and an endorsement of clarity and revelation. By drawing back the obfuscating curtain, so to speak, on Fanny's character and on the novel, Austen clears a space between the text and the reader. It is a discomfiting effect; Austen alienates the reader from the text by bringing him/her closer. While space has been a mechanism present in *Mansfield Park* at the levels of plot, theme, and rhetoric and style, in the last chapter space becomes a tool for the author and the exposing of such space reveals how important distance is to the narrative impulse, how important it can be to notice the obfuscating mist between the reader and the novel.

Analyzing space and distance in *Mansfield Park* is a way of examining how issues related to space and subject develop beyond the interior/exterior divide established by convenience. Austen's novel demonstrates multiple ways that space is used as a process, as mechanisms for coping, viewing, and reading. It also demonstrates how these processes inform each other, since they are all based upon the concept that fixed space is a facilitating medium. For Fanny, the space of time and distance allows her to cope with her isolation at Mansfield Park and later at Portsmouth. Fanny's ability to harmonize by distance is informed by the principles of the picturesque, though she is denied other kinds of picturesque views (those of appropriation). The picturesque and the theme of improvements demonstrate the way that spaces can still be used to indicate character, only now they tell us more about the character of those evaluating spaces rather than those who own or occupy them. The shift in emphasis from occupant to evaluator points to a larger shift in the treatment of space at the end of the eighteenth century, one which I describe as the shift from objective to subjective uses of space. This shift was made possible by the acceptance of an interior subject with solidified identity. As the notion of a defined self became historically established, questions about interior/exterior character no longer engendered the same level of anxiety and were replaced with questions of how subjects could use space rather than be defined by it. One significant example of the subjective use of space is picturesque tourism, in which an observer moves from prospect to prospect in a landscape, admiring the ever-changing views and capturing them either in paintings or in a viewing mechanism such as a Claude glass. In *Mansfield Park*, the picturesque is yet another spatial mechanism. Finally, in its foregrounding of space as mechanism, *Mansfield Park* suggests that reading could also be done spatially, specifically by reading for ironic distance between narrator and character, and author and novel. In *Mansfield Park,* Austen plays with spatial concepts of distance and nearness, terms that require a point of reference (as in, distance from, nearness to). The grammatical syntax of nearness and distance requires a centre from which proximity is established. Even if the subject does not occupy that centre, space is still defined in relation to a specific point, whether that point be geographical, architectural, or narrative. Ultimately, in terms of the relationship between space and subject, the novel's use of space suggests the emerging primacy of the subject over its spaces.

Conclusion

Reading Spatially

The shift from objective to subjective uses of space at the century's end indicates that architectural and character convenience were very much eighteenth-century concerns. After all, the eighteenth century is when an interiorized subject originates. Wahrman locates the creation of what he calls the modern self against the disruptive backdrop of the American Revolution (247), alluding to an underlying violence that precipitated the shift from superficial to rounded selves:

> The troubled preoccupation with the meaning, constitution, and limits of identity during this national crisis [the American Revolutionary War], as an essential precondition to its very understanding, was the critical blow that cracked the dam, releasing and stimulating further the currents of unease about the same issues that had been slowly building up over decades. (247)

The texts that I examine in this dissertation demonstrate and explore the "currents of unease" regarding the constitution of subjects, specifically female ones, as shown in the attempts to fix the character of female subjects using architectural convenience. The suddenness with which the shift occurs also indicates the transformative and revolutionary nature of the shift. The novels I examine roughly follow the trajectory that scholars such as Wahrman and Lynch (in *The Economy of Character*) establish for the development of the interior self, with anxieties about female interiority most prevalent in the middle of the century as concepts of subjectivity were still being worked out. Yet Edgeworth's *Belinda*, published in

1802, a quarter of a century after the American Revolutionary War, still plays with concepts of architectural and character convenience, even if it is to reject them. My project should be read against a history of subjectivity in which the rounded subject does not emerge until late in the century, but the way that the novels continue to engage with questions of interior and exterior into the turn of the century also cautions against locating a small sample of four novels within a larger history. My reading of the novels, in fact, suggests that architectural thinking does continue to resonate into the nineteenth century, though these resonances might function in conjunction with other spatial constructions of character, such as the picturesque self.

The importance of architectural and character convenience to the study of the eighteenth-century subject also lies in what this particular, specific metaphor of the subject as house offers. While the representation of spaces as human bodies can be traced to Vitruvius and Ancient Rome, the reverse construction, the body as a house, occurs in eighteenth-century fiction as a means of interrogating subjectivity. The interrogation was spurred by anxieties in culture over the meaning of appearances and what Elaine McGirr calls the "gap between seeming and being" that was one of the century's major concerns (1). In a certain way, that gap is closed by approaching the subject architecturally. So far in this dissertation, I have argued that the construction of the subject as house divides the self along lines of interior and exterior. But what the house metaphor offers that other metaphors of split identity (such as masks) do not is the unification of interior and exterior into one entity. While a mask can be cast off, the exterior of a house cannot physically be separated from its interior. The house metaphor highlights the tension between interior and exterior by presenting two "sides" (an inside and outside) that are inextricable. Being considered architecturally heightens the stakes of determining character, since exterior attributes are now treated as being intrinsic. This analogy seems like a more trustworthy conception, but in turn the closeness increases the sense of betrayal when convenience is found lacking. The metaphor of the subject as a house indicates the increased importance accorded to unified, interiorized subjects and demonstrates why metaphors based on interior/exterior are an appropriate and fruitful method of approaching histories of subjectivity.

While my critical discussion of space and the subject ends with Austen's *Mansfield Park*, questions about how novels represent the relationship between space and subjects continue to resonate well past the end of the eighteenth century. My project, with its historical basis, suggests new ways of looking forward but also of looking back. Moving into the nineteenth century, chapter four has already begun to explore additional treatments of space beyond convenience in Austen's depiction of space as a mechanism in *Mansfield Park*. Convenience itself continues to have currency in subsequent time periods and even in novels that would seem to have little relation to eighteenth-century domestic fiction. Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), for example, raises questions about its protagonist's identity through the layout of Dr. Jekyll's house, with its respectable house facing the main street and the dark operating theatre/laboratory in the back. Stevenson obviously uses concepts of architectural convenience to indicate the personalities of those who occupy the spaces. Yet he is careful to delineate all the spaces that connect Jekyll's bedroom with his laboratory, including two flights of stairs, the kitchen, a path through a courtyard, the operating theatre, and another set of stairs up to the laboratory. Rather than the front and back of the house merely standing for the characters of Jekyll and Hyde, respectively, the progression of spaces instead demonstrates the lack of boundaries between the two characters and the impossibility—and folly—of attempting to separate one's evil impulses from the good. The example of Stevenson's novel also suggests other contexts in which to pursue questions regarding space and subject, including the impact of space on the development of masculine identity, whether Victorian-era building practices (such as splitting up a townhouse into flats for renting) affected character, and the ways that spaces were mediated by the effects of the Industrial Revolution, such as urban re-organization or pollution. The increased availability and amount of architectural resources from the Victorian era, including texts concerning lower social classes, offer the basis of a broader range of analysis than I have been able to accomplish here.

This project, particularly my discussion of narrative techniques in chapters one and four, also suggests an avenue of inquiry related to another history—the history of the novel—that requires looking back to Richardson's *Clarissa* and 'writing to the moment'. Richardson is viewed as the progenitor of the psychologically realist novel and his technique of writing to the moment, especially in *Clarissa*, is celebrated for achieving a level of psychological realism based upon the proximity of the reader to the character, the closing of the distance between the two. However, I argue in chapter four that Jane Austen writes with an irony that opens up a space between the reader and character. The introduction of distance between reader and character would seem to negate the significance of psychological realism to the development of the novel, but this is not the case. While proximity promotes psychological realism, distance does not necessarily preclude it. The ironic space that Austen introduces between the reader and Fanny Price invites an affectionate reaction to the heroine's faults, a recognition that identifying with a fictional character does not always lead to a better understanding of that character's inner being. While for Richardson closing a distance between reader and narrator creates realism, in Austen, creating an ironic distance allows a fuller perspective on a character who is very internalized. In other words, examining the significance of narrative space in the development of the novel suggests alternative ways of achieving psychological realism that are not based upon nearness. Finally, the way that Austen uses space as a reading mechanism also points forward to other authors' architectural treatment of narrative, with perhaps the most famous example being Henry James's metaphor of a "house of fiction" that has a million windows, each of which requires a watcher/author to activate its meaning. The line that connects Richardson, Austen, and James suggests a future project that examines authors' use of architecture or space as ways of attaining psychological interiority in fiction.

Overall, this dissertation establishes the significance of reading for space in literature and the way that architectural discourses influenced the development and understanding of subjectivity. I started with the claim that space can be read as a text and end with the contention that space can be used as mechanism for reading, that space itself is hermeneutic. The multi-valent meanings of 'space' allow for such fluid uses, for its status as both a text and a means of interpreting text. This project has established the relevance and the flexibility of spatial methodologies of reading, methodologies that could be applied to other literary periods or genres that deal with subjects or construct a relationship between a reading subject and a text. By exploring the diverse ways that space interacts with literature, I hope to have offered additional, productive ways of reading space and reading through space.

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