

*** THIRD QUESTION EXAMPLE #1 ***

Fantomina Eliza Haywood
Robinson Crusoe Daniel Defoe
Castle Rackrent Maria Edgeworth
A Simple Story Elizabeth Inchbald
The Vicar of Wakefield Oliver Goldsmith
The Mysteries of Udolpho Ann Radcliffe
Mansfield Park Jane Austen
Persuasion Jane Austen
Gender Trouble Judith Butler
The Production of Space Henri Lefebvre (Ch.2 “Social Spaces” and Ch. 3 “Spatial Architectonics”)

For my third question I am interested in writing about gender and space in the long eighteenth century. Using as a theoretical foundation concepts explored by theorists Judith Butler and Henri Lefebvre, I would like to examine the intersection of gender and space and the geography of identity. The above listed works of fiction reflect the rise of the novel spanning the long eighteenth century. In these novels, constructions of masculinity and femininity are determined in varying ways reflecting emergent identities dependent on class and gender based demarcations of space. These spaces variably comprise property architecture, domestic interiors as well as country and cityscapes natural/sublime or nationally defined. I would like to explore the roles of masculine and feminine within the changing national geography of England. I find intriguing the seemingly consistent but ultimately unstable attitudes about gender, class, and property over the course of the long eighteenth century. This instability is reflected in the spatial mappings of these novels of varying style and it will be interesting to explore the gender constructions these works’ contain and consider their resonance or lack of resonance with widely “accepted” historical/philosophical constructions of gender.

*** THIRD QUESTION EXAMPLE #2 ***

Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i>
Jewett, “A White Heron”	Morrison, <i>The Bluest Eye</i>
Olsen, “Tell Me a Riddle”	Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>
Esquivel, <i>Like Water for Chocolate</i>	Rich, “Living in Sin”
Eliot, <i>Middlemarch</i>	Rukeyser, “Myth”

Criticism:

Woolf, “Professions for Women,” *A Room of One’s Own* (selections)
Rich, “Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman,” “Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying”
Cixous, “Sorties”
Walker, “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens”

In “Professions for Women,” Virginia Woolf writes that “killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer.” This statement, intended for authors, applies equally well to the female characters those authors create. The lists of

works and criticism above present an all-woman cast – female authors creating female characters who deal with women’s issues in unconventional ways. Each author, in order to create her characters, had to first kill the Angel in the House to deliver female characters – strong women and girls – who likewise transgress the boundaries proscribed by masculine society.

If it is true that “we think back through our mothers if we are women,” as Woolf wrote in *A Room of One’s Own*, then the character Jane Eyre is, both by chronology and by characterization, the grandmother of all transgressing women. She defies convention beginning with her earliest defiance against her foster family. Jane’s unwavering sense of fairness coupled with an “unfeminine” short fuse often prevent her from displaying the approved traits and behaviors for someone in her position – both female and economically dependent on the (often lack of) kindness of others. Lacking the sustained influence of a true mother, Jane is forced to create and maintain her own standards. When, at Thornfield, she realizes that “women feel just as men feel...they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer...,” she is vocalizing not only her own frustrations but those of Bronte as well. As Rich, in “Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying,” writes, “when a woman tells the truth she is creating the possibility for more truth around her.” Jane succeeds because of her transgressions, not in spite of them and, in doing so, sets the standard for both women authors and their characters to follow.

The literary daughters of Jane – and Bronte – include any woman who, as a character or an author, transgresses the boundaries set for her by family or society. Sylvie, in Jewett’s “A White Heron,” chooses her true and lasting love of nature over the temporary but more acceptable admiration of the young (male) hunter. In “Tell Me a Riddle,” Olsen creates parallel women: Eva, who in her dying days rejects the outward trappings of the submissive wife in favor of her revolutionary youth; and her granddaughter Jeannie, who both physically supports Eva and draws inspiration and strength from her. Tita, in Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*, attempts to channel inward her frustrations at her mother’s dogged dependence on outdated tradition. However, her emotional state is unintentionally reflected in the effects her cooking has on her oppressive family, turning this traditionally safe, feminine act into a subversive one. Each of these characters, as well as many others, finds fulfillment in transgressing the boundaries of woman’s place; it is this re-vision that is, in Rich’s words, “an act of survival.”