

THE SPATIAL ASPECTS OF FIVE CHOSEN NOVELS  
BY JANE AUSTEN AND CHARLOTTE AND EMILY BRONTËS  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*, *MANSFIELD PARK*,  
*JANE EYRE*, *VILLETTE*, *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*.

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Most readers of fiction will probably agree that certain novels, more than others, impress their minds with irresistible images of unique spatial-visual universes of their own, that they construct worlds which are alluringly tangible and "real" in their stereoscopic visual aspects. It will be repeating a critical cliché to say that Emily Brontë is one of the authors who manage to achieve that effect. Of the three novelists mentioned in the title Charlotte Brontë seems to be second as far as the visuality, plasticity and importance of the material world constructed in her novels are concerned.

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, called an "ironic comedy" (Brown 1979:39) and thus described as "spaceless" and "timeless" (Brown 1979:39), will appear in this context to attach hardly any relevance to the physical world it creates. In comparison to the Brontë sisters, its author seems to be on the whole less concerned with a minute and exact evocation of space and the matter that fills it. Jane Austen and Emily Brontë are usually felt to occupy two extremely differing positions as far as the qualities (also spatial) of their worlds presented are concerned. Yet the essence of their different treatment of the spatial issues has so far escaped clarification.

To the author of this paper space filled with things evoked in novels has always seemed of more immediacy and weight than the issue of time or even the dilemmas of man. That led to the forefronting of the spatial aspects in my reading of literature and now results in this paper, which tries to employ space like litmus paper — for describing and comparing texts, for asserting their qualities and meanings.

The number of critics dealing with the problem of space in fiction has increased in the 1930's. It has been suggested that there has been a marked interest, if not fashion, for spatial criticism in literary studies (Sławiński 1978:9). Out of the numerous critics who were involved in it, it were the writings of Jurij Lotman, Gerard Genette, Michail Bachtin, Bronisława Bałutowa and Ernst Cassirer that have provided the stimulus and theoretical background for the following discussion. However, none of their methods of approach will be consistently followed throughout this paper.

The basic assumption is Lotman's claim that every culture and epoch develops its own model of universe with spatial categories playing the constitutive part in its emergence and expression (Lotman 1976:210). As human beings, we are space-bound and space-obsessed. We see, speak, imagine, think and remember in spatial terms, whatever the object of our thoughts, memories or utterance may be. This is manifest in language, where spatial categories (like the basic oppositions: top v. bottom, close v. distant, within v. without etc.) are the terms for the description and classification of all aspects of experience, including politics, morality, ideology, as sacred or profane, familiar or alien, laudable or despicable. The list of spatial relations which have acquired non-spatial meanings is practically endless (Genette 1976:228).

Every community's model of space incorporates a certain vision of space then, but it also uses space to express other aspects of reality in all sorts of spatial metaphors and linguistic clichés as well as archetypal or improvised spatial connotations. Thus we find space "spoken about", space as "signifié" in the model of universe thus devised as well as "speaking" of "significant" about the actual world (Genette 1976:228). These two phenomena are not always distinguishable in texts and often appear simultaneously. Yet they are always reflected in art, and so must also be traceable in the construction of the worlds created in fiction. The spatial features of fictitious worlds are thus in some way representative for the mode of perception of space characteristic of a *Weltanschauung*, a literary trend or an author, which makes them a useful criterion for comparing philosophies, *Zeitgeists* as well as particular creative imaginations.

This is the basic tenet of the following discussion, which will begin with procuring the synthetic schemes of space as it appears in the particular works and then proceed to see how the acquired schematic models, reductive and imperfect as they will necessarily be, relate to each other. Our main concern will be with describing the spatial complexes of the novels<sup>1</sup> at large, seen from the bird's eye perspective, and not with their particular components such as interiors, landscapes, spatial metaphors and symbols etc. We shall aim at abstract-

ing from the texts their general spatial layouts, definable in terms of the most basic spatial categories. Thus it is the skeleton of the spatial complex, cleared of most of the material filling used for its evocation, that is our concern here. This abstract, immaterial model of space, inherent in, and reconstructed by, the reader from the innumerable and diverse material objects, places and their mutual relationships, is not complete until the very final pages of the text. The last stages of the plot are the point of regressive accumulation of all the prior spatial motifs (Płachecki 1978:64). The result of this retrospective view comes in the form of an epiphany of the basic model of space of the given fictitious world<sup>2</sup>. Such an abstracted construct is undeniably a morphological component of the text, one of the principles organizing the world presented and as such largely responsible for the semantic content of the work (Sławiński 1978:11). Thus the spatial complex must be seen as one of the means of conveying statements on the human condition, which remains the ultimate concern of literature<sup>3</sup>. It follows then that from the analysis of space created in the five novels by Jane Austen and the two elder Brontë sisters we shall move on to the discussion of the basic themes of these novels. If but very little fresh light is cast on these already profusely criticized authors, this attempt at "spatial criticism" may help to even further rehabilitate this approach and prove it as valuable as that concentrating on the aspects of time, so enthusiastically practiced in the past decades.

#### SPACE AS JANE AUSTEN WRITES IT

*Pride and Prejudice* (1797) and *Mansfield Park* (1814) are very different novels and though "similar in their representation of social life" (Brown 1979:6), are said to belong to the two separate streams of Austen's creation — the former qualifiable as an "ironic comedy" and the latter as a "morality novel" of "satiric realism" (Brown 1979:37). In fact the two novels seem to be hardly comparable unless with the view of showing the quality and scope of the change in her ideas and techniques. Also in respect of their spatial organization they turn out to be dissimilar.

<sup>2</sup> The use of the term "epiphany" here has been stimulated by the article by Mary Rohrberger and Dan E. Burns (1982). The authors develop the idea of epiphanic plots in which, at the close of the story, "all the pieces fall together in the reader's mind" so that his attention is engaged in observing "the relationship of events in a pattern" (Rohrberger and Burns 1982:8).

<sup>3</sup> The priority of the human element (the character and his actions) above other components of the text is generally accepted by critics. It is also responsible for treating space (or "setting", as it is more commonly called) as a secondary and subservient, if not negligible element in fiction. See chapter VI in H. Markiewicz (1984).

<sup>1</sup> Spatial complex is the term coined by Bronisława Bałutowa (1979). It is defined as "all non-human material forms known from empiric reality" (Bałutowa 1979:27).

*Pride and Prejudice.*

As a novel of social life, of "people living together" (A. C. Ward's "Introduction" to *Pride and Prejudice*, 1974:VIz), *Pride and Prejudice* poses its essential tensions between the social man on the one hand and other people with their communal product, civilization, on the other. The relationship between a man as an individual and nature, or other aspects of the universe not included or "improved" by civilization, is not included. Whatever forms the material environment takes, it is shown as secondary to man and only appears in the novel in connection with man, in its "humanized" version. It is the object of man's actions and the background against which these actions take place. Man and space condition each other. While reading we first of all notice people, never alone, in the context of their living space, the houses they have erected. The content of space encompassing the characters is man-made, domestic and conventional. "Label" words like drawing-room, assembly rooms, estate, shrubbery, with abstract stereotypical adjectives (well-proportioned, handsomely fitted, suitable to one's fortune etc.) are sufficient to evoke the familiar images in the readers' minds. Nothing out-of-the-ordinary surrounds the protagonists or it would have been singled out in a longer and more detailed descriptive passage of which there are but few in the novel.

Apart from a few scenes, the action is set in the secure, limited space of the interior of a room or carriage, or within the boundaries of a garden. Thus the space is largely homogeneous and can be safely labelled as "social", artificial and man-controlled. It is predominantly positively marked — respectable, pretty, genteel, civilized. A marginal portion of negatively marked space, important by implication (it is used for off-stage incidents, e.g. the London hotel where Lydia lives with Wickham after their elopement), is Austen's tribute to Ernst Cassirer's definition of "mythical space" (Buczyńska 1963:91) — one subdivided into the sphere of the sacred and the profane, one in which every location is charged with meaning. The existence of that hotel also marks the lowest step of the vertical hierarchy of social significance, wealth and morals within the world of the novel. The top place is occupied by Pemberley, also significantly situated "well on rising ground" (*P. P.* 1974:241), while the medial positions are practically shared *ex aequo* by the houses and properties of the rest of the characters.

When viewed from above, the whole world of the novel appears to be an amorphous and negligible horizontal plane through which the humans move to and fro between their familiar, well organized habitats in Longbourn, London, Scotland, or indeed anywhere they could practice their shared genteel code of manners and morality. This horizontal mobility is combined with, metaphorically understood, vertical movement up or down the social ladder by marrying above or below, by following the code of reason and propriety or violating it rashly. In both cases, anyhow, the movement is regulated by the

arbitrary and universally recognized rules of decorum and sound judgement. In the case of the vertical movement it is both *in which direction and for what reason* that is analysed as essential. The gist of the literal, horizontal movement of the characters, though, however frequent and important, is in the change of place the scenes are set in, and not in the process of transfer itself. What happens *between* Netherfield and Longbourn or Pemberley and Longbourn is of no consequence. Netherfield, Pemberley and Longbourn are houses and as such emblematic of certain abstract phenomena essential to humanity as Austen and her contemporaries saw it. They represent various steps in human progress towards "perfection", i.e. control over himself and the universe, towards an ordered, civilized, man-made world. The space between these cases of culture is thus negligible, even though it forms a quantitatively dominating and qualitatively different "implied" subspace of the novel's world, one whose importance for the novel's meaning results from its complete exclusion from the world actually presented. The natural world is thus guessed by inference and never really called forth, as if what is "uncivilized" did not exist at all. There are but two moments in the book when we are allowed a glimpse into that subspace, the not-humanized province<sup>4</sup>. Eliza is the only human who shows some predilection for natural nature, one not "corrected" by man's aesthetic taste and effort. Her attitude to nature is ambivalent which is more than we could say about other characters, who are suspicious, uneasy, anxious while exposed to nature at large.

Both subspaces we can find in *Pride and Prejudice*, the man — made realm and the civilizational "wilderness" — manage to coexist in the actual world of empiria, but it seems the man-oriented reality of the 18th century made the two incompatible and the domain of nature was thus readily overlooked. There is a barrier around the world of human society and the narrator, as well as the characters, refuse to notice what lies behind it and thus to acknowledge the dichotomy of their universe. The barrier must be infiltrable. In this way the world created in the novel, when viewed from above, turns out to be composed of a potentially unlimited number of enclaves of social life in the vastness of the negligible, if not contemptible, natural universe. It resembles a map with a number of colonized territories amidst the extensive blank of non-improved wilderness. The plot is wholly set in the social world of "civilized" people. There are no descriptions of elemental nature, neither does nature force its way into the humanized world otherwise than controlled by the self-same humanized canons of taste that operate within it. Pemberley is a good illustration of the point. Even weather is almost excluded from the world presented in the novel. Elisabeth feels her predilection for outdoor exercise is

<sup>4</sup> The obvious example is when the dirt and mud of a public footpath is minutely discussed after Eliza's walk to Netherfield to see Jane.

unique and indulges her desire for solitude, not unguiltily, only on "nice, sheltered paths" (*P. P.* 1974:169) and when she is "unfit for other employment" (*P. P.* 1974:194). A woman's, and not much less so a man's, proper place is decidedly indoors, in an abode suitable to her or his fortune. Some readers describe it as a claustrophobic world, but it can also be called artificial, cushioned and secure, limited and limiting, in the literal and metaphorical sense of the words.

### *Mansfield Park.*

The world of *Mansfield Park* is designed in a different way. The main concern here is with the dealings of an individual, unique and ultimately separate, with other individuals and the environment, which in this case is more heterogeneous: both man-made and natural. Thus the world the heroine has to come to terms with offers more choices and poses more diverse dilemmas. The spatial configuration, with its dual substructuring (into the world of civilization and that of nature again), further diversified too, illustrates the basic issue of the novel. This compartmentalization of the material world makes the heroine's choice of place and the ethos this place must inevitably possess, more difficult but also more real and valid.

In the artificial sub-space (as opposed to the natural one) there is a range of places presented from a close perspective, one much closer than it was in *Pride and Prejudice*. The vertical substructure of social status is more distinct and polarized — the breach between the Park and the Price household is greater than any such in the earlier novel. It also overcomes the boundaries of one social stratum. The three subspaces on the horizontal plane also form two incompatible vertical hierarchies. One is governed by the ephemeral and dubious standards of fashion and politesse (with London holding the top position, then Mansfield Park and Portsmouth following) and one of true, permanent social worth and morality (Mansfield Park, Portsmouth, London). The characters can travel between these worlds and can even permanently emigrate to one of their own choice, providing they manage to assume and put in practice its code of values. In this way they manage to combine the vertical and the horizontal movement. This may be considered the main issue of the novel, in fact: man has to, and is able to, decide where he belongs to and what way of life he identifies with. The inalienable ethos of space and its importance for the character's fate is then the major structural element of the novel, it holds it together, powers the people's actions and conditions the emergence of all the problems. In comparison to *Pride and Prejudice* the novel allows its humans more mobility and power to decide but also unveils their dependence on the place they live in and whatever it entails.

The three subspaces do not make up the whole of the novel's world presented, though. They are submerged in the open unlimited vastness of the

natural world, still "unimproved" by man<sup>5</sup>. In *Mansfield Park*, the natural subspace has more say in the structure of the plot and the meanings resulting from it than it was in *Pride and Prejudice*. It is sometimes directly and minutely spoken about by both the characters and the narrator. Though prominent, yet, the natural aspects of reality are still secondary and subservient to the human issue of making a portion of space one's home, of familiarizing it, or of establishing one's relations with one of the socially dominated areas. This foregrounds the superiority of "human" space, the ordering power of civilization.

The scheme of the spatial design of the world of the novel will be the following, then. Against the hazy and sometimes distant, but distinguishable, background of the natural universe, here and there brought into the focus by a spatial metaphor, a descriptive passage or the admiring attention of the characters, a number of man-controlled and man-defined cases of social life are shown. Three of them are magnified but only two actually visualized (London is characterized indirectly, by its natives: Mary and Henry Crawford). These three subspaces are distinct from one another, constructed according to well comprehensible principles, populated, and exerting a great influence on, as well as putting demands before, their inhabitants. There is a lot of movement between these worlds, usually with little awareness, on the part of the humans, of the wider natural context, of what is going on between or around the three habitats of man. People are not ascribed to one world, they can be transplanted. Depending on their judgment, they will either ascend the hierarchy or, like the majority, perform the movement downwards in moral and social terms. The few distinguished characters, though, "rise" to end "within the view and patronage of Mansfield Park" (*M. P.* 1980:457).

Like in *Pride and Prejudice*, this is first of all a social world within a socially — oriented space. When places and things count (and they usually do, being endowed with all sorts of moral and aesthetic connotations), they do so because of their personal or human connotations. Thanks to the stylistic and poetic importance of spatial motifs, the text concentrates on man as he confronts the variety of ideas incorporated in the variety of material forms of life. This material world in its spatial framework has been made to speak about certain abstract notions, and the characters seem to understand its language. So do the readers, though, as by the time the novel ends every portion of space evoked in the novel is automatically identifiable with a set of qualities and more complicated meanings we intimated throughout the novel.

<sup>5</sup> The tendency to introduce "improvements", to reshape landscape according to the current fashion, so crucial in the novel, can be treated as an epitome of a similar drive towards ordering all matter, or ordering in general. This is what the word "improve" is meant to suggest in this sentence.

## CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S CREATION OF SPACE

The archetypal dual subdivision of the universe into the artificial and limited world of civilization and the open realm of *primaeval* nature acquires in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* a number of possible modified meanings, rarely clearly definable and sometimes contradictory. The natural subspace is usually the one more familiar to the heroines. Both Jane and Lucy more readily identify and more successfully, though violently, react with the natural forces, with the elements or some unspecified agent behind them, than with the human world. They feel it is of the same order as themselves — one family of God's children. Contrasted to, and separated from, nature is the social, urban, civilizational world of people. It has its convoluted ways, tricky paths and alien principles, rarely comprehensible to, and compatible with, the heroine's personal scales of value. Thus the major dramatic tensions arise on the border line between a unique individual world and the external, alien world of wordliness. The problem is how to establish diplomatic relations between the two and make the frontier penetrable. Not that there is no barrier between an individual and nature. These two, yet, are allied or kin and though an individual is often overwhelmed by his bond with the elements, he more often draws comfort and peace from them. The idea of a border line enclosing the heroines within themselves, recurring in dozens of images and spatial metaphors, is one of the central problems in these works. It also marks the central subspace of the novels, that of a woman's mind or self, suspended and torn between the inalienable though overpowering natural cosmos on the one hand, and the limited, alien, sometimes petty but attractive social and human world on the other. Unlike in Jane Austen, where we watched a community of people living together within the common ground of their culture and coping with the issues their common heritage created, here we have an image of separate, enclosed, unique personal spaces struggling hard to attain a sense of community, to alleviate the sense of claustrophobia and alienation, to abolish the barriers enclosing them within themselves. Both external subspaces of the world presented the heroines have to come to terms with are vividly visualized and full of objects treated not without aesthetic relish and emotional colouring (such spatial images as the beautiful and grandiose dining-room in Thornfield Hall, the struck tree, the *allée défendue* etc. are the obvious examples here).

This tangible, material world is not static. There is restlessness and movement, often chaotic, in the realm of man. The heroines are beyond the centres of the bustle, they witness from beside and sometimes even outside, which often makes them suffer from a sense of stagnation. They also feel homeless — they rarely find a private or socially shared place they would recognize as their own, in material and emotional terms. The author seems to suggest that it is desirable, possible but also extremely difficult to find such a "port", a portion

of space where one would feel integrated and included rather than alienated and excluded. The breaking down of the barriers separating the individual so as to identify with a familiar and comprehensible portion of space, is essential to the heroines' well-being. They are dependent on the two worlds encompassing them, but since they remain apart, they are not completely determined by their influence. They keep trying to comprehend both as well as participate in both but find it hard to feel satisfied. Their estrangement from the human world is not as painful, though, as would be their alienation from what they feel a part of — the natural universe at large. Even this subspace, though, is often bewildering and inflicts pain. The result is that *no* subspace can be securely classified as being familiar, safe, understandable. The world turns out to be precarious, changing and unreliable. Madame Beck's school is both a sought-for shelter and a prison; the Chalet is a source of security and anxiety; the *allée défendue* is both enticing and eerie; Thornfield Hall is admirable and sinister. Neither of the novels sketches a transparent and coherent vision of space with obvious axiological overtones for every subspace or location. No place has an ethos of its own that would be consistently operating and unquestionable, there is no order and stability of features and values in the spatial complexes these novels evoke, not at least, throughout the bulk of the texts. (There is a "happy ending" in *Jane Eyre* which makes it possible for her to organize the world into an ordered and qualitatively marked system).

*Wuthering Heights*

There are few novels in which the physical and spatial aspects of the world presented would be equally irresistibly visual, fascinating and intrinsic in the novel's meaning as in *Wuthering Heights*. The world presented in this novel is practically limited to a small, enclosed area. The only alien element, the first narrator, pushes the actual world even further away. Whatever happens in that world, beyond the grounds of the Grange and the Heights, is almost as if of no consequence (with the exception of Heathcliff deriving from it). Thus the outer, social world never really comes to exist in the novel. The more so that everything within the world presented is so unusual that the normal standards of sense, merit etc. must be relinquished as useless. This world, or rather its two separate sub-worlds, must be measured by their own peculiar standards.

The few native inhabitants of the two houses (note that the names are making use of archetypal spatial connotations) remain in an insoluble bond with their worlds, one beyond logic, reason and belief. They are unable to change their affinities, cannot be transplanted and feel ill at ease when kept on the premises of their foil. The border line between the two households is not completely unimpregnable, though, so there are numerous instances of crossing it as the protagonists are haunted by an irresistible and inexplicable urge to come to grips with "the other" world.

Both subspaces are visualized in detail. Their appearance and lay-out are emblematic of their non-visual qualities, sometimes easily decoded from the spatial complex and sometimes only vaguely sensed but defying verbal definition. The intricate network of spatial metaphors and symbols usually escapes intuitive archetypal or conventional interpretation.

The dualistic, but by no means Manichaeian, enclosed human world of the novel is inherent in the all-encompassing, natural and elemental one, in an infinite variety of its manifestations (from all shades of weather, through the minutely presented Yorkshire wildlife, to the elements in their pure form). It is also governed by, and inherent in, this natural domain. It is not a social world of civilization. Thus the distribution of stresses we found in *Pride and Prejudice* is reversed here — the communal and civilization in man is suppressed. The humans are shown as insubstantial and uninfluential in the face of the universe at large. The characters seem to be helpless and lost as individual personalities. They are not self-sustained unless in communion with their spatial contexts which also become their conditioning factors and manipulators. Still there is no “common front” they could form, no shared world-view, routines, fates, etc. The only common feature is their peculiar impotence and dependence on the place they descend from. They are not interesting or important when separated from their native houses, in fact they do not exist away from them, being but a function, however human and individualized, a subspace of the infinite natural universe in its diversity.

Let us have a look at the bare scheme of the spatial arrangement of the world presented in *Wuthering Heights*. We shall notice its closeness, dual subdivision, the uniqueness and incompatibility of the two subspaces, best visible in their material and spatial configurations. The characters are ascribed to the particular places and thus immobilized, but also drawn to their foils. They lock control over themselves and the surrounding world. This closely wrought structure is exposed to the workings of a ubiquitous and grand power with the elements as its agents. It also is a part of that power's domain. The social and civilizational motivations are absent from the novel's universe. The protagonists are but separate elements whose only ethos is that of the place they belong to.

It will be obvious that the notion of a border line, working on a number of strata, is vital for the construction of the spatial complex as well as for the novel's meaning. It is the axis around which the action spins and a suggested annihilation of which is equivalent with the novel's conclusion.

There is no hierarchical relation between the two subspaces. Also within the particular houses the “up” v. “down” opposition (equivalent to that of “good” and “bad”) is so relative that no conventional hierarchization is possible without risking gross simplification. The subjection of the human world to that of the elements does not form a hierarchy either — it is *one* system, the

individual's private dealings being contained within those of the natural world. This “horizontality” of the novel creates the impression of its being without direction and somehow unresolved, in “worldly”, social terms at least. One feels that once the conflicts roaring within this closed system (and they do not result from the differences in merit, there being no question of any of the houses being in any way superior to the other, but from ones of *quality*) are resolved or die out with their agents, the whole system will disintegrate. The unfulfilled need, on the part of the reader, for socially explicable motivations and resolutions must be one of the “many normal standards” it is the function of the book “to challenge” (Winnifrith 1977:60).

#### CONCLUSIONS

A comparison of the reductive schemes of the spatial complexes shall constitute the next stage of our discussion. A certain order can be noticed among the five bare constructs we arrived at. Having started with the apparently scant presentation of the material world, predominantly artificial in nature, we found in *Pride and Prejudice*, we arrived at an overtly space-oriented, highly visual and strictly natural country of *Wuthering Heights*. We left behind the social space with socially conditioned, civilized people to reach the few singled out and desolate creatures. These creatures were confronted with the elemental in nature, epitomized in the material world of Emily Brontë's novel. We found no vivid images of the material world and few spatial metaphors in *Pride and Prejudice*, while in *Wuthering Heights* space and things that filled it lived and spoke, not quietly either.

In fact, it is difficult to resist the temptation of using the term “mythical” (as understood by Cassirer and Mielecinski) to describe the world presented in *Wuthering Heights*, and especially its spatial aspects. There are a number of points in which the definition is applicable. According to Bronisława Bałutowa, Cassirer thinks that mythical space is “the spatial framework constructed on the basis of the factual, concrete world of things” (Bałutowa 1979:24). And indeed, the concreteness and profusion of familiar (though defamiliarized) material objects in the novel is striking. The positions of these objects are not semantically neutral. They are bound with abstract qualities and cannot be arbitrarily manipulated. The crippled trees near the Heights or the golden and red rooms of Thrushcross Grange could not be mutually replaced without changing their meanings, those of the places they belong to or those of the whole novel. Evidently, Cassirer's idea that “for myth all difference in spatial aspect involuntarily changes into a difference in expressive feature” (Bałutowa 1979:25) finds its realization in *Wuthering Heights*. Mythical space is endowed with life, it is ordered and shaped according to some intelligible, all-inclusive pattern. It involves shared intuitions of the world as a system, and we find

them in Cathy, Heathcliff, Hareton and Linton who need not communicate in order to comprehend the nature of the universe that created them. Neither do they feel in any way estranged from this universe — the world and themselves forming one organism. Like mythically thinking people, they do not find themselves separate from it, and Mioletinski thinks this is an important quality of myth-governed communities (Mioletinski 1981:201).

Emily Brontë's novel seems to be, on the whole, liable to "mythological" criticism, certainly more so than *Pride and Prejudice*. Yet, on reconsidering it in the light of the mentioned qualities, one may find that this otherwise intellectual and "enlightened" novel shares a lot with *Wuthering Heights* in respect of its spatial configuration — more perhaps than with the works of Emily's own sister.

The spatial complex in *Pride and Prejudice* is factual and material enough, being made up of all the typical accessories of upper-middle class life in the late 18th century. That these accessories are not minutely described does not mean that they are absent; unimportant or not visualizable. Their typicality and conventionality must have made them more than easily imaginable for the readers of the period. The lack of detailed visualization may, paradoxically, result from the material world's unquestionable reality and vividness. Things need not be described when we know that they must be there and what they must look like. Both these matters were regulated, in the world that produced the novel, by the imperatives of decorum, propriety, custom and fashion. Cassirer's idea that in mythical space "everything has its concrete form and proper place" (Balutowa 1979:25) pertains to *Pride and Prejudice* as well as to *Wuthering Heights*. It is clear that the positions and quality of things are semantically marked and convey cultural and ethical messages, easily decodable and nonambiguous. The structuring of space in *Pride and Prejudice* is a code intuitively intelligible to the characters and the readers. The material reality and the abstract semantic meanings it carries are presented subtly and by implication, by means of few salient points<sup>6</sup> and not long descriptive passages. The originality and complexity of Emily's artistic vision made it necessary for her to contain her ideas in extended descriptions, spatial symbols and metaphors. These were not necessary in Austen's novel, where meanings were easily called forth by the right object here and there (like the expensive fire-place at Rosings or the domestic-china ornaments on the mantelpieces). The profusion or absence of descriptions is not symptomatic of the importance or non-significance of spatial and visual aspects as structural components of the text. Bronisława Balutowa makes this point while saying: "in fiction ... our mental vision rests on a few chosen words. The reader doesn't usually realize the scar-

<sup>6</sup> A closer analysis of different methods of setting creation can be found in Bronisława Balutowa (1979).

sity of data received from the text since he automatically supplies the missing links and constructs the whole into a more or less fully realized concrete image". (Balutowa 1979:28). Also Charlotte Brontë writes in *Jane Eyre* that a successful observer and story teller must "have the notion of sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things" (*Jane Eyre* 1966:136).

The model of the spatial complex of *Pride and Prejudice* as we see it at the close of the novel, is as coherent and concise as that of *Wuthering Heights*. It is also equally "telling" of certain qualities and notions the work is concerned with. Both authors burden space and matter with the responsibility of saying things essential and comprehensible to the characters and the readers. Both make man an inherent element of the environment he lives in. He is inextricable from the homogeneous worlds of the novels, in his own eyes as well as the readers' (a quality stressed by Mioletinski as typically mythical. (Mioletinski 1981:201)). The fact that the novels imply a binarity of the universe is also qualifiable as a "mythological" trait. (Mioletinski 1981:207). The binarity is apparent from and inherent in, the oppositions between the two realms, two differently designed spatial structures and thus relies on semantic interpretations of sensual qualities, which also corresponds to Mioletinski's remarks on mythical perception (Mioletinski 1981:207).

If this argument is not faulty, it follows that Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* and Emily Brontë are not dissimilar in the basic themes they develop. They are both engaged in fathoming the relationship between man and the massive, concrete world he is a part of, he perceives as a systematic whole and within which he functions according to some consistently operating laws. The problems raised result from one's being a subspace of another, larger world. The "larger worlds" are very different in both cases, of course. The former includes man in a social and civilizational, while the latter in a preternatural and universal model of universe. Both models are "mythical" and one-sided as they fail to cover the other, equally real in the actual world, context of human existence. Of the two visions, that of Austen seems more neutral and "realistic" today, probably because the domain of nature has been practically ousted from the sphere of our experience. This may also contribute to the fact that we tend to overlook the physicality and spatiality of the world of *Pride and Prejudice* as too familiar to attract any particular attention. It is worth noticing that the two models we have detected in both novels are complementary and simultaneous in the empirical world and are rarely treated separately in the 19th century novel, which aims at a more objective representation of life and which is the product of a highly civilized community governed by the standards of intellectual rather than mythical thinking. As Mioletinski points out (1981:206) yet, these two modes of mentality can coexist in a developed community and can be studied synchro-

nically, as two types of logic not forming a diachronic sequence. In this light the two works can be classified as rare instances of mythologizing novels among the usually non-mythical, realistic, modern fiction of the 19th century.

*Mansfield Park* and the novels by Charlotte Brontë may be viewed as attempts at presenting a synthetic view of the complex nature of the empiric reality by showing their protagonists' affinities to, and estrangements from, both the manmade and the natural worlds.

Jane Austen the "satiric realist" (Brown 1979:5) puts the heroine not *in* a world, but *between* worlds, reducible to two larger spaces, both putting their claims to be recognized. In *Villette* the same situation is presented, as well as in *Jane Eyre*. People inhabiting those subdivided (and these are essential, qualitative dichotomies, usually further diffused, too) worlds are suspended between the two primary subspaces and are left with the insoluble dilemma of how to reconcile themselves to both. Being between, they are nowhere and uprooted until they have found their place, the pursuit of which aim is the core of the novels. Brown notices that *Mansfield Park* is "permeated with a sense of uncertainty and uprootedness" (Brown: 39), something unimaginable in the "mythical" novels.

The per force uncommitted heroines of *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* remain apart from the two external worlds that torment and attract them, but are also subspaces in their own right, the centres of the works' perspectives. This was not so in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights*, where the view was from afar and above, where we observed "the unfathomable expansion" (Brown : 41) within which the characters existed. *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* present a subjective, personal perspective, limited and wavering, of the heroines themselves as separate subspaces. This, naturally, eliminates the communality of vision of space and the shared intuitive understanding of the meanings the spatial relationship of things carry in mythical space. In these novels there is no consensus among the characters or readers as to the interpretation of the spatial models of the world presented. The space there evoked has become "personalized" and subjective. The disappearance of any easily definable ethos of space in these two novels is connected with a far-reaching compartmentalization of space as well as experience, with the appearance of moral and emotional multivalence, or at least ambivalence, in the world presented. It is accompanied by the disappearance of any clearly drawn, systematic axiologically marked model of space. There are no sacred and profane or familiar and alien areas. Spatial relationship make no sense to the heroines, they form no understandable, complete and acceptable systems that would be semantically charged. The spatial complex is now perceived as precarious, unreliable, incomprehensible, changeable. It is enough to observe how Lucy's attitude to the storms, common and important as they are in the novel, changes from awe and admiration to hatred at the end of her vacation. Also the evolution of

Madame Beck's school from a happy retreat and shelter to prison manifests the instability of the vision of particular spatial motifs. The lack of a consistent ethos of space will also emanate from *Jane Eyre*, whose heroine is consumed by a thirst for practical experience in "the busy world, towns full of people" (*Jane Eyre* 1966:140) but also seeks the support of the natural forces in times of crisis.

In *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, a similar inability to pin down the *genius loci* results not from a dubiousness about its quality either in character or reader, but from this system's defiance of verbal definition and logical classification. It does not impede the intuitive recognition of the complex systems of meanings incorporated in the spatial complex and does not negate the "mythicality" of its space as understood by Cassirer.

It results from what has already been said that *Mansfield Park* and Charlotte Brontë's novels foreground the individual volition, liberty, uniqueness and the resulting alienation of man from the material world and its three dimensions. Space has become external to man. *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights*; which model man according to an arbitrary pattern, must be found deterministic. In both cases the characters' selves are submerged in larger worlds and comply with those worlds' principles. *Mansfield Park* and Charlotte Brontë's novels submerge man in himself only, in his own imperfect and usually unstable and incoherent vision of the reality around him. Perhaps *Mansfield Park* should be seen as a transitory sub-genre — half way between the "mythical space" novels and the "personal" space novels.

By limiting the expanse of spatial - material world presented to a homogeneous, powerful and scrutable (if not familiar) model of space, novels like *Pride and Prejudice* and *Wuthering Heights* turn space into an important non-human protagonist with an identifiable identity of its own, one exciting to action or subverting it, one infiltrating into every layer of the novel's structure. The characters' subjection to the spatial complexes of these works, with all their complicated but definite meanings, diminishes an individual's priority, a feature never questioned in novels like *Jane Eyre* or *Villette*. By enveloping man in a familiar, though sometimes overpowering, world of matter, the protagonists' choices are preconditioned, limited and somehow sham.

From what has so far been said about the configuration of space and the material worlds in the considered novels one conclusion seems to have emerged: the spatial complex can be a criterion for differentiating between two types of works, two literary subgenres. One, whose theme is man left to his own resources and exposed to the relentless claims of conflicting and amorphous forces, and the other focussing on man accompanied in an organized though simplified world which lays its claims but also relieves one of a number of potential dilemmas. It is risky but tempting to describe the former group of novels as existential or modern in their treatment of man and universe, while

the latter as mythical in its approach to both. This tentative subdivision will probably not be applicable to the whole body of fiction, but it is, to a certain extent, parallel to the typologies suggested by M. Bakhtin (1977:192 — 8) into the heroic epic fiction and the novel) and N. Frye (1973:304) (into the novel and the romance). These critics do not include the spatial complex among the numerous and diverse criteria for their typologies of fiction (like the concept of character, the homogeneity or heterogeneity of discourse, the resolved or unresolved closure etc.). This may be seen as doing injustice to this important morphological and semantic element of fiction.

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