UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER
(an accredited institution of the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON)

Department of English and Creative Writing
Volume 1 of 1

Landscapes and Genres in the Prose of Charlotte Smith

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2017

UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER
(an accredited institution of the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON)

ABSTRACT

English Literature
Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

LANDSCAPES AND GENRES IN THE PROSE OF CHARLOTTE SMITH

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Despite increasing interest in the work of Charlotte Smith, a consistent approach to her prose has remained elusive. This thesis addresses all of Smith's fiction for adults. By drawing attention to Smith's use of landscape, and her portrayal of non-urban landscapes through a range of descriptive filters, this project shows how Smith uses outdoor space to educate her protagonists and her readers about their positions–both practical and ideological. We see her deftly adopting and then exposing different descriptive registers to foreground the choices involved in reading and interpretation. Furthermore, periods of escape to these non-urban spaces, and the practise of their analysis, allow Smith's heroines to develop a sense of personal agency. Then, in her fiction from 1794 onwards, Smith highlights the danger of other individuals who intervene in this, forcing their own reading of the surroundings upon the protagonist, to the latter's detriment. Becoming aware of these choices about reading, as with more practical choices about marriage, finance, and location, are essential to Smith's promotion of individual agency.

This thesis, as well as exploring Smith's experimentation with foregrounding personal independence in her prose, also situates this alongside eighteenth-century travel writing. It reveals that the chopping and changing between different language styles seen in Smith's fiction has similarities to the playfulness of travel writing. It also suggests a new approach to the analysis of landscape, extending the extensive, recent, critical focus upon the urban spaces of the eighteenth century. By looking at the construction of Smith's landscapes, and emphasising Smith's reliance upon multiple discourses, this study suggests the need for a more complex decoding of the outdoors spaces featured in the fiction of the late eighteenth century. It models how such a complex reading of landscape might occur, and demonstrates the value of it.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Deborah Joy Brown,

declare that the thesis entitled

Landscapes and Genres in the Prose of Charlotte Smith

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

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Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the generous financial support of the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, and the help of the English and Creative Writing Department, Research Office, and the Disability Team at the University of Chichester. My particular thanks go to Chawton House Library and to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for their welcome, and without whose resources and hospitality this thesis would have been impossible to realise.

This work would not have begun but for the inspirational teaching of Janet King and Jessica de Mellow who contributed to my love and understanding of English Literature–a process begun by my Mother. The work itself is indebted to the remarkable breadth of knowledge of my supervisor Fiona Price, and the valuable input of Benjamin Noys and Jennie Batchelor at different stages.

This project would not have been finished without the encouragement of fellow postgraduate students in Oxford, my friends, my church community, and my parents. I am grateful for their support, their practical help, and their unswerving faith in me. I am thankful, too, for the continued interest of other scholars from the research seminars at St Peter’s and St Anne’s in Oxford. Special thanks are due to all who typed for me during the final months, especially Ruth Morton, and David Rackstraw. For everyone who displayed touchingly consistent interest in all things of the eighteenth century, I am very grateful.

Definitions and Abbreviations

Publications

Letters	*The Letters of A Solitary Wanderer*
Wanderings	*The Wanderings of Warwick*

Publication Details

ECCO	*Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*
JECS	*Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*

Publishing Houses

CUP	Cambridge University Press
MUP	Manchester University Press
OUP	Oxford University Press

Introduction

Reading Genres, Reading the Landscape in the Prose works of Charlotte Smith

In Charlotte Smith's penultimate novel, *The Young Philosopher* (1798), Adolphus, the elder brother of protagonist Delmont, is discussing his engagement to a young woman of great fortune, but very little sense, with his younger, unmarried sister Louisa. Louisa expresses dismay at her brother's haste:

> 'And would you really, brother, marry so precipitately?'
>
> 'To be sure I would; why not? there are no doubts, I suppose, about her fortune?'
>
> 'But you cannot be acquainted with her temper, with her disposition?'
>
> 'I shall know enough of them afterwards, never fear–more, egad! than I wish to know.'
>
> 'But if you should not be happy together?'
>
> 'Why then we must be happy as others are, apart.'
>
> 'And those are your notions of marriage, my dear Adolphus?'
>
> 'Yes, and very good notions too, Louisa. I cannot conceive how a man of fashion can have any other. Thine, I suppose, are sweet, pretty ideas of connubial felicity, taken from novels, where the hero and heroine are so vastly happy at last, as never was the like[.]'[1]

This scene is both a witty and a worrying reflection upon fashionable attitudes in the late eighteenth century. It expresses, through Louisa's probing, a dismay at the prioritising of finance over character in marriage choices. This is not because economic security is to be treated lightly, but because, especially for Smith, this want of foresight and the attitude of flippancy toward matrimonial happiness represent some of the worst, and most dangerous, behaviours operating in late eighteenth-century England. Louisa's own marriage choice is not much better than that of her brother. With no sensible advisors and very little experience of the world, she does the best she can within her understanding of the options available to her. Neither match is exemplary: despite Adolphus' mockery of romantic fiction, both make easily anticipated marriage choices for a sentimental novel.

Charlotte Smith knew at first hand the extreme emotional and financial trouble that could follow an ill-conceived marriage. Her own marriage to Benjamin Smith happened uncomfortably fast, removing Charlotte from her new stepmother's home and attaching her to a man whose temperament was as unstable as his spending habits. During their marriage, Smith suffered alongside Benjamin, driven by his debts to escape to France and to spend periods in prison. The toll of unceasing financial and emotional abuse finally forced her to leave him, and to attempt to support their large family alone. Having suffered all the trauma entailed in a quick marriage, Smith, like many of her contemporaries, was keen to participate in the powerfully influential public debate about women's behaviour. She warned and educated her sex about the options open to them, and their romantic and economic consequences. The latter two were often inseparable. Susan Wolfson describes Smith and similar female authors as 'women who went public with their authority'.[2] Smith's novels, I will argue, represent just such a public performance of authority, and aim to interrogate and offer a critique of experiences of dependency. Simultaneously, Smith models such interrogation skills for her reader so that they, like Smith's heroines, can assess their position and make informed decisions about their future.

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[1] *The Works of Charlotte Smith*, ed. Stuart Curran, 14 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005-2007), x: *The Young Philosopher*, ed. A. A. Markley (2006), pp. 317-18.

The primary way in which Smith teaches her characters to interrogate their situation is by teaching them how to analyse the landscape around them. In her prose, Smith resisted what Mitzi Myers has described as the 'model of femininity typically inscribed' in sentimental novels. It represented women 'according to a linguistic and structural etiquette of powerlessness and marginalization, often showing them being emotionally and physically carried away'.[3] While this 'carrying away' in fiction is often a sign of servitude to male desire, I argue that in Smith's novels her female protagonists actively carry themselves away from overt social pressures in urban and domestic spaces, to non-urban, less populated landscapes in order that they may discover or establish a sense of agency: ideally, an independent, rational self. By moving away from the urban, Smith's heroines have the opportunity to examine the landscape around them and to attempt to classify or navigate it. The practice of analysing these often rural spaces enables these women (in particular) to apply similar observation skills to their own social situations so as to recognise, if not always control, their future circumstances, especially their romantic and economic options. The agency they have gained in their experience of natural landscape, away from the urban centre, allows Smith's heroines to remain alert to the dynamics around them and involving them, wherever they move to next.

Smith, as Myers remarks of Mary Wollstonecraft, '[took] for granted a growing and predominantly female readership hungry for narrative', who, through their desire to read romantic plots, could be educated about their own marital options.[4] The role of the novel and its potential for influence upon the character of its readers was much discussed during Smith's career, and her own work plays with this influence.[5] She encourages her readers to approach novels with caution, undermining characters like Ethelinde's cousin Clarinthia, whose own marriage choice is based upon her obsession with romance as represented in novels, rather than an assessment of the character and situation of her future husband. Smith then goes further, and uses her protagonists to model an alternative method of assessment to that of Clarinthia. Smith's protagonists probe different interpretations of the landscapes they see, to test out and develop their ability to understand the social, political, and–most crucially–the economic climate around them. Similarly, they are then encouraged to assess and choose a relationship that will contribute to a community of like-minded, intelligent and compassionate individuals whose financial awareness is as important as their emotional sense. In this thesis, I wish to trace Smith's powerful articulation of how reading space–and choosing the right language or register with which to describe or respond to the landscape–can allow the development of individual agency. In Smith's prose writing we can trace a 'carrying away' of her heroines to non-urban spaces where they try out their descriptive and analytical skills, learn about the consequences of these interpretative choices, and so develop further as rational, thinking individuals. I believe Smith intended her heroines to model these skills, and to demonstrate their influence, to her readers at the time. Not only did her novels convey morality in their plots, but, in a much more unusual move, Smith used setting itself to explore the development of agency for women.

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[2] Susan J. Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions: Social Being and the Turns of Literary Action* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2010), p. 10.

[3] Mitzi Myers, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Literary Reviews', in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft*, ed. Claudia L. Johnson (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp. 82-98 (p. 84).

[4] Myers, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Literary Reviews', p. 84.

Locating Smith

Smith's career as a writer involved experimentation with and within an array of different genres. Her work includes different forms of poetry, sentimental and epistolary novels, translations, fiction for children, and a play. Her popular *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784) was followed by two prose translations before her first original novel, *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788), was published.[6] This work showed development of the sentimental language first displayed in Smith's re-writing of *Manon L'Escaut: or, The Fatal Attachment* (1786), now used in a popular format to examine issues around female dependence. The lengthier *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake* (1789) followed, and has received little critical attention–perhaps because of Smith's experimental arrangement of repetitive, intrusive economic detail within the sentimental plot–but it is central to Smith's promotion of female agency. In Smith's next novel, the

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[5] In particular, see Stuart Curran, 'General Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, I: *Manon L'Escaut: or, The Fatal Attachment; The Romance of Real Life*, ed. Michael Gamer (2005), pp. vii-xxvii (p. xv), and Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State UP, 1998), p. 36.

[6] For discussion of accusations of plagiarism before this, see Michael Gamer, *Romanticism, Self-Canonization and the Business of Poetry* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017), p. 74. The popularity of Elegiac Sonnets is also described in *Charlotte Smith: Major Poetic Works* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2017), eds Claire Knowles and Ingrid Horrocks.

bildungsroman Celestina (1791), the often-neglected overarching plot shows Smith stretching out her criticism from a focus on family to examine other structures of power and protection, such as the church. What has attracted scholarly attention is the conclusion of *Celestina*, where the increasing, nation-wide preoccupation with the situation in France is reflected. This is a topic that visibly drives Smith's radical epistolary novel *Desmond* (1792), which draws upon the popular rhetoric of land-owner responsibility to develop Smith's critique of political injustice and irresponsibility in France, as in Britain. Smith's characters must consider the uses of their land and the consequences of these practical decisions. Smith then turns to the War of Independence as a mechanism for contemporaneous political analysis, with the house featured in *The Old Manor House* (1793) operating as an example of an outmoded system of control. Its surroundings in the novel reproduce the increasing spread of commerce across land and class boundaries, and Smith shows the hero and heroine negotiating different types of land with varying levels of success as their romantic fantasy repeatedly comes up against practical difficulties.

Published the same year, Smith's poem *The Emigrants* (1793) is a powerful work that, in its depiction of the movement of French clergy and aristocracy, addresses the implications of England's treatment of the alien, a theme that returns throughout Smith's work.[7] For example, *The Wanderings of Warwick* (1794) and *The Banished Man* (1794) look even further afield and are concerned with the construction and function of cosmopolitan communities abroad for the unsettled European alien and the dissatisfied Englishman. These communities are now attempted in a variety of different countries in order to find a space that can accommodate the independent individual. In *Montalbert* (1795) and *Marchmont* (1796), Smith returns to the heroine-driven novel to explore in greater detail the power of the family and the possible consequences of different economic and romantic choices. Alongside this practical approach, Smith emphasises the vulnerability of women whose interaction with space is mediated by those around them, and her locations begin to feature natural, as well as revolutionary, breakdown.

Although *Rural Walks* (1795) and *Rambles Farther* (1796) were published for children, their titles draw attention to Smith's use of movement through space as an educative device. They reflect 'the eighteenth-century preoccupation that education should move away from rote-learning from books' towards children learning 'by absorbing material from their everyday lives'.[8] As with Madame de Genlis's *Adelaide and Theodore* (1783) here, all of Smith's novels extract education from the observation of and interaction with the natural world. Her botanically-laden novel *The Young Philosopher* (1798) was succeeded by more children's literature and a play, as Smith experimented still further. Her final fiction–*The Letters of a*

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[7] The ethics of Smith's poetry are also mentioned in *Major Poetic Works*, pp. 26-27.

[8] Stéphanie-Félicité de Genlis, *Adelaide and Theodore, or Letters on Education (1783)*, ed. Gillian Dow (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), p. xii.

Solitary Wanderer (1801-02)–reinforces Smith's combination of the botanical and the political with its gathering together of different examples of revolutionary space, like a botanist collecting samples. Although the posthumous publication, *A Natural History of Birds* (1807), contrasts starkly with the sentimental work with which Smith began her prose career, even in her first novel *Emmeline* we can see a clever use of natural history to both enhance and expose Smith's sentimental and gothic motifs. *Beachy Head* (1807), also published posthumously, speaks to Smith's fascination with her homeland and the places local to her various homes in Sussex. It describes a liminal position on the edge of the Sussex coast, looking out to Europe, and on the edge of political and cultural change: a position that Smith returned to throughout her life, as she does throughout her fiction.

Charlotte Smith's prose, with its crisp, radical tone and exploratory analysis of authority structures, sometimes left contemporaneous reviewers concerned. As the *Critical Review* remarked of *Desmond*:

> her politics we cannot always approve of. Connected with the reformers, and the revolutionists, she has borrowed her colouring from them, and represented their conduct in the most favourable light.[9]

If original reviewers were sometimes disturbed by Smith's politics, almost the opposite is true today of contemporary criticism: Smith's openly political fiction has attracted far more analysis than her other writings.[10] Her poetry, however, has received more critical attention than all the prose together.[11] Whilst both approaches have been pivotal to studies of Smith today, and to my work in particular, here I wish to focus upon Smith's prose writing exclusively. This study shows that in her prose, Smith, as well as explicitly deploying many different motifs associated with particular types of novel, uses a mixing and clashing of the language associated with specific genres to explore different views of the same space. She does this to demonstrate different readings of a landscape by describing the same space through different registers. This contrast then suggests alternative readings or responses to the physical surroundings, as well as to personal circumstance. In this study, I trace Smith's use of contrasting descriptive language in her better-known political fictions, as well as in her more neglected work, such as *Ethelinde* and the novels Smith published alongside her children's fiction, namely *Marchmont* and

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[9] *Critical Review*, n. s. 6, 1792, pp. 99-105 (p. 100).

[10] For example, the work of Adriana Craciun, Angela Keane, Leanne Maunu, and Amy Garnai focus primarily upon Smith's interaction with revolutionary ideology. See Chapter Two for more detail. *Emmeline* attracted interest as an example of gothic writing, but in early Smith criticism, this was one of the few exceptions.

[11] Consider, for example, the main monographs on Smith, particularly the work of Jacqueline Labbe. Almost all of the close text analysis in the collection, *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, concerns either revolutionary topics or Smith's poetry.

Montalbert.[12] To this, I also add analysis of Smith's only attempt at a sequel, *Wanderings*, and the unusual collation that is *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, a source for Loraine Fletcher's important biography, but which has received little attention in its own right.[13]

Including these works reveals not only the diversity of Smith's prose writing, but also the multiple engagements of her work with issues of language, and agency. Whilst important work has been done on Smith's life, it often draws upon her fiction, and thus risks minimising the latter's originality. Here I position Smith's use of personal experience primarily as a mode of public intervention that operates similarly to her interruption of landscape description with different registers.[14] As Tilottama Rajan has noted in her study of Mary Hays, the appearance of the author's life within the text 'consciously raises the question of the relationship between experience and narrativization'.[15] Smith herself openly expressed her disapproval of biographical interpretation in her Preface to Volume Four of *Letters*, and she is not merely participating in a wider movement of prefatory defence, but seems to be using her own biographical detail to support her lessons in the re-reading–or cautious reading–of the text. Biographical detail is one of many resources Smith draws upon in her experimentation. Smith's financial precarity, and the emphasis upon this in her copious correspondence with her publishers, has also often led to an image of the writer 'chained to her desk'.[16] Yet, as Jennie Batchelor and Jacqueline Labbe have explained, Smith was also a canny editor of her own authorial image.[17] As Claudia Johnson so clearly depicts, 'during the eighteenth century–and well beyond–novelists routinely decry their craft; indeed it is almost a matter of convention to do so'.[18] Smith participated in all the self-flagellation expected of her, yet she also used the written word to punish and confront her critics, managers, trustees and, at times, her readers, manipulating her self-presentation to various effect and for good reason. Despite personal distress and difficulty, Smith's goal is a larger one. Wolfson has described the situation thus:

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[12] See, though, Joseph Morrissey, 'Sensibility and Good Health in Charlotte Smith's *Ethelinde*', in *Picturing Women's Health 1780-1914*, eds Francesca Scott, Kate Scarth and Ji Won Chung (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), pp. 11-28.

[13] Notable exceptions are Amy Garnai, 'The Alien Act and Negative Cosmopolitanism in *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), pp. 101-12; George Boulukos, 'The Horror of Hybridity: Enlightenment, Anti-Slavery and Racial Disgust in Charlotte Smith's "Story of Henrietta" (1800)', in *Slavery and the Cultures of Abolition: Essays Marking the Bicentennial of the British Abolition Act of 1807*, eds Brycchan Carey and Peter Kitson (Cambridge: Boydwell & Brewer, 2007), pp. 87-109; Fiona Price, *Revolutions in Taste* (London: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 139-42. Further references to this novel are to *Letters*.

[14] Stuart Curran described Smith's prose as an attempt to make 'a virtual career out of self pity'. Antje Blank, at least, recognises a two-way relationship in creation: '[N]either Mary Wollstonecraft nor Mary Hays, for example, exploited the potential for self-referentiality with such consistency as Smith, who biographized fiction as readily as she fictionalized biography'. Loraine Fletcher has been most adamant about the weight of autobiographical detail in the prose, commenting that, '[W]hen she at last began to write novels she used, more than any other author I know, autobiographical material scarcely disguised'. Stuart Curran, 'Romantic Poetry: The I Altered', in *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. Anne K. Mellor (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1996), pp. 185-207 (p. 199); Antje Blank, 'Introduction', *Women's Writing*, 16 (2009), 1-5 (p. 4); Loraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), p. 3.

[15] Tilottama Rajan, 'Autonarration and Genotext in Mary Hays' *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*', in *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre*, eds Tilottama Rajan and Julia M. Wright (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 213-39 (p. 222).

[16] William Cowper, 'To William Haley [January 29, 1793]', in *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, eds James Kind and Charles Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), IV, p. 281.

[17] See, for example, Jennie Batchelor, 'Jane Austen and Charlotte Smith: Biography, Autobiography, and the Writing of Women's Literary History', in *Women's Life Writing, 1700-1850*, eds Daniel Cook and Amy Culley (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 181-96; Jacqueline M. Labbe, 'Selling One's Sorrows: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, and the Marketing of Poetry', *The Wordsworth Circle*, 25 (1994), 68-71; Sarah Zimmerman, 'Charlotte Smith's Letters and the Practise of Self Representation', *Princeton University Library Chronicle*, 55 (1991), 50-77.

> The reviews liked to complain of Smith's 'egotism' in these serial rants across the prefaces to her publications; yet from another perspective, publication was not only Smith's only court of appeal, but was the media than enabled her to theorize a politics of melancholy across a plane from the personal to the national.[19]

Stephen C. Behrendt, indeed, called the prefaces Smith's 'publicity campaign', and her presentation of her authorial position is as strategically constructed and layered as are the landscapes within her novels.[20] Just as Smith used her prefaces and poetry to strategically present different versions of herself to the reader, so she experiments with different ways in which to read the landscape in her novels, expecting her readers to understand and engage with both strategies.

Stuart Curran's introduction to the Pickering & Chatto edition of Smith's works does much to contextualise her prose. He describes Smith judging 'the market for fiction shrewdly', and positioning her own efforts within reach of 'marriageable young women' of 'high society'.[21] Whilst acknowledging Smith's adherence to 'the female Bildungsroman', Curran also recognises that Smith was 'profoundly concerned' with the 'progressive liberation of her heroines from the conventional strictures' that dictated 'their cultural and societal expectations'.[22] Curran argues that Smith's cultivation of a female sensibility is equalled only by her 'insistent' emphasis upon 'reality'.[23] Both serve to enable women to identify with and be empowered by Smith's work. Curran explores this empowerment within the context of the male characters in Smith's prose and the threat they represent, arguing convincingly that Smith wanted women to 'cultivate the inner resourcefulness' that would allow them to 'keep their balance' in society.[24] What Curran sees as resourcefulness, this thesis has termed agency, and, alongside the danger of the powerful or hysterical male that Curran describes as the primary threat to women, here I examine the threats lurking in both familiar and unfamiliar spaces. Not satisfied with warning her readers by the use of predictable dangers and their visible consequences, Smith teaches them how to observe and analyse, not only such dangerous characters, but the landscapes they access and influence. Smith builds the reader's intelligence and 'resilience' through educational episodes in non-urban space, using the concerns of the novel of sensibility to teach avoidance of or adjustment to the 'psychological impact' of unfolding events, alongside an increasing wariness about the interpretations or influence of others.[25]

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[18] Claudia L. Johnson, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Novels' in *The Cambridge Companion to Mary Wollstonecraft,* pp. 189-208 (p. 190).

[19] Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions*, p. 25.

[20] Stephen Behrendt, *British Women Poets and the Romantic Writing Community* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2009), p. 16.

[21] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. viii.

[22] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. xi.

[23] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. xi.

[24] Curran, 'General Introduction', pp. xiv-xv.

While Curran has seen Smith's publications between 1800 and 1804 as 'innovative' experiments that 'teach the essentials of how to read', I argue that this is true from her first publication.[26] Further, it is not through exacting descriptions alone that Smith educates us, but in the replacement or interruption of more dramatic, typical, or generic readings of space with the possibility of an accurate or instructive interpretation. Jacqueline Labbe has argued that although Smith 'constantly assesse[d] the market value of each composition', she still invited the reader to consider what it is that they were reading, and how they could identify this.[27] Labbe describes Smith using the 'natural world', not 'in self-indulgence. It is not even simply a retreat'. Instead, it provides Smith's readers with 'an alternative, living, refreshing world'.[28] My argument is that Smith's exploration of viewing or describing the world–especially when referencing nature, botany, or science–provides a corrective to the overly sentimental or dramatic impulses of a stereotypical heroine. It teaches 'real life' alternatives to the narratives of romance and disenfranchisement, as characters develop the 'resilience' to recognise these narratives and, wherever possible, to intelligently negotiate them.

Yet in initial contemporary criticism, a fracture emerged in the treatment of Smith's work, positioning her either as creative and deeply original (poet), or hackneyed and financially desperate (author). This reflects a familiar divide in the study of creativity between poetry, as the peak expression of Romanticism, on the one hand, and the inferior form of the novel on the other. Smith's work, as with recent Romanticist criticism, undermines these binaries, however. She often uses poetry within the prose, highlighting, in her mixing of the two genres, issues of creative originality throughout. Always these issues are tied to material experience, and thus creative freedom and practical independence go hand in hand.[29] Smith, particularly, explores the link between agency and economics with an original richness because of the strongly social context she creates, partly in the economic detail of her prose, and partly because of her own situation of economic vulnerability. With publication as her primary source of financial provision, and regularly harassed by her husband for these profits, Smith was certainly a woman who understood the economic foundation upon which her life was built.[30] Whilst there has been extensive discussion of the financial context surrounding Smith's work, here I want to analyse how Smith's fiction itself highlights the economic consequences of different choices for her characters.[31] Rather than a concern with the economic showing self-absorption, I argue that in Smith's prose it is one of the goals of her experimentation with form, and contextualises the non-urban spaces and communities she describes.

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[25] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. xvi.

[26] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. xvi . In this way, the thesis extends the arguments of Curran and Elizabeth Dolan; the latter's interest in Smith's pedagogical aims is discussed in Chapter Four.

[27] Jacqueline M. Labbe, 'Introduction' in *Charlotte Smith*, XIV: *Elegiac Sonnets, Vols I and II; The Emigrants; Beachy Head: with other Poems; Uncollected Poems*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (2007), pp. vii-xxx (pp. vii, ix).

[28] Labbe, 'Introduction', p. xix.

[29] See *Romantic Sociability: Social Networks and Literary Culture in Britain, 1770–1840*, eds Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p. 4.

The Language of Experimentation

This thesis demonstrates that within Smith's novels, particularly within her depictions of landscapes or non-urban spaces, Smith often surprises the reader by not following conventional descriptive expectations. Whilst she may begin a scene in a typically sentimental or gothic manner, using the devices and language associated with these, often Smith then interrupts the scene with a secondary analysis in more factual, rational, or botanical language. I describe these different language styles as registers associated with particular types of novel, like the gothic or the sentimental, not just because they draw upon the tone of these styles of text, but because these different registers also encourage the anticipation of particular plot developments. For example, when Smith uses gothic motifs and presents a landscape in dark and dramatic language, a reader of eighteenth-century fiction is encouraged to anticipate some form of gothic horror to confront the novel's heroine. Similarly, when Smith writes in the sentimental register of gasps, sighs, and tears, the reader anticipates the increasing vulnerability of the character involved. These registers, because they are associated with particular and popular fictional motifs, provide Smith's primary vocabulary. However, this thesis demonstrates that in Smith's depiction of non-urban spaces she regularly interrupts or explodes these registers, undermining them with a different perspective, such as providing a literal description of the botanical detail in the landscape to replace or expose the previous, emotionally-laden description of it.

In this way, Smith demonstrates a number of values. Firstly, that quantifying the landscape scientifically, or looking at the small details of its composition, is interesting, engaging, and has worth. Secondly, that the description of landscape and the language with which it is described can have a direct impact upon the actions carried out in this space. Thirdly, that the escalating emotions associated with particular plot developments can be redirected by the recognition of their construction, or their symbolism. The primary character who observes, or describes, or occupies the landscape can choose with which register to read it, and this choice has consequences for the direction of the plot and influences the other characters within that space. Smith's unpredictable use of contrasting descriptions also accentuates real and practical dangers operating in the late eighteenth century. By becoming alert to interpretive choices, her characters often recognise their options in other areas of life. Smith frequently exposes the consequences of gambling, poverty, and debt–even of adultery and illicit romance–as well as the fundamental options of early adult life: choices about marriage, income, and home. Smith uses the re-reading of space through different registers to allow her heroines to develop agency, and thus to review their own position in society and the different choices they have about their own futures, or the future of other vulnerable characters. It is Smith's manipulation of multiple registers that enables first an analysis of different spaces, and then the examination of relationships to authority, and economic and moral power. Smith draws upon the gothic, the sentimental, travel writing, botanical detail, historical events, and the work of other, famous authors, switching deftly from one to another to create, in this mixing of registers and references, novels that highlight and parade the dangers and the possibilities of different readings of space. This questioning or contrasting of different descriptions of space exposes the interpretive choices facing the protagonist, and, more broadly, the impact of their choices upon the lives of both the self and the community in the late eighteenth century. Continuing determinedly to 'read' the landscape in a particular fashionable mode has disastrous consequences, particularly for Smith's heroines. Contrastingly, facing a gothic or sentimental portrayal of a situation, for example, and becoming alert to its dangers and concealments, enables the protagonist to exercise some power over their response, over situations that threaten to overpower them, and, ultimately, over their own future economic and marital placement.

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[30] Antje Blank and Janet Todd comment upon this, and women's financial rights more generally, in Charlotte Smith, *Desmond* (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), p. xiv. From the beginning of their marriage, Smith's husband ploughed vast amounts of money into his entrepreneurial schemes, resulting in extreme debts and regular bankruptcy that forced them to flee, with their children, to France. Once finally separated, Smith's husband would still attempt to collect her profits from publication, as was his right by law, despite the needs of his children and the serious health problems of several of the family. The topic is referred to regularly in scholarly work on Smith, particularly in *Biography* and the introductions to each Broadview edition.

[31] Elizabeth Dolan has drawn attention to this economic context, too, 'Introduction' in *Charlotte Smith*, XII: *Rural Walks; Rambles Farther; Minor Morals; A Narrative of the Loss of the* Catherine (2007), pp. vii-xxv.

The Context of Experimentation

Smith's prose, which falls between 1788 and 1805, occurs in a period of literary as well as political turbulence. The dramatic rise in publication opportunities, in the number of novels produced by women, and in the reading public itself provoked the creation of a varied and rich library of contemporary texts. In recent reclamation work, there have been many and various attempts to summarise or categorise this output to better improve our understanding of it, but the literary trends of the end of the eighteenth century were complex. One way of classifying the texts has been to organise novels by genre. Franco Moretti, in *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, provided an excellent and unusual mapping of genres, but such work is obviously ill-suited to considering hybrid works, of which there were many.[32] Work on particular genres–such as the gothic and sentimental novels and their political involvement–has been immensely valuable in showing the radical input of fiction naively dismissed as feminine, but again this approach struggles to address novels that cross multiple genres, and these genres themselves are not neatly contained to any reliable set of expectations.

David Duff, in particular, has posited that this period in the history of the novel is not defined so much by set categories and styles of writing as it is by the experimentation with a combination of those forms and themes common to singular generic types, a manipulation that Duff explains is integral to Romanticism. Duff's work differentiates between the rough and smooth mixture of genres, the latter barely noticeable, the former providing a jarring reading experience.[33] These approaches can be useful to our understanding of Smith's manipulation of different registers. Smooth experiences could include the varying degrees with which Smith emphasises the more traditional or expected language options with which to describe space, whether poetical, emotionally-imbued, or dramatically ominous. Despite these options, the space itself remains the same; the description of it, however, influences the characters within that space and encourages a reaction within that same register. Rougher experimentation includes the breaking up of the novel's text to insert poetry or botanical detail, or the intrusion of dogmatic footnotes or obviously contrasting registers. For example, Smith often switches between the symbolism of a gothic surrounding and a more literal description of its physical makeup. In their collection, Julia Wright and Tilottama Rajan portray the use of genre in late eighteenth-century England as a messy, non-linear experience, contrary to the genealogy of literary development that it has been tempting to fall back upon. For many authors, they argue, the manipulation of genre served as direct 'cultural intervention', often as a way of revealing marginalised characters as much as emphasising marginalised form.[34] Similarly, Smith uses the different registers to describe unusual locations and places without set authority figures: both the isolation and originality of the location and the multiple ways in which it is described create a break in the sentimental plot. This breakdown of the landscape–as of the register–allows marginal characters to appear, unusually rational or independent interpretations of their situations to surface, and women, particularly, to redirect what have been thus far highly predictable plots.

What Smith does is to distinctly portray landscape itself, the non-urban space where interaction occurs, through a specific filter, described entirely in one familiar register. She then has her characters strategically re-view the landscape to find evidence for this reading and the emotions it has generated. The reassessment of descriptive language and of the landscape are intimately linked, and such assessment seems to only take place outdoors and away from the urban environment. Such reviewing participates in a wider move of form experimentation but the result, this thesis argues, in Smith's prose is to provide examples of how to resist controlling readings of space where other characters attempt to lead events or emotions in a particular direction. Smith wants her characters to be intelligent and alert readers of the significance of their surroundings and its impact upon personal circumstance. Such deliberate and sustained reviewing of each heroine's situation also enables the economic or politicised context to receive as much emphasis as the development of a romantic plot, sometimes even superseding it. These different readings and contexts tussle with each other, particularly when Smith presents a scene in the typically exaggerated parlance of the sentimental novel, but then has the same scene reread by the protagonist who is now looking for empirical evidence to support or challenge their own sentimental reaction. Smith consistently draws attention to the choices involved in reading. Her novels are varied, not only in their stylistic difference from each other, such as *Ethelinde* and *The Young Philosopher*, but within themselves individually as multiple contexts interrupt, are considered, and deployed. It is Smith's experimentation with landscape description that is consistent; it is always designed to be educational, even if the spaces she depicts change over the course of Smith's career.

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[32] Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees* (London: Verso, 2007).
[33] David Duff, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 176-86.
[34] Wright and Rajan, *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre*, pp. 2-15 (p. 8).

Whilst the emphasis of such experimentation is upon the education of the women in Smith's novel, it would be short-sighted to disassociate this education entirely from Smith's readership. Smith's characters consistently model to her readers the questioning and reviewing of their observations and responses to their surroundings. Marilyn Butler, among others, has drawn attention to the increasing literary intelligence of the reading public in this period, and this is something that Smith acknowledged in her letters and prefaces as she explained how to read or not read her work.[35] Smith relies upon the popularity of literary analysis and the intelligence of her readers to assume that they, too, will discover agency in the process of interpretation. As well as being careful readers of her fiction, they should apply these reading or reasoning skills to personal choice and circumstance. Smith's inclusion of different readings alerts her readers to the functions of space, the manipulative skills of others, and the possible consequences of an impulsive or stereotypical reaction to personal circumstance. Her challenges to spatial reading represent Smith's advocacy of autonomous and rational thought, especially for women, and especially regarding the economic. Smith uses space and the reading and rereading of it to educate the individual for their own benefit and that of their future community. This becomes especially relevant when we see generic readings being forced upon women despite their wariness, such as in *Wanderings* and *Montalbert*. In fact, as Smith's fiction progresses, the opportunities to find and assess an isolated landscape become few and far between. Instead, a wariness about others' interpretations comes to the fore, and Smith depicts the complexities of establishing or maintaining agency in these increasingly peopled or changing landscapes. Once Smith's experimentation with presentational language coincides with challenging historical and temporal situations, her work becomes more difficult to decode, but simultaneously it is more interesting. Smith not only draws upon a huge array of popular authors, publications, locations and events, but creates multiple moments of complexity in her own composition. She just about manages to fit the expectations of the publishing community, whilst fashioning something radical, not only in content–as has been long acknowledged–but also in form.

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[35] Marilyn Butler, *Mapping Mythologies: Countercurrents in Eighteenth-Century British Poetry and Cultural History* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp. 87-89; *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith*, ed. Judith Phillips Stanton (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2003) p. xxxi.

Landscape Views and Liminal Spaces

In this thesis, I set out how the protagonists of Smith's novels, by viewing and interpreting the non-urban landscape, model the skills needed in the late eighteenth century to rationally weigh-up marital and economic options. Smith demonstrates how this education, predominantly for her heroines, encourages reflection and analysis, and impacts on their personal decision making.[36] This affects the community more widely. In particular, Smith uses the description of landscape and the protagonist's reaction to the setting around them to champion a rational and intelligent analysis of personal circumstances. This frequently involves, but is not restricted to, geographical position, economic situation, and romantic choice. In fact, each of these three circumstances interact with each other. Smith champions a thorough, sensible reading of space: she shows her reader how choices, particularly those related to different registers, will have a dramatic impact upon the individual, the community they participate in, and their future. She simultaneously politicises space and demonstrates an acute awareness of the constructed and socially-mediated nature of space.[37]

Physical spaces themselves received a range of treatment in the eighteenth century in the ways they were studied, taught and explored across the globe. In England, knowledge of different locations and cultures was rapidly expanding, and not all contributions came from professional geographers.[38] A range of professionals and amateurs had a dramatic impact upon contemporary scientific knowledge, and today a similar variety of sources have been brought together to enable the current critical interest in space in its multiple forms. Nature and natural spaces have of course been a long-standing preoccupation for critics of Romanticism, given nature's centrality in the period, but Alan Bewell remarks that, 'where an earlier criticism had seen through nature to discover the workings of the Romantic imagination, historicist criticism now pierces through the Romantic ideology of nature to discover history, society, or politics'.[39] His own practice, however, is to pay attention to the history of nature itself, its commodification, transportation and textual reproduction. Smith's work reflects the period's fascination with such materiality and she often references the layers of very different disciplines, combining geology, botany, political change and economic detail to portray a single section of landscape. As Charles Withers and Robert Mayhew explain, both scholarship in the eighteenth century and more recently in 'geography as a taught subject and textual practice' has been 'motivated by materialist perspectives drawn from book history, map history and the history of science'.[40] The material experiences of landscape gardeners, explorers, artists, and tourists were each portrayed differently, and–aware of clashing and contemporary trends in landscape analysis–Smith constantly referenced and relied upon other publications for details of natural history and geography.

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[36] Pat Elliott touches upon this in 'Charlotte Smith's Feminism: A Study of *Emmeline* and *Desmond*', in *Living by the Pen*: *Early British Women Writers*, ed. Dale Spender (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1992), pp. 91-112 (pp. 92-93).

[37] Henri Lebfebvre discusses the socially constructed nature of space, and the problems with assuming its emptiness, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, [1974] t. 1991) p. 8. Also see *Henri Lefebvre: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Andy Merrifield (Routledge: New York, 2006).

[38] See Charles Withers and Robert Mayhew, 'Geography: Space, Place and Intellectual History in the Eighteenth Century', *JECS*, 34 (2011), 445-52 (p. 446). I think here particularly of the work of writers such as Hester Lynch Piozzi, see Marianna D'Ezio, 'The Advantages of "Demi-Naturalization": Mutual Perceptions of Britain and Italy in Hester Lynch Piozzi's *Observations and Reflections Made in the Course of a Journey through France, Italy and Germany*', *JECS*, 33 (2010), 165-80.

The current fascination with space in scholarly work around the eighteenth century has primarily focussed upon multiple ways of reconstructing and understanding spaces that are urban, looking at the physical mapping out of the city, and the plethora of layers of meaning and context for such a space. Particularly influential studies include James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin's *Romantic Metropolis*, Dana Arnold's *Rural Urbanism*, and Charles Withers' *Placing the Enlightenment*.[41] Larry Peer, especially, has focussed on the conceptualisation of different urban spaces by using a multidisciplinary approach, and Jane Rendell usefully pulls apart the different experiences and behaviours expected in various locations across Regency London.[42] Miles Ogborn has explained the value of the multiple sources that can contribute to the reconstruction or interpretation of city spaces, particularly from those in late eighteenth century publications.[43] This thesis specifically seeks to apply such detailed analysis, an unpeeling of the layers of contextual detail, to non-urban spaces. It draws out a similar complexity of language used to describe space, taken from the fields of science, natural history, botany, different novel styles, and different rhetorical devices, and, as part of that, positions Smith creating something more complex than the idea of a utopian rural retreat. Whilst poets such as William Cowper famously condemned local excess in the city, and Wordsworth emphasised the simplicity of the rural as a remedial space, Smith's combination of primarily urban characters moving away from the city to complex and distinct non-urban spaces does something different. Whilst Cowper and Wordsworth encouraged others to retreat to an 'idealized rural periphery not just from the urban centre but from the effects of empire', Smith grapples with the political and economic just as explicitly in her non-urban spaces.[44] Tim Fulford describes attempts to escape exploitation and corruption as unrealistic, with peasants positioned as 'sufficiently remote not to be affected by the new capitalist agriculture'.[45] Indeed, the increasing disdain for urban space that positioned the rural as an unpolluted corrective is fraught with problems.

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[39] Alan Bewell, *Natures in Translation: Romanticism and Colonial Natural History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2017), p. 12.

[40] Withers and Mayhew, 'Geography: Space, Place and Intellectual History', p. 445.

[41] *Romantic Metropolis: The Urban Scene of British Culture, 1780-1840*, eds James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (Cambridge: CUP, 2005); Dana Arnold, *Rural Urbanism: London Landscapes in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Manchester: MUP, 2005); Charles Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

[42] Larry H. Peer, *Romanticism and the City* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London* (London: Athlone Press, 2002).

[43] Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York, London: Guildford Press, 1998).

Specifically for Smith, such a view loses sight of the economic context of all space, urban or rural.[46] In a period of overwhelming political, economic and social change, Smith moves her characters away from frantic metropolitan scenes, full of interested, invasive, and observant characters, to spaces that allow personal meditation, aided by the emotions prompted by surrounding nature and by the broadness of spaces that, initially for Smith, hold fewer observers. These spaces are frequently characterised by their difference to the urban, and, at times, seem to be a kind of opposite space or corrective to the city, but Smith's removal of her characters from the economic marketplace to a non-urban escape is not like that of Mary Wollstonecraft's, 'a paradise' of her 'own creating'.[47] If, at the end of *Mary, a Fiction* (1788), Wollstonecraft's heroine wants to escape hardship and inequality to the world (heaven) where 'there is neither marrying, nor giving in marriage', Smith's characters must continue to negotiate with economic and emotional fact wherever they are located.[48] Given this emphasis, the image of the rural escapist utopia is not the one best applicable to Smith's endeavour. Even once Smith's non-urban spaces become increasingly peopled and troubled, she remains interested in the experience of personal agency through a depiction, or a wariness about others' depictions, of non-urban space. Our understanding of Smith's work is best informed by those critics who emphasise material concerns and the multiplicity of meaning and context involved in these complex spaces of the eighteenth century.[49]

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[44] Tim Fulford, 'Poetry, Peripheries and Empire', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romantic Poetry*, ed. James Chandler (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), pp. 178-94 (p. 177).
[45] Fulford, 'Poetry, Peripheries and Empire', p. 179.
[46] See Butler, *Mapping Mythologies*, pp. 8-9.
[47] 'Advertisement' in *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*, eds Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler, 7 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1989), I: *Mary, a Fiction; The Wrongs of Woman: or, Maria; The Cave of Fancy*, p. 5.
[48] *Mary Wollstonecraft*, I, p. 73.

The fragmented nature of Smith's narratives might, to some degree, be fruitfully considered alongside the increasingly experimental format of travel writing. Smith's reliance upon the travel writing of others is well documented, and elements of this are explored in Chapter Three of this thesis. Unable to travel freely herself, but keen to draw upon the explorations and information of others, Smith often incorporated direct descriptions or references to the works of other popular authors. What is particularly interesting in the context of this study is that the format of travel writing itself often had moments of descriptive interruption, changes between registers, and references to or direct inclusion of well-known fictional characters and circumstances. That these fictions are openly used for the enjoyment of the reader is well-documented, and Smith seems to be using a reversal of this format at times in her prose: she inserts factual or established accounts of geography and social history within her fictional romances.[50] Christopher Thompson describes the change and experimentation within the travel genre, encouraged by earlier writers such as Laurence Sterne:

> Richer description could now develop into mediations of the self in relation to landscape, history, personal experiences of time and literary creation. Linear progress gave way to conspicuous digressions and changes of tone and theme, allowing the travelogue to incorporate poetry, dreams, fantasy and satire, as well as inset stories. These writers foregrounded fragmentary impressions in order to echo the subjectivity of their observations and the fated incompleteness of any representation.[51]

This variety of style and substance described by Thompson is similar to that this thesis identifies in Smith's experimentation with interruptive register changes in her outdoor scenes. Matthew Grenby discusses an element of this in his introduction to *The Wanderings of Warwick* and *The Banished Man* as he participates in the critical analysis of Smith's presentation of herself.[52] In Chapter Three of this thesis, we see Smith, like Thompson's travel writer, 'incorporate' a range of accounts, fragments, and perspectives in *The Wanderings of Warwick*, *Montalbert*, and *Marchmont*; her use of the 'inset' story is also seen throughout Smith's prose career. Given

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[49] See, for example, Jennie Batchelor, *Women's Work: Labour, Gender, Authorship, 1750-1830* (Manchester: MUP, 2010) and Mary Ann Schofield, '"The Witchery of Fiction": Charlotte Smith, Novelist', in *Living by the Pen*, pp. 177-87.

[50] See C. W. Thompson, 'The Romantic Literary Travel Book', in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Carl Thompson (New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 269-77. Robin Jarvis discusses the variety of ways in which travel writing could be read in *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), p. 4.

[51] C. W. Thompson, 'The Romantic Literary Travel Book', p. 269.

[52] For Grenby's analysis of Smith's presentation, see Chapter Three.

Smith's familiarity with travel writing, and her use of multiple similar devices, it seems clear that, to some extent, the experimentation in her novels as outlined in this thesis is influenced by it.

Robin Jarvis' work draws attention to the difficulty in establishing how travel writing was intended to be read, and the real experience of those reading it in the eighteenth century.[53] For Smith, Loraine Fletcher, Judith Phillips Stanton and Stuart Curran have provided the most empirical evidence about her readers, but it is Megan Vanek who has explained that, in the recent acknowledgement of the eighteenth-century novel's 'debts to travel writing' more broadly, scholars have concluded that travel writing was designed for 'both personal edification and broader civic improvement.'[54] Vanek's emphasis on an intention of personal and national change is supported by Carol Fabricant, who has written on the links between different forms of travel, travel writing, and the personal growth of the traveller and their reader. Fabricant also discusses the effect of diverse travel accounts of 'geographical space' upon 'novelistic space', referencing the parodies and confusion seen in *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*.[55] In much the same way that Fabricant sees Jonathan Swift in the early eighteenth century demonstrating the 'capabilities' and 'limitations' of the travel book as an 'instrument for disseminating knowledge', this thesis presents Smith, in the late eighteenth century, demonstrating the capabilities and limitations of the sentimental novel, highlighted by many similar diversions, to explore romantic and economic choice in fictional plots.[56] Smith uses these diversions, not simply to challenge the presentation of landscape, but to highlight the directions that plots, and behaviours, will continue in if their progress is not acknowledged or challenged.

The spaces Smith uses to explore material concerns and the navigation of them are frequently less populated than urban space, and all contain some natural element. That they cannot all be classed as explicitly rural has led to my use of the descriptive label 'non-urban'. These are spaces that are separate from busy, social gatherings and the intense social scrutiny that accompanies them, but are as diverse as woods, lakes, small gardens, wide hills, changing coasts and local pathways, to name but a few. These spaces are not entirely separate from observation or social obligation, but, with some level of physical separation from the city or from the house, they are distinctive from the more frantic urban spaces where social etiquette and obligation is more emphatically enforced. Thus, in such non-urban spaces–especially when there are views, landscapes, and gardens to comment upon–Smith's heroines are able to discover and then exercise some level of spatial and personal agency. Instead of creating spaces like those of Frances Burney's novels, where –whether indoor or outdoor–space is fraught with inescapable problems and observations, Smith's outdoor spaces frequently enable isolation or freedom.

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[53] Jarvis, *Romantic Readers and Transatlantic Travel*, pp. 1-11.

[54] Megan Vanek, 'The Uses of Travel: Science, Empire and Change in Eighteenth-Century Travel Writing', *Literature Compass*, 12/11 (2015), 555-64 (p. 555).

[55] Carole Fabricant, 'Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature' in *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), pp. 707-44 (pp. 741-47).

[56] Fabricant, 'Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature', p. 747.

Smith's experiences of community and of isolation also inform her fictional explorations of space and her awareness of the complexity of such spaces. Recent work by Stephen Behrendt, Gillian Russell, and Clara Tuite has begun to undermine the privileging of isolated Romantic creativity by discussing and exposing the communities that writers were functioning within. In the case of Smith, Pam Clemit has shown Smith's close relationship with the Godwins, both before and after the death of Mary Wollstonecraft.[57] For Smith, landscapes, like communities, are not discrete, and even uncomplicated rural spaces are acted upon by competing forces. Smith demonstrates how the non-urban is inescapably shaped by its relationship with the urban: the outskirts of society are still ruled by the same power structures. Some of Smith's most menacing descriptions depict the interaction of the two spaces. She shows lawyers in the countryside, attacks in the woodland glade, and enforced sentiment upon the clifftop or beach. This clash is most evident in Smith's attention to liminal spaces, those on the edge or border of a definable space, or spaces that continually shift boundaries, such as the beach. In line with her interest in the complexity of descriptive language as a way of recognising the shaping power of observation, these liminal spaces also help us to recognise the shaping power of the land itself. Frequently, Smith has her characters strategically retreat to geographical borders to better examine the spaces they normally occupy. By using borders and boundaries–areas that physically are imprecise, or are in the process of change–otherwise dependent characters can seem to temporarily escape the confines of a stifling patriarchal society, and assess their position socially, economically, and geographically before attempting to return to, or sometimes create, some form of community with new awareness. There are, however, competing interpretations of these escapes and, as Smith's fiction progresses, spaces that were once useful in their flexibility or isolation become peopled with other characters either seeking to escape from the confines and behaviours of urban space or rejected from them. These same spaces that initially helped Smith's heroines find agency become increasingly unpredictable and limiting.

Smith herself is interested in and suspicious of ways of viewing. Methods of looking at landscape can be both perspectival–in *Desmond* and *Celestina* she employs a telescope–and aesthetic. Her familiarity with and manipulation of the fashionable modes of viewing landscape has been extensively explored, most notably by Jacqueline Labbe, and explains my use of the term landscape rather than, for instance, nature.[58] Landscape here describes the arrangement of the land within the physical view of the character occupying it. Alan Bewell's discussion of the changing views of what nature represents, and the changes to nature itself as a concept and term demonstrates the complexity of the latter. Whilst the landscape of the eighteenth century underwent ongoing visible commercial, aesthetic, and botanical change, Smith is interested in the different approaches to viewing change, and the changing–the zooming in and out–of perspective itself. She is not, perhaps, as painterly as Ann Radcliffe, but sketches extensive descriptions of the landscapes local to her, as of those she had no experience of, using personal experience, other literature, and travel writing to add detail. When Smith deals with the sublime and beautiful, however, she does not do so to produce a mixed political mode, a form of picturesque. Rather, she draws attention to detail within the larger picture, looking at the figures which populate the scenery, as John Barrell invites us to do in *Dark Side of the Landscape*.[59] At the same time, the filters of literary registers, placed over the landscape, alert reader and heroine to the multiple ways of reading these landscapes.

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[57] Pamela Clemit, 'Charlotte Smith to William and Mary Jane Godwin: Five Holograph Letters', *Keats-Shelley Journal*, 55 (2006), 29-40. See also Judith Davis Miller, 'The Politics of Truth and Deception: Charlotte Smith and the French Revolution', in *Rebellious Hearts: British Women Writers and the French Revolution*, eds Adriana Craciun and Kari E. Lokke (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 55-60.

Moving to liberating spaces involves the crossing of borders, and these liminal spaces, or areas of tension, can serve as places of potential transformation.[60] Smith's prose reflects this change in the demarcation of territory, in that her characters are constantly crossing borders, and undermining the boundaries previously enforced. In this period, the increase of mobility and movement, for the local populace as well as soldiering and emigrating communities, weakens the clarity of geographical borders. The constant travelling back and forth of Smith's characters suggests a softening or porosity of spatial boundaries. As Smith examines blurred boundaries in descriptive terms, we find an increasing experimentation with her geography that further undermines the idea of static or stable categories. In her novels, boundaries between land and water prompt unpredictable behaviour and expression, but in the explicitly political novels, geographical change is also accentuated by the constant flux of national territory. Matthew Grenby notes that 'geographical boundaries were increasingly becoming frangible, so that by the end of our period few, if any, regions remained isolated from the others, economically, culturally or politically'.[61] This process of change is everywhere apparent in Smith's landscapes, whether they are shifting in categorisation, in definition or naming, or in the experience of them physically.[62] Such interpretations are always dependent upon perspective. As the identities of countries in Europe underwent negotiation, as inaccessible geographies became reachable, and even as the familiar scenes of France were banned to their own clergy, so we see in Smith's representation of nature a similar unsteadiness. Such positive and negative examples of change run alongside Smith's alternative perspectives of the landscape, and the change in the characters able to access or occupy non-urban space.

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[58] See particularly Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Romantic Visualities: Landscape, Gender and Romanticism* (London and New York: Macmillan and St Martin's Press, 1998), pp. 1-35 (pp. 6-14), on the use of the eminence and women's use of different points of view.

[59] John Barrell, *Dark Side of the Landscape* (Cambridge: CUP, 1980).

[60] Michael Wiley, *Romantic Geography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1998), p. 3. Wiley reflects upon the work of Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey.

[61] M. O. Grenby, 'Introduction', *JECS*, 34 (2011), 425-34 (p. 425).

Chapter Summaries

Chapter One addresses *Emmeline*, *Ethelinde*, and *Celestina*, and traces Smith's use of non-urban space to allow her heroines periods of isolation and reprieve.[63] When able to access these wide, wild landscapes, Smith's protagonists can reflect upon their circumstances with objectivity, free from observation or direction. This isolation develops their reading skills as they consider their reading of personal circumstance whilst observing their present surroundings. Smith's heroines establish a level of independence by being able to consider and, to some extent, to choose their future placement. These choices are always contextualised by economic detail and are fiercely pragmatic. Yet, even while they ostensibly solve the courtship conflict, these novels represent Smith's most positive portrayal of the agency of women.

In Chapter Two, I group together three novels often treated as Smith's most revolutionary: *Desmond*, *The Old Manor House*, and *The Banished Man*.[64] Now intertwining plot with political commentary, Smith's use of landscape is impacted by widespread upheaval. Rural escapes are fractured and frequently only occur on the margins of controlled or peopled landscapes. Smith explores male responsibility for non-urban space and its inhabitants even while she shows her characters struggling to navigate the unpredictable and altering political terrain. She begins to look at the boundaries of non-urban spaces and how these areas of instability prompt unusual, often dangerous, behaviour.

The Wanderings of Warwick is considered alongside *Montalbert* and *Marchmont* in Chapter Three, primarily because each novel is an example of Smith's return to or reinvestment in the sentimental plot and the possible communities open to isolated and vulnerable women.[65] In *Wanderings* and *Montalbert* in particular, women's reading of their surroundings and their circumstances is mediated by other characters, often to their own detriment. Smith uses grander natural settings in her presentations of these landscapes (particularly in Italy and Spain), and the different options for viewing, describing, and naming the land come to the fore. Frequently, in these three novels, the landscape is difficult to name or categorise, and nature often seems to contribute to the struggles Smith's characters experience, rather than provide relief. This is emphasised by Smith's use of dramatic natural disasters, a device that is contrasted with her inclusion of travelogue detail.

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[62] In *The Banished Man*, for example, D'Alonville's travels take him through different sites in Europe whose names and politics are in constant contention. Thus physical borders and moving political borders combine to create a greater sense of instability and isolation than that provoked by generic and rural/urban difference in Smith's earlier fiction.

[63] *Charlotte Smith*, II: *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle*, ed. Judith Stanton (2005); III: *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake*, ed. Stuart Curran (2005); IV: *Celestina*, ed. Kristina Straub (2005).

[64] *Charlotte Smith*, V: *Desmond, A Novel*, ed. Stuart Curran (2005); VI: *The Old Manor House*, ed. Ina Ferris (2006); VII: *The Banished Man* and *The Wanderings of Warwick*, ed. M. O. Grenby (2006).

[65] *Charlotte Smith*, VIII: *Montalbert*, eds Stuart Curran and Adriana Craciun (2006); IX: *Marchmont*, eds Kate Davies and Harriet Guest (2006).

Chapter Four considers *The Young Philosopher* alongside *Letters* to highlight Smith's change in focus: in both texts she collects examples of different stories, and of disintegrating rural spaces.[66] In both texts, shorter stories are used pedagogically, and although Smith still instructs her reader in the art of interpreting the landscape, frequently the dramatic terrors they encounter are not interpretative choices but demonstrations of real danger. In *Letters* in particular, the Wanderer has a variety of registers to sample in the tales he hears and records. Each non-urban space he visits or hears of, however, already contains struggling characters whose circumstances interfere with his own interpretation. He seems to collect examples of revolutionary turmoil spilled out into a variety of landscapes.

This thesis traces Smith's different experiments with the portrayal of non-urban space and her protagonists' ability to interpret it. The constantly changing descriptive registers that early on promote reasoned analysis also effectively portray the dangers of mediated readings of space, of politics, and of personal circumstance. Independent reading, and careful consideration of the alternative options, is key to enable Smith's readers–particularly women–to navigate their changing circumstances in the late eighteenth century.

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[66] *Charlotte Smith*, XI: *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*, ed. David Lorne Macdonald (2007).

1. Chapter One

Thinking Outdoors in Smith’s Early Novels

Between 1788 and 1791, Charlotte Smith wrote and published three successful courtship novels. Despite their enthusiastic reception from the public, literary reviewers were more reserved about the novels that followed Smith’s first success, *Emmeline* (1788). Their observations of *Ethelinde* (1789) and *Celestina* (1791) can be broadly categorised around two themes: disappointment at Smith’s allusions to Frances Burney’s fiction, contrasted with overwhelming praise of her landscape descriptions.[1] To Smith scholars today, these two strands present no surprise. Smith was writing fiction in a period well known for its rich literary allusion, and quotations, mottos and borrowings were particularly popular.[2] Smith’s own prose influenced–at the least–the plots, characters, and settings of Jane Austen, Walter Scott and Charles Dickens.[3] The courtship novel had a clear structure, too, and whilst some level of originality was needed for these novels to be attractive, the contemporary reader would expect a relatively predictable plot progression.[4] The second theme, those pleasing ‘ruralities’ as *The Monthly Review* described them, has received less attention today, primarily because such descriptions are more frequently found and explored in Smith’s poetry.[5]

In these three novels, these moments of spatial detail have often been overlooked because they stand out, awkwardly at times, from Smith’s seemingly traditional plots. They are, however, much more than the moments of poetry set into less original sentimental prose that Stuart Curran has described: ‘As a celebrated poet who writes novels, Smith felt an obligation to supply her reader with self-consciously poetic descriptions’.[6] This thesis contests that in Smith’s prose, non-urban spaces deserve as much attention as her poetic locations have received. They are outstanding in both their specificity and originality and deserve to be approached with more care than that of an inappropriate inclusion of poetic material in the wrong genre.[7] Rather, in Smith's fiction, such non-urban spaces facilitate key character development when her characters can access them alone. Indeed–whilst they certainly are inseparable from Smith's well-documented attack on abusive figures of authority–by allowing periods of escape or isolation from these figures and issues, Smith's outdoor spaces better allow her heroines to recognise the dynamics of all the spaces open to them. Thus, her protagonists can make informed and pragmatic choices about their future positioning even while this positioning is overtly concluded in courtship resolution.[8]

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[1] Stuart Curran summarises that Smith’s reviewers consistently ‘honoured’ her landscapes, ‘General Introduction’, p. xxii. The reviewer for *Critical Review* was disappointed in the plot and detail of *Ethelinde* but admitted that the ‘best parts’ of the novel were the descriptions, n. s. 3 (1791), pp. 57-61 (p. 58). *Edinburgh Magazine* agreed, calling Smith’s scene-painting ‘impressive’, from ‘the pencil of genius’, but disliking the immoral subplots, n. s. 11 (1790), pp. 203-06 (p. 205). For links to Burney, see especially the review of *Emmeline* in *Critical Review*, 65 (June 1788), pp. 530-32.

[2] See Jacqueline M. Labbe, ‘Romantic Intertextuality: The Adaptive Weave’, *Wordsworth Circle*, 46 (2015), 44-48. See also Wolfson, *Romantic Interactions*, p. 9; Behrendt, *British Women Poets*, p. 11; Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017) p. 35; Donnelle Ruwe, ‘Charlotte Smith's Sublime: Feminine Poetics, Botany, and *Beachy Head’*, *Prism(s)*, 7 (1999), 117-32 (p. 121).

[3] See Helena Kelly, ‘A Possible Literary Source for *Jane Eyre*’, *Notes and Queries*, 4 (2008), 443-44; Jacqueline M. Labbe, *Writing Romanticism, Charlotte Smith and William Wordsworth, 1784-1807* (London and New York: Macmillan and St Martin’s Press, 2011). For links to Charles Dickens, see Stafford Harry Northcote, Viscount St. Cyres, ‘The Sorrows of Mrs. Charlotte Smith’, *The Cornhill Magazine,* 15 (1903), 683-96 (p. 684); *Biography*, p. 338. See also Curran, ‘General Introduction’, pp. xvii-xviii; Susan J. Wolfson, ‘Charlotte Smith: “To Live Only To Write & Write Only To Live”, Review: *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith* by Judith Phillips Stanton; *The Works of Charlotte Smith* by Stuart Curran’, *Huntington Library Quarterly,* 70 (2007), 633-59.

[4] Curran argues that the differences between Burney and Smith were ‘as great as the resemblances’, ‘General Introduction’, pp. viii-ix.

[5] *Monthly Review*, n. s. 2 (1790), pp. 161-65 (p. 165).

[6] Curran, ‘General Introduction’, p. xxii. Fletcher also describes the first three novels as full of sensibility, but acknowledges Smith’s inclusion of realism in her later works, *Biography*, pp. 112-16, 230-31 and 582. Curran agrees with this, ‘General Introduction’, pp. xxii-xxvii.

In terms of their understanding of space, Smith scholars have begun to recognise the value of Smith's experiments in prose to challenge the roles and behaviours of different representations of authority, particularly those that influence women. The castle in *Emmeline* has proved a particular focus of attention, with critics largely agreeing that Smith uses the gothic presentation of this space to provide her heroine with agency. Unfortunately, with a few notable exceptions, Smith's manipulation of outdoor space has gone largely unnoticed by readers of Smith's first three novels.[9] Jacqueline Labbe has remarked that, 'Smith developed a deep attachment to her rural surroundings […] her novels abound with superbly realized natural description'; yet Labbe's own detailed analysis is limited to *The Old Manor House*.[10] A whole host of critics have explored the significance of setting more broadly—for example, the use of *Desmond* to explore domestic as well as national politics—but despite these fruitful projects, few critics have attempted to recognise a pattern in Smith's prose overall that explores her use of landscape.[11]

Within Smith's romantic plots, spaces that are separated from the urban enable her protagonists to recognise and explore their own emotional position and assess the marital options (intrinsically linked to the economic choices) open to them. Their ability to choose a romantic conclusion often follows their education in reading the spaces around them: by setting a variety of registers or descriptions against each other, Smith gives her protagonists a choice about which reading of non-urban space to accept. Once they are able to assess space, these characters can also assess the romantic and economic options for their future, and the social and physical space they will occupy. In this way, Smith's non-urban space is both fiercely liberating and fundamentally pragmatic. It enables emotional expression whilst never entirely losing sight of the economic basis upon which romantic options in the late eighteenth century were firmly based.

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[7] Curran describes Smith's sourcing of her descriptions, and the compulsion she felt under to extend them, 'General Introduction', p. xxii. Surprisingly, Loraine Fletcher has also described the inclusion of the Skye/poetry episode as 'bizarre', 'Introduction' in Charlotte Smith, *Celestina*, ed. Loraine Fletcher (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2004), pp. 9-44, particularly pp. 21-26 (p. 24.)

[8] Fletcher discusses the influence of courtship novels upon their readers in 'Introduction', in Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline*, ed. Loraine Fletcher (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2003), pp. 9-35 (p. 23).

[9] The exceptions include Fletcher's introduction to *Emmeline* (particularly pp. 23-28), Straub's comments on poetry in *Celestina*, and Lisa Ottum's recent work on the Hebrides in the same novel; Straub, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, IV (2005), pp. vii-xxii (pp. xix-xxii); Ottum, '"Shallow" Estates and the "Deep" Wild: The Landscapes of Charlotte Smith's Fiction', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 34 (2015), 249-72. Whilst excellent studies, none of these attempts to address more than one of Smith's novels.

[10] 'Introduction', in Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), pp. 9-32 (p. 9).

[11] Whilst Blank and Todd believe that Smith's 'more conventional novels' avoid 'political disquisition', Leanne Maunu has convincingly argued that these early novels are 'implicitly political'; 'Introduction', in *Desmond* (2001), pp. 7-33 (p. 17); *Women Writing the Nation: National Identity, Female Community, and the British-French Connection, 1770-1820* (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 2007), p. 86.

By using titles that followed the tradition of Samuel Richardson and Frances Burney in *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* and *Ethelinde, or the Recluse of the Lake*, Smith, of course, took advantage of the popularity of the sentimental novel, but these titles also show Smith's constant awareness of place.[12] Loraine Fletcher in particular has focused on the importance of place in Smith's work: her own analyses concentrate on Smith's use of the 'castle' and other interiors to discuss the state of England, and this interest in symbolic buildings unites many of the critics of these early novels.[13] The recent work of Kate Scarth complicates this approach by looking specifically at suburban space in *Emmeline*, the physical gap between the hectic urban and the farmed rural.[14] My thesis extends our reach still further to consider Smith's use of the countryside and individual escapes from town. Indeed, while the title of *Emmeline* references that particular castle, I would argue that the lake featured in *Ethelinde*'s title is a foretaste of Smith's ongoing preoccupation with the outdoors.

Loraine Fletcher structured her biography around the analysis of Smith's strategically constructed buildings, and Smith's use of architecture and formal gardens has provided the first step to a proper understanding of her manipulation of space:

> The development of [Smith's] ideas about national politics can be traced in the way she constructs her castles: the more radical the novel the more sinister and oppressive its castle. Fictional castles and prisons were also becoming recognisable as codes for a more specifically female confinement; Charlotte herself did much to focus this metaphor.[15]

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[12] For example, Samuel Richardson published *Pamela, or, Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady* (1748), and Frances Burney's titles include *Cecilia; or, Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782) and *Evelina; or, The History of a Young Lady's Entrance to the World* (1778). Ellen Malenas Ledoux discusses Smith's awareness of the reception of her books, *Social Reform in Gothic Writing: Fantastic Forms of Change, 1764-1834* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp. 17-18. Duff describes the strategic use of titles and subtitles to play with 'generic affiliations', *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre*, p. 11.

[13] Loraine Fletcher, 'Charlotte Smith's Emblematic Castles', *Critical Survey*, 4 (1992), 3-8.

[14] Kate Scarth, 'Near Brighton and London: Suburbs in Fiction, 1780s-1920s' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2013), pp. 65-109.

[15] *Biography*, pp. 94-98 (p. 92).

Fletcher's comments on this predilection for gothic buildings are anticipated by Smith herself, who remarks with irony:

> For my part, who can no longer build chateaux even en Espagne, I find that Mowbray Castle, Grasmere Abbey, the castle of Roche Mort, the castle of Hauteville, and Rayland Hall, have taken so many of my materials to construct, that I have hardly a watch tower, a Gothic arch, a cedar parlour, or a long gallery, an illuminated window, or a ruined chapel, left to help myself.[16]

This comment from Smith suggests, albeit playfully, that these architectural features are not adequate, or are in danger of exhaustion, when used to carry the weight of her social critique. I argue that extensive non-urban spaces are another strategy Smith adopts to critique social and political factors, although they are complex to decode. Smith uses outdoor space, a break from wearying constructions, to encourage independent thought in otherwise dependent subjects. This is seen particularly in the outdoor experiences of her first three vulnerable heroines.

One of the complexities of analysing Smith's non-urban spaces is the problem of categorisation. The novel *Emmeline* in particular has been considered almost exclusively in terms of the gothic. For instance, Diane Long Hoeveler argues for Emmeline as a gothic heroine, one who fights to 'seize power and money and property in [her] own right'.[17] Hoeveler concentrates on the feminist aspects of the novel, however, and risks eliding Smith's ongoing wider concern with systematic injustice.[18] Smith's use of genre is in fact complex, partly as a result of this concern, and partly because of the complexity of the genres open to her. For example, Catherine Delfyer defines the gothic novel as 'that hybrid which also questions the constructions of categories, generic and otherwise', whilst Ed Cameron has discussed Walpole's use of its combination of 'ancient improbability with modern realism'.[19] Smith plays with the idea of categorisation, constantly frustrating the signals of one genre with the introduction of the language of another in order to encourage a strategy of reading or of interrogating issues of social equality. Antje Blank portrays authors toward the end of the 1780s struggling with the naivety of sentiment, and attempting to find a new language, one which Smith seems to find by switching between different registers. Specifically, of Smith, Blank wrote that 'she levelled her criticisms at social and political institutions' and even within the restrictions of the sentimental genre, she keenly participated in the political debates of the nation.[20] Smith's attempts to manipulate the emotionally weighty language of sensibility, obvious in both her poetry and translations, develop more strategically in these first three novels as she experimented within the confines of sellable prose. Blank describes Smith's contemporary, Ann Radcliffe, attempting to retrain her oversensitive readers by explaining the supernatural occurrences of the gothic, but for Smith the language of the gothic is one of many different responses. For Smith it is less about the heroine 'seizing' power, money or property, and more about recognising the dynamics of her situation.

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[16] 'Avis au Lecteur', *Charlotte Smith*, VII, pp. 193-96 (p. 193).
[17] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p. 50.
[18] Batchelor also critiques Hoeveler's positive interpretation of self-victimisation in *Women's Work*, p. 85.
[19] Catherine Delfyer, 'Lucas Malet's Subversive Late-Gothic: Humanizing the Monster in *The History of Sir Richard Calmady*', in *Demons of the Body and Mind: Essays on Disability in Gothic Literature*, ed. Ruth Bienstock Anolik (North Carolina: McFarland, 2010), pp. 80-96 (p. 82); Ed Cameron, *The Psychopathology of the Gothic Romance: Perversion, Neuroses and Psychosis in Early Works of the Genre* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2010), p. 22.

Thus Smith endorses the intelligent reading of society as she does of her fiction, and participates in a broader, more subtle revolution than that described by Hoeveler.[21] As Ildiko Csengei has commented:

> Novelists from Sarah Fielding to Mary Wollstonecraft experimented with the sentimental genre to convey resistance–often from within the traditions of the novel of sensibility itself–to oppressive social conventions and expectations.[22]

As Mary Wollstonecraft would argue in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), sensibility itself compromises female independence. For her fictional characters who try to feel independently, sentiment is suspicious and sensibility leaves them vulnerable.[23] Smith is suspicious, too, not only of sensibility, but of all formulaic readings. Despite seeming to dismiss Smith as 'primarily a novelist of sensibility', Gary Kelly has traced the radical use of that genre, and Chris Jones perceptively observes that 'from the outset, [Smith's] attitude to the sentimental tradition was critical and her use of its convention tricksy'.[24] Stuart Curran agrees, situating these early novels 'wholly within the framework of the popular female *bildungsroman*', but simultaneously 'to subvert its conventional terms from within'.[25] If Wollstonecraft exposes the gothic potential of sentiment in her posthumous novel *Maria* (1798), then Smith encourages a reading of interior and exterior spaces that moves the heroine through the gothic or the sentimental and out the other side.

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[20] Antje Blank, 'Things as They Were: The Gothic of Real Life in Charlotte Smith's *The Emigrants* and *The Banished Man*', *Women's Writing*, 16 (2009), 78-93 (p. 80). Smith's political contribution was sufficiently noted by contemporaries to be toasted at White's Hotel in Paris, November 1792; see Curran, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, V, pp. vii-xvii.

[21] For more on Smith's use of reading to educate, see Pat Elliott, 'Charlotte Smith's Feminism', pp. 92-95.

[22] Ildiko Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility and the Literature of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 3.

[23] For more on the influence of sensibility, see Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental* Novel (Cambridge: CUP, 1996); Jerome McGann, *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and Janet Todd, *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986).

[24] Gary Kelly, 'Women Novelists and the French Revolution Debate: Novelizing the Revolution/Revolutionizing the Novel', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 6 (1994), 360-88 (pp. 376-77); Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 161.

[25] Stuart Curran, 'Charlotte Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, and the Romance of Real Life', in *The History of British Women's Writing*, eds Jennie Batchelor and Cora Kaplan, 10 vols (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010-2016), V, ed. J. Labbe (2013), pp. 194-206 (p. 200).

Emmeline and Understanding Place

In *Emmeline*, Smith's protagonist learns to effect changes, initially in domestic interiors, then, gradually, outdoors, interpreting space with greater rational insight. Through this process, Emmeline becomes able to respond to the predictable morality of heavily sentimentalised situations with more sensible alternatives. In *Ethelinde,* Smith explores the difference between the identification of physical danger and the dangers of romantic expectation. She also highlights the economic basis of Ethelinde's choices: financial considerations become increasingly prominent, especially when Smith creates outdoor spaces where hierarchical power is removed. For her heroines, and for a selection of other intelligent characters, becoming aware of the different readings of a space and understanding how locations operate enables mental liberation in the outdoors. They can return to society with the ability, if not the authority, to interpret it. Understanding economic dependency is key to this process of rereading. By *Celestina*, Smith has developed this technique further, creating clear contrasting outdoor sites that enable extensive contemplation of the authoritarian structures of society and thus increase individual autonomy. The romantic heroine engages herself and the reader in the real issues of her return. In Smith's first three novels, although her landscape descriptions echo elements of the sentiment seen in her poetry and early in *Emmeline,* these spaces unexpectedly become increasingly integral to the development of individual agency. Once outdoor space is fully understood, it can begin to generate personal freedom, first for the benefit of the individual and then for the community to which they return.

Even before *Emmeline*'s publication in 1788, Smith's manipulation of language and her foregrounding of the practical can be seen in her translation work. In her rearrangement of the French novel, Smith used sentimental language initially to embellish L'Abbé Prévost d'Exiles' work, *Manon L'Escaut*, but her emphasis upon the economic detail that contextualises space begins here too.[26] As Michael Gamer observes, 'Romance and fact, it turns out, can accommodate the other to mutual advantage and with interesting results'.[27] Fletcher has directly compared two scenes from Prévost's original work with Smith's translation to conclude that

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[26] See *Biography* for more on *Manon*, pp. 70-77 and 82-83. For more on the translation of Smith's own work, see Katherine Astbury, 'Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* in French Translation; or the Politics of Novel-Writing during the French Revolution', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism,* pp. 129-43. Angela Wright discusses the impact that Smith's translation and subsequent retraction had upon other authors of the period in *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), p. 13, pp. 33-65.

[27] Michael Gamer, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, I, pp. xxix-xxxvii (p. xxxiv). For more on the inclusion of realism, see Anjana Sharma, *The Autobiography of Desire: English Jacobin Women Novelists of the 1790s* (New Delhi: Macmillan, 2004), pp. 173-76, and Diego Saglia, 'Looking at the Other: Cultural Difference and the Traveller's Gaze in *The Italian*', *Studies in the Novel*, 28 (1996), 12-37.

Smith 'has a more palpable design on the reader than Prévost, and more insistently suggests the incongruity of Manon's punishment'.[28] Although this encourages sympathy towards Manon, Smith's rewriting also foregrounds Manon's greed and the consequences of this: she transforms the chemistry between the couple into a practical arrangement that hinges upon the chevalier's financial position. By forcefully and repeatedly explaining her economic needs within their romantic relationship, Manon awakens des Grieux's suspicions. As he analyses her changing desires, so his ability to read space improves:

> What has Love to oppose against this furnished house, coach and footmen? She seemed much hurt at my suspicions, and protested her heart was ever mine, and that no other attachment could ever find a place there. Rather, said she, I am disposed to vengeance than to love. What then have you any intention of going further, cried I? Do you mean to take his coach and house? No, only his money, answered she. (81)

Des Grieux accuses Manon of invading and occupying enemy territory. He knows that to have the loyalty of Manon is to have her in his physical possession, in his 'coach and house'. By providing the possessions she desires, his rival de Malleville will earn a 'place' in Manon's heart: de Malleville will win physical and subsequently emotional possession.

Des Grieux expresses his concerns explicitly to the reader: 'Young Gevres de Malleville knew better what he was about than his father did; and determined to be sure of his prize before he paid for it' (82). Aware of her economic motivation, de Malleville is determined to secure Manon's physical presence in his space before satisfying her lust for money. He seems to understand and have better command of the interaction between physical and financial possession, and no sentimental tendencies tamper with his plan for ownership. Manon, however, is determined to be a consumer whilst outwitting his objectification. She believes her plans will satisfy her insatiable appetite for money without forcing her to occupy an alternative space: she will achieve the wealth that would enable a re-envisioning of her own home with des Grieux. Yet Smith's confused use of 'place' undermines the sincerity of Manon's protestations: the invasion of both heart and home are synonymous with her sexual promiscuity, confirmed by her recurring absence from des Grieux's house. Ultimately, de Malleville's practicality allows him to triumph over the sentimentality of des Grieux's behaviour, and his calculating efficiency leaves Manon desolate and placeless. Smith emphasises the real power that the economic has over individual contentment, romantic choice, and spatial positioning, and this is the context for all of her spatial experiments.

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[28] *Biography*, p. 73.

Published two years later in 1788, Smith's first original novel *Emmeline* is structured around a series of constrictive indoor spaces that emphasise the liberty of the outdoors. Using a compelling courtship narrative, Smith has her heroine learn to identify and navigate her own position and future options. As an orphan, and with her legitimacy challenged by her guardian uncle, Lord Montreville, Emmeline is the typical, vulnerable heroine of a sentimental novel, but she is simultaneously constantly on the move.[29] Deprived of a legitimate home or identity, she is at the mercy of the economic choices of Lord Montreville, and the romantic desire of his son Delamere. Once the men take possession of her home, Emmeline prefers the peaceful grounds around it to the ominous gothic interior of Mowbray Castle where both men await her. One of the most popular scenes for contemporary analysis has been the sequence in Mowbray Castle where Delamere attempts to rape Emmeline, and these internal scenes are worth addressing before exploring the significance of Smith's landscapes.[30] As Delamere violently breaks the lock to Emmeline's room and chases her through the castle, his intentions are obvious. Jane Spencer explains that 'the impenetrable castle is being used as a symbol for the unviolated heroine' and Fletcher confirms this: the 'building functions as an extension of Emmeline's self, her shell and her body'.[31] However, Emmeline's knowledge of her surroundings enables her escape from Delamere's predatory rage:

> A gust of wind blew out the candle; and Emmeline, gliding down the steps, turned to the right, and opening a heavy nailed door, which led by a narrow stairs to the East gallery, she let it fall after her.
>
> Delamere, now in total darkness, tried in vain to follow the sound. He listened–but no longer heard the footsteps of the trembling fugitive; and cursing his fate, and the stupidity of Millefleur, he endeavoured to find his way back to Emmeline's room, where he thought a candle was still burning. But his attempt was vain. He walked round the hall only to puzzle himself; for the door by which he had entered it, he could not regain. (31)

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[29] For more on *Emmeline* and the sentimental, see Todd, *Sensibility*, pp. 110-28; Katharine M. Rogers 'Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Women Novelists: Elizabeth Inchbald and Charlotte Smith', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 11 (1977), 63-78; Eva Figes, *Sex and Subterfuge: Women Novelists to 1850* (London: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 56-88; Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers Before Jane Austen* (London: Pandora Press, 1986), pp. 20-21; Mary Anne Schofield, *Masking and Unmasking the Female Mind: Disguising Romances in Feminine Fiction, 1713-1799* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990), and Jane Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986).

[30] For more on Mowbray Castle, see Cynthia Klekar, 'The Obligations of Form: Social Practice in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*', *Philological Quarterly*, 86 (2007), 269-89; Fletcher, 'Introduction' (2003), p. 23; Joan Forbes, 'Anti-Romantic Discourse as Resistance: Women's Fiction 1775-1820', in *Romance Revisited*, eds Lynne Pearce & Jackie Stacey (New York: New York UP, 1995), pp. 293-305 (p. 298); and Ledoux, *Social Reform*, pp. 58-60.

[31] Spencer, *The Rise of the Woman Novelist*, p. 97; *Biography*, p. 97.

Emmeline actively takes authority within this gothic space. She escapes pursuit behind the protective ‘heavy nailed door’, unable to be caught because of her ‘ghostlike’ movement, the elusive vulnerability of which is repeated in the term ‘fugitive’ and is contrasted with the solidity of the building. In this reading, Smith uses the gothic register but undermines readerly expectations. Emmeline refuses to be the victim, but significantly becomes the gothic figure, ‘gliding’ and unseen, taking advantage of the language that Delamere introduced with his attack. Ellen Ledoux argues that ‘Emmeline participates in an alliance with the castle, using its idiosyncratic nature to escape attempted rape in multiple instances’.[32] It is not merely Emmeline’s ownership of the building that rescues her, as Ledoux argues. Rather her understanding of the gothic register allows Emmeline to subvert expectations. The generic consequences are enacted upon Delamere rather than Emmeline and reach a crescendo with the repetition of ‘in vain’. Blinded by the dark and unfamiliar with the site, Delamere’s helplessness becomes supernatural as he is unable to ‘regain’ the door, despite constant searching. The gothic space now conspires to thwart his threatening intention: Delamere’s ignorance and arrogance provoke his own vulnerability in this space.

Smith here is beginning to experiment with the registers describing a space, manipulating a setting that seemed dependent upon standardised tropes to host an unexpected conclusion. Robert Miles describes the gothic genre as ‘opportunistic, oppositional’, and ‘double dealing’, and Smith harnesses these characteristics in an unusual way, to overturn male predatory desire, until the fear of the victim becomes experienced by the predator.[33] Instead of Delamere physically overpowering Emmeline, the castle overwhelms him. This is an early example of Smith’s understanding and subversion of register. Emmeline, in avoiding rape, is strategically subversive in her manipulation of the place she occupies. Diego Saglia writes that:

> Place in Gothic writing may be seen as the contended territory where the tensions of the text are played out. Ultimately, it is a place of conflict between the observer’s overwhelming desire for control, and the subversive, chaotic forces of difference.[34]

Smith uses space in *Emmeline* to critique and elude male authority, but chaos and liberty are generated when the female defies gender expectations and uses the generic motifs initiated by other people. Smith uses the tension in her settings to expose the specific, systematic conflict between authority figures and their subjects, subjects who seek to protect their bodies and their minds.[35]

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[32] Ellen Malenas Ledoux, ‘Defiant Damsels: Gothic Space and Female Agency in *Emmeline, The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *Secresy*’, *Women’s Writing*, 18 (2011), 331-47 (p. 334).

[33] Robert Miles, 'The Eye of Power: Ideal Presence and Gothic Romance', *Gothic Studies*, 1 (1999), 10–30 (p. 26).

[34] Saglia, ‘Looking at the Other’, p. 27.

A similar overthrowing of expectation is seen whilst Emmeline is staying with Mrs Ashwood. Sir Richard Crofts informs her that Mr Rocheley has bargained with him for her hand in marriage and for Emmeline, physical movement is the most powerful recourse. As Joan Forbes has remarked, Emmeline 'experiences romance as coercion'.[36] The clarity of Emmeline's verbal response within such a complex space, at such a social and economic disadvantage, demonstrates a measure of agency that is emphasised by her exit from the scene:

> Having said this, with a firmness of voice and manner which resentment, as well as noble pride, supplied; [Emmeline] arose, curtseyed composedly to Sir Richard, and went out of the room; leaving the unsuccessful ambassador astonished at that strength of mind, and dignity of manner, which he did not expect in so young a woman. (100)

For Emmeline, injustice forces clear thinking, and, restrained from weeping by Sir Richard's presence, she leaves him. Eleanor Ty remarks that Smith's 'rejection and yet, at the same time, conscious employment of romantic conventions […] create much of the tension in Smith's fiction'.[37] Whereas for 'persons of sensibility', 'debility' and 'heightened emotionalism' were desirable, for Smith movement and rationality are the answer.[38] With Emmeline now absent, Sir Richard becomes the focus of the narrative in his flustered attempts to regain authority by interviewing the servants. The hostess remains absent, the dependent Emmeline–of whose obedience Sir Richard was confident–has also left, and he remains in the space, impotent. There is an awkwardness in the text as the sentimental expectation fails, and it is Sir Richard who is left alone and powerless, instead of Emmeline. By shifting the narrative focus from the emotions of the heroine to the failure of Sir Richard, Smith transfers Emmeline's embarrassment to him, replacing the distressed orphan with a humiliated authority figure. In this domestic setting, Emmeline's spatial choices represent greater autonomy for women, without undermining their innocence. Emmeline is justifiably exercising control within an increasing variety of interiors and chooses a different role for herself within the options available in each scene.

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[35] For more on alternative interpretations of the castle, see Ledoux's 'Defiant Damsels', and *Social Reform*, pp. 55-92.

[36] Joan Forbes, 'Anti-Romantic Discourse', p. 299.

[37] Eleanor Ty, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries: Five Women Novelists of the 1790s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 115-29 (p. 116).

[38] Csengei, *Sympathy, Sensibility, and the Literature of Feeling*, p. 5.

The carriage in which Delamere abducts Emmeline provides another significant contested space. Delamere abducts Emmeline from the secure house into a typical eighteenth-century space: the carriage is a male preserve over which he can claim authority.[39] The force exerted to get Emmeline into the coach, however, must be repeated to get her out, as Emmeline's frame collapses under the shock of abduction:

> His fears for her health now exceeded his fears for losing her, and he determined to stop for some hours; but when she made an effort to leave the chaise she was unable, and he was obliged to lift her out of it. He then ordered the female servants to be called up, recommended her to their care, and entreated her to go to bed for some hours. (139)

As with Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), the coach is a dangerous space. This scene of Smith's is more derivative than usual: the fainting collapse and abduction are typically sentimental and Smith's attempts to establish female independence seem to fall back upon physical passivity as a strategy to escape domination. Like Burney, Smith begins to satirise domestic spaces but the faint, as a response to abduction, is a weak solution.

Instead of her collapse allowing Delamere to manipulate her body, however, Emmeline's body obstructs his plans and she is given an opportunity to escape. Although Emmeline's collapse is generic, Smith's use of it is not: it signals Emmeline's release from Delamere's control and her movement to a separate room consequently gives her the authority to negotiate her return. This pre-empts Smith's more forceful and original attempts to restructure such typical scenes later in the novel. Rather than fall victim to the emotions generated by her powerlessness, Emmeline uses her ill health to reposition herself and arrange her return to a safe, moral space. Although this excerpt lacks the distinctiveness of the spatial politics later in the novel, it supports the same message. For Smith, a removal from threat, however temporary, enables women to recover their reasoning skills. Emmeline can reflect upon her options and speak–weakly, but determinedly–of her future positioning.

These moments of privacy or isolation can be achieved to some extent in domestic spaces, in closets and bedrooms, but for Smith the most fruitful moments are when individual agency is considered in wild terrain. There are two particularly marginal sites that Smith returns to throughout her prose, and they highlight her manipulation of boundaries (physical and generic) to enable independence. These sites represent both geographical and social margins, spaces that are frequently unoccupied and cannot be socially regulated: the forest glade and the beach. Examples in this novel are on a smaller scale than Smith's later experimentation with the Hebrides, Scotland generally, and America, but nevertheless any separation from frantic urban busyness signifies a separation from control, a move that allows independent reasoning to break through the weight of social expectation.

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[39] See Sara Landreth, 'The Vehicle of the Soul: Motion and Emotion in Vehicular-It-Narratives', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 26 (2013), 93-120; and John Dussinger, 'The Glory of Motion: Carriages and Consciousness in the Early Novel', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 1 (1989), 133-45.

In the forest glade, vulnerable characters can escape critical observation, but are still in danger of attack and misinterpretation. Since the forest is a motif used repeatedly by Shakespeare and in early medieval romances, Smith plays upon literary allusions, but her woodlands are nonetheless surprisingly original. Her first such description is unusual:

> This part of the country is called Woodbury Forest; and the deep shade of the beech trees with which is it covered, is broken by wild and uncultured glens; where, among the broom, hawthorn and birch of the waste, a few scattered cottages have been built upon sufferance by the poor for convenience of fewel [...] No road whatever leads through the forest: and only such romantic wanderers as Mrs Stafford and Emmeline, were conscious of the beautiful walks which might be found among these natural shrubberies and solitary shades. (183)

Mrs Stafford and Emmeline first discover the scene because of their 'romantic' wandering.[40] Smith's use of the present tense creates a practical tone, interspersing fact between sentimental embellishments. Botanical details solidify Smith's description of the wild glen, creating a specific imagined space, which is naturally realistic. By listing plants that thrive in less accommodating environments, she emphasises the isolation of the area. The intrusion of Emmeline and her friend into the wilderness is justified by their 'conscious' appreciation, much like intelligent travellers. Although the practical detail clarifies the physical setting, the presence of the wanderers, this interruption of fiction into fact, romanticises the forest. Smith here is combining a variety of significant discourses: botanical detail, the economic, and the act of aesthetic exploration. This blend, at a distance from society, presents a space that is more evolved than the gothic and sentimental spaces Smith has previously presented.

The forest glade enables the inclusion of Adelina's story, whom Emmeline and Mrs Stafford discover there in their wandering. Her tale is an example of the unusual, immoral or difficult plots that Smith can include in these difficult spaces.[41] The fable-style development of discovering Adelina asleep promotes her innocence and vulnerability and, by separating this setting from the rest of the plot, Smith is able to side-step the consequences of Adelina's immorality. Here, on the margin of social space, Adelina can tell of her broken marriage and subsequent unfaithfulness. Filled with sentimental language yet communicated in a radical space, this tale can receive the pity and sympathy it deserves. There is no space in Smith's novel for heavy-handed morality: she avoids the repercussions of Adelina's fallen state by suspending the narrative in a different setting.[42] What does become clear is that Adelina must relinquish her woodland bower for something more practical and realistic, and in less danger of violation. Although Mrs Stafford and Emmeline demonstrate compassion and savoir-faire, their protection is insufficient. The danger of the glade is that it can be freely entered by anyone. It creates confusion and misunderstanding, as well as liberating the vulnerable to be vocal. Instead, Godolphin–Adelina's brother and Emmeline's admirer–must take up the mantle of protection, and provide the sanctuary needed, away from society again but in a space administrated by a powerful yet compassionate man. The forest glade is a facilitating site for revelation, but the tensions it contains mean it cannot be inhabited permanently.

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[40] Katharine Rogers interprets Smith's use of 'romantic' as signifying the appreciation of nature, and describing 'idealistic' characters, 'Romantic Aspirations, Restricted Possibilities: The Novels of Charlotte Smith' in *Re-Visioning Romanticism*, eds Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp. 72-88 (pp. 72-73, 76).

[41] For more on Adelina, see Ty, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries*, pp. 121-23.

The Isle of Wight provides a safer location. The beach, where the sea clashes with the land, is a location that appears with frequency throughout Smith's publications. Her repeated use of it in the novels and the sonnets, and as the location for the powerful *Beachy Head* (1807), always includes extremely specific details and often relatable locations: living in Sussex, Smith frequently drew upon her knowledge of Eastbourne (where Beachy Head is located), Brighton and the Isle of Wight.[43] Instead of describing the increasing popularity of the coast, Smith presents these locations as unstable and tempestuous, portraying them as separate from social life as much as from social morality. Early in *Emmeline*, the beach appears as a sentimental location, which becomes more radically adapted as the novel progresses. Initially, Smith uses site details to emphasise Emmeline's sensitivity:

> The low murmurs of the tide retiring on the sands; the sighing of the wind among the rocks which hung over her head, cloathed with long grass and marine plants; the noise of the sea fowl going to their nests among the cliffs; threw her into a profound reverie. (16)

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[42] For example, the punishment of Lady Monteith in Jane West's *A Tale of the Times* (1799), and the warning provided by Julia Delmond in Elizabeth Hamilton's *Memoirs of a Modern Philosopher* (1800). A more generically conventional treatment of Adelina's situation can be seen in the death of Lady Elmwood in Elizabeth Inchbald's *A Simple Story* (1791).

[43] Smith was educated in Chichester and spent many months living in Brighthelmstone, now Brighton. Her experience of travelling to and from France also lent authenticity to her descriptions, *Biography*, pp. 5-11. For other beaches she visited, see *Biography*, pp. 123, 188, 247.

Smith’s identification of the plants, the seabirds and their habits, and her description of Emmeline’s position add interesting detail to an otherwise emotive scene, where the anthropomorphised wind and tide seem to sigh in accord with the girl. Emmeline’s immersion in the physical scene means that, when she returns to the house, her innocence is synonymous with nature, her position is unimpeachable. This example is one of the few instances where Smith uses the beach as a peaceful site. As her career progressed, Smith used the changing nature of this terrain to expose controversial plots, opinions, and social and political criticism. It also enabled the expression of mental instability and uncertainty, especially in *Marchmont* and *Letters*, but Smith began to experiment with this in the sequence of events on the Isle of Wight.

Adelina, removed to the isle by her brother Godolphin, is observed by her maid using the beach to exacerbate her own emotional turmoil. Her sanity is bound up with the unsteadiness of the beach weather:

> [She] does things that really would kill a strong person [...] Quite of cold nights this Autumn, when the wind blew, and the sea made a noise so loud and dismal, she has staid there whole hours by herself [...] she seems to take pleasure in nothing but sorrow and melancholy. (411)

This excerpt predates Adelina’s second and complete loss of sanity, and the scene is heavy with emotional speculation. Adelina’s ‘pleasure’ has a sadistic ring to it. At night, she indulges all her mawkish fancies, and subjects her body and mind to the regrets of the past. Yet, Adelina’s suffering seems to be enjoyable: the beach is a strange site of conflict. Smith uses Emmeline’s behaviour upon the Isle of Wight as a corrective to this. She presents two different readings of the same scene: one investigatory and rational, one melodramatic, and then explains the consequences of both.[44] When we contrast Emmeline’s behaviour in her first and second observations of a garden intruder, the first demonstrates Emmeline’s courage, and observational skill:

> Her presence of mind never forsook unless where her heart was greatly affected; and she had now courage enough to determine that she would still continue for some moments to observe him, and would not alarm the servants until she saw reason to believe he had ill intentions […]
>
> Had not Emmeline been very sure that she not only heard his footsteps distinctly as he passed over a gravel walk in his way, but even heard him breathe

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[44] Fletcher has drawn attention to a different form of doubling Smith uses in having both Mrs Stafford and Adelina approached by Fitz-Edward; ‘Introduction’ (2003), p. 13.

> hard and short, as if agitated or fatigued, she would almost have persuaded herself that it was a phantom raised by her disordered spirits. The longer she reflected on it, the more incomprehensible it seemed, that a man should, at such an hour, make such an excursion, apparently to so little purpose. That it was with a dishonest design there seemed no likelihood, as he made no effort to force his way into the house, which he might easily have done; and had he come on a clandestine visit to any of the servants, he would probably have had some signal by which his confederates would have been informed of his approach. (414)

In this scene, Emmeline's reasoning triumphs. The narrative describes and justifies the anticipation of a gothic response: the heroine's presence of mind should forsake her, the villain's approach should be more ethereal. Instead of giving in to the response of her 'heart', Emmeline exercises her 'courage', choosing to objectively observe the action, rather than rashly cause alarm. Instead of assuming the intruder's intentions are of 'force', she seeks evidence. The narrative emphasises the visitor's reality with the physical sound of footsteps and shortened breathing: this removes the supernatural element. Consequently, Emmeline reacts to the gothic suggestions with a calm rationality, deliberately considering alternative reasons for this odd arrival. Smith champions rational consideration, challenges emotional anticipation, and calmly returns both characters to their homes.

Interestingly, this strategy simultaneously serves the gothic cause in the next scene. Because the atmospheric tension has come to nothing, there is more suspense created when the visitor's second appearance is described in a more generically typical register. Emmeline presents a typical response and dramatic consequences follow:

> The wind blew chill and hollow among the half stripped trees, as they passed thro' the wood; and the dead leaves rustled in the blast. 'Twas such a night as Ossian might describe. Emmeline recollected the visionary beings with which his poems abound, and involuntarily she shuddered [...] Emmeline, less wrapped up, suddenly saw the figure which had before visited the garden, descending, in exactly the same posture, down the pathway, which was rather steep. He seemed unknowingly to follow it, without looking up; and was soon so near them, that Emmeline, losing at once her presence of mind, clasped her hands, and exclaimed–'Good God! who is this?'
>
> 'What?' said Lady Adelina, looking towards him.
>
> By this time he was within six paces of the gate; and sprung forward at the very moment that she knew him, and fell senseless on the ground [...] [S]he was

> without any appearance of life; and he, who had no intention of rushing thus abruptly into her presence, was too much agitated to be able to speak. (423-24)

Thus Fitz-Edward, Adelina's lover, is introduced and provokes her collapse. The fault seems to be Emmeline's, however. It is her choice of presentation that dramatises the scene this second time. The common narrative construction 'the wind blew chill and hollow' to a contemporary reader suggests the beginnings of a horror story, and, as Saglia writes, 'whereas the typical eighteenth-century sublimity is always apprehended from a secure vantage point, the Gothic experience involves direct personal danger'.[45] The climax suspended in the first scene is fully expressed in the second, culminating in the death-like swoon of Adelina, a traditional moral end to her behaviour. Smith's combination of 'chill', 'hollow', 'stripped', and 'dead' reverberate through the description of Adelina's faint, generating a horror realised in the observation that 'she was without any appearance of life'. Confronted with her lover, Adelina seems to perish. This is no sentimental faint, but a close encounter with mortality, yet it is not so much a consequence of Adelina's adultery as it is of Emmeline's reading choices.

Smith uses gothic motifs to add impact to her argument for rational thought: the rashness of this encounter pushes Adelina further toward insanity. The similarities between this description and Emmeline's earlier observation stand out to criticise her melodramatic response. Ann Radcliffe would also commend objectivity in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794): of Emily, she wrote, 'Had she dared to look again, her delusion and her fears would have vanished together'.[46] Whilst Emily does not have the wisdom to 'look again', Smith demonstrates what resisting a generic reading looks like, and then demonstrates the consequences of being led by it. This complicates Katharine Rogers' explanation, that Smith's 'natural descriptions are called forth by her characters' state of mind'.[47] Rather, the state of Emmeline's mind, her choices of interpretation, influence the portrayal of nature. Smith's counterpoising of the dramatic reading with rational thinking and seeing situates the gothic as the darker, or more hysterical interpretation of the emotional overspill that is typical of the sentimental. Smith encourages women to learn how to tell them apart, and to seek out empirical evidence to inform their reading and interpretation of space.

Smith's criticism of those who cannot read space includes men.[48] Fitz-Edward's ignorance of the effect of this culmination of gothic machinery means he also fails to anticipate the extremity of Adelina's response. Fears here are not generated by the supernatural, or even the unknown, but are familiar, and their consequences must be addressed. Reason, Smith suggests, would have preserved Adelina's health, and is essential in the following sequence to prevent the 'frightening to death' of Adelina and Emmeline, as Godolphin holds Fitz-Edward accountable for Adelina's insanity. It is the intimacy of the characters that makes the subsequent confrontation so shocking. Instead of a malevolent villain, it is Godolphin, the hero, who nearly robs his sister and lover of their sanity. Instead of outwitting a supernatural figure, Emmeline must carefully reason with her future husband, and depend on his affection and respect for her, and his own reasoning skills. Antje Blank observed that Smith 'harnessed spaces and themes generally classified as "Gothic" to serve her novelistic project of writing the "real"'.[49] Smith seeks to face dangers inherent in relationships, challenging the weight of social expectation, enabling Godolphin to reject seeking revenge for his sister's situation. Smith subverts generic and dramatic expectation to endorse rational behaviour: Adelina's collapse forces Emmeline to abandon the gothic, and Emmeline's distress forces Godolphin to temper responsibility with gentleness. Smith's success in juxtaposing gothic suspense with radical gender values allows a peaceful conclusion for Adelina. Restored to full health and protected by her brother, Adelina and her son are allowed to form a new family unit with Fitz-Edward. This small community have achieved an unlikely happy ending, and the framing of Adelina's story within the overall plot allows Smith to demonstrate, through Emmeline, one type of response to such a tale.[50]

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[45] Saglia, 'Looking at the Other', p. 20.

[46] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 662.

[47] Rogers, 'Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Novelists', p. 73.

[48] Curran describes sentimental men during the decline in popularity of the sentimental novel; Straub also explores the complexity and fallibility of Smith's heroes. 'General Introduction', p. xii; 'Introduction', pp. viii-xviii.

This subplot worried reviewer Mary Wollstonecraft, and Smith would receive similar criticism when she restored Josephine in *Desmond*. Yet, despite her radical handling of issues such as adultery, she continued to write sentimental novels that were conventional enough to warrant constant comparison with the work of Fanny Burney.[51] Although there are many similarities between the novels of Burney and Smith, Smith extends Burney's use of sentimental space to encourage greater liberty.[52] For Burney, isolated heroines outside of domestic interiors are open to any amount of danger, such as in Vauxhall Gardens (*Evelina*, 1778) and later in the New Forest (*The Wanderer*, 1814). Outdoors, her heroines suffer from increasing paralysis and distress, culminating in narrow escapes from attempted rape, robbery and humiliation.[53] Kate Ferguson Ellis articulates this sense of danger in the period more generally:

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[49] Blank, 'The Gothic of Real Life', p. 78.

[50] Susie Pinch describes the framing of different narratives, including Adelina's, in 'Compulsory Narration, Sentimental Interface: Going Through the Motions of Emotion', *Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*, 50 (2009), 165-83 (pp. 172-73).

[51] *Mary Wollstonecraft*, VII, pp. 22-27. Other reviewers found it affecting, Curran, 'Introduction', *Charlotte Smith*, V, pp. xiii-xiv. Kate Ferguson Ellis discusses Adelina's marriage in *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1989), pp. 78-81.

[52] Fletcher addresses the similarities and differences between *Cecilia* and *Emmeline* in 'Introduction' (2013), pp. 16-17, 31.

[53] For more, see Lennard J. Davis, 'The Social Construction of Public Locations', *Victorian Popular Culture*, 17 (1989), 23-40 (pp. 28-29), and Susan Alice Fischer, 'A Sense of Place: London in Contemporary Women's Writing', *Changing English*, 9 (2002), 59-65 (p. 59).

> [T]here is plenty of evidence to support the picture of eighteenth-century social life, both in the countryside and in the growing urban centres, that is filled with uncertainty and violence.[54]

For Burney, women were only safe once returned to companions who could articulate or physically demonstrate their protection. The tone of Burney's work, echoed in Smith's overall concerns, is of fear and 'uncertainty' for dependent women. Women are constantly in dread of social or physical encroachment, and safe havens are few and far between. Although Smith creates havens in the wilderness more often than in the home, for both authors, it is the recognition of a safe or liberating space that enables full use to be made of it.

Evelina (1778), in the style of a *bildungsroman*, uses the heroine's physical movement through different spaces to show her increasing ability to recognise and avoid dangers where possible. Burney's success in replicating and dramatizing the dangers of London, combined with the relentless pace of social activity, makes it easy to forget that Evelina has any narrative time and space in which to reflect, a striking contrast to Smith's emphasis upon extensive periods of character isolation.[55] In *Evelina,* the novel pivots around oppressive space as a catalyst for development. For Burney, outdoor space is not liberating, but leads to misunderstanding:

> Just then, who should come in sight, as if intending to pass by the arbour, but Lord Orville! Good Heaven, how did I start! And he the moment he saw me, turned pale, and was hastily retiring; - but I called out, 'Lord Orville!–Sir Clement, I *insist* upon your releasing me!'
>
> Lord Orville then, hastily approaching us, said with great spirit, 'Sir Clement, you cannot wish to detain Miss Anville by force!'
>
> 'Neither, my Lord,' cried Sir Clement, proudly, 'do I request the honour of your Lordship's interference.'
>
> However, he let go my hand, and I immediately ran into the house.[56]

To access the retreat of the house is Evelina's only option and to do so she must constantly avail herself of the aid of more powerful men. A strong, male, physical presence seems to be the only safeguard outdoors, but it is also the primary threat.

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[54] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. xi.

[55] For more, see Elizabeth Bennett Cubek, 'London as Text: Eighteenth-Century Women Writers and Reading the City', *Women's Studies*, 17 (1990), 303-39 (p. 308, pp. 332-37), and Simon Varey, *Space and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp. 137-55, 181-99.

[56] Frances Burney, *Evelina* (London: Penguin Press, 2004), p. 382.

Smith develops Burney's exploration of gendered power by creating spaces where men are altogether absent: both authors insistently warn against male predators. Smith's strategy to move the heroine to the wilderness for protection would, for Burney, warn of imminent attack, but for Smith the innate sanctity or impartiality of wild places provides an arena in which to establish the self, and to help identify threats to one's self. Both agree that the influence of powerful men is real and must be negotiated with agility. However, Smith is much more concerned with the systematic impact of patriarchal power upon women's autonomy, and this can perhaps cause her courtship resolutions to seem less satisfying than those of Burney's early work. Smith re-educates an intelligent reader to anticipate real rather than imagined dangers by creating fear from familiar and present social circumstances. She radically endorses leaving society, or avoiding observation, in order to consider these dangers. After learning to identify them, Emmeline is rewarded by returning to Wales, refurbishing her castle with her husband Godolphin, and using their mutual education for the benefit of the surrounding community. In *Ethelinde* we will see a significant move to a few distinctive spatial sites to liberate Smith's social critique further and to foreground her fascination with economic agency. These landscapes become increasingly ambivalent as Smith seeks to increase awareness of different vulnerabilities for the individual.

Ethelinde **and Economic Power**

In 1789, only a year after *Emmeline*'s success, Smith informed her publisher that she had enough material for her second sentimental novel. The speed with which she produced it was unusually quick, and this may be partly responsible for *Ethelinde*'s fragmented plot. The *Critical Review* described it as 'less full of adventure', a novel that 'fatigues from its expansion' and, with five volumes of economic drama, it is easy to see why.[57] The fragmentation, too, I believe is a result of this foregrounding of the economic basis of Smith's plot in a novel otherwise known for its beautiful settings. As Fletcher puts it, it is a 'novel about money'.[58] However, the *Critical Review* and the *Edinburgh Magazine* (1790) both quoted Smith's natural descriptions at length, and the reviewer for the *Monthly Review* (1790) requested even more 'beautiful scenes in nature', the 'ruralities' so popular in *Emmeline*. In this novel and in these outdoor spaces, Smith extends her examination of personal autonomy to include practical decisions that are based upon the economic situation of her characters.

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[57] *Critical Review*, n. s. 3 (1791), pp. 57-61, (p. 58). It was, however, popular with the French, see Astbury, 'Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* in French Translation', p. 134.

[58] *Biography*, p. 94, see also p. 112. As well as the motifs I consider, the plot hinges upon Ethelinde's Father's imprisonment for debt, the exploitation of slavery, and various other financial and moral difficulties. The conclusion is delayed because Ethelinde, so mindful of the need for economic security, initially refuses to marry Montgomery until he can find an income.

She expresses this fascination with finance in two types of outdoor space particularly. In his introduction, Curran describes the geographical pattern of the novel in 'symmetries of setting', identifying a balance between town and country spaces.[59] I argue that even within the town, there are small outdoor escapes: extended adventures in large natural locations, mainly in the Lake District, are contrasted with short escapes from claustrophobic social scenes into smaller spaces, primarily local gardens.[60] The larger spaces allow broader topics and opportunities for discussion to arise, whilst the small city spaces enable brief respite from the emotional intensity of the impending consequences of economic irresponsibility. Movement is frequently driven by financial dependence or the need to consider financial options. Smith constantly drives home the importance of economic savoir-faire, and a high level of emotional drama is needed to maintain the reader's engagement in such a pragmatic discussion.[61] This drama is partly expressed as physical relocation, and the incessant character movement, combined with the detailed economic background, makes the novel a difficult read. Whilst outdoor space liberates discussion and behaviour outside the norm, Smith's use of these spaces becomes increasingly troubled because of the amount of complexities that must be resolved within them. The larger landscapes expose this particularly, such as Smith's use of the clifftop in the Lake District.

Outdoor space continues to enable the heroine to recognise her own agency, and this licence becomes available to other characters when they join her in the outdoors. As in *Emmeline*, Ethelinde's moments of lucid thinking occur when she is outside, particularly when men are absent, and Smith allows characters supportive of reasoned thinking to visit the same spaces. For example, Sir Edward, Mrs Montgomery, and Mr Harcourt each walk outside to process emotional difficulties, following an example set by the heroine. Outdoor intervals enable Ethelinde to arrange her thoughts about each situation without recourse to dramatic sentimental gestures. Significantly, however, as in Burney's works, the outdoor spaces equally liberate the libertine male. He can behave in an openly predatory manner without the constrictions of social observation. Initially, we find Lord Danesforte detaining Ethelinde in Sir Edward's gardens: '[T]hough he was not unfrequently admitted there, he now sauntered into the garden, where perceiving Ethelinde, he came forward in his assured way to meet her' (103). He accosts her confidently: '"Bribe me to silence, then, or I do not promise it," said he, rudely kissing her' (105). In contrast to Evelina in the arbour, however, Ethelinde is more confident in her dialogue with Lord Danesforte outdoors than she is when accosted in domestic interiors, even though the exchange still causes her ‘weakness, terror and vexation’ (105). In this exterior, Ethelinde is allowed to wander without restriction, but Danesforte is able to seize her without check. Although outdoor space reveals authenticity, it liberates both the dependent character and their attackers. Thus, some external spaces emphasise vulnerability even if they allow new and liberating discourses to surface. Smith is teaching women that, as well as learning to read space, they must still be wary of it.

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[59] Curran, 'Introduction', *Charlotte Smith*, III, pp. vii-xiii (p. viii.); Fletcher had also noted this, *Biography*, p. 110.

[60] Smith seems to be one of the first novelists to use the Lake District as a setting. She did however make use of Gray's Journal, see *Biography*, pp. 113-14, and the lakes were certainly popular with tourists, such as Ann Radcliffe (1795), Thomas West (1788/1789) and William Gilpin, (1774 [1804]).

[61] Despite its seeming unpopularity in the shadow of the best-selling *Emmeline*, there was eventually a reprint of *Ethelinde* in 1804. Unfortunately, this came too late to financially benefit Smith. See *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith*, p. 403.

One of Smith's stronger descriptive spaces is in the Lake District and this is where the majority of freedom, revelation and attack occur. James Foster has praised Smith’s ‘English landscapes’ for being ‘as accurate as they are poetic’ and her use of the Lake District is worth noting.[62] This scene depicts Ethelinde accosted by Davenant, who is determined to trade a letter from her lover, Montgomery, for sexual favours. The landscape is wild, and situated distinctly outside of Miss Newenden’s domain, as Ethelinde ‘wandered all day about the hills’ (394). The ‘ragged hawthorns’ and ‘scar of chalk’ lend a brutality to the landscape that is exacerbated by its loneliness: ‘No human being appeared on the whole extent of the open country between her and the sea. Scarce a cottage or a haystack arose as a sign that it was inhabited’ (331, 395). Signs of employment or activity are rare, and the emphasis upon the vastness of nature makes Ethelinde seem more helpless. The sea in the background reminds us that this is a border space, but, in addition, the active arena is a broad expanse of land: Ethelinde is vulnerable to both the instability of the former and the licentiousness of the latter. Because of this, Davenant can depart from normal modes of conduct and behave violently. In her fear, Ethelinde attempts to dispel the threat of sexual attack by acknowledging the nearby groomsmen, appealing to their reason and attempting to reinstate a protective community.

Their interference, as with their worth, is not recognised by Davenant, but there is a shift in power when one servant takes hold of Davenant’s whip:

> The fury of Davenant now exceeded all bounds. He levelled a violent blow at the groom, who caught on his arm what would otherwise have been fatal; the other servant, far from taking part with his master, now stepped forward, and though little more than a boy, wrenched the horse whip from his hands and threw it away. (398)

The groomsmen transform Davenant from threatening patriarch to defeated bully. In this outdoor space, the hierarchy of society disappears and the servants cannot be injured or influenced by Davenant’s social advantage, despite their inferior economic status and age. This is a departure from their previous behaviour when, intimidated by Ellen Newenden, they prioritised catching her horse before rescuing Ethelinde from a fall: ‘[knowing] how angry his mistress would be if any accident happened to the Snap mare, he attended more to the preservation of his place than the preservation of Miss Chesterville’ (337). Now, the threat of rape is immediate, there are no other men to intervene, and no hierarchical orders to follow. Later, James explains his motivation to Ethelinde:

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[62] James R. Foster, ‘Charlotte Smith, Pre-Romantic Novelist’, *PMLA*, 43 (1928), 463-75 (p. 470).

> Master ordered us to be discharged, and so Mr. Mash has paid us off; but I assure you that if ‘twas to do again I should do just the same. I can get another place; but I could not have answered it to my conscience to have left you with Mr. Davenant. [...] Mash fears neither God nor man, nor devil; and if Master Davenant will but pay him well would run the hazard of being hanged as soon as not. […] ’tis money got, as one may say, with a rope round one’s neck. (402)

The men, instead of fearing for their places, fear for their consciences. The financial context is key. Davenant expects the servants to obey him because he can bribe them, just as he obeys Lord Danesforte because of his financial patronage. The servants, by rejecting his bribery, demonstrate their autonomy, and their behaviour subverts assumptions about economic and class subservience. They take action responsibly, demonstrating unity and overthrowing the powerful male, yet Davenant cannot understand how his position has been overthrown.

Smith tries to reveal something in her representation of the working classes that is authentic and intelligent, while at the same time she draws upon the imagery of the faithful feudal servant.[63] The response of the workers satisfies our expectation of chivalrous heroism, but their rejection of reward goes beyond that. They seem simultaneously reassuringly protective and originally alert thinkers in this unusual situation. Servants in the sentimental novel are frequently silent or absent because they are dependent. Like Smith’s heroine, however, these characters think independently in the outdoors. In this unstructured space, money is not just rejected because of a sense of duty, or an attempt to appear morally impressive, but because these servants know and state that they can find employment elsewhere. This kind of economic awareness is essential to Smith’s work, even for characters whose roles are so brief.[64] In *Ethelinde*, outdoor space becomes a place where anyone can have a voice, and Smith seems to suggest that recent increasing labour mobility is positive. If the ability to understand finance is more widespread, then anyone who understands their economic options can exercise a level of independence.

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[63] Todd discusses the filial servant, *Sensibility*, pp. 13-14.

[64] For more on the changing economic dangers of the period, see James Raven, *Judging New Wealth: Popular Publishing and Responses to Commerce in England, 1750-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992). Also John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972) and Susanne Stewart, ‘Roads, Rivers, Railways and Pedestrian Rambles: The Space and Place of Travel in William Wordsworth’s Poems and J. M. W. Turner’s Paintings’, *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 34 (2012), 159-84. Ledoux has described heroines using setting to ‘find economic enfranchisement’ in the work of Fenwick and Bailie, *Social Reform*, pp. 1-21.

The choices of Montgomery, the hero of the novel, also revolve around issues of finance. In one of his attempts to earn enough for Ethelinde to marry him, we see Montgomery reject a business position because of the immorality of his employer:

> Royston [...] saw the young man escape him whom he intended to have kept some time longer, for the double gratification of his pride: first, by insulting him with the supercilious superiority of a patron; and then, by boasting to all the world how generously he acted. (215)

Smith then walks the reader through the difficult consequences of this choice, and the generosity Montgomery shows regardless. Although outdoor spaces can remove the authority of financial superiority, money is essential. In this instance, Montgomery separates himself from Royston's corruption, consequently impoverishing himself and creating anxiety for those close to him. This bears some similarity to Valacourt's behaviour in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) whose 'little money' is used to make a 'poor family completely happy', yet Valacourt is troubled by indecision and worries for his future provision.[65] In contrast, Montgomery's choice, occurring before he has earned anything, is a more ethical one. This is a plot deeply troubled by debt, yet Montgomery's ethics are consistent, even in the face of uncertainty. Financial awareness can allow freedom of movement: for servants who know where to find another job, for Ethelinde who, in the end, can afford to travel to her Aunt's house, and for Montgomery, who survives unemployment despite his dwindling account. The protagonists become increasingly alert to the realities of financial ties. They are constrained by practical factors, but liberated to understand and choose a response to their circumstances. It is, after all, Ethelinde's choice to delay marrying Montgomery because she knows it is financially impractical.

Montgomery's behaviour becomes increasingly generous as his ability to identify need improves. Despite the desperation of his plight, Smith provides Montgomery always with just enough coins to satisfy the needs around him, and his giving, unlike Royston's, is accomplished without 'boasting' or 'pride', despite the mere 'five out of eleven guineas he had in his pocket' (231):

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[65] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, pp. 52-53. The castles in *Emmeline* and *Udolpho* are compared by Ledoux in *Social Reform*, pp. 61-69.

> ‘[M]ethinks you look ill yourself, my old friend; will you accept this from a man who loves a soldier much, but a faithful servant more;’ and, Miss, he put a guinea into my hand. (240)

> [H]aving furnished his friend, who could not bear to ask the Colonel for money, with two guineas out of the five he had in his pocket, he took his leave [...] forgetting every inconvenience in the reflection that the day had been passed in the service of Ethelinde. (238)

> [B]y having supplied young Chesterville, and paid the physician, together with the purchasing of some wine and other things which he fancied the weak condition of Colonel Chesterville made necessary, his finances were now reduced within a guinea[.] (251)

The insistent narrative of Montgomery’s eleven guineas, interspersed throughout Colonel Chesterville’s speedy decline, serves to emphasise just how essential economic foundations are to Smith’s agenda.[66] Although her calculations are at times inconsistent, she underlines the real cost of sentimental situations, making the emotion they generate more authentic by providing evidence of quantifiable need. Writing in 1773, Anna Letitia Barbauld condemned the generic rendering of distress in popular fiction, and argued that the intricate details of suffering were needed to arouse the reader’s interest.[67] For Smith, these small details highlight the importance of financial responsibility. Her ideal characters, the steadiest financially and ethically, respond to the variety of unexpected needs that may arise, their own and those of their neighbour. Smith wants citizens who can understand the economic context of their space, and respond intelligently and ethically to the needs of others. The trail of Montgomery’s eleven guineas provides an example of this.

Ethelinde, instead, learns to respond intelligently to her own needs. As she becomes increasingly logical in her thinking, the heroine finds that her reasoning often does not suit the company she is with, and she is driven by a desire to escape the house and be amongst nature in a way that complements her appreciation of beauty and tranquillity. When staying with Ellen, Ethelinde asserts a dramatic level of control over her behaviour despite the social mores constraining her. She chooses to visit Mrs Montgomery in her humble cottage because her intelligence allows her to make sense of the action, rather than submit to the opinion of her fellow guests: ‘In a few moments she had argued herself into the most perfect conviction of the propriety of what she was desirous to do, and pursued the path which led to the cottage’ (37). To achieve unrestrained access to these spaces, and to do so without unpleasant company, Ethelinde becomes increasingly vocal: ‘Indeed I never thought of standing on the ceremony of Mrs. Montgomery's returning my visit; but intended this evening to have waited on her again’ (43). Ethelinde’s responses become aggressive in their playfulness as she argues both her companions and her conscience into agreement with her independence, whilst simultaneously ridding herself of Davenant’s intimidating company:

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[66] This has similarities to the economic detail so popular in nineteenth-century realism, and the popular It-narrative, for example Ann Mary Hamilton’s *The Adventures of a Seven Shilling Piece* (1811).

[67] A. L. Barbauld, *An Inquiry Into Those Kinds of Distress Which Excite Agreeable Sensations* (1773) in *Anna Letitia Barbauld: Selected Poetry & Prose*, eds William McCarthy and Elizabeth Kraft (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), pp. 195-208.

> [T]hough I hold myself bound to pay the trifling attention of a visit to Mrs. Montgomery, in consequence of the obligation I owe her son; yet, as Mr. Davenant feels no such necessity, why should I, by accepting of his offer to attend me, subject *him* to the possible inconvenience of forming an improper acquaintance? (45)

This is a clear development from Emmeline’s behaviour, whose private anxiety about her increasing vocal authority is absent in Ethelinde’s retort and exit.[68] Removing herself to the tranquillity of non-urban space is an abrupt move on Ethelinde’s part, but this tranquillity, combined with the separation from structured social interaction, releases her hostess too. The idyllic cottage setting, similar to Adelina’s woodland glade, allows Mrs Montgomery to retell her history and Ethelinde to respond in a manner appropriate for the narrative and space, before returning to a busy house and more guarded behaviour.[69]

As Ethelinde experiences increasingly liberating locations, she returns to social structures with more confidence. Although non-urban space is a helpful arena, sooner or later, one must return to and learn to live in the house, the extended metaphor for wider society. Ethelinde’s gradually increasing autonomy is demonstrated when Ellen derides her for fearing Davenant’s attack and Ethelinde responds by immediately planning her escape from Ellen’s home. She has become more confident in anticipating and responding to the dynamics of space, no longer cycling anxiously in internal dialogue but instead prioritising the decisiveness that drives her physical movement. She consciously recognises her danger and escapes, although her understanding of her own vulnerability forces her to seek another domestic space rather than wander alone outdoors in a liberating, but now recognisably problematic, space.[70] Finally, Ethelinde returns to Mrs Montgomery's cottage, an indoor space that, because it is synonymous in its simplicity with the outdoors, seems the safest compromise. The boundaries of the cottage grounds create a safe structure in this wild retreat, yet separate it from the village, making it at the same time rural and urban, as only 'the little wicket in the fence [...] divided the garden from the village street' (37). Indeed, whilst living at Grasmere, the amount of time the inhabitants of the cottage spend verbally explaining their feelings aligns the cottage in a flattering parallel with the freedom of non-urban space. Volume Five in particular contains little differentiation between behaviour expressed in and outside of the cottage, and it becomes increasingly sentimentalised as 'that dear and tranquil cottage whither [Ethelinde] thought that, when every other hope failed her she might turn her weary steps, and find peace, and protection' (304). Later the cottage becomes a facilitating site for Sir Edward, too, to process his grief. Smith has cleverly created a safe, sociable space, synonymous with the autonomy gained in outdoor spaces, yet also private and sustainable.

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[68] For more on Ethelinde’s verbal authority, see Morrissey, ‘Sensibility and Good Health’, pp. 11-28. Gary Kelly describes the protagonist of the late eighteenth-century novel ‘asserting’ her ‘agenda’ against ‘paternalism, patriarchy, and patronage’ in ‘Revolutionizing the Novel’, p. 371.

[69] Angela Keane discusses the plot’s escape from censure in *Women Writers and the English Nation in the 1790s* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), n. 2, p. 178.

Throughout this novel, there is a consistent warning in Smith's use of space: although Smith uses isolation as a device, she does not advocate it as a lifestyle. As Wollstonecraft's *Mary, A Fiction* (1788) portrayed, returning to normal society becomes almost impossible after experiencing liberty and independence. Smith complicates her praise for retreat when she reveals the consequences of separation from society, and the dangers of being unable to read or anticipate the dynamics of space, most apparent in the behaviour of Ellen Newenden. Disgusted with the excessive sentiment of society, Ellen has removed herself to the countryside, believing herself to be a clever observer and thus safe from trickery. In contrast to Ethelinde's experience, this separation from social involvement leads to a different kind of vulnerability: Ellen is seduced by a fortune hunter without realising what a commodity she is. Smith undermines Ellen's attempts to criticise society by demonstrating her blindness to the machinations of her visitors. She, too, needs education, so that her natural perceptiveness and wit can be healthily directed to see through the charms of men whose vulgarity she mistakes for perception. Her desire to escape sentiment supports Smith's overarching emphasis on reason, but Ellen is wrong to assume that creating her own space outside of the admittedly saccharine scenes of society will be any safer. Even though Ellen has separated herself from the metropolis, social spaces continue to operate in the same way; by providing a sociable space at home, Ellen recreates the dangers inherent in it.

Sadly, too, Ellen's determination to critically read society has rendered her unable to recognise positive examples of sentiment and character: she 'was not only incapable of friendship, but of tenderness and pity; and [had] no idea either of books or of that sort of conversation in which Ethelinde delighted and excelled' (294). Ellen is not interested in reading texts or people and this disinterest is self-professed: 'I wish Ned very happy; but I have no skill in judging what will make him so'. Indeed, she continues:

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[70] Schofield discusses Ethelinde's control of her own story in 'The Witchery of Fiction'.

> 'Ned was always as soft hearted as a girl; and has no notion of taking the bit between his teeth and setting off, as I should have done long ago, if I had been jaded by such a vain, ill tempered, proud doll.' (320)

Yet, it is 'soft' Ned who must rescue her from abuse of her finances and person. Ellen's inability to anticipate basic courtship patterns causes her to occupy an uneasy position, one easily exploited by Wollaston. Instead of congratulating herself in rural safety, Ellen is exposed to more intrusive abuse than all the other characters. Smith is relentless: women must learn to read space and remain aware of their vulnerability, wherever they are. Attempts by women to be permanently removed from, or critical of, the social structure are disastrous because such women are repeatedly outmanoeuvred by successful and powerful men. Some form of community is needed for protection as Smith highlights the vulnerability of permanent isolation, whatever its justification.

Throughout the novel, Smith has highlighted the importance of reading space and the consequences of this reading upon romantic choice. Ellen's misreading of her own situation results in her unhappiness at the hands of a man better able to predict how plots unfold. The inability to read fiction intelligently is a more general concern of the period, and Smith uses it as an example of misunderstanding the implications of practical, romantic choices.[71] In Wollstonecraft's *Maria,* the protagonist is so unable to surrender her romantic fantasies that she marries her hero Venables.[72] Mitzi Myers comments that, 'Wollstonecraft explicitly urges women readers to think and feel for themselves; implicitly, she shows them how, in a critical discourse that is also a mode of self-definition'.[73] Although Myers' analysis is of Wollstonecraft's reviews, it is a pithy summary of the intention of radical authors at the time. Kaley Kramer agrees that both Wollstonecraft and Smith encouraged 'self-aware reading' to alert their readers to the 'cultural narratives' having 'authority and agency over women's lives'.[74] However, Kramer's analysis is restricted by her focus on Smith's financial position which causes her to argue that Smith's strategies are more subtle than they are. Throughout her prose career, Smith tries to liberate women to such an extent that they can successfully navigate social choice and space, but this is not always possible. Ideally, after their education in the outdoors, women can return to normal life in society. However, the conclusions of Smith's first three novels picture each romantic couple establishing their home outside of the social structure, in a kind of separate community. Going forward, Smith's novels consistently picture these separate communities, but their unusual and varying locations show the difficulty of constructing even such a community within a realistic representation of eighteenth-century England.[75] Problems here (legal, economic) are not just plot devices, but are irrevocably linked to independence. In Smith's first three novels, she is as interested in the idea of independence as she is in the establishment of these social, more formal, difficulties.

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[71] *Edinburgh Magazine* expressed concern that Smith's readers would be unable to read Sir Edward's love for Ethelinde as fiction, n. s. 11 (1790), pp. 203-06 (p. 205). Smith was self-conscious about the construction and effect of her novels, *Biography*, pp. 116-18; Ledoux, *Social Reform*, pp. 1-21.

[72] *Mary Wollstonecraft*, I.

[73] Myers, 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Literary Reviews', pp. 93-94.

[74] Kaley Kramer, 'Women and Property in Later Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Gendered Property and Generic Belonging in Charlotte Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft', *Literature Compass*, 6 (2009), 1145-58 (p. 1149).

Recognising Emotions in *Celestina*

As Smith develops her ideas concerning female autonomy, she challenges the form of the courtship novel and this is particularly evident in *Celestina*. Brought up in Alvestone Park, Celestina falls in love with and is about to marry Willoughby, heir to the estate. Unusually for a courtship novel, the marriage is arranged, but is delayed by a series of dilemmas until the conclusion of the novel. Kristina Straub argues that this procrastination emphasises Smith's scepticism towards marriage, but the delay also enables the exploration of other issues key to her work.[76] Celestina must remove herself from the security of Alvestone Park once its owner has abandoned her, and is forced to stay in a series of unfamiliar spaces, most notably in the Hebrides. Contrasting alternative communities with the one traditionally formed by marriage allows Smith to make a more clear-cut exploration of autonomy. Particularly in the Hebrides, authority figures can be escaped entirely. When Celestina eventually returns to Alvestone Park, she returns with a new authority of her own, developed in this isolation. It is an authority, however, that Smith ultimately undermines in the novel's conclusion, the marriage.

At the time of its publication, *Celestina* suffered from general critical displeasure because of Smith's use of passages from Burney, but again the landscapes in this novel provide some of Smith's most original work.[77] *Celestina* is different and distinctive from Smith's preceding work because, whilst succeeding as an engaging and tense romance, it contains non-urban spaces that are more fully described. A pivotal novel in Smith's argument for autonomy in outdoor space, *Celestina* includes descriptions of spaces so distinctive that they moved critics to high praise. The *Monthly Review* included a lengthy description from the novel to support their admiration of it, whilst the *Critical Review* compared Smith's portrayal of nature to that of Ossian.[78] In fact, *Celestina* seems to be one of the earliest novels to use the Hebrides and islands as settings. In line with contemporary travel journals, Smith has Lady Horatia, a key female wanderer, resort to Scotland as the only new experience left to a connoisseur of European watering places. Samuel Johnson himself published an account of his travels around the area, as did Thomas Pennant, whose descriptions Smith incorporated.[79] Zoë Kinsley discusses travel in Britain at this time as 'a means of vicariously experiencing the foreignness of Grand Tour locations' and indeed, whilst Celestina explores the North, her hero Willoughby has similar experiences in Europe.[80] By setting one quarter of the novel in and around Scotland, Smith effectively establishes a physical arena at a distance from observation, where Celestina can escape the male gaze and all it signifies, and instead her own gaze can dwell on the land around her. A broader, wilder range of settings gives Smith the opportunity to explore other social mechanisms too, rather than constricting her critique to a representative immediate family typical of the sentimental novel.

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[75] George E. Haggerty contrasts periods of isolation and community in *Evelina* that are similar to those in *Ethelinde* in 'A Friend, a Fop, and a Feminist: The Failure of Community in Burney', *The Eighteenth Century*, 36 (1995), 248-65.

[76] Straub, 'Introduction', p. vii.

[77] *Mary Wollstonecraft*, VII: *On Poetry; Contributions to the Analytical Review, 1788-1797*, p. 388.

Smith grounds this expanding criticism in part by making economics more stable than in the previous two novels. Celestina's movements are tightly constrained, but by different types of guardian and their expectations rather than the harrowing financial desperation seen in *Ethelinde*. In *Celestina*, we see Smith deliberately place her heroine in a position of uncertainty after the romantic resolution. It is a sentimental novel, but it offers a more encompassing examination of the role and responsibility of community in this specific period of development, post-ward and pre-marriage. Each of the previously mentioned devices is present in *Celestina* too, uniting to create something new and exciting. In *Celestina*, then, Smith decentralises the authority of the father or husband to examine other adult figures as guides. Fletcher writes that 'though *Celestina* is more derivative than the earlier novels, its narrative irony is drier and its perspective wider'.[81] Smith's focus upon Celestina's wait for Willoughby and for revelation prevents the novel from being wholly romance-orientated and enables more in-depth analysis of the alternatives to family and marriage. It is harder to fit Celestina into any preconceived model of womanhood in terms of who has authority over her, and so she turns to the community for support, and within that community to the church in particular. It is only once Smith has demonstrated the failure in judgement of other structures of authority, such as the church, that Celestina is permitted to test her own judgement, in isolation. The church, well-meaning friends, and wealthy patrons each fail to understand and protect Celestina, but instead expose her to a series of intrusions. Celestina, Smith makes clear, does not rebel through her own wanton desire, but as a result of the failure of society to protect her. This failure leads to her journey to Scotland.

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[78] *Monthly Review*, n. s. 6 (1791), pp. 286-91 (pp. 286-87); *Critical Review*, n. s. 3 (1791), pp. 318-21 (p. 321).

[79] *To the Hebrides: Samuel Johnson's Journey to Western Islands of Scotland; and James Boswell's Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides*, ed. Ronald Black (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011). For more on contemporary Highland experiences, see A. J. Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line: Three Journals of Travel in Eighteenth Century Scotland; Burt, Pennant and Thornton* (London: Collins, 1974).

[80] Zoë Kinsley, *Women Writing the Home Tour, 1682-1812* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 156.

[81] *Biography*, p. 132.

As in *Ethelinde*, Smith initially introduces physical spaces that showcase the objectification and surveillance of women, and then demonstrates the opposite freedom of nature. This is seen quite naturally in the contrast between the constrictive home of the local vicar and the safety of Alvestone Park, but it can also be seen more radically in the contrast between Celestina’s adoptive home and the liberating and dangerous landscape of the Isle of Skye. Alvestone, with its safe boundaries and structure of accountability, is a paradise that is lost to Celestina after her guardian’s death and Willoughby's desertion. In contrast, on Skye, Smith permits Celestina a liberating and almost licentious period of testing the limits of the physical landscape and of her own emotional development. The vibrant descriptions of nature echo this liberty, making this section stand out for its diversity, and its divergence from the otherwise easily-anticipated plot. It really is wild, compared to the sentimental style of the novel overall.

Before being allowed to explore further afield, however, Celestina tests the traditional options of protection: Smith first addresses the church. The local vicar, Thorold, is present at the discovery of Willoughby's desertion. Given Thorold's record of generous behaviour, it comes as no surprise that he immediately offers advice and practical help:

> I cannot say I approve of your staying here, or of your going back to indulge your uneasiness in the mournful seclusion of your cottage; let me propose therefore a middle way, by which you will […] be ready to obey any wish of our dear Willoughby […]. Will you go home with me? (99)

Aware of Celestina’s unstable position, Thorold lists the spaces she can inhabit: Alvestone, the cottage, or his home. No longer regarded as Alvestone’s mistress, Celestina cannot remain there, and instead of returning to an isolated landscape that will exacerbate her grief, she turns to the vicar for protection. The use of the possessive pronoun in ‘our dear Willoughby’ aligns Thorold with the family. His insight into Celestina’s emotional state is a strong point in the church's favour, as is his instantaneous offer of support. Celestina lists Thorold's qualifications to deserve her respect and gratitude, but, nevertheless, ‘[she] was unacquainted with his wife, and dreaded to intrude herself into a family where she might find only the master of it disposed to receive her’ (100). Already demonstrating unexpected foresight given the sheltered nature of her upbringing, Celestina shows more awareness of her own sex than this significant religious leader.

As Celestina becomes acquainted with Thorold's family and is harassed by each member in turn, his passivity generates some serious concerns for Celestina's safety, and for the perception of the church generally. Although he is observant, Thorold is as unable to check trends in his wife's behaviour as those in modern fashion:

> Mr. Thorold, whose strong understanding taught him to see and bear [his wife's] foibles, had taken the utmost pains to check in his daughters a propensity to imitate them. The three elder had been married some years, and were settled […] Arabella […] had a little of the vanity of her mother; but it had taken another turn: […] she piqued herself […] on being reckoned extremely accomplished. (101)

The values and habits of popular society are reproduced within the intimacy of this immediate family and, by extension, invade the church. The comparison that Smith draws between these women and Celestina reproduces the increasing distinction between nature and art, expressed, for example, in Elizabeth Inchbald's novel of that title in 1795, four years later.[82] Inchbald's novel satirised the cruel tendencies of social convention, and Smith portrays this conventional family acting out a hypocritical assessment of Celestina's morality. Thorold's reluctance to intervene in their commentary and judgement emphasises the power such observers have, and the church is criticised for its inactivity. Celestina must become equally observant so that she can protect her own physical movement from similar analysis.

Domestic space here is not tranquil but full of insinuation, observation and attack. Celestina escapes to the garden to meditate in isolation but repeatedly her escape is obstructed, as Montague (Thorold's youngest son) enthusiastically pursues her, persistently provoking her to speech, stealing her poetry and finally thrusting his foot into her room as she attempts to retire. His persistence is disturbing, and it comes as no surprise to find he later stalks Celestina across England, all the way to the Hebrides. Montague's interruption of Celestina's retreat signifies the fallibility of Thorold's authority. Celestina does not suffer, in this situation, any prolonged threat of physical violation, but is caught continually between Montague's desire to possess her intellectually, and his brother's more brutal appetite. This tension, combined with the ongoing wait for Willoughby's explanation of his disappearance and the intense observations of the Thorold women, provokes Celestina into poetic composition in a nearby graveyard. The lines are similar in theme and location to Thomas Gray's 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard' (1751) but are inspired by the gravestone of a young woman.[83] In an allusion to Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Montague Thorold then steals this paper from Celestina, whose repeated attempts to retrieve it are ineffective:

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[82] Fiona Price discusses this distinction in the context of Wollstonecraft's teaching in *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, and Rousseau, see *Revolutions in Taste*, pp. 45-74 (p. 52).

[83] Thomas Gray, *Poetical Works: Thomas Gray and William Collins*, ed. Austen Lane Poole (London: OUP, 1937); Samuel Richardson, *Pamela: Or, Virtue Rewarded*, ed. Albert J. Rivero (Cambridge: CUP, 2011).

> 'Do, Mr Montague, give me that silly paper: Its detension is useless to you and disagreeable to me.'
>
> 'Pardon me then if for once I am guilty of what offends you. I cannot part with it. But it is my first and shall be my last offence.'
>
> 'I hope so,' said Celestina very gravely. 'The thing is in itself of no consequence, and I wonder you should be so childishly anxious to keep it.'
>
> 'Your hands have touched it; your letters are upon it; you composed the lines.'
>
> 'Well, Sir,' cried she, impatiently, and willing to put an end to a speech to which she feared the Captain might listen; 'since you will not give it to me or destroy it, the only favour I have to ask is that you will never speak of it again, either to me or any other person.' (135)

In this scene of struggle, the parchment on which the sonnet is written symbolises Celestina's independence whilst drawing attention to her position spatially. The poetical expression of her thoughts, whilst demonstrating influence from Thomas Edwards and Gray, represents Celestina's independence, which is threatened by Montague's desire for acquisition.[84] His possession of Celestina's 'letters' signifies a desire to draw out her intimate thoughts, and ultimately to possess her. The very independence Montague is threatening is in part what makes Celestina valuable to him. Her appeal for secrecy, however, relies on an uneasy sense of false intimacy that jeopardises this independence. Simon Varey observes that, 'one sign of the recurrent violation of personal space, in both *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, is that the heroine's correspondence is intercepted by her enemy or supposed enemy'. *Ethelinde* can be added to this list, and now Celestina's creativity is at risk.[85] Montague sees his theft as a victory won, yet by halting his speech, Celestina forbids the circulation of her writing, symbolically cutting off the circulation of her body. By combining this interdiction with the issues of creative originality and the redirection of generic expectation Smith demonstrates the potential for women to recognise and redirect the nuances of their social interaction. In spaces that would typically result in continued vulnerability, Smith promotes a more rational negotiation with social expectation, however ineffective it may appear at times.

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[84] The influence of two of Edwards' sonnets is mentioned by Smith in the text. Straub identifies him, n. 11, p. 439.

[85] Varey, *Space and the Eighteenth-Century English Novel*, p. 187.

It is no coincidence that both composition and theft occur away from the domestic hearth. The absence of observation and the liberty of the outdoors enable both the creative act of composition and the destructive act of Thorold's theft. Kristina Straub writes that 'in an interesting twist, Smith makes the heroine's poetry, rather than Thorold's, the vehicle for her objectification into a fetish object'.[86] Montague's desire to obtain and caress Celestina's poetry is disturbing, and he prevents each of her attempts at privacy, intentionally mishearing her declarations of independence and rejection.[87] Simultaneously, pursuit and constant surveillance by the Thorold women drive Celestina to spend long periods in her room: her use of space is forced, and as escaping to the garden, the graveyard, and her bedroom fail, she finally abandons the house early one morning. Women, here, attack Celestina verbally and in their criticism of her spatial choices. Their ruthlessness is exacerbated by verbal insult: Arabella's reference to Thomas Otway's *The Orphan* implies that Celestina is guilty of sexual licentiousness, by allowing Montague to invade her room, a space that represents her body.[88] Celestina's use of space is consistently misinterpreted, even her innocent receipt of a visit from Vavasour, confidant of her fiancé. Already Celestina's only retreat is to outdoor seclusion. Thorold takes neither his family's rudeness nor Montague's infatuation seriously despite his 'mortification' at their behaviour (152). His reputation for wisdom is undermined by the dysfunction of his family. Thorold is saddened by Celestina's departure, but is not proactive or powerful enough to intervene. Here, Smith uses the individual within the institution representatively: first, Celestina's guardian fails, then her fiancé, and now the church.

Celestina leaves the failed protection of the church to seek an alternative community, safe from courtship. On her journey, however, Celestina is distracted by passing Alvestone Park and she decides to revisit the site to 'indulge' her 'regret' (166). Early in the novel Alvestone, serving as a biblical Eden, seems to offer Celestina the stability that she longs for: it is a site which is clearly structured, and it facilitated Celestina's initial experience of equality. Her role as a sibling to Willoughby and Matilda, despite her adopted status, is frequently affirmed in this recollection: in their walks together, Willoughby supported both Celestina and Matilda symmetrically, 'while Matilda leaned on one arm and she on the other' (22). Celestina returns here in her imagination throughout the novel. Laura Linker describes a similar occurrence in Aphra Behn's *The Lucky Chance* (1686): 'Leticia responds by characterizing [the garden] as a pleasing place of remembered love that she must leave to return to a melancholic world of social restriction'. Interestingly, this garden space serves also as 'a tranquil space in which [Leticia] can pour out her emotions'.[89] For Smith, the garden is very much restricted to the re-creation of past experience and the mourning of the present. Here, Celestina longs to feed the animals and recreate her formative experiences, despite the inappropriateness of this behaviour now that her engagement is over.

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[86] Straub, 'Introduction', p. xv.
[87] For more on Celestina's poetry, see Fletcher, 'Introduction' (2004), pp. 21-30.
[88] For more, see Straub's notes 8, 13 and 14 on p. 439, and *Biography*, p. 185.

Her desperation to view Alvestone drives Celestina to unusual behaviour throughout the text: at one point, she requests a telescope from her landlord to search the horizon and identify some features of her home:

> All the indulgence she allowed herself was, that of sometimes chusing to walk towards a knoll at the extremity of the common, which afforded an extensive view towards the west; from thence, by the help of a telescope lent her by her landlord, Celestina had discovered a clump of firs in Alvestone Park; […] she found a melancholy pleasure in distinguishing them, and would frequently, as she leant on Jessy's arm in their pensive rambles, fix her eyes on that distant object, gaze on it steadily for two or three minutes, and then with a deep sigh turn away, and walk silently home. (72-73)

Celestina transforms this scientific observation into an opportunity to feed her melancholy by persistently gazing upon the house in silence. Jacqueline Labbe observes that, 'the prospect view, allied as it was with political and cultural power and dominance, and allied also with masculinity and a breadth of vision, is not common property'.[90] Celestina's misuse of the view, and her deviant use of the telescope, only emphasise her vulnerability: as much as she gains visual control, Celestina is still unable to control the situation itself, or her position in it. Her use of the site as a catalyst for despair undermines her rational actions and challenges the idea of Alvestone as a healthy and stable place. Nevertheless Celestina is reluctant to surrender her position at Alvestone.

The biblical context makes Smith's use of space more loaded. Images of Celestina and Willoughby strolling together through the gardens replicate the wandering of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis, the religious significance of which is emphasised by Smith's use of John Milton's cry: 'must I leave this Paradise?' (165). It is established as a place of instruction, innocence and sweet companionship, where sexual fruition will naturally develop. Yet with Willoughby's discovery of Celestina's possible relationship to him, they cannot remain there. After Willoughby disappears, the narrative reads:

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[89] Laura Linker, *Dangerous Women, Libertine Epicures, and the Rise of Sensibility, 1670-1730* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2011), p. 54.

[90] Labbe, *Romantic Visualities*, p. 143. Labbe describes the 'myriad movements' of the authors using this perspective, p. x. See also Ottum, '"Shallow" Estates'.

> This place was the daily resort of Celestina during the week she remained at Alvestone, and thither she usually carried some of those books from the library as she remembered Willoughby had read to her. These were principally poetry; and the re-perusal of them, the place, the season, a thousand tender remembrances enforced by each, served at once to soften and depress a heart naturally tender and affectionate, which, deprived of almost every other object of its regard, cherished with painful pleasure the idea of Willoughby, such as he once was, and when they passed here so many innocent enchanting hours. (22)

Reading and returning operate here, not only to emphasise the stability of Celestina's formative experiences, but to create an image which Willoughby and Celestina can easily call to mind. The emotions of both are tied to a site, inextricably linked. This device is repeated in *The Old Manor House* when Orlando imagines himself at Rayland Hall during his experiences in North America. As the majority of Celestina's and, in fact, Willoughby's emotional education occurs while they are away from home, it is important that they can contrast their later experiences with Alvestone and attempt to reconcile the two. In some ways, Smith undermines the stability of the home by associating it with punishment and suffering. Kate Ferguson Ellis describes the trope of being driven from the ancestral home as the 'grotesque re-enactment of God's punishment'.[91] Alvestone is perhaps not truly the Eden it seems but it is something to aspire to: on their return both characters bring a new maturity to reshape it, a maturity gained in the wilderness. They both learn whilst absent, and then try to apply their learning for the benefit of their local community.

The most significant liberating and educative experience of isolation for Celestina is her visit to the Isle of Skye with Mr and Mrs Elphinstone for seven months. This wild space finally allows Celestina freedom from the pressures and observations of society to honestly explore her response to Willoughby's behaviour. Chapter Two of Volume Three charts Celestina's rejection of possible authority figures as she eschews normal social structures in favour of increasing emotional alignment with the isolated and often tumultuous surroundings. She loses passive status, becoming more independent in thought and physically adventurous, almost molesting the land with her unrestricted exploration, particularly of the nearby 'grotesque' island (211). Although to be left unmolested is Celestina's only desire, her own invasion of the island is noticed by her companions–companions she joins despite 'her inclination for solitude'. Mr Elphinstone quickly points out the danger of her idealisation of isolation. When Celestina, laughingly, claims the island as her own, Elphinstone responds with a comparison to the island of Calypso. In Greek mythology, Calypso, the daughter of Atlas, captures Odysseus when he is shipwrecked upon her island and keeps him captive for seven years. This warning of Celestina's potential for power recurs as the chapter progresses, particularly in her avoidance of Mrs Elphinstone, whose exemplary conduct is confining and, at times, irritating to Celestina. Calling Willoughby's figure to mind, Celestina places him within the landscape as she walks alone, imagining and thereby controlling his response to the island and to her, making him subject to her whim, as in the Greek analogy. Although in her ‘Sonnet’ she imagines Willoughby’s presence in the Hebrides would enable her to ‘find all *my* world in this lone solitude’, Celestina also suggests Willoughby can give her ‘sovereign bliss’: ‘Thy mind my empire, and my throne thy heart’ (213). Whereas in Radcliffe’s work, the ‘silence and grandeur of solitude’ directs Emily’s thoughts to the ‘God of heaven and earth’, for Smith this rural wilderness remains contextualised by heterosexual romance, albeit a romance in which Celestina longs for some measure of agency.[92]

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[91] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. xi. Anne Mellor also discusses the instability of the home in *Romanticism and Gender* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 85-106.

Smith’s narrative then jumps forward three months, during which time Celestina’s isolation and subsequent reflection have developed her into an active agent. The reader next finds her assessing the kindly advice of Mr Thorold and Lady Horatia, two of the few characters that have previously had the moral authority to advise her. Given information that throws doubt on Willoughby’s fidelity, she receives intelligent suggestions for her future conduct in romance and is offered a standard by which to measure her choices and emotions. Lady Horatia reasons:

> [I]f some insurmountable barrier is between you, you will learn to consider him as a friend, and consult his peace in regaining that cheerfulness which he meant not to destroy; but which to see destroyed, must overcloud his days, however prosperous they may otherwise be. (215-16)

Despite recognising her obligation, Celestina immediately rejects this advice, and evades even the company of the mild Mrs Elphinstone. The latter ‘tried to communicate to her some of that still and mournful acquiescence which served her in place of philosophy’ (216). Celestina, Smith writes, ‘had not yet suffered enough to learn it’; she continues to indulge her emotions and imagination and revels in the freedom from restraint. Other women begin to be concerned for her, recognising the danger of wallowing in grief. However, in her response to Lady Horatia's anxious letter, Celestina now consults her own ‘inclinations’.

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[92] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 6.

> [H]owever obliged [Celestina] thought herself by the friendly interest Lady Horatia took in her happiness, and however just her arguments might be, she felt no inclination to quit her present solitude; and since she had now less hope than ever of meeting Willoughby, she had less than ever a desire to return into the world, but gave herself up to that melancholy despondence, against which hope, and her own sanguine and cheerful temper, had till now supported her. (216)

Smith emphasises that the duration of Celestina’s isolation is too long. The ‘till now’ implies that Celestina’s cheerfulness is exhausted, and her separation from the world has led to dangerous melancholy and ‘sick thoughts’. The independence established in her experience of isolation now turns to stubbornness and Celestina refuses to acquiesce until the sudden death of Mr Elphinstone.

In the Hebrides, as her well-meaning advisers are not physically present, Celestina feels no compulsion to follow their advice. She has no accountability structure here and no one to prescribe boundaries for her movements or moods. Celestina's surrender is similar in nature to Adelina's beach trips, but her agency allows her to access authority rather than insanity. This is a radical development from Ethelinde’s attempts at independence: Celestina has achieved the autonomy that Ethelinde surrendered upon her marriage, and, rather than living in a cottage synonymous with the outdoors, keeps occupying an entirely outdoor space. Celestina here temporarily has no one for whom she is responsible, so her behaviour is not confined by that responsibility either. Smith directly contrasts this with the real difficulties of responsibilities that cannot be escaped. Mr Elphinstone’s reckless behaviour causes his wife extreme pain, but she supports him despite anticipating personal and financial collapse. Mrs Elphinstone's struggle for self-control demonstrates the front that Celestina must present once she returns to the mainland. It is only upon Elphinstone’s death that Celestina is recalled to a responsibility now as important to her self-definition as her isolation has been. As Celestina finds her ‘presence of mind […] summoned to the assistance of her poor unhappy friend’, Smith sketches a dual movement of self-determination, a movement between self-selected isolation and sentimental obligation (223).

The first few chapters of Volume Three are dedicated to describing in vivid and conscientious detail the isolation, geographic and emotional, that Celestina experiences. By continually ‘walk[ing] away alone’, escaping ‘the ladies’ to occupy distant scenes alone, Celestina takes authority over the outdoors (216). Penetrating caves, positioning herself as the observer rather than the observed, Celestina averts her gaze from any sign of humanity, recognising that within the natural environment she can command some order. The only people she sees are not a threat: fishermen, workers, and a comic imitation of a typical highland figure. This caricature turns out to be Montague in disguise; whilst he is anonymous, Celestina can dismiss him, but when he startles her, causing her to fall, his power is evident. Although Montague is an eccentric, Celestina's fall suggests he represents a physical threat to the heroine and his parody destroys her idealised isolation. Almost immediately after Montague's appearance, Mr Elphinstone, the only authority figure in the party, dies, releasing Mrs Elphinstone from her oppressive relationship, and Celestina from any need of submission. However, the women are unable to remain here alone. Montague's exposure therefore heralds a greater loss of power. The women lose control: literally, over their circumstances and arrangements, and psychologically, as Mrs Elphinstone is driven wild with grief and fear and Celestina barely manages to support her. When Cathcart summons them, assigning Montague as guardian for their journey to Devonshire, Celestina surrenders her independence, and the structure of society is reasserted in this small group.

As soon as the representatives of these structures return, Celestina becomes humble and modest again, although there are still traces of her resentment in the narrative. Her ensuing support for Mrs Elphinstone almost seems to compensate for Celestina's rebellion. Once returned to society, Celestina must allow Montague and Vavasour to court her because, in Lady Horatia's eyes, she has no reason not to. As when Lady Ann Percival advises Maria Edgeworth's heroine Belinda to receive Mr Vincent's attentions, cautious practicality in romantic matters–or, as the title of Austen's novel *Persuasion* (1817) suggests, influence–is shown to be inadequate.[93] Celestina must rationally consider the alternatives: despite her liberation, she still needs to make intelligent decisions. As Hoeveler has observed 'Smith cloaks her narrative in moral lessons of utility'.[94] Prose fiction at this time was not only 'one of the most widely consumed forms of print', but also 'considered a major form of ideological communication, for better or worse–usually the latter'.[95] Smith's novels, however, communicate a lesson in reading both fiction and real life to help identify forms of ideological control and circumvent them. In 1801, Edgeworth would have Belinda learn to uncover problems hidden behind gothic terror by exercising reason. Smith argues, however, that romantic choices are more difficult.[96] The romantic, and thereby the economic, consequences of spatial choices are Smith's main focus in these first three novels.

However liberating or exposing non-urban isolation is, it is necessary to return to the structure of society for the good of the community. Indeed, even the examples of matriarchal units led by Mrs Willoughby, Lady Fitz-Hayman and Lady Horatia warn that although independent, intelligent women may have good intentions, society functions best when both men and women exercise their authority together. Still, Celestina's complete submission at the novel's conclusion seems a surrender on Smith's part. As Hoeveler critiqued, 'these marriages are less celebrations than they are quiet acceptances of their new keepers'.[97] Curran, too, sees Smith's conclusion as 'unlike' those of 'Burney, or, later, Edgeworth and Austen', because it seems 'less a wrapping-up than a pause before the testing must begin all over again in what the reader could project as a sequel, or a series of sequels of struggles'.[98] In fact, the return to Alvestone is a necessary return to the formative experience for both sexes; Celestina and Willoughby still need this place of security to sustain their relationship, which is dangerously volatile, and other friends and family are needed to mentor them. Smith implies, by uniting the couple with their French family, that they need guiding by a successful family unit. Further development is needed. The gender roles here are uncomfortably shaken and Willoughby, the newly established male guardian, seems unable to provide the stability to support a happy conclusion, even though he has won the finance, property, and wife. Pat Elliott describes the tension for the sentimental novelist:

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[93] Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* (Oxford: OUP, 1994); *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen,* ed. Janet Todd, 9 vols (Cambridge: CUP, 2005) VII, eds Janet Todd and Marilyn Butler (2006).
[94] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p. 41.
[95] Gary Kelly, 'Romantic Fiction', in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism,* ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge: CUP, 1993), pp. 196-215 (p. 197).
[96] When Mr Vincent's servant is terrified by seemingly supernatural events, Belinda remembers an experiment she witnessed and manages to unveil the scientific trick that is upsetting Juba, *Belinda*, pp. 218-23.

> The problem lay in the form itself: how was it possible to create a serious discourse concerning women's real experience within the confines of a traditional form which demanded a satisfying, if not blissfully happy conclusion, however improbable? [99]

The conclusion of *Celestina* shows this tension most clearly: the final tableau is remarkably improbable. Yet this is also a positive step for Smith as the couple have a stable system, a wider community, to support and encourage them into more mature and considered behaviour. Structures of authority that have failed are replaced, and a new immediate family is produced, of Celestina's relatives and faithful servants. Personal improvement will be ongoing, and supported and guided by the more experienced. Although Celestina's resignation of agency is awkward, Smith has created a community where both female and male behaviour can be commented upon, and both can develop further the exercise of reason.

As *Celestina* concludes with travel to Europe, representatively Smith's focus is shifting abroad to entwine her domestic interests with the more overtly political. Despite its use of Burney, *Celestina* is perhaps the most original novel of Smith's oeuvre, as only here are her independent women allowed such freedom of movement, expression, and emotion that is neither regulated nor punished. In the following political novels, this voice will be relocated to the margin as Smith adopts a male protagonist and rearranges much of these controversial discussions around secondary characters and their experiences of spatial displacement. These three novels have signalled, too, Smith's life-long fascination with the creation, disruption and maintenance of community, which is key to her exploration of independence. With such constant change, the individual must learn to read the spaces open to them in order to survive and for the benefit of the wider community.

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[97] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, p. 36.
[98] Curran, 'General Introduction', p. xv.
[99] Elliott, 'Charlotte Smith's Feminism', p. 93.

The landscape is used to create time for emotional development and to respond to highly emotive situations, as we have seen in Celestina's solitary moments, Ethelinde's walks, and Emmeline's 'wanderings' and readings. The margins in physical space become more prevalent in Smith's work, and provide sites of tension where Smith can dissect the different values of society and their direct consequences upon the individual. Space becomes, not merely an unpeopled plot within which to express anomalous emotions, but an active arena, whose features begin to influence and engage with the emotional development of the isolated character. The descriptions of nature use aspects of pathetic fallacy, but Smith's manipulation of the land is more complex than this. She promotes reason and rationality, but creative liberation is healthy too. In these seemingly sentimental novels, Smith's characters are allowed to choose a response– an option, I will argue, that is denied equivalent figures in her later works.

2. Chapter Two

Border Spaces in *Desmond, The Old Manor House,* and *The Banished Man*

In a sonnet of 1784 Charlotte Smith reflects on the tension of the coast, between land and sea:

On some rude fragment of the rocky shore,
    Where on the fractured cliff the billows break,
    Musing, my solitary seat I take,
And listen to the deep and solemn roar.[1]

In this space we can see the tension between violence, the 'fractured cliff' and breaking waves, and the contemplative attitude of the poet 'musing' on the 'solemn roar'. Written well before the radical violence of French revolutionary terror, this sonnet indicates already Smith's attempt to engage with disruptive change and the breaking-apart of seemingly permanent structures. 'Natural' erosion prefigures Smith's interest in fractured and liminal spaces in the 1790s. Continuing on from her use of outdoor spaces as sites of criticism of structures of authority in her early works, Smith's 1790s novels engineer periods of escape to non-urban or borderline places. These escapes enable ambitious discussions about radical politics, and her use of varied locations abroad engage with the legal, economic and political difficulties of Europe and America.[2] These are addressed both in the overtly political discussions held by key characters in *Desmond*, *The Old Manor House,* and *The Banished Man*, and in the very 'fractured' spaces such characters frequent. Dissatisfied with the contemporary climate of England, but unable physically to locate an ideal political space, in these three novels Smith's characters are increasingly driven to spatial boundaries.

There is established critical consensus that Smith's fiction, between 1791 and 1794, develops in response to the changing political climate at home and abroad.[3] In its restless conclusion, however, *Desmond* demonstrates the difficulty of finding a realistic, healthy resolution for the community, or for the land itself. Smith addresses aversion to social and political change in *The Old Manor House* where she uses the landscape to portray tensions between the increasingly industrial turn of wider society and those upholding aristocratic structures of power and finance. In *The Banished Man,* Smith addresses the experience of the émigré whilst refusing to invest in the description of the different spaces her characters visit; she provides only cursory description of the settings in which social, political and religious turmoil disrupt individual and community-wide relationships. Smith explicitly links the instability of physical and national boundaries with individual distress, not only as a standardised technique, but to explore the consequences of political choices upon the functioning of communities. Smith finally resorts to removing her favourite characters to Verona, Italy, seen here as a non-political space: a manoeuvre signifying Smith's exhaustion with the possibilities of English spaces, and her attempt to find new solutions, distanced from political fervour but still able to facilitate the intelligent analysis of it.

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[1] 'Written on the Sea Shore.-October, 1784', in *The Poems of Charlotte Smith*, ed. Stuart Curran (Oxford: OUP, 1993), p. 20, lines 1-4.

[2] Chris Jones documents her 'outspoken' radical material, *Radical Sensibility*, pp. 160-84 (p. 166).

[3] See Angela Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*; Stuart Curran, 'Introduction', *Charlotte Smith*, v, pp. vii-xvii; Leanne Maunu, *Women Writing the Nation*; Amy Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings in the 1790s: Charlotte Smith, Mary Robinson, Elizabeth Inchbald* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Antje Blank and Janet Todd, 'Introduction' (2001); Alison Conway, 'Nationalism, Revolution, and the Female Body: Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', *Women's Studies*, 24 (1995), 395-409 for the most comprehensive studies.

As Adriana Craciun's valuable work has documented, Smith's novels become increasingly cosmopolitan, and her inclusion and use of movement and exile allow Smith to explore the experience of homelessness for a variety of figures.[4] The constant movement that this necessitates means that different geographical borders are crossed by the protagonists, and the spaces around these borders become important in themselves. Spaces that would normally involve a temporary stay, or the process of movement or crossing, become properly occupied and this allows the exploration of some interesting issues. Smith also shows that, in avoiding clear definition, such spaces can hold multiple dangers because of their instability. In *Desmond*, there are still some non-urban retreats that allow personal reflection, as was seen in Smith's early fiction. By 1794, however, natural space, whilst still providing a place of discussion, is also the site of struggle. The interest in liminal spaces seen in her earlier work becomes more complex with Smith's fiercer concentration upon alternative political and economic positions. The woods of *The Old Manor House* are now frozen, as well as desolate, whilst the swamp in *The Banished Man* holds the threat of suicide. Despair is more frequent, and the economic factors involved in isolation have political connotations. Fletcher understandably interprets this difficulty in finding an ideal place as indicating a 'pessimistic' turn in Smith's writing whilst, oddly, seeing Smith simultaneously as 'less hostile to authority'.[5] As Smith experiments with vocal radicalism, the variety of nationalities she utilises permits her characters to journey into further, more broken spaces, and to reflect upon a widespread, not purely Anglo-centric, breakdown. The struggles she reveals of those fighting to find identity or safe community are not always resolvable, and non-urban space, although still liberating, is sometimes too free an arena for those lacking stable boundaries.

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[4] Adriana Craciun, *British Women Writers and the French Revolution: Citizens of the World* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2005).

[5] *Biography*, p. 167.

Responsible Spaces: *Desmond*

Desmond is set between 1790 and 1792 and moves between France and England. Both in France and in Kent, Smith uses the metaphor of the country estate to examine landowner responsibilities in the context of radical change. The first French estate is a large property in the province of Normandy, owned by Montfleuri and visited by Desmond, the British hero. Desmond presents his observations in a series of letters to his previous guardian, Bethel, before travelling with Montfleuri to visit le Comte d'Hauteville, Montfleuri's uncle.[6] The Count's gothic castle is the antithesis to Montfleuri's modern estate: Montfleuri's land provides a sanctuary. Antje Blank and Janet Todd observe that Smith began by 'analogously linking the head of the state and the head of the household, but then featured the oppression resulting from abusive and inadequate male authority, familial and public'.[7] Diana Bowstead writes that the 'observations' that 'fill' the novel 'tie injustice in the government of nations to injustice in the government of families'.[8] For example, Verney, Geraldine's abusive and irresponsible husband, is on a par with Count d'Hauteville who neglects his entire estate in a move that critiques aristocratic privilege, as well as the irresponsible spending of both. This, obviously, functions as a metaphor for the heads of state, not only in France, but at home in England too. As Blank and Todd make clear, this analogy is far reaching.[9] The contrasting heads of estate in France–Montfleuri and the Count–have an impact upon the natural and economic qualities of their properties too. Smith discusses reliance upon financial stability alongside our involvement with and influence upon nature. As well as the estate metaphors, she also repeats some other earlier sites: a garden that facilitates liberal discussion, and two cottages. These reveal the weakness of political and moral boundaries in the face of the encroachment of nature.

In Smith's earlier fiction, she explored locations in which the heroine could temporarily escape the confines of society but that were ultimately unsustainable. In Montfleuri's land, however, liberty is more feasible because it is accompanied by realistic responsibilities. He draws characters away from the dangers and failings of wider society to a location that allows productivity and habitation. Welcoming all–Montfleuri gathers the vulnerable and abused–this estate becomes a miniature civilisation, enabling an inclusive cross-section of French society to be represented, liberated, and encouraged to work. Smith champions release from dependency by describing to her reader the institutionalised horrors these characters have escaped. Having rescued two of his sisters from restrictive religious orders, Montfleuri's third sister is described trapped in the 'cruel bonds' of a disastrous marriage. She is tied to 'one of the most worthless characters in France', a '*fier aristocrate*', who has 'quitted his country rather than behold it free' (47-48). Resembling Smith's own absent husband, this aristocrat's abusive behaviour becomes synonymous with his anti-revolutionary stance. Nor does his wealthy position protect him from deserving the 'worthless character' so frequently used to describe immoral mercantile characters.

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[6] Chris Jones and Diana Bowstead discuss Smith's use of the epistolary format; *Radical Sensibility*, pp. 166-67; 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*: The Epistolary Novel as Ideological Argument', in *Fetter'd or Free?* eds Mary Anne Schofield and Cynthia Macheski (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1986), pp. 237-63 (pp. 238, 259).

[7] Blank and Todd, 'Introduction' (2001), pp. 7-33 (p. 32).

[8] Bowstead, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 237.

[9] Bowstead has also compared land management styles in England, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', pp. 242-44. For more on Hauteville Castle, see *Biography*, pp. 147-48 and on Montfleuri's property, pp. 149-50.

Emphasising the difference between ideal male protection and the reality of abuse, the extent of aristocratic irresponsibility is revealed and then contrasted with Montfleuri's treatment of his 'habitation' and 'the country around it'. His 'liberal and enlightened spirit' has resulted 'in softening the harsh features of *that system of government, to which only the poverty and misery of such a country as this could, at any time, be owing*' (65). Smith ruthlessly criticises the inflictors of 'poverty and misery', whilst championing Montfleuri as a provider of relief. Smith is yet positive: the aristocracy, she suggests, can make amends by recollecting their responsibilities and 'softening' the conditions, aesthetically and economically, of their tenants. Montfleuri's sensitivity to the 'features' of the countryside is as crucial as his awareness of the poor. Whereas in *Celestina,* destructive rural France is constrictive and corrupt authority cannot be reasoned with, here in *Desmond,* land and government seem redeemable; there is hope of breaking free from habits of irresponsibility and this is reflected in a practical narrative of rational and economic considerations.[10] Smith uses elements of the gothic to emphasise the horrors of the working conditions of the poor, just as she has done with the dependency of women, but here she teaches her audience how to humanise these locations. Montfleuri's plan for work for the poor, like his plans for his estate, attempts to break cycles of irresponsibility throughout society.

Montfleuri's property displays his taste, his recognition of the value of nature and his practical progressive attitude toward change. He has 'no predilection for the gothic gloom in which his ancestors concealed their greatness' and so 'has pulled down every part of the original structure, but what was actually useful to himself' (65). The result is that his house has been brought 'into the form of one of those houses, which men of a thousand or twelve hundred a year inhabit in England' (65). Montfleuri has cut away the peripheral details of the estate to reduce it to a practical 'useful' house that facilitates hospitality, but modestly turns away from the 'gloom' of the past. That it is 'useful to himself' directly implies his own, continuing productivity. The cutting away of superfluous 'gloom' has connotations of medical operation too, where infection is cut away to allow healthy regrowth. Similarly, Montfleuri's simplification of the architecture draws upon the contemporary commendation of simplicity as good taste, and an avoidance of excessive or fashionable décor to demonstrate his commitment to change.[11]

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[10] See *Charlotte Smith*, IV, pp. 383-413.

Jane Austen would also condemn fashionable land management and its links to economic irresponsibility in *Emma* (1815) and *Mansfield Park* (1814), as had Ann Radcliffe in 1794 through characters such as St. Aubert and his objection to M. Quesnel's 'enthusiasm' for uprooting trees.[12] The symbolism of Montfleuri's actions is obvious, both in his disinfection of the old, merely ornamental role of aristocracy, and the striving for practicality, the desire to be innocent of the abuses of the previous regime. Leanne Maunu observes that 'in some respects […] Smith's analogy is a Burkean one, for Edmund Burke's model of progress relied on a gradual reformation of the state'.[13] Whilst Burke did promote reform, he was in favour of change so slow as to be 'almost imperceptible' whereas Montfleuri's actions are more decisive.[14] He desires realistic practical living, enjoying the home his wealth earns, but only insofar as it pertains to productivity and sanctuary, and veers away from excessive 'gothic gloom'. Smith grounds this fictional image with contemporary living costs, providing an economic and, crucially, an English context 'which men of a thousand or twelve hundred a year inhabit in England'.[15]

Smith's littering of verbs distinguishes Montfleuri's activity from prevalent notions of aristocratic inertia or uninterest: the phrase 'he has pulled down' draws attention to his participation in work. Ethically and intellectually alert, Montfleuri's behaviour is a critique of poor authority, a complimentary example of those aristocrats attempting to respond to the revolutionary desire for liberty and to further enable the workers of France. Smith's tone is acrimonious too, portraying stagnant aristocrats as fanciful and secluded. The mocking 'concealed' greatness hints at a lack of visible worth and predilections for empty grandeur. Emphasising the foreign element of the gothic is valuable here as it allows the English reader to further detach themselves, establishing a sense of superiority that facilitates frank discussion of the political situation without reflecting upon the possibility of a more local application of these criticisms. Yet the English financial context encourages consideration for Smith's readers at home. As England became increasingly defensive of her own structures of government, and the silencing of radical speakers became a common event, Smith wrote quite cannily, with her reader at home ever in mind.[16]

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[11] Leanne Maunu discusses Montfleuri's simplification, *Women Writing the Nation*, p. 90.

[12] See in particular the praise of landscape preservation in *Emma*, and the criticism of the prospect view in *Mansfield Park*; *Jane Austen*, VI, pp. 388-89; V, pp. 61-123. Both are indicators of concern for the future, as in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 13. See also Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1994), particularly pp. xviii-xix, pp. 38-48.

[13] Maunu, *Women Writing the Nation*, p. 99.

[14] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) (Oxford: OUP, 2009), p. 169.

[15] Keane compares Verney and Stamford's treatment of their estates with that of Montfleuri, *Women Writers in the English Nation*, pp. 89-90. Maunu discusses the metaphor of the house for the British government, *Women Writing the Nation*, p. 99.

Montfleuri's role as a model authority is supported by the repeatedly idyllic depiction of his land. Although Smith maintains the narrative of labour, the property is described in terms that become almost hallucinatory in their sensuality:

> Its situation is the most delicious that luxuriant fancy could imagine [...] The opposite banks rise immediately on the south side into steep hills of fantastic forms, cloathed with vines.–They are naturally indeed, little more than rocks; but wherever the soil was deficient, the industry of the labourers, who are in that district the tenants of Montfleuri, has supplied it; and the wine produced in this little mountainous tract is particularly delicious. (65)

Fletcher has commented on the frequency with which Smith mentions productive action. She writes that 'Growing grapes or grain, fishing or culling game, distributing, sharing, cooking or wasting food is a major preoccupation of *Desmond*. Charlotte has thought about the consequences of the revolution in a visceral and imaginative way'.[17] The extravagantly 'fantastic' scene, despite its natural barrenness, evokes a sense of warmth and fertility, with the cypress trees and free-flowing wine. Smith cleverly chooses her perspective to enhance this singular setting, enclosing the property amid steep hills: the banks are harder to plough, but the reward is that 'delicious' wine.

While this landscape enables an ideal French micro-civilisation, it is also separate from the reality of revolutionary France. What Montfleuri proudly calls his 'castle' is strategically isolated. The setting is also described in rather medieval terms, and Smith is unable to resist including a ruined nunnery:

> [N]othing can be more picturesque: when on a fine glowing evening, the almost perpendicular hill on which it stands is reflected in the unruffled bosom of the broad river, crowned with these venerable remains, half mantled in ivy, and other parasytical plants, and a few cypresses, which grow here as in Italy, mingling their spiral forms among the masses of ruin. (66)

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[16] Stephen Behrendt discusses the dangers for women engaging in 'anti-war writing' in '"A Few Harmless Numbers": British Women Poets and the Climate of War' in *Romantic Wars: Studies in Culture and Conflict, 1793-1822*, ed. Philip Shaw (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp. 13-36 (p. 14). Maunu discusses the censorship of the unfolding events in France, *Women Writing the Nation*, pp. 89-91. Amy Garnai draws attention to the challenges of censorship operating during the French Revolution, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, pp. 32-33.

[17] *Biography*, p. 149.

The romantic landscape is at odds with the hard labour of the peasantry, but it does allow for Desmond's romance, which seems more suited to a setting of picturesque beauty than that of cultivating toil.[18] Both he and Montfleuri continue to have some gothic leanings.

Smith's hopes for progressive change certainly encourage activity and initiative, but her portrayal of the ideal gradual change of French governance is also symbolised by the softness of nature's reclamation: the 'venerable' remains of past historical events are absorbed into the landscape, still visible but ultimately unthreatening. As Anne Janowitz remarks, such ruins are sure to 'remind those in opposition to central government that there has been a time when government was neither central nor uncontested'.[19] The successful destruction of an ancient building, symbolic of the collapse of other unwelcome structures, encourages the reader to place in a larger historical perspective the contemporary disagreements in France. Simultaneously, the reclamation by nature soothes the trepid citizen, reminding them of the ease with which the world recovers from change, however unexpected.[20] Smith's scene is both timeless and contemporary to her fight for individual autonomy. The ruin of the building is gently claimed by the landscape, 'mantled' by plants that feed upon it. Its remains are more aesthetically pleasing than they are useful. The description is emotive, yet the area seems isolated and peaceful. The draping of the plants suggests the protection of the vulnerable. The 'venerable' ruins are made peaceful by the 'unruffled' river: their elderliness is revered but change takes place nevertheless. These images become reassuring, if pervasively radical. The overgrowth of the ruins at once mutes their power, and yet preserves their foundations.

Smith's quiet, non-urban landscapes project her desires for the future of France, ones that could be stated with great clarity at the time of publication. A brief comparison with the castle of Comte d'Hauteville, however, highlights the extremes of poor and positive authority. Desmond's observations of this landscape are almost as harrowing as the nightmares he experiences under the Count's roof. His gothic dreams exaggerate the horror of this setting, bolstered by Smith's emphasis upon the economic consequences of the Count's irresponsibility. As Fletcher has identified, 'even in [her] first novel the Castle should be read as imaging the organisation of the state, which needs rearrangement or new blood'.[21] Bowstead describes this particular example as 'a magnificent gothic edifice within an agricultural wasteland', and it is the waste of that land that Smith's descriptions concentrate upon.[22] The Count provides no opportunity for productivity, but exists, almost housebound, within a dead landscape. Misusing his land and ignoring his tenants, he leaves the terrain unproductive, despite its easy flatness. The description of the area is measurable and Smith intersperses it with disheartening language: ‘dead’, ‘dull’, and ‘broken’ (77). Desmond’s supernatural dreams are dispelled but Smith’s records of the Count’s abuses are quantifiable. The land is of no use to tenants or temporary visitors and Desmond’s description expresses contempt:

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[18] Bowstead discusses the significance of Geraldine, Josephine and the ruin, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', pp. 250-51.

[19] Anne Janowitz, *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 3. Janowitz discusses the 'persistent theme' of the power of time in 'ruin sentiment' across genres.

[20] For example, Burke's shock at the events is well documented, Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, p. 39.

[21] *Biography*, p. 97; see pp. 146-49 for more on the symbolism of the dream and the castle.

[22] Bowstead, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 244.

> The look of even ill-managed cultivation soon after ceased; and over a piece of ground, which was grass, where it was not mole-hills, and from whence all traces of a road were obliterated, we approached to the end of an avenue of beech trees: they were rather the ruins of trees; for they had lost the beautiful and graceful forms nature originally gave them, by the frequent application of the axe; and were, many of them, little better than ragged pollards. (77)

Instead of ill management, here there is none. The land is no longer formally or naturally beautiful and there are no signs of positive industry. Cultivation has been replaced by the attack of ‘the frequent application of the axe’. Respect for nature has not been modelled by the Count and so the tenants have intervened: reducing graceful forms to ‘ragged’ pollards out of desperation for practical provision.

The Count has distanced himself from his responsibilities towards both his land and his people, and his systematic ill-management has damaged the estate. The harsh realities of the land are synonymous with those of the government: France has suffered under the same treatment with those in power equally reluctant to admit change:

> There had once been a straightwalk, leading from the termination of the avenue to the steps of the house, but it was now covered with thistles and nettles: the steps were overgrown with green moss, and when the great door opened to let us in, it seemed an operation to which it was entirely unaccustomed. (79)

The political system, like this moulding door, is ‘entirely unaccustomed’ to change, to opening. Even for Desmond and Montfleuri, both property owners in their own right, access is restricted. This setting, much like the organisation of France, will take years of work and management to return to working order. The Count has no interest in the stagnation of his home, or the need for rehabilitation. Indeed, he only listens to Montfleuri’s views because he owes him money (86-93). He is not interested in change.

Smith examines the dynamics of traditionally aristocratic spaces within an economic context, identifying benefits and dangers for the tenant inhabiting these (ir)regulated spaces. She attempts to establish a balanced geography that tempers man’s liberty in and enjoyment of nature with the responsibility of land-ownership. Montfleuri's intellectual and physical work is rewarded with greater pleasure in the ownership of his land and in the exercise of justice. In the estate of the Count, however, we see the self-absorption of its owner infecting the local tenants. Smith looks toward the progressive, thoughtful nature of Montfleuri's arrangement, yet she simultaneously warns of the magnitude of the task France had taken on. Within this, perhaps the illicit romance of Josephine and Desmond is a foreshadowing of the liberal, potentially dangerous, freedom such a rearrangement may encourage.

If the privacy of the Count's home is excessive, and the freedom of Montfleuri's land is idealistic, it is with a balance of the two that intelligent discussion of change can be facilitated. The Luxembourg Gardens–a green space within the city of Paris–provide this retreat for Montfleuri and Desmond, in a way that few other spaces do.[23] The weather is mild, the area is safe despite increasing darkness, and the conversation flows as freely as the space does around them. The pace of conversation is even and measured; a direct contrast to the idea or more rapid conversation, the frantic and emotional appeal that some feared characterised discussion of the Revolution. For example, Wordsworth places his work in opposition to the 'craving for extraordinary incident' and 'rapid communication' that 'blunt the discriminating powers of the mind', valuing instead the quiet simplicity that Smith, here, attempts to portray.[24] Angela Keane describes *Desmond* as a reproduction of 'the pamphlet debate' and a commentary upon England 'on the brink of collapse', but the drama Keane emphasises is momentarily halted in this tranquil space.[25]

Smith makes every effort to de-gothicise this outdoor location as Montfleuri relates the 'history of Jacobinism' (55-60).[26] In these scenes, Desmond represents Smith's ideal reader, open to education and the rational analysis of what he hears and sees. There is no threat of interruption to their discussion or challenge to their use of this place. Radical topics of conversation can arise without disrupting nature. Montfleuri explains his history at length, until Desmond declares:

> Here our conference was ended for this time, at least, on politics. We took a few turns among the happy groups who were either walking, or sitting, to enjoy the most beautiful moon-light evening I ever remember to have seen; and I then returned to my hotel, and went to my repose. (60)

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[23] Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) show one other text openly based in this unusual setting, despite the popularity of Paris in contemporary literature: *A Remarkable Dialogue, Which Lately Happened in the Gardens of Luxembourg at Paris. Between an Old Impartial English Whig, and a Nonjuror of the Church of England, Concerning the Young Chevalier,… By a Prussian officer*, printed in Edinburgh, 1749-50.

[24] William Wordsworth, 'The Preface' (1801) in *Lyrical Ballads,* ed. Michael Mason (Harlow: Pearson/Longman, 2007), p. 9.

[25] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 82-83.

[26] Bowstead summarises Montfleuri's role as such, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 245.

This recollection with its superlative language reassures Smith's readers about intellectual and political debate. Desmond and Montfleuri stroll amongst other conversationalists, openly expounding their ideas fluently, in nature. In the castle, these topics led to argument and almost to insanity for characters who refused to look out, to observe contemporary change (92). In the Luxembourg Gardens, however, in these gentle lessons, there is a pervasive sense that, having escaped the gothic entrapment of the indoors, everything can be treated rationally. The tranquillity of this location confirms the moral righteousness of the discussions, which intermingle with the observation of nature. The Luxembourg Gardens are free, too, from architectural imposition, providing a temporary escape from the choice between alternative models.

The correct space and use of space, Smith argues, enables the discussion of justice, but as Volume Two moves to the domestic scenery of England, the reader is reminded that spaces open to Geraldine Verney are much more constrained.[27] Geraldine, unwanted by mother or husband, retreats with her children to a woodland cottage to recover her health. This has similarities with the scene in *Emmeline,* but Geraldine's behaviour is not that of Adelina: she is faultless in her actions toward her abusive husband. She is also alert to spatial dynamics. Her political alignment with Montfleuri is shown elsewhere in her suggestions to Desmond about the management of his Kent estate, whilst her own management of the scenes in the woodland glade shows Geraldine choosing how to respond to sexual intruders. As Pat Elliott has described, women like Geraldine, Emmeline and Mrs Stafford can be distinguished from earlier models of heroines by 'their maturity, intelligence, and often their spirit'.[28] Whilst Geraldine's position is restricted in so many ways, she nevertheless has strong opinions about interactions with the surrounding land, seen in her influence upon Desmond, but especially in her own choices about her use of non-urban isolation.

Geraldine's glade is the clearest early example of Smith returning to a favourite type of space, but placing it within a different context. This glade differs from that occupied by Adelina precisely because Smith admits real and persistent threats to it. For Adelina, potential intrusions were only hypothetical, but the thought of threat was enough to provoke both a sentimental response and a hurried escape. For Geraldine, the glade really is invaded, not only by the French Duke who has been offered Geraldine in payment of her husband's debts, but by the hero, Desmond.[29] This repeated predatory invasion leads to a sexual vulnerability that contrasts starkly with the protective geography: the house is ‘embosomed’ between flowers and the heath (174). Similarly, Desmond’s discovery and observation of Geraldine effectively removes the sanctity her moral behaviour has developed, as does her participation in observing and welcoming him. Although he attempts to protect her from the French Duke, Desmond’s own violation of the domestic boundary is persistent. For example, instead of waiting at the cottage door, Desmond swiftly moves in to observe Geraldine reclining with her ill child:

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[27] Bowstead comments upon the unusual structural decision of 'geographically separating' Smith's main characters, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 241.

[28] Bowstead, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 95.

[29] Michael Wiley discusses Smith's use of the cottage site and compares it to her beaches as a space of uncertainty in the poetry, 'The Geography of Displacement and Replacement in Charlotte Smith's *The Emigrants*', *European Romantic Review*, 17 (2006), 56-68 (pp. 61-62).

> I lifted up the iron latch, and opened it.–I crossed the brick hall […] The door […] was a-jar; I pushed it gently open […] I dared hardly breathe lest I should too suddenly alarm her. Her eyes were shut. (204-05)

The blur between indoor and outdoor space, whilst aligning Geraldine’s arrangements with nature, allows Desmond to observe her in an intimate position of distress. Desmond and Geraldine then perform a sequence of observations, in which the use of a telescope reminds us of Celestina’s attempts to possessively view Alvestone Park (189). Here, it is Geraldine’s undressed body that Desmond aims for. Geraldine’s observations are equally sexual, justified by–she hastens to explain–the activities of her boy, whose interaction with Desmond needs overseeing (184, 193). Geraldine’s description of her own behaviour flags up its unusual nature: ‘I could not […] forbear marking from my window the way he took […] as long as I could discern his figure through the obscurity of the night’ (184). Whilst scholarly attention has highlighted the morality of Geraldine’s behaviour, by drawing attention to Geraldine’s maternal choices we can miss the regularity and duration of her observations of Desmond.[30] Smith is cautious. Geraldine’s behaviour is consistently defended or explained, but her understanding of the boundaries of this space, and her willingness to use them, increases until she can read, interpret, and finally vocalise what she perceives.

Space, Smith emphasises, is always associated with morality. By later bringing his French mistress to the same cottage to undergo her confinement, Desmond shows persistent naivety about this. Instead, Fanny Verney, initially depicted as the inexperienced character of the novel, is the first to recognise and explain the connotations of space to Geraldine; she warns her sister not to occupy a place, however maternal or appropriate, that has accommodated prostitutes (154-55). Thus when Fanny questions Geraldine’s contact with Desmond too, and warns of the danger of other men, the reader should trust her insight more than that of Geraldine. The latter resorts to mockingly contrasting Fanny's concerns with the dangers experienced by a heroine of sentimental fiction, comparing one man, Colonel Scarsdale, to a 'modern Lovelace' (179). Geraldine believes herself capable of discerning and navigating any possible sexual danger seen in man's use of space. However, to a more impartial observer, Desmond's sexualised behaviour begins to seem as predatory as Verney's. Negotiating the dynamics of these places, for innocent women and even for experienced men, is complicated**.** Yet despite repetitive evidence of Geraldine's preoccupation with her children, and her scorn at Fanny's concerns, Geraldine demonstrates real awareness of spatial politics in her communication with the Duke.

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[30] There has been much attention paid to this maternal aspect: Conway argues that Geraldine cannot be disruptive whilst maternal, *Nationalism, Revolution, and the Female Body,* pp. 395-409 (p. 399); Eleanor Ty and Chris Jones argue for Geraldine as a representation of conservative womanhood, *Unsex'd Revolutionaries,* p. 138; *Radical Sensibility,* p. 163; Keane discusses women’s relationship to the maternal and the nation, *English Writers and the English Nation,* pp. 3-4.

> '[S]he must beg leave to decline the honour he intends her of a place in his carriage [...] Mrs Verney is sorry the small house and establishment she has here, make it impossible for her to receive the Duc De Romagnecourt at her present residence [...]' Bridge-foot Manor-farm. (203)

Geraldine's firm rejection acknowledges that possession of her domestic space is synonymous with possession of her body. Smith is using a long-standing trope from the sentimental novel that ties in with her reference to Lovelace.[31] Refusing the Duke's 'place', Geraldine explains the impossibility of his visit, listing practical, spatial, reasons that prevent her receiving the intruder. However, spatial impracticality and protection from nature prove inadequate, emphasising not only Geraldine's fallibility, but also the inescapability of these threats to women, children, and to marriage.

Diana Bowstead observes that 'Geraldine's story serves to bring a kind of realism into fiction that was new to the novel in 1792'.[32] By generating pity in the reader, Bowstead argues that Smith intended to 'motivate critical insight' into issues surrounding power and vulnerability.[33] Geraldine is unable to separate her children from corrupt company, and constant surveillance and intrusion mean that they become as vulnerable as she is. The glade, far from protecting the maternal role, invites invasion and encourages deviant desire because it lacks an authorised protector. Further, Desmond's eagerness to adopt this position suggests Geraldine's unacknowledged desire for him. Increasingly Geraldine and her children are seen at the door or window, but their innocent desire to look out becomes a shield for her sexual yearning.

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[31] For more on the significance of Samuel Richardson to Smith, see W. Austin Flanders, 'An Example of the Impact of the French Revolution on the English Novel: Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', in *The Western Pennsylvania Symposium on World Literatures, Selected Proceedings: 1974-1991*, ed. Carla E. Lucente (Greensburg, PA: Eadmer, 1992), pp. 145-50. Claudia Johnson also explores Geraldine's naivety in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 28-48.

[32] Bowstead, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 253.

[33] Bowstead, 'Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*', p. 252. Critical reviewers at the time agreed with this interpretation, commenting that such novels as this were 'becoming the vehicles of useful instruction', *Monthly Review*, 1792, n. s. 9, p. 406.

Desmond's political wisdom distracts from his domestic deviance: his desire to protect Geraldine seems to have blinded critics to the inappropriateness of his surveillance, which is eventually both invited and mourned by Geraldine.[34] Having demonstrated her understanding of the coding of spatial invasion, Geraldine's behaviour toward Desmond cannot be seen as entirely innocent.[35] Smith encourages model authority figures to attempt to counteract the dangerous misuses of male power, yet the very immorality of this particular attempt at protection makes it another example of the misuse of responsibility that Smith is criticising, an example, too, of the instability such a location allows.

With spaces such as this, Smith shows the boundaries between the indoors and outdoors becoming weaker, used for observation rather than separation. Indeed, the blurring of moral choices in *Desmond* is frequently accompanied by confusion about geographical boundaries. Kathleen Oliver has argued that Smith's 'proposed solution to the spatial dilemma encountered by women' is to create 'interior spaces that integrate the natural world as fully as possible, theoretically allowing for both freedom and security'.[36] However, the imprecise nature of such interiors makes them difficult and dangerous to navigate. Like the outdoors, they allow freedom for the heroine but also for her attackers. The uniting of the outdoors and indoors, first expanded in the description of Geraldine's cottage entrance, is repeated toward the end of the novel. Alone and in danger, Geraldine now sees the exploration of a nearby cottage as equally risky as an escape to the forest.[37] Her concerns are proved accurate as the cottage is occupied by banditti, and their misuse of the domestic interior is demonstrated in their easy acceptance of the protrusion of nature into the cottage: 'A fire of vine stalks and turf was made in the chimney of the room, which was floored only with earth, or rather with mud' (311). Significantly, this cottage is too accepting of nature. The looseness of distinction between the indoors and outdoors becomes threatening, and threatening characters occupy such a space.

More than this, as domestic and political spaces encroach upon each other, even Smith's boundary between the radical and anti-revolutionary becomes indistinct. Geraldine and Desmond are forced to retreat to the Count's abandoned castle but they are unable to determine who now occupies it. Its emptiness signifies the first wave of immigration, yet it is impossible to see who is now in control:

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[34] This reading complicates the work of Alison Conway, which positions Geraldine's body as maternal, despite these signals of desire, and despite Geraldine's voluntary decision to leave her children in Rouen whilst in pursuit of her husband, p. 399.

[35] In particular, Keane discusses the use of Geraldine as a metaphor for the national situation. Maunu also discusses the link between 'roles of gender and national identity', *Women Writing the Nation*, p. 85.

[36] Kathleen Oliver, 'Seeking Shelter in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*', in *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1660-1820*, eds Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014), pp. 195-210 (p. 195).

[37] Fletcher writes of a similar confusion between the interior and exterior of the Count's castle, *Biography*, p. 147.

> We now entered a dark and gothic hall.–Warham stumbled over something, he stooped and took it up; it was one of those caps to travel in of a night, used sometimes in England, but oftener in France; a bullet had pierced it, and it was on one side covered with blood. (319)

The similarity in appearance between the revolutionaries and anti-revolutionaries causes the escalation of gothic suspense, and reasoned thinking is of little help. It is unclear, too, who has altered the landscape: the fosse both traps the travellers and protects them from the anti-revolutionaries. The uncertain possession of the castle represents the leadership of France; Smith provokes questions about who is in charge, and who should be. The rebels, like Verney, must be removed for the revolution to have a chance of success, yet they seem inseparable from the radicals. Verney's royalist role, his flitting from one powerful aristocrat to another, and from place to place, shows a fickleness that Smith wished to underscore in British supporters of the counter-revolution. Angela Keane describes such opportunities to 'capitalise on economic and political instability' from the 1790s onwards, and Verney's slyness is shown in his ready geographical relocation.[38] Keane calls this lack of connection to location a 'ready displacement', a sign of weakness and material interest: someone who will abandon or misappropriate place to achieve material gain. Whilst Desmond, despite constant movement, is identified with a stable estate in Kent that signifies his responsibility, Verney's properties have been let or invaded. It is not just space in France that is indeterminate; such men show the vulnerability of English spaces, exposed to the whims and debts of their owners.

In Smith's unsettled conclusion to the novel, she abandons her progressive portrayals of representative aristocratic behaviour for an emphasis upon the responsibility of the individual. The shaken style and content of the conclusion reflects the difficulty of resolving Smith's diametrically opposing estate metaphors.[39] Space, politics, the future of France, are all considerably more complicated than such an analogy. The reviewer for *European Magazine* was particularly pleased that this conclusion was 'unembarrassed by a crowd of improbabilities', but this was a first for Smith.[40] Her minute engagement with the issues of the period is evident in her experimentation with the portrayal of land to emphasise responsible living, but not all landscapes are this easily solved. Smith extends her earlier examinations of personal autonomy to address the rights of the people, in France and in the home, in an argument that begins with great clarity, but concludes with political and domestic irresolution.[41] The relocation of the final community is vague and briefly described, and as society continues to be shaken, Desmond and Montfleuri must adapt to different working roles themselves. In the final chapter alone, they are represented as nursemaids, scouts and soldiers. Perhaps this fracturing of identity, as with the fracturing of space, nods towards the very literal displacement of Smith's characters that would follow, both at home in England and much further abroad.

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[38] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 89.

[39] For more on the style and structure of *Desmond*, see Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 81-107 (pp. 81-84) and Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, pp. 15, 19.

[40] Unsigned review of *Desmond. A Novel*, *European Magazine*, n. s. 22 (1792), pp. 21-23 (p. 21).

The Old Manor House

If *Desmond* concludes with some uncertainty about character roles and locations, Smith's following novel, *The Old Manor House*, is distinguished by a focus on the protagonist's desperation to adopt one very particular role and space. The plot follows Orlando Somerive and his attempts to secure his inheritance of Rayland Hall and with it the authority long held by his great-aunt. The result is an interesting depiction of the changing spaces of the 1770s and Orlando's struggle to recognise or adapt to them. In part, Orlando's difficulties stem from the very real alterations around him, but they are also tied to his determination to claim a heroic romantic role and archaic feudal power: both responses belong to a different time and a different genre. Angela Keane has described the 'trope of exile that dominates the ending of *Desmond*' as one that 'can be attributed both to a 'Romantic' preoccupation with a generalised condition of alienation and to the more particular impact of revolution and war on the discourse of national belonging'.[42] Smith's interest in individual alienation is seen in her earliest fiction, but in *The Old Manor House* and *The Banished Man* Smith considers individuals from a wide range of circumstances and nations. She gives attention to characters experiencing overtly revolutionary turmoil but also to those negotiating the changing economic climate in a more social setting.[43] For Orlando, the longing to 'belong' to an unchanging feudal place sits at odds with commercial changes around him. He effectively refuses to acknowledge or allow for the impact of difference and consequently his experiences seem more overtly romantic or unreal than those of Smith's other protagonists. On the topic of the romance genre, Jacqueline Labbe has observed that this novel was 'read as a romance, rather than as a political novel. Its setting in the past, its love story plot, its Gothic-style machinery all function to promote the romance–the unreal–rather than the novel–the believable'.[44] Yet the novel continues to be full of signs of the real: the financial, practical decisions, rent arrangements, and legal entanglement. These issues, like his immediate family, are sidelined by Orlando in his determination to create his own quest.

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[41] Pat Elliott, Amy Garnai and Stuart Curran discuss the uncertainty of Smith's conclusion; Elliott, 'Charlotte Smith's Feminism', p. 110-11; Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 19; Curran, 'Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism', *South Central Review*, 11 (1994), 66-78 (p. 70).

[42] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 89.

[43] Mary Wollstonecraft documents the alterations in commerce and land ownership in her *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*, in *Mary Wollstonecraft* (1989), v, pp. 56-57. Chris Jones describes different 'objections to commercialism', *Radical Sensibility*, p. 169.

[44] Jacqueline M. Labbe, 'Introduction' to *The Old Manor House* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2002), pp. 9-32 (p. 27). Labbe also discusses the interaction between the economic and romance plots in 'Metaphoricity and

Loraine Fletcher has claimed that Smith 'was the first novelist to take as her setting a castle or great house intended to be read as a precise emblem of England' and argues that this novel 'brought Burke's house image into the mainstream of English fiction'.[45] Smith's Rayland Hall is one of the many responses to Burke's house of Britain and *The Old Manor House* (1793) harnesses aspects of the historical novel, disguising contemporary radical analysis within the details of the American War of Independence (1775-1783).[46] Although critics have interpreted Smith's timing as a distancing strategy from the French Revolution, as Keane highlights, the 1770s themselves were by no means an untroubled period.[47] In one way, Orlando's intentional disengagement from contemporary change is helpful: his journey through America as a soldier allows Smith to expose the symptoms of corruption in contemporary warfare. Orlando's innocent interrogation of his position guides the reader through a catalogue of government crimes, whilst highlighting the economic greed and ruthless patriotism of his compatriots.[48] However, Orlando's constant fascination with and fantasies of Rayland Hall whilst in America also make his own perspective suspect. Crucially, space away from the urban ceases to be a place of discussion or liberty in this novel, and instead shows the preoccupations of those using or visiting nature.[49] Simultaneously, the increasing spread of economic and political power over the non-urban leaves fewer spaces within which to explore individual reason, and fewer places capable of realistically supporting the autonomous subject.

The spaces of *The Old Manor House* provide a framework for Smith's political critique, within which she employs, sometimes comically, stock settings and images to address specific ideas about progress and change. The predictability of these devices is criticised by Simon Parkes, who argues that Orlando's ongoing weakness of character is accentuated by easily anticipatable generic climax.[50] However, Orlando's failure as a hero signifies more than generic failure: he lacks the ability to navigate the landscape, seen in his inability to protect,

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the Romance of Property in *The Old Manor House*', *Novel,* 34 (2001), 216-31. The importance of the discourses of romance and realism to Monimia's role is discussed by Kaley Kramer, 'Women and Property', pp. 1152-53. Angela Wright discusses the roots of the distancing technique of using history and romance in *Britain, France and the Gothic,* p. 62.

[45] *Biography*, pp. 164, 144. See also pp. 133-37 for more on Burke and renovation.

[46] Smith's reference to Burke is mentioned in most criticism concerning this novel. Most particularly, see Carmel Murphy, 'Jacobin History: Charlotte Smith's *Old Manor House* and the French Revolution Debate', *Romanticism,* 20 (2014), 271-81 (p. 279); Barbara Tarling, '"The Slight Skirmishing of a Novel Writer": Charlotte Smith and the American War of Independence', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, pp. 71-86 (pp. 73-78); and *Biography*, pp. 164-66 and 177-79; Ina Ferris, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte* Smith, VI (2006), pp. vii-xix (pp. xii-xiii), and Stuart Curran, 'Charlotte Smith: Intertextualities', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism,* pp. 175-88 (p. 188).

[47] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation,* p. 97.

[48] See Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 96-97.

[49] See Gary Kelly on the use of nature as a 'refuge from Revolution', 'Revolutionizing the Novel', p. 373.

[50] Simon Parkes, '"More Dead Than Alive": The Return of Not-Orlando in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*', *European Romantic Review,* 22 (2011), 765-84 (p. 777). Also see Claudia L. Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1995).

fight, and even at times to walk. Wrapped up in romantic ideals, Orlando disregards practical provision for himself, his lover, or his family. Encounters with Monimia to him are encounters with a damsel in distress, and he uses America, not as an ideal space, or an interesting location in itself, but to reflect upon and fantasise about England and Rayland Hall.[51] Orlando's failure is because he is too generic, too fictitious. He can only win his fortune and wife by falling back upon an outdated system of power. He belongs to another kind of novel, just as Mrs Rayland belongs to a different time and this, to some extent, explains his regular misinterpretation of the land itself.

Labbe and Parkes have discussed Orlando's disorientation upon his return from America, which they attribute to his experience of war.[52] I would argue, however, that his physical awkwardness is partially because of the confrontation of his fantasies about England with the reality of returning to it. Although Labbe has recognised the general 'constant struggle' that Orlando experiences because he is 'totally immersed in a world of romance', Orlando is unable to negotiate the physical landscape itself because of his incessant romantic escapism.[53] In one instance, upon being returned to England, Orlando remembers that he dropped the sword overboard that had been intended for payment for his journey.

> [H]is high and romantic spirit might have been unwilling to surrender to those rapacious wretches; but fortunately perhaps both for them and for himself, this his only weapon had slipt from under his arm as he was violently staggered by a sudden tossing of the boat […] and was irrecoverably lost. (338)

This loss, symbolic of his loss of an aristocratic role, has far-reaching consequences upon his behaviour. Unable to pay the people who rescue him, unable to feed himself or to provide a home for Monimia, Orlando wanders from one role to the next, failing to understand the economic needs and responsibilities of each position, and replaying his memories rather than acknowledging the present. Thankfully, however, as Smith shows here, this same escapism or blindness frequently prevents Orlando from reacting to his circumstances in a romantic (or heroic) manner, and thus protects him from the consequences of further rash action. As Katharine Rogers observes, 'Romantic elements emphasize the disparity between the unworldly, unselfish hero and heroine and the sordid world they must live in'.[54] For Orlando, adopting a romantic role means that he interprets space in the light of romance rather than considering the practical needs that Smith continually emphasises. Whilst Susan Staves has concluded that Smith approved of Orlando's romantic behaviour and her 'elements of satire and ridicule' had 'vanished' by this point, any reading of Orlando's interactions with the land itself complicates this position.[55]

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[51] For more on the uses of America in 1780s fiction, see W. M. Verhoeven, 'Land-Jobbing in the Western Territories: Radicalism, Transatlantic Emigration, and the 1790s American Travel Narrative', in *Romantic Geographies: Discourses of Travel, 1775-1844*, ed. A. Gilroy (Manchester: MUP, 2000), pp. 185-203 (pp. 185-88). Labbe referred to these geographical errors as Smith's 'notorious mistake–locating Savannahs in New York State and allowing Canada to bloom with magnolias', 'Introduction' (2002), p. 14. For more on Smith's American fantasy and her utopian ideas more generally, see Craciun, *British Women Writers and the French Revolution*, pp. 166-71.

[52] Mary A. Favret also writes of the dislocation of war and its creation of two different bodies/experiences. See 'Coming Home: The Public Spaces of Romantic War', *Studies in Romanticism*, 33 (1994), 539-48.

[53] Labbe, 'Introduction' (2002), p. 22.

Misreading becomes mismanagement as Orlando encounters generic space that he is unable to use to his advantage. Despite the acknowledged probability of his becoming heir and authority of Rayland Hall, Orlando is unable to act appropriately: he is in an awkward position of not-yet power. This is seen particularly in his secret assignations with Monimia, in which Orlando is both master of Monimia and the secret passageways, and victim to others who use the location more efficiently. Smith highlights this when Orlando accosts a ghost, who is revealed as a local infamous figure–Jonas.[56] The gothic register is particularly effective here, and Sir Walter Scott described it as 'a fine scene of natural terror'.[57] Although Orlando unmasks the rational cause of his fear as Emmeline did before him, he is unable to defeat it, despite a similar familiarity with the place. Instead of disarming the gothic, Orlando tries to take advantage of it for his own ends.[58] The discovery of smuggling, rather than leading to the intervention of the law or the aristocrat to prevent illicit behaviour, inspires Orlando to participate in deviating from the norm, and to take advantage of these imprecise or fraught spaces to further his relationship with Monimia. He refuses to behave as a figure of feudal justice, and chooses instead to participate in the romance of smuggling by using Monimia's body as his contraband.[59] Any kind of gothic crescendo is dispelled by Jonas' identification, but Smith instead creates anxiety around a more practical focus: the smuggler's financial double-bind and the inability of those from the estate to take this economic problem seriously.[60] Quickness to respond here is positive: Orlando does show himself able to consider the impact of his family's power, but he is unable to propose a solution and his usefulness as an ally is undermined by his physical clumsiness.[61] Orlando trips and falls: he defeats Jonas only because the latter is too drunk to respond so that even while the symptoms of the gothic have been displaced and ridiculed, romantic chivalry is simultaneously mocked.[62] At least, Smith implies, the gothic interpretation is justified to some extent: there are real reasons for the inhabitants of the hall to fear these midnight visitors, driven to subversive behaviour. The gothic has been hijacked, however: it is of little surprise to see–throughout the novel–former underlings beginning to take advantage of the power that diminishing feudal control allows them. Orlando is unable to resolve this: neither authority figure nor smuggler, he has no appropriate position from which to act and his success as a hero is dependent upon his participation in the inheritance of old economic behaviours rather than modern opportunities.[63]

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[54] Rogers, 'Romantic Aspirations', p. 85.

[55] Susan Staves, 'Don Quixote in Eighteenth-Century England', *Comparative Literature*, 24 (1972), 193-215 (p. 211).

[56] Jonas serves as a commentator upon the state of the estate and its incumbents, *Biography*, pp. 164-66, 188.

[57] Sir Walter Scott, 'Charlotte Smith' in *Miscellaneous Prose Works* (Ealing: Cadell, 1843), 4, pp. 20-70 (p. 63), <https://archive.org/details/miscellaneouspro04scotuoft> [accessed on 23 September 2017].

[58] See Angus Whitehead for a link between Orlando hiding Monimia and supernatural beliefs in 'An Allusion to "[…] All the Ghosts in the Red Sea […]" in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House* (1794)', *Notes and Queries*, 55 (2008), 28-29.

[59] Vivien Jones discusses the similar predatory gaze of both Jonas and Orlando, '"The Coquetry of Nature": Politics and the Picturesque in Women's Fiction', in *The Politics of the Picturesque: Literature, Landscape and Aesthetics since 1770*, eds Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 120-144 (pp. 132-34).

[60] James Holt McGavran Jr describes Orlando taking advantage of local poaching too, 'Smuggling, Poaching and the Revulsion against Kinship in *The Old Manor House*', *Women's Writing*, 16 (2009), 20-38 (p. 30). Ledoux writes of gothic writing being used to encourage 'social consciousnesses' during the revolutionary period, *Social Reform*, p. 4. For more on the economics of Rayland Hall, see Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 98-99.

Orlando's dependence upon an identity associated with Rayland Hall is shown when he travels to America and yet continues to focus upon the ideal of occupying English soil. Although Orlando's escapist fantasy is justified by his suffering in America, he focuses upon England to a degree that borders on madness: 'the hall and all its inhabitants were present to him; and he started up to demand instant satisfaction of Sir John Belgrave' (323-24). Although Orlando regrets the miles separating him from fulfilling this fantasy of feudal defence, his previous behaviour casts doubt on his ability to behave as usefully as his imagination suggests. This contrast between Orlando's imagined and physical capabilities is interesting. Whilst crossing the Hudson River as the sole captive of a local tribe, Orlando becomes the only man not 'in some degree cheerful' because his thoughts remain in England (324). His captor, Wolf-hunter, resents Orlando's desire to escape their company. So, to fit in, whilst Orlando's mind is preoccupied with England, he allows his body to become part of the tribe, increasingly resembling them in appearance and behaviour.[64] His fantasies about England extend into a sterile form of action as Orlando composes letters for those he anticipates having already died in his absence. Rather than examining the extremely unusual space and circumstance he finds himself in, Orlando becomes obsessed with romance, driven to spend hours imagining Monimia's voice and behaviour. There is quite a contrast with Desmond at this point, whose behaviour, whilst including romantic fantasy, never prevents him openly discussing contemporary events. Orlando is so preoccupied with the end result of his relationships with both Mrs Rayland and Monimia that he is unable to acknowledge the difference of his current circumstances. This makes him a difficult vessel for political analysis. Orlando turns away from the scene of beauty to focus on his misery, and also turns from political alertness toward narcissistic analysis:

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[61] Whilst Fletcher argues that Orlando demonstrates an ability to sympathise, Orlando's inability to prevent the smuggling leads to questions about his competence as the future ruler of the Manor House.

[62] For more on the romance epic see Rachel Crawford, 'Troping the Subject: Behn, Smith, Hemans and the Poetics of the Bower', *Studies in Romanticism*, 38 (1999), 249-79 (p. 259).

[63] This of course was one of the key topics discussed by Edmund Burke and Mary Wollstonecraft in their respective publications.

[64] Orlando's relationship with Wolf-hunter is analysed by Derek T. Leuenberger in '"Their Only Protector and Support": Protection and Dependency in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*', *European Romantic Review*, 28 (2017), 139-61 (pp. 149-50, 153). Interestingly, Simon Parkes points out that the Hudson River is also where Orlando is rumoured to be buried, 'More Dead than Alive', p. 775.

> On this side all was cheerful and lovely–on the other mournful and gloomy, the latter suited better with the disposition Orlando was in, and he reared his little hut on that side next the cypress swamp, and under the covert [sic] of the dark fir trees that waved over it. (330)

Ensconced in dreams of his lover, his father, and his patroness, Orlando is woken by an 'ill omen'd bird', prompting his composition of the melancholic sonnet at the conclusion of Volume Three.[65] Orlando is irritated by the noise, and resents reality replacing his fantasies about Rayland Hall.

Although Barbara Tarling observes that Orlando 'contrasts the pastoral happiness he has enjoyed in his native country with the misery he sees around him', actually, in America, it is Orlando's choice to locate his 'little hut' in isolation and to indulge his 'gloomy' disposition.[66] This preference for isolation has a dangerous, rather than a liberating, effect. Orlando's negative interpretation of the bird seems supported by descriptions of nature as 'funereal' and 'lurid', yet the reader has just observed Orlando intentionally choose the 'mournful and gloomy' location over the 'cheerful and lovely' alternative of his fellow companions (330). In his sonnet, Orlando struggles to distinguish between 'real ills' and 'phantoms of despair' as he privileges romance over reality. Despite having a choice about the locations open to him, Orlando indulges in solitary grief but about his options at home, not his present captivity. The description of the surrounding country here is particularly threatening as Smith employs multiple symbols of death, yet Orlando's anger is not with the landscape or even with the mismanagement of the war itself, but with the danger to his plans for the future. The land is laden with symptoms of Orlando's mental state: the confusion of the fog, his obsession with impending death represented by the 'funearial' figures, and Orlando's conscious decision to humour and focus upon these aspects. Rufus Paul Taylor described Smith's depiction of nature as one that 'dovetail[s] with and aid[s] mood and accident, as well as characterization'.[67] By choosing to indulge his woes, Orlando stands against the many examples of reasoned behaviour modelled in

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[65] Janine Nordius argues that this sonnet shows an increasing indulgence in sensation, '"A Kind of Living Death": Gothicizing the Colonial Encounter in Charlotte Smith's *The Old Manor House*', *English Studies*, 86 (2005), 40-50 (p. 48).

[66] Tarling, 'Charlotte Smith and the American War of Independence', p. 81.

[67] Rufus Paul Turner, 'Charlotte Smith (1749-1806): New Light on her Life and Literary Career' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southern California, 1966), p. 127. Labbe makes a similar point, 'Introduction' (2002), p. 14.

Smith's novels thus far. The decision to exercise rational thought in the cases of Geraldine, Emmeline, and Celestina led to the realistic addressing of their fears, and often resulted in their progression to a fruitful place. Orlando's decision to indulge in anxiety and to use nature to exacerbate his 'mood' foreshadows the troubles that have yet to befall him, and how poorly his mental and physical state can withstand them.

Whilst abroad, Orlando is preoccupied with Monimia despite his dramatic circumstances. Surprisingly, this preoccupation continues once Orlando has returned to England, which leads to his own practical danger and an insensibility to the experiences and development of other characters. Orlando not only misunderstands himself, but cannot interpret the world about him. Simon Parkes has called Orlando 'a rather ineffective chivalric hero'.[68] Indeed, his attempts to fulfil the romantic expectations of a returning hero are painfully comical: he is repeatedly physically and socially clumsy. Parkes ascribes this physical weakness to being 'dislocated' in body and identity, 'his physical state reflecting his geographical and emotional dislocation', observing that 'Smith cleverly confuses the boundaries of time and space'.[69] Mary Favret observes that such confusion is common of 'wartime experience', which 'cannot be easily compartmentalised *there* and *here*; it overflows these spaces, somehow fugitive and omnipresent at once'.[70] It is particularly Orlando's reading or framing of space that is confused. Upon returning to the British shore, Orlando, longing to resemble a true patriot, 'kissed the beloved soil' devotionally, and narrowly avoids drowning himself (338). Then, in his enthusiasm to walk home, Orlando falls 'headlong' off a cliff (340). Orlando cannot recognise the difference in his situation. He is confident in his ability to navigate the natural surroundings, despite constant mistakes. Indeed, Orlando's continual mistakes about the landscape demonstrate his increasingly liminal position: not fully recognised or confirmed in his local identity, Orlando seems unwilling to acknowledge any alteration in the economic or physical climate during his absence. The admission of such would necessitate examination of his own role in the estate, and potentially allow a rearrangement of the power system represented by Rayland Hall. Having been subject to the injustices and orders of Mrs Rayland, Orlando cannot afford to abandon the lineage of control that he hopes to finally benefit from. Indeed, Orlando's choice to avoid both the recognition and discussion of social and economic change is what secures Rayland Hall for the next generation, and the continuance of the feudal system, despite the increasing dissatisfaction of its tenants.[71] Smith plays with the similarities between understanding simple boundaries of geography and the more complex lines of social identity.

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[68] Parkes, 'More Dead than Alive', p. 768.

[69] Parkes, 'More Dead than Alive', p. 768; p. 769.

[70] Mary Favret, *War at a Distance: Romanticism and the Making of Modern Warfare* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), p. 4.

[71] Kramer observes the relationship between property ownership and 'social, cultural, and political roles', 'Women and Property', p. 1146.

Without a fixed identity, without being able to call the Hall or the Somerive house his residence, Orlando is exposed to increasing economic difficulty. The sequence of financial challenges that Orlando faces speaks of the increasingly industrial turn of society. Returning unrecognisable to the local populace allows Orlando to recognise that the Hall has been invaded and spaces around it have transformed into quasi-industrial locations. For the characters he encounters, economic and spatial concerns dominate, in a continuance of the narrative that had begun with the smuggler's experience. It is only the threat of the legal and economic trouble that would be caused by his death that grants Orlando a temporary reprieve:

> [The miller] then feared that he might 'get into trouble', to use the expression of the country, if a man was found dead at his door, without his having assisted him; and calculating, rather than yielding to the impulse of humanity, he ordered his wife to go call up one of the men […] to haul him away to a hovel full of straw in the year–all which he thought less trouble than might be given him by Coroner's Inquest, if the man should be found dead at his door in the morning. (349)

Reduced to resembling 'the poor', Orlando is denied a loan from the miller, who, despite being convinced of his identity, doubts his economic value. Instead, it is the mistress of 'one of Stockton's friends' who takes pity on him due to his unhealthy appearance, and allows Orlando to enter his father's old house (351).

Indeed, the only characters who will help Orlando are those independent of his aristocratic role: his agent's assistant and his neighbour's mistress (352). Sources of finance and refuge become increasingly impenetrable for Orlando as he finds himself unwelcome if not unrecognised at each familiar house. Smith demonstrates acute awareness of the power of the increasingly mobile populace, and the consequent challenges to those dependent upon and representative of more patriarchal forms of control. Contrast this now busy, peopled landscape with the stagnancy of Rayland Hall and the economic only gains importance. The Hall, thus far run by a tyrant uninterested in the social, political and geographical alterations outside of it, is a representation of an outmoded system of control. It is only when the Hall lacks an aristocratic owner, when Mrs Rayland dies, that its surrounding landscape can be used by a different, economically-driven, set of people. Consequently, the rising class are now in a position to examine and assess the position of others, and their observation harasses economically vulnerable and placeless characters. Economic vulnerability becomes equated with the inability to control space: even the once powerful Mrs Lennard surrenders her attempts at independence once Miss Sukey observes her in bed (449). Monimia, too, describes her worst experience, not as the attempted attacks of lusting men, but the sharing of a bed with Mrs Newell (411). Economic change enables invasive viewing, just as it reconfigures social structures. By gaining the Somerives' house, or their carriage, women such as Betsy, or the mistress, find themselves rising within society without the security of marriage or merit. Rather, they understand the economic trade-off operating in the 1770s with more savoir-faire than the well-educated but intrinsically romantic Somerville family. Smith, instead of providing an example of economic wisdom, demonstrates the repeated misfortunes of those who cannot negotiate economic change, either because of their unwillingness to recognise it, or their innate vulnerability.

In contrast, Monimia is more successful in her navigation of a safe position because her understanding of her economic and social value is more accurate, and less romantic than Orlando's. So, too, is her knowledge of her surroundings. Observation is one of Monimia's strongest qualities. It frequently saved her from danger in the abusive relationship with her aunt, and now enables her to market her labour appropriately both in Orlando's absence, and in their financially fragile marriage.[72] Frequently constrained physically and socially because of her poverty and gender, Monimia's fears, although at times represented in a gothic manner, have been generated by genuine dangers. Her acknowledgement of these dangers, despite Orlando's incessant naïve reassurances, allows Monimia to reason herself into a productive way of life after Orlando's presumed death, and to provide herself with a rational and viable situation in a functional space: she emerges as a character more typical of Smith's work. As Vivien Jones observes, 'Monimia breaks out of Orlando's possessive idealisation in more explicitly economic terms when she insists on working to support the family, since he cannot'.[73] Despite the traumatic experiences she has undergone, Monimia finally finds herself liberated, and in a similar situation to that of Geraldine Verney, caring for children, protected in a forest glade:

> The path […] led under broken arches and buttresses, which had resisted the attacks of time and violence, towards an old gateway, whose form was yet entire.
>
> Everything was perfectly still around; even the robin, solitary songster of the frozen woods, had ceased his faint vespers to the setting sun, and hardly a breath of air agitated the leafless branches. (403)

The tranquillity of the scene speaks of the security of Monimia's situation, free from pursuit or intimidation. Her position of thoughtfulness fits the stillness of nature, but the 'frozen' woods portray a stagnancy that suggests that immobility is unhealthy, both practically, as the winter sun sets, and metaphorically, as Monimia is unable to progress from this halt.[74]

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[72] For more on Monimia's labour, see Joseph F. Bartolomeo, 'Subversion of Romance in *The Old Manor House'*, *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1800,* 33 (1993), 645-57 (pp. 653-55), and Jennie Batchelor, *Women's Work*, particularly pp. 72-74, p. 86. Also Kathryn R. King on Monimia's 'subversive' desire to labour, 'Of Needles and Pens and Women's Work', *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature,* 14 (1995), 77-93.

[73] Vivien Jones, 'The Coquetry of Nature', p. 134.

Monimia's situation is, however, noticeably worsened by Orlando's interruption.[75] His return is responded to with all the joy and relief suitable to a sentimental reunion, but the maturity and tranquillity that Monimia has schooled herself in are completely lacking in her male counterpart. Indeed, upon their return to the cottage, Orlando's inability to monitor his behaviour distresses the bereaved Mrs Fleming to such an extent that she must retire from her own room, with her children. Monimia is now required to support the feudal order, and maintain Orlando's romantic and economic fantasy. As James Holt McGavran Jr. summarises, 'one fears to contemplate what sort of father Orlando will be'.[76] That Monimia is removed from this sanctuary, and that her anxiety and financial need are exacerbated by Orlando's tempestuous behaviour, jealous demands, and economic ignorance, only emphasises how poorly Orlando functions as a hero, not as the 'good' man Deborah Kennedy has described.[77] Instead, as Bartolomeo observes, 'Orlando's scattered epiphanies have little impact on a pattern of passivity and dependence, of waiting for the happy ending due the romance hero'.[78] This romance, as with Orlando's security, can only be stabilised by returning to a period of feudal allegiances: Orlando's character is unable to fit into a progressing economic climate, primarily because of his 'addiction to romance rather than reality'.[79] Smith shows the awkwardness of reconciling economic reality with romantic closure. Neither this heroic role nor the structure of the novel seem adequate to carry Smith's topic matter.

The failure of the aristocratic role causes alienation for Orlando. He is unable to adjust the role to fit the climate, or to see that he is unable, and so he becomes alienated from reality. Monimia, too, is separated from a realistic or healthy space and must pretend to take on a wholly romantic role whilst secretly continuing to understand and provide for their financial needs. Despite having gained some level of independence, Monimia is placed back into a submissive position. There is a contrast here to Emmeline, whose success with different problems resulted in her ultimate authority over the estate and her participation in its progress. Monimia's experience is markedly different, perhaps because of her different class position, or because the limited education and liberty she gains is given to her by the romantic Orlando. He, despite his best intentions, must remain representative of that male power which Smith's other heroines have been liberated from, in order to sustain his heroic role and to have a space, and a position of his own.[80] Although Monimia participates in the changing economic climate through her labour, this element of reality is ignored by Orlando, whose priority is to reintroduce an honourable lineage, to perpetuate spatial and economic control for generations to come.

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[74] S. R. Martin argues that the frozen forest represents Orlando's state, rather than that of Monimia, in immobile despair, 'Charlotte Smith 1749-1806: A Critical Survey of her Works and Place in English Literary History' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Sheffield, 1980), pp. 161-62.

[75] This is read similarly by James McGavran and, although Kathryn King sees Monimia refusing a 'statue existence', in Orlando's positioning of her she is forced to become 'his creation', McGavran, 'Smuggling, Poaching, and the Revulsion against Kinship', p. 33; King, 'Of Needles and Pens', p. 87.

[76] McGavran, 'Smuggling, Poaching, and the Revulsion against Kinship', p. 33.

[77] Kennedy's review of the Broadview edition posits Orlando as a 'good' character, having summarised the novel rather oddly as 'about goodness and where to find it'; Deborah Kennedy, '*The Father and Daughter with Dangers of Coquetry*, and: *The Old Manor House* (review)', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 17 (2005), pp. 307-09.

[78] Bartolomeo, 'Subversion of Romance', p. 162.

[79] Labbe, 'Introduction' (2002), p. 24.

The conclusion Smith provides fits Orlando's needs, despite her revelation that the feudal order no longer serves the interests of the community, financially (in terms of economic independence) or spatially (and land use and occupation). Smith's move from established historical events to romantic closure forces the presence of fantasy into the foreground, as Orlando adopts a restored space and a restored role, neither of which will remain uncontested by the developments across England. Orlando is unable to undergo a similar self-education to that experienced by Smith's previous protagonists; his only development has been to sacrifice a portion of his political naivety. The pattern of romance incorporating or depending upon realism that Smith has used in her previous novels is missing here. In her resolution of the novel, Smith is forced to attempt to resolve the problems of the romance genre whilst sidelining economic difficulties. Ina Ferris's reading of the novel is more positive, focusing upon Smith's 'affirmation of the romance genre' as well as the vast 'range' of social class and geographical setting she incorporates. Yet the 'repair' of the community that Ferris sees in the novel's conclusion sits at odds with Orlando's clear dysfunction.[81] In the end, Orlando is aware of other uses of space, even by his wife, but he refuses to acknowledge them. The friction between his romantic vison and Monimia's pragmatic outlook highlight some of the problems that Smith's fiction engages with. Orlando's attachment to Rayland Hall clearly represents the reluctance of non-radical citizens to revise their understanding of England and its functions. Smith shows more precisely how a determination to escape reality, explicitly, to ignore material circumstances, essentially disables the individual from understanding the society around them and their changing role within it.

Spaces in Flux: *The Banished Man*

If in *Desmond* we see a clear relationship between spatial management and responsibility, and *The Old Manor House* demonstrates the dangers of determinedly remaining in one setting, then the spatial patterning and narrative variety of *The Banished Man* suggest greater instability in the classification of spatial options. The frequently changing geographical locations–often hard to label, or barely described–reflect something of the political turbulence experienced across Europe by 1794. The constant flux in boundaries and identities is reflected in Smith's creation of several locations which are hard to pin down in either physical or generic terms. For example, the swamp as a setting gives a greater sense of hopelessness or of being in the in-between, in a no-man's land, than in Smith's previous experimentation with the borders of land. Smith's Wales is a sentimental construction, but different registers are used within it. With these spaces there is no way to reinterpret or stabilise the landscape or to make it habitable, but even the exiting of unhealthy sites, as with the laying aside of unhealthy thinking, is more complicated. Even Italy is not fully fleshed out to provide a location for Smith's progressive, cosmopolitan community at the conclusion. This signals, not so much a retraction on Smith's behalf, as her frustration with the increasing difficulties of life (and of publication) in the 1790s and the difficulty of finding the place or the language in which to resolve them.[82]

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[80] Bartolomeo remarks upon Orlando's restoration of Monimia's original jailer once they are married, 'Subversion of Romance', p. 646. Also Dale Townshend observes the characters putting new objects in the house without changing the house itself, 'Improvement and Repair: Architecture, Romance and the Politics of Gothic, 1790-1817', *Literature Compass*, 8 (2011), 712-38 (pp. 735-36).
[81] Ferris, 'Introduction', pp. xviii, vii, xix.

In the first three volumes of the novel, travel is almost incessant, but instead of fleshing out the voyaging of the protagonist D'Alonville with geographical detail, Smith provokes reflection upon the incidents that have occurred at the locations he has left behind. For example, 'Lost in these contemplations, D'Alonville often lingered behind his friends, and arrived at the places where they stopped, sometime after them' (199). It is travel, not rural escape, that provokes contemplation in Bohemia, as if there are few safe locations in which to pause. There is a similarity between D'Alonville and Orlando, who both choose to avoid describing their surroundings, but whilst Orlando's reflections were taken up with fantasies about Rayland Hall, D'Alonville presents vignettes of others' experiences of disturbance, gathering together examples from across Europe. D'Alonville attempts to escape the landscape of war by reading his surroundings through generic filters such as the sentimental, or by passing so quickly through the land that he has no time to focus upon it.

One of the most noticeable structural features of this novel is the discontinuity of linear movement. Indeed, in 1799, the translator Marquand was so struck by the speed with which Smith relocated her characters that his French edition portrayed it with sharp sarcasm. For example, as Katherine Astbury has translated, in one scene Marquand edits the narrative to read, 'suddenly we find ourselves transported to the arrival of Ellesmere and his friend in London'.[83] As Astbury remarks, Marquand's use of 'suddenly' expresses his 'frustration' with Smith's geographies.[84] His wit is well-placed: Smith's work is noticeably disjointed and lacks the convincing linear development of steady physical travelling. Although this does jar the narrative, it is certainly not a result of authorial carelessness: at points in the novel Smith adopts a similarly cynical commentary to that adopted by her translator. For example, she writes, to spare the reader 'tedious' detail, that 'the conversations then which decided that D'Alonville was an accepted lover […] shall be passed over' (301). Chris Jones has observed that this novel 'marks an advance in ironic technique and a toning down of the radical criticism which had characterized the authorial voice'.[85] Whilst Smith's radical criticism is only really minimised in terms of explicit revolutionary praise, this is certainly one of her most self-consciously written novels, both as her direct intervention and more subtle experimentation show, and this is a feature popular in travel writing of the period. Keane has observed that '*The Banished Man* is not such a radical departure from *Desmond*', and indeed, whilst Smith's political commentary may be gently sidelined, her spatial politics are not.[86]

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[82] Grenby explores the different pressures Smith had acting upon her, and the desire to 'maximise' appeal; 'Introduction', *Charlotte Smith*, VII (2006), pp. vii-xxxiii (pp. xxviii-xxxi, xxxiii).

[83] Smith's original description is p. 301. Katherine Astbury provides the translation of Marquand's description, 'Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* in French Translation', p. 140.

[84] Astbury, 'Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* in French Translation', pp. 139-40.

Volumes One to Three of four follow the travels of D'Alonville, a loyal royalist whose brother's defection hastened the death of their father. Now without family or home, D'Alonville spends most of the novel alternating between assisting other vulnerable or helpless characters, and travelling alongside those on the move because of various revolutionary causes. Monica Hart has written that Smith is 'especially concerned with the person who has been cut off from the nation, exiled from the place that shapes his or her identity'.[87] Toby Ruth Benis has described D'Alonville as the 'most energetic' of Smith's heroes, the one who sees the broadest experiences of exile, although the locations D'Alonville covers do not interest Benis so much as Smith's 'preoccupation with how violence shapes stories'.[88] It is D'Alonville's energy or pace which makes Smith's use of space seem so disjointed and her portrayal of violent upheaval so powerful, however. In Smith's fiction so far, men who lightly value place have been largely unreliable or irresponsible, but D'Alonville's attitude toward space cannot be justly compared because, as the title makes clear, he is a 'banished man': he has little or no agency over his home or location. In his work on exile, Giorgio Agamben describes how the banning of an individual forces them to have a constant awareness of the place they have been banished from, and of the authority that has been exercised over them in their eviction, rather than setting them free from the system of authority.[89] This is certainly true of D'Alonville's experience, and in his attempts to resituate himself within other non-French communities: there is constantly an undertone of grief. Benis has argued that it is his 'estrangement' that 'leads D'Alonville to characterize his experience in ways that […] eschew the causal connections and sequential thinking of conventional story-telling'.[90] The Revolution has evicted him from his place, and so he has no choice but to try out the different locations left to him, but these spaces are selected by chance events, rather than by 'sequential' examination. The lack of a chronological sequence again bears similarities to the eighteenth-century travelogue.

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[85] Chris Jones, *Radical Sensibility*, p. 170.

[86] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 91.

[87] Monica Smith Hart, 'Charlotte Smith's Exilic Persona', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 8 (2010), 305-23 (p. 314).

[88] Toby Ruth Bennis, '"A Likely Story": Charlotte Smith's Revolutionary Narratives', *European Romantic Review*, 14 (2003), 291-306 (p. 293).

[89] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1998), pp. 104-15.

D'Alonville's exile and subsequent indecisiveness have an impact on the narration of his movements. Repeatedly Smith gives no more information than the relocation of D'Alonville and his co-travellers, using the season and weather to gloss over more locational details:

> On the second day the weather was so unfavourable, that their progress was slow; and towards evening a storm of wind, with snow and rain, made it so disagreeable […] that they consented rather to remain at a little alehouse. (208)

The weather, unfavourable until the travellers move to England, excuses the lack of local description: D'Alonville cannot explore the location and so cannot describe it. Perhaps this lack is also excused by Smith's ambitious attempts to cover scenes all over Europe. Having been derided for her geographical errors in *The Old Manor House*, it is possible that Smith abstained from lengthy description to avoid similar mistakes. However the quantity of travel literature available in the 1790s, the popularity of the Grand Tour and more localised experiences would mean that, combined with Smith's own travels to and from France, she could find plenty of detail with which to extend these spaces should that be important. Instead, Smith emphasises the hero's flexibility, endurance, and cosmopolitan comprehension. The few descriptions given belittle the danger of travelling through Europe as an émigré, instead underscoring the homelessness of the experience.[91] Smith is concerned with those who are dispossessed, and her increasingly international range of characters demonstrate how far this experience has spread. The details of the different countrymen are provided, and Smith's use of broader description and signals of passing time make this novel more a representation of mass unsettlement than a focus upon a particular plot. Within these multiple tales of eviction, however, she still provokes questions about dependency and responsibility.

Angela Keane has argued convincingly that Smith used the Polish revolutionary narrative as an expression for a 'republican discourse that can no longer be articulated sympathetically through a French subject'.[92] She sees this novel as an investigation of the boundaries between the public and private, a dichotomy that has real relevance for Smith's manipulation of locations as well as her fascination with formative identity. Rather than seeing

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[90] Bennis, 'A Likely Story', p. 292.
[91] Smith uses some of her prior locations: the wife of De Touranges escapes Rouen, where Geraldine also travelled, p. 189.
[92] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 94.

Smith as apologetic or confused in her narrative, Keane identifies the strategic nature of Smith's redirection, concluding that, particularly in her delay of the romance plot, Smith is 'self-conscious about the disorientation she produces in her reader'.[93] That this disorientation is exacerbated by the confusing complexity of the landscapes, I think, is clear. A variety of political and national representations are reflected in the encompassing and, at times, bewildering visual and geographical clues, most obvious in the first dramatic scene of the novel. Rogers discusses the impact of a similar visual disorientation, examining the clouding of sight that hinders D'Alonville's search for the castle of Rosenheim.[94] The frequent changes in visibility undermine both the solidity of setting, and the ability and identity of the characters. These inconsistencies lead to misgivings in the reader, concerns that have been translated into a critical fascination with Smith's seemingly incompatible politics, or disjointed and therefore unskilful geographical description. Instead, Smith's experiments with land, as with register, and her use of the travelogue emphasise increasing breakdown and critique. This leads to a greater emphasis on the impossibility of community, or, at the very least, upon the impossibility of finding a permanent location for it.

Areas of geographical tension that in Smith's earlier work were so pertinent are largely brushed aside in a regimented attempt to emphasise widespread dispossession. Endless cottages are entered, borders are crossed, and the phrase, 'without any remarkable occurrence' recurs with regularity in Volumes Two and Three, as Smith moves her characters from country to country, and from chapter to chapter:

> Their journey passed without any remarkable occurrence. They reached Hamburg on the last day of December, and embarking on board a merchant-ship which lay ready to sail, arrived in the usual course of time, and without any remarkable occurrence, in the Thames; where, quitting the vessel, they took a post-chaise, which in a few hours set them down at an hotel in London. (225)

Smith alternates between quantifiable detail and generalisations. Place names are given to provide contemporary travel minutiae, and Smith provides detail of the length and quality of several journeys. Large portions of action are summarised however:

> They were stopped twice by struggling parties of French, who now were in possession of many leagues of the country through which they passed; but Rodolph managed his story so well, and they seemed so perfectly what they represented,

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[93] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 92.
[94] Rogers, 'Inhibitions on Eighteenth-Century Novelists', p. 74.

> that on the fourth day after leaving Rosenheim they arrived safely at Coblentz. (168)

This is a pattern throughout the first three volumes, making it unsurprising that the writer for *The Literary Review* found it impossible to establish an 'intelligible abstract' for the novel.[95] This is less surprising if this work is considered as a travel guide, but it does lack many of the visual hooks that have previously so successfully enabled greater emotional extension of Smith's key characters. Fletcher observed that here Smith is 'more concerned' with 'ideology than narrative interest'.[96] There are fewer periods of isolated reflection too, but when they do occur they fully occupy the narrative, emotions almost replacing, instead of being facilitated by the geographical descriptions. Nature's enabling of autonomous thought seems strangely unnecessary, perhaps because most of Smith's characters have no particular urban society from which to escape, but are continually dispossessed and outside, both socially and nationally. Their reflection, like their travelling, is more cyclical than it is productive.

When they do appear in this novel, spaces separate from the urban allow the exploration of political disenchantment or personal grief at both localised and international suffering, such as in the case of Ellesmere's uncle. Perhaps the most dramatic example of this is the behaviour of De Touranges, to whom the loss of his nation is as distressing as the absence of his wife.[97] Indeed, once comforted by the restoration of his family, De Touranges still chooses to leave them again, to take action politically. Again, there is a confusion between domestic and political responsibilities that Smith makes much of, and she reflects the anxiety and instability of De Touranges in his choice of surrounding: the swamp.[98] Smith employs one of her greatest assets: the ability to generate mood through poetic description of natural scenes. Here, as in *Emmeline, Celestina,* and *Desmond* before, Smith's choice of descriptive phrasing reveals character development: De Touranges is at one with the 'withered' and 'grey', reflecting both the stillness and the 'black and troubled' nature of his surroundings. Smith plays with the threshold between mental stability and madness as she does with the unclear boundary between land and water:

> It was a sullen gloomy evening: […] Close to the river a row of pollard willows crowded along the shelving bank, which formed a causeway; on the other side of which was an osier ground, its marshy surface concealed by withered flags, with here and there an old willow, which supported the earth that was raised above it; the evening wind sighed round their almost leafless branches, and the small

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[95] *The Literary Review*, n. s. 11 (1794), pp. 40-45 (p. 44).
[96] *Biography*, p. 217.
[97] For more on De Touranges, see Benis, 'A Likely Story', pp. 298-99.
[98] Pat Elliott discusses the link between domestic and political power, 'Charlotte Smith's Feminism', p. 91.

> remains of their grey and faded foliage, fell before slowly in the breeze; the surface of the water was black and troubled; and D'Alonville, as he surveyed the dreary scene, thought it but too fit a place for a miserable being, such as his countryman had been described, to indulge the darkest despair–perhaps even projects of suicide, to which too many of the victims of the revolution had been already driven. (390-91)

The darkness conceals De Touranges, because his mood is synonymous with the setting, in 'darkest despair'. The 'sullen' evening merging into the 'black' water prevents an observer from distinguishing between the sky, marsh and land. This easy blur between different physical states also blurs the boundary between life and death: it is hard to distinguish De Touranges' state. His uncertain physical position, neither standing nor lying, on the boundary of land and swamp, suggests mental instability to D'Alonville: 'I fear you are not well by your being here at such a time' (391). The time (dusk) and the location (the swamp bank) impair D'Alonville's ability to perceive physical and mental state, and disguise De Touranges' condition from him.[99]

It is only a sudden glimpse of present reality, provoked by D'Alonville's appearance and plain speech, which prompts a physical reaction from De Touranges, stirring him from bodily and mental inertia. He admits nature's influence upon his sanity, recalling afterwards, 'I questioned the information of my senses'. The physicality of D'Alonville's presence and his practical support returns De Touranges to the present, and to the reality of his political and economic position. Yet it is the memory of suffering that overwhelms De Touranges, not distress provoked by his present circumstance: '[L]eaning on D'Alonville's arm, the memory of all he had suffered, and all he had feared, rushed upon his mind at once, and seemed again to overwhelm him–deep groans burst from his heart' (391). Having imbibed the 'wildness' of nature, the fears of the past have an immense impact upon his mind, and D'Alonville quickly sees his friend deteriorate toward madness.

> There was so much wildness in the manner of saying all this, and still more in the look and gesture with which it was accompanied, that it but too well justified the opinion that had been formed of his state of mind. (391)

With his friend bordering on insanity while he occupies this odd liminal space, D'Alonville is determined to help De Touranges progress–spatially and mentally. It is not until D'Alonville has managed to lead his friend back to town that reason can reassert itself. Until then, D'Alonville is unsuccessful in his attempts to reason with De Touranges, or to assure him of the safety of his family. Once stable in spatial terms, D'Alonville can encourage De Touranges to stabilise his thinking, too. That De Touranges's reason has been 'on the point of leaving' is echoed in D'Alonville's concern that he might commit suicide in the swamp (392). The unstable borders of this land, as well as removing physical navigational markers, make it easy to lose reason. As in Smith's earlier work, Adelina was forced to remove herself from the space of the forest because of its associations with immorality. Here, the men must remove themselves from a place associated with insanity to a more stable space within which to re-establish awareness of present realities. In both novels, the threat of an unstable location cannot be reasoned away, and the place must be deserted.

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[99] Benis describes the narrative coherence threatened by confusion about the land and weather, 'A Likely Story', pp. 293-94. Keane explores similar disorientation Smith produces in her experimentation with the romance plot, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 91-93.

Even once De Touranges is reunited with his family, he is determined to fight in the war. At the conclusion of the novel, his continued absence makes the presence of revolutionary disruption felt. That his family must remain in Italy without him lends an element of fracture to Smith's final location. As Smith's concerns about the French Revolution begin to encompass other national political upheavals, she rescues a variety of characters, frequently of different political persuasions, to emphasise the disintegration of the family unit caused by political turmoil. Smith seems less to encourage an examination of national difficulties than she does those of the community more broadly. Although national difference, suggestive of patriotism and pride, provided a popular rhetoric in favour of war, Smith deliberately removes such specificity to downplay the hostile discourse of nationhood. She turns instead to further experimentation with the community abroad, in which the individual begins to function more for the good of the cosmopolitan whole than for independent gain. The community in Italy is formed for the sake of an international example, a rescue for the rejected more generally, rather than for the English or French in particular.

The relationship between description and political experimentation seems to have escaped her readership, but Smith's tendency to toy with language registers is as openly addressed in the 'Avis au lecteur' as her domestic politics are in the figure of Mrs Denzil.[100] In this unusual insert, Smith coyly refuses to introduce a key romance so early on, instead incorporating a comically typical secondary romance between the second hero, Ellesmere, and a revolutionary's daughter who neither speaks nor understands English. Smith has D'Alonville satirise this version of romance, just as she satirises the construction of the novel's landscape. Undermining the 'romantic' situation, D'Alonville repeatedly refers to Alexina as Ellesmere's woodland nymph:

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[100] Garnai discusses the 'Avis au Lecteur' and Smith's personal pressures at this time, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, pp. 35-36.

> ‘[P]ermit me to make one enquiry, and let that be, Whether the fair Alexina does not derive some of the extraordinary charms you find in her, from the distresses that surrounded her? and whether a lovely nymph, wandering amidst woods and wilds, in pious attendance on a banished father, acquires not very peculiar charms in the eyes of my friend who is a *little*, perhaps a *very little*, romantic?’ (218)

D’Alonville’s own experience of romance is more realistic: his bride can speak fluent French, and his repeated discussion of their financial provision demonstrates the practicality of their union. Here, at least, there are echoes of Smith’s earlier lessons. The ‘Avis’, in drawing attention to the generic nature of Smith’s architectural creations and their political symbolism, seems to have distracted critics from the extent of her experimental playfulness. Garnai, for example, reads the ‘Avis’ as an attempt to ‘purposedly de-politicize the novel by undermining or downplaying the Gothic’.[101] Although Smith does undermine gothic formulae, her mockery of novelistic conventions, always varied, in *The Banished Man* begins to occupy the narrative in a manner hitherto unseen.[102] She frequently discusses narrative decisions within the text, such as, ‘A narrative cannot so well explain as will the following letter’, and, ‘One frequent objection to novels is the recurrence of love scenes’ (431, 301). Alongside this authorial commentary and the use of romantic satire, there are hints at wit of the kind that Jane Austen would later employ. Such scenes as Mrs Risby’s ejection from Mrs Denzil’s property are echoed, I would argue, in Elizabeth Bennett’s ejection of Lady Catherine De Burgh.[103] Despite such interruptions, the move to Wales in Volume Four, instead of providing a rural retreat, recreates all the hype of a dramatic sentimental novel.

With this move of the Denzil family, Smith is providing Britain with one last chance at redemption: to demonstrate that it is capable of allowing and enabling intelligent and responsible community.[104] The failure of Wales to provide this, despite its detachment from more populated space, hints heavily at Smith’s disappointments in British options. As Jane Aaron writes:

> The freedom of a life of retirement in Wales, as opposed to the worldly sophistications increasingly corrupting English life, is a theme frequently emphasized in Romantic fictions […] Both the beauty of Wales’s unspoiled

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[101] Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 37.
[102] Grenby discusses Smith’s teasing tone, ‘Introduction’, p. xxiv.
[103] *Jane Austen*, IV (2006), pp. 396-97.
[104] Mary Chadwick has spoken on a similar technique used by authors interested in Wollstonecraft, who position Wales as ‘other’ to England in an attempt to better facilitate some of Wollstonecraft’s ideals; ‘Making Space for Wollstonecraft: Mary Barker’s *A Welsh Story*’, *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (2017) <http://dx.doi.org/10.18573/j.2017.10151> [accessed on 15 September 2017].

> scenery and the equally unspoiled naturalness of its inhabitants give it its healing charms.[105]

In Wales, a new, more typically sentimental plot is begun even though the primary romance has been resolved. Smith returns to her familiar pastoral descriptions, contrasting the imposing Rock-March and its barren lands with the Denzils' cottage, cradled in the lap of the surrounding mountains, a contrast that has been fruitfully explored by Labbe.[106] Wales as a location is thus more fully realised than earlier settings in the novel, but it is difficult to navigate morally because portrayed so generically. The locations in which the Denzils attempt to establish community are already fought over by other communities, and D'Alonville's deception about his marriage makes it difficult for the surrounding characters to determine which community he belongs to. The subsequent plot resembles a sentimental novel in itself. D'Alonville becomes more of a heroic type: rashly duelling, secretly visiting his wife, and ignoring and offending characters he sees as morally or socially inferior to him. Full of easily anticipated plot turns, this static volume is a stark contrast to the varied novel thus far, yet both Wales and then Italy seem, in their difference to the discourse of travel, to reflect a moment of hope that there is an alternative space for the community. They are, however, translated through specific registers and Wales in particular is soon overrun with sentimental motifs.

The most obvious example of Smith's foregrounding of register is seen in the small pamphlet written and sold by the housekeeper at Rock-March: '[S]hould imagination refuse to fill up the lofty and spacious rooms, the little printed book sold by the housekeeper, Mrs. Empson, will give a perfect idea of it all' (421). Smith then contrasts this with her own interjection:

> But, courteous reader, if thou art spared a minute description of this Welsh palace, the country, in which it stood, must be a little more considered, for it was around that country, that with the dawn of the next morning, D'Alonville threw his eyes on the anxious enquiry, whether beneath some sheltering wood on the soft declivity of a hill, spreading its swelling bosom to the south, and watered by a gushing stream from the rock, some little white cottage might not peep forth–fit abode for love and Angelina. (422)

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[105] Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender and Identity* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 35. Aaron discusses the popularity of Wales in novels between 1780 and 1800, pp. 8-9, and the invasion of English rakes, p. 37.

[106] See Labbe, 'Cultivating One's Understanding: The Garden and the Bower', in *Romantic Visualities*, pp. 66-112. See also Fletcher on the contrasting spaces, *Biography,* pp. 219-21.

Edward Copeland has argued that Smith 'begs off' further description in novels such as this whose plots, he writes, 'seem little more than a laborious necessity'.[107] Despite the weariness with architecture she expressed in 'Avis', Smith has more houses to describe, and she expresses her exasperation by satirising the techniques she uses. Incorporating romance and sentiment, the gothic, suspicion, political and moral corruption and envy, Smith attempts to engage the attention of her reader. The instability exaggerated in this romantic description, with its intrusion of tourist paraphernalia, shows it is unreliable as a typical sentimental tale, and must be read more cautiously.

Smith finally moves the entire community, uniting its international fragments, to Italy. This scene is particularly short, occupying only a couple of pages at the conclusion of the novel, and is represented in epistolary format.[108] It seems that Smith's experimentation with form becomes increasingly self-aware; as she dissects her previous hopes and fond projections, she redirects them into–not staid, affirming, nationalistic conclusions–but increasingly escapist and fragmented utopias. The community in Verona has two distinct purposes: first it explains the location of the major characters and reflects upon the fortunate conclusions of their 'adversity', and secondly it demonstrates a sharing of the narrative voice between the male and female, a balance that is mirrored in the type of descriptions each narrator gives. Significantly we find that Italy is explained in botanical language, which, in its scientific specificity, serves to fully realise the location rather than undermine it. Presented in a short letter, the place described is intensely analysed, with neighbouring plants receiving as much attention as the news of loved friends. Mrs Denzil's desire to demonstrate her botanical authority seems a little misplaced, but her description aligns Italy with other botanical places that Smith has previously used for retreat, imbuing this short narrative, I would argue, with the weightier emotional and political freedom associated with Smith's other retreats. Yet politics continue to disturb even this idyll as De Touranges' absence provokes ongoing grief for his family. The conclusion consequently seems more realistic: the presence of grief is a marker and reminder of both past and potential impacts of national politics. The presence of war and the possibility of participation are still very real, but so is Verona, rendered realistic by floral detail.

For these three novels, the intensity of political metaphor and the representation of a vast range of individuals make Smith's conclusions appear awkward or clumsy. Labbe has argued that this awkwardness intentionally emphasises the constructed nature of the practises Smith criticises. Labbe argues that Smith, by drawing attention to her work as fiction, simultaneously focusses on the fictions of social construction, undermining them as effectively as she did her romance plots. Although I envisage Smith as a socio-political commentator who melds different registers to create rupture of fictional expectation, the argument that these awkward conclusions are solely a continuing form of social commentary is a little simplistic. Smith’s inability to conclude these three novels speaks too of the complexity of the issues she addresses, within descriptive styles that have clear limits. Her attempt to combine aspects of different registers allows for more variety in content, and for a more direct tone to undermine the relationship between style and form: Smith’s irresolution is clear in both form and subject matter. Smith cannot resolve Monimia’s position, any more than she can include the Iroquois within her utopian conclusion.[109] She cannot find a situation in which the varied nationalities of the community in *The Banished Man* can co-exist because of their awareness of political difficulties throughout Europe. Neither can she promise Desmond a future in which his home will outgrow the need for constant attention, or in which Geraldine’s happiness will not depend on the spaces she is allowed to access by the authority figures acting over her. Romantic conclusions Smith can offer, and it is most appropriate to the success of the popular novel that she does so. Imagining a working alternative to contemporary society has proved too much for Smith precisely because of her determination to include realistic details. As Fletcher observed of Smith’s gender dynamics, ‘The difficulties she has with her sometimes amorphous heroes are those of a radical satirist who is no leveller, and finds it hard to envisage the leaders of a future society’.[110] It is not the characters alone who prove problematic, but the spaces they visit, those openly ruled and restricted by powerful individuals, and those so open as to accentuate the vulnerability of the characters visiting them. Experiments with this future society have marked Smith’s prose thus far, yet the complexity of this work, within an increasingly violent political environment, highlights the challenges she faced in her attempts to discover a useful landscape for the ideal community of reasoning individuals.

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[107] Ed Copeland, *Women Writing About Money: Women's Fiction in England, 1790-1820* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), pp. 35-60 (p. 50).

[108] Grenby discusses Smith's last-minute addition of the Italy section and the Mrs Denzil plot, 'Introduction', pp. xxiv-xxv.

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[109] Janine Nordius talks about the inability to resolve the position of the Iroquois, concluding that the novel’s end produces a ‘disturbing hiatus’, ‘A Kind of Living Death’, p. 48.

[110] *Biography*, p. 174.

3. Chapter Three

Guided Reading in *The Wandering of Warwick, Montalbert,* and *Marchmont*

The conclusion of *The Banished Man* leaves Smith's readers with a conundrum. She has consistently championed the creation of a community of like-minded characters, yet by 1793 the only location for this that Smith can suggest is Verona, Italy, and this proves difficult to pin down as a model. The only details Smith gives of the area are botanical ones, and the mode of living within this community is sketchily described. Instead of giving a realistic portrayal of Italy, in *The Banished Man* Smith presents the country as an alternative space away from economic and political turmoil. Similarly, in *The Wanderings of Warwick*, Xaviera, the anti-heroine, describes Italy as a place in which she will cease to exist, or to be known.[1] As Adriana Craciun has observed, Italy provided an 'unfamiliar fringe' for novelists of the 1790s and although Ann Radcliffe would describe the Italian landscape in detail, with 'everything […] there to be seen', Smith experimented with this unfamiliarity.[2] Alongside the geographical emptiness of Smith's Italy, there is a generic difficulty. Despite Smith's attempts to unite family characters, the complexity of her plots render such unity unrealistic and the ideal resolutions seen in Smith's early sentimental work begin to disintegrate, as do the locations that host them.

Given this failure of resolution in terms of both plot and landscape, it is tempting to argue, along with Gary Kelly, that following *The Banished Man,* Smith moves away from radical politics.[3] However, this chapter demonstrates that Smith's fiction does not necessarily depart from her previous work, but actually there seems to be a reinvestment in earlier solutions rather than a rebuttal or retreat. This strategy is not entirely unusual. Michael Wiley has observed that:

> while Wordsworth clearly became disillusioned with the course of the Revolution, by turning to nature, solitude, and the imagination he did not forsake his early Revolutionary hopes, but attempted new strategies to realize them.[4]

For Smith, the 'new strategies' replay elements of her old work. This is particularly seen in her foregrounding of the courtship plot in the three novels here discussed. Also, Smith's analysis of the family, alternating between satire and sentiment, continues to focus upon economic ramifications for the dependent individual and for England more widely. Even Mrs Marchmont,

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[1] *Charlotte Smith*, VII (2006), pp. 1-104 (p. 79).

[2] Adriana Craciun, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, VIII (2006), pp. vii-xix (p. xiii); Saglia, 'Looking at the Other', p. 22.

[3] Gary Kelly, *The English Jacobin Novel, 1780-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), p. 112. Amy Garnai discusses this interpretation in some detail, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 35 and n. 69, p. 191.

[4] Michael Wiley, *Romantic Geography*, p. 3.

Althea’s compassionate mother-in-law, is defeated by the complexities of legal and economic practices, by political and individual ruthlessness that robs her of economic and emotional stability. We see Smith extend the usefulness of these secondary characters to examine issues of vulnerability, to warn of similar threats to the protagonist without immediately involving them. More than that, she demonstrates the cyclical nature of social and economic failures. In Chapter One we saw the failure of entrenched patriarchal authority, and in Chapter Two the fallibility of the husband, as the new generation of men came to the foreground: those whose choices, whether boldly radical or not, made vulnerable the communities depending upon them. Now, Smith examines the vulnerability of the maternal role and the errors it can involve, but although Smith suggests a break away from inherited modes of reading that efface maternal suffering, other interpretations of space continue to be forced upon the heroine. The heroine’s only alternative to becoming subsumed into an abusive or controlling community is to attempt to stand alone, or to create a new community. However, when husbands or protectors interfere or mediate readings of space for the heroine, she loses that valuable independence and risks becoming engulfed in old patterns of sensibility.

One result of the need for independence, or for separation from old cycles of behaviour, is that Smith’s persecuted protagonists are even more frequently forced outside than in her earlier novels. Their domestic stays are only ever temporary, and when they do occur, the blurring of indoor and outdoor space used so effectively at the conclusion of *Desmond* now predominates. The three novels here addressed, *Wanderings* (1794), *Montalbert* (1795), and *Marchmont* (1796), extend and manipulate this uncertainty about spatial parameters, increasingly reflecting an uneasiness about the signs and expectations of domestic and wild sites. These novels feature many mixed or overlapping spaces which make reading and categorisation genuinely difficult. There are ruins that reject domestication, and servants who live in and out of the house. These, and other examples, all question the legitimacy of human authority within seemingly unoccupied spaces, and teach suspicion of the apparent emptiness or vacancy of non-urban space. In these three novels in particular, generically typical sentimental interiors are contrasted with more expansive Smithian locations–particularly that of the beach. The patriarchal home, the gothic castle, and the abandoned family estate are arranged against the margins of the sea, the banks of the river, the borders of property, the woodland glade, and, once again, against land in need of management. Frequently, sites are portrayed as caught between the cultural and the natural, and this is repeatedly symbolised by episodes at the shore of the sea, caught between land and wave.

As seen in Chapter Two, areas of imprecision, or crossing over, play a crucial role in liberating characters to express grief personally and nationally. However, in *Montalbert* and *Marchmont*, the beach in particular begins to expose even darker emotions, permitting expression of insanity provoked by suffering, and authoritarian figures attempt to use such spaces as sites of control or punishment. Smith's reinterpretation of these previously enabling spaces increasingly uses the gothic to demonstrate disintegration. In *Marchmont*, the countryside infiltrated by servants of the law provides a darker take on *Ethelinde*, and elsewhere gothic buildings adjacent to the sea mimic that first location of Emmeline Mowbray. This time, significantly, instead of undermining the hysteria of the gothic, as she had done earlier, Smith uses its motifs to warn of genuine dangers. The threats portrayed by the gothic are real and the options for dealing with them are limited. These three novels are most similar because of their portrayal of the threats hidden by generic motifs, and because they exhibit the dangers of allowing someone else to choose the register in which space is read. These other readers or interpreters of space–whether they are temporary companions like Walsingham, or trusted husbands like Marchmont and Warwick–frequently disable the protagonists from making informed decisions about their future economic, romantic, and geographical positions.

The darker symbolism of these natural spaces is inseparable from the mechanisation and breakdown of nature itself. Nature occludes or confuses attempts at resolution, often hosting and hiding the very characters that the protagonist has sought to escape by moving outdoors. In a way, it is the indeterminacy of these spaces that is itself gothic. In each of these novels, outdoor spaces are openly vulnerable to political and economic misuse: they are fought over and torn apart by warring, vested interests, different political bodies, and opposing religious and economic powers. We see Smith extend her depiction of the neglected estate in *Desmond*, bringing deterioration and irresponsibility closer to home, to England, to the familiar. This is most apparent at beaches and other borderline spaces, but Smith's anxieties even invade domestic gardens. As she struggles to portray the warring politics of ownership and the power of presentational choices, Smith experiments with changing landscapes: the most dramatic example of this is the Calabrian earthquakes. Alongside this use of violent physical geography in *Montalbert*, she includes a range of new registers and spaces, drawing particularly upon increasing global patterns of movement by including travel writing and European locations. Examples of these include sites of trade (abroad and at home) and of tourism, the camps of the soldiering populace in *Wanderings*, and the mimicry of the debtors' prison in *Marchmont*.[5] With the more enabling natural spaces exhausted or invaded, Smith explores these temporary alternatives to attempt to find another solution. Radically, in *Wanderings*, economic corruption invades Europe as Smith demonstrates a propensity amongst the English characters to project their socio-economic structures upon different communal spaces. Thus they automatically recreate the breakdown of community they sought to escape. The foreign colony is key to *Wanderings* and *Montalbert*, and later in *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*. In these communities away from England, some of the old patterns of control and manipulation re-establish themselves, and form a contrast to the foreign gothic or Catholicism of the Iberian Peninsula. Restaging the kind of pressing social encounters that had driven Burney's *Evelina*, for example, Smith shows how they only become more agonising in these foreign locations. This is particularly clear in *Wanderings*. As such, this fiction does not demonstrate a retreat from radicalism, but shows Smith continuing to tussle with possible solutions to the social and political problems that occupy her earlier fiction. Here, the alternatives Smith can offer are stark: an outside that is frighteningly indeterminate, or a home from home in which British corruption has been exported abroad.

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[5] The further travels abroad of Smith's sons may have informed her descriptions. For more on their movements, see *Biography*, pp. 196-200, 201-03, 319-20. For Smith's use of other sources, see *Biography*, p. 212 and Grenby, 'Introduction', pp. xii-xiii. For Smith's experience of debtors' prison, see *Biography*, pp. 62-67.

The Wanderings of Warwick

The Wanderings of Warwick (1794) was an unusual publication for Smith: it was both her shortest novel and her only attempt at a sequel. It has a somewhat confused narrative, composed by the now confident and comfortable Warwick, husband to Orlando's sister, Isabella, who recounts the adventures that occur between their elopement in *The Old Manor House* and the financial provision they ultimately find. Yet Warwick's perspective is so particularly inflected that the novel can be read as a commentary upon his role as a husband, and as reader and guide. Caroline Franklin describes 1794 as Smith's 'most profitable year', but also a time when she incurred major expenses. Franklin observes:

> although *The Wanderings of Warwick* undoubtedly suffered from the commercial pressures of its production, we should not assume out of hand that it was not also generated by the impetus for literary experimentation.[6]

For the first time, Smith's own interjections into the narrative seem to come at random and it is partly because of this fitfulness that *Wanderings* makes such a valuable contribution to Smith's oeuvre. Its sporadic nature means it can feature dissimilar, distinctive and concerning spaces that exhibit alternative community types and their (dis)function. Economic need drives the plot. In his attempts to become or produce a sellable commodity, Warwick's own identity shifts between soldier, author, genius, travel writer, critic, cosmopolite, artist, historian, and breadwinner, to say nothing of the roles of husband and father that he frequently elides. As a result of changing social scenarios, Warwick employs different registers, one minute skilfully creating the gothic and terrifying his companions, the next, mocking those who fear it, like Isabella. Having received an inheritance that secures his social and economic position, Warwick insists on writing rather than verbally telling his history, which allows for narrative experimentation, including mention of his recent forays into publication. This form also enables Warwick to enjoy his newly found authority by controlling the portrayal of some of his questionable romantic and economic choices. Within this account, Warwick describes two situations of particular interest: the colonial community his family help maintain in Portugal, and the landscape around Count de Villanova's suicide in Spain.[7] The last location is meant to provide a restorative after Warwick's immersion in the unhealthy colonial community, but he cannot put aside his tendency to dramatise space. These disparate settings–the colonial and the gothic spaces of Europe–highlight the consequences of Warwick's presentational choices upon the vulnerable people travelling with him, who are forced to read in and respond to the register he chooses.

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[6] Caroline Franklin, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Smith, *The Wanderings of Warwick*, ed. Caroline Franklin (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1992), pp. v-xv (p. ix).

From the outset, Warwick is securely positioned. Now at the end of his travels, he looks out to the distant sea, a reminder of adventure, and observes the harvest, a sign of the Raylands' continuing wealth and productivity (8). Warwick is reluctant to leave these reminders of present affluence to recount his less successful past. Matthew Grenby describes this choice of Smith's, to begin an adventure novel with the plot already solved, as 'remarkably avant-garde'.[8] Perhaps the established security of her protagonist is what allows Smith to examine such varied examples of unreliability hereafter. Whilst the plot is told from this secure vantage point, the narrative itself is remarkably insecure: descriptions either reveal Warwick's weakness for female beauty, or are used to assert his literary superiority, a superiority that is devalued by his obtuseness when it comes to the real suffering of and practical provision for his family. Movement is not as desperately driven as it is in Smith's other novels, but it does still depend upon the economic. Travelling dictated by military employment was a familiar topic to those who had survived the American War of Independence and been impacted by the French Revolution, and Smith's own sons travelled extensively with the army.[9] Even after his wartime release, Warwick's choices of location are dictated by his family's dependency–first, upon the manipulative Sir Randolph Aldborough in Lisbon and Cintra, and then upon the generous Villanova, who sought the Warwicks' company to mitigate the pain of his failed romance.[10] During this second dependency, Warwick frequently uses Villanova's superior position to help stage himself as a wealthy socialite travelling for pleasure. Even though Villanova removes Warwick from the escalating sentimental drama of the colony, Warwick's constant staging continues to provoke others' suffering. His presentational errors encourage the failure of his own micro-community.

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[7] During the course of the novel, Don Julian assumes the title Count de Villanova. For the sake of consistency, all references here are to Villanova.

[8] M. O. Grenby, 'Introduction', p. xii. Smith has Warwick comment on this too, p. 9.

[9] *Biography*, pp. 201-03.

[10] Villanova seems to be a model for Walsingham in *Montalbert*, whose selfless disinterest and disastrously failed first love make him a useful and safe aid for the heroine.

The control Warwick claims over the narrative plays havoc with Smith's own interjections too. Grenby observes that Smith:

> seems to use Warwick as a mouthpiece for her own views. But at other times she distances herself from her hero, her footnotes moderating, or even undermining his views. Throughout, Smith plays with this relationship.[11]

Warwick's exclamation to Orlando, 'I hate such morbid reflections,' forms the tone for his retelling: all incidents of naivety or misjudgement are overlooked or quickly eclipsed by more interesting detail (9). Grenby and Franklin, in their respective introductions, have drawn attention to the tensions this creates, for Smith as author, and Warwick as fictional author.[12] In particular, Grenby writes 'Smith has great fun establishing a gap between Warwick's stated views and what his narrative unconsciously reveals, thereby exposing his character flaws and self-delusion'.[13] Warwick's laziness or lassitude toward accuracy is a serious problem. It is his inaccuracy or intentional misinterpretation that renders locations so dangerous for his companions. By selfishly viewing the landscape, and frequently sexualising it, Warwick refuses to acknowledge the reality of his responsibilities toward Villanova and Isabella. His glib fluency is further unsettled by Smith's use of the increasingly popular travel writing style of presentation. Smith combines elements of adventure plots and useful tourist detail in such a way that contemporary issues intrude upon Warwick's romantic tale.[14] As Fletcher remarks, 'it is more travelogue than novel, and written to order'.[15] Consequently, she describes the publication as Smith's 'most cursory novel'; however, it is this very haste or superficiality that emphasises and allows implicit critique of Warwick's presentational choices.[16] It is not so much that his descriptions are brief, but that they are inconsistent: none of the registers are particularly convincing or fully fleshed out. The courtship plot jars with Warwick's economic focus, and his introduction of the travelogue is undermined by his omission of relevant useful detail. Warwick seems ignorant of, or uninterested in, the potential consequences of this for those dependent upon his choices.

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[11] Grenby, 'Introduction', p. xiii.

[12] Grenby, 'Introduction', pp. xi-xii; Franklin, 'Introduction' (1992), pp. xi-xii.

[13] Grenby, 'Introduction', p. xi.

[14] For example, Smith digresses into a discussion of slavery, pp. 26-28. See Grenby, 'Introduction', pp. xiv-xvi, and *Biography*, p. 212.

[15] *Biography*, p. 211.

[16] *Biography*, p. 207.

In the colony, Warwick presents his group's adventures in the style of a courtship novel. This choice recalls Smith's early sentimental fiction: we see the threat of predatory patriarchs, the economic vulnerability of the dependents, and the small, tightly controlled social scenes that echo the spaces from *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, and those of Burney. Personal and economic concerns become more important to Warwick than objective narrative description: Lisbon and Cintra, locations important to the plot, are both famous for their beauty, but their attraction goes largely unremarked. Locations are compared in financial rather than aesthetic terms. Warwick excuses himself from further or accurate description of them because of pressing personal need, or, at times, because he knows there is other literature available:

> I would describe Cintra to you, if it were not much better described already; and if I were disposed to lengthen my narrative, I would tell you what kind of country we passed through in our way to meet Villanova. But there are so many descriptions of every part of Europe, that I will not inform you where we fared well or ill. (60)

As the aesthetic is unsellable or hackneyed, Warwick refuses to invest in its description. Instead he devotes time to courtship, assigning his wife to the care of Sir Randolph Aldborough so that he is free to act the part of a single man. Indeed, he ignores the consequences of accepting the patronage of Sir Randolph, consequences that weigh particularly heavily upon his wife.

Quick to buttress Sir Randolph's role at the head of their small community, Warwick commands Isabella to uphold this relationship, to ignore personal insult and vulnerability for the sake of maintaining their source of income. Initially, this insensitivity is justified on the grounds of Warwick's need for physical recovery, and Smith makes reference to the increasing trend in the late eighteenth century of seeking out locally acknowledged 'health spots' to treat illness, a treatment she attempted with her own daughter, and for which Bath was particularly popular back in England.[17] Ultimately, however, Warwick's aim is to continue his affluent lifestyle:

> As soon as he was gone, I related to Isabella as much of what passed as I thought likely to raise her dejected spirits, and reconcile her to her new acquaintance, to whom she seemed (and not without reason) to have taken an aversion.–She was reasonable enough, however, to own that, with a man of his age, and in our situation, she ought to overlook much of his rough and displeasing manner for the

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[17] See in particular Annick Cossic, 'The Female Invalid and Spa Therapy in some Well-known Eighteenth-Century Medical and Literary Texts: From John Floyer's *The Ancient Psychrolousia Revived* (1702), to Fanny Burney's *Evelina* (1778)', pp. 115-38, and Anita Gorman, 'Seeking Health: The City of Bath in the Novels of Jane Austen', pp. 315-33, both in *Spas in Britain and in France in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, eds Annick Cossic and Patrick Galliou (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006). Grenby also writes about patron O'Neill, who was to provide Smith with more detail of Portugal, 'Introduction', p. x.

> sake of the good it was in his power to do our children. For their sakes, […] I saw Isabella determined to sacrifice her dislike and resentment[.] (35)

Warwick uses the word ‘sacrifice’ but it may be more than dislike that Isabella has to give away. The material benefits that Warwick and the children enjoy make Isabella’s company, and potentially her virtue, a tradeable commodity. Warwick has been self-absorbed as a narrator, but now Smith exposes the solipsism and selfishness in his manipulation of the community.[18] Both the small community and the heterosexual romance are threatened when Warwick positions the Admiral as ‘grandfather’ to his children. Sir Randolph provides for them, but the reader, along with Isabella, can see that this stems from a desire to usurp Warwick’s position. Warwick is significantly absent in their family gatherings, and Isabella, quite justifiably, anticipates a disastrous climax of which she will be the victim.

It is partly because their presence helps Sir Randolph form a counterfeit British community that the Warwicks are so attractive to him. In 1794, Smollett mocked this tendency of the English ‘genius’ to create rules of politeness abroad ‘without any assistance either from France, Italy, or Lapland’.[19] Using the Warwicks to establish British patterns of etiquette and activity, Sir Randolph can position himself as both benefactor and authority figure, complete with a community that he can control. Alongside his hope that gratitude and fear will overpower Isabella’s objections to his seduction, Sir Randolph supports his role by playing upon Warwick’s relationship with his peer, Warwick’s uncle, back in England. Sir Randolph recreates the select gatherings held by his British counterpart, just as he attempts to recreate his peer’s past attachment to Isabella. Warwick, meanwhile, is distracted by the elaborate dress of servants and women surrounding him and their attempts to engage his affection (36). Beside these women, Isabella appears artlessly innocent and simply attired. Suggesting her reluctance to attract attention, her dress bears similarity to that of an innocent, single woman, as seen in *Emmeline, Ethelinde,* and *Celestina.* Of similar dress in *Pamela*, Jennie Batchelor explains:

> Rather than seeking to embellish and transform, the dressing-down of the heroine and the language of the novel into a ‘native simplicity’ renders it transparent, rather than vulnerable to accusations of affectation.[20]

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[18] See Grenby for more on Warwick’s character, ‘Introduction’, p. xiii.

[19] Tobias Smollett, *Travels Through France and Italy*, ed. Frank Felsenstein (London: OUP, 2014), Letter XXIX, p. 252.

[20] Jennie Batchelor, *Dress, Distress and Desire: Clothing and the Female Body in Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 6.

Isabella's affinity with an unprotected, unmarried heroine suggests that Warwick is creating a warped courtship narrative, whilst he, representing the debonair single man of the sentimental novel, is eager to 'cultivate [his] acquaintance' with the English women (37, 60). By judicious flattery, the Admiral encourages this misreading of romance, allowing Warwick to ascribe his general favour with the surrounding women to his own personal attractions, and to increasingly forget to attend and protect his own wife. Whilst Isabella chooses simplicity over affectation, her husband's narrative becomes increasingly affected and complex.

Even once the surrounding space is irrevocably that of a courtship novel, Warwick is slow to read accurately. When the entire community travel to Caldos at Sir Randolph's expense, it becomes evident, as in *Emmeline*, that authority over a woman's location spells danger. Isabella has a place in Sir Randolph's 'Portuguese carriage', and Warwick instead walks tête-à-tête with Mrs Effingham (39). Yet despite repeatedly discovering Isabella in tears, Warwick chooses to ignore the increasing threat to his wife's person in favour of economic ease and flattery. To justify this, he romanticises Isabella's distress, projecting appropriately feminine concerns on to her: regret at leaving her family, and longing for home, for example.[21] Warwick's behaviour is not only obtuse, it is unkind: 'When I thus detected her, I remonstrated with her on the folly of indulging useless regret for the past' (39). This ignorance is entertainingly sent up by Sir Randolph himself:

> 'Make love to my wife, Sir!' cried I: 'dares any man think of such a thing?' 'Many a one, I warrant you,' interrupted Sir Randolph–'why not to *your* wife as well as to the wives of other folks?' (41)

Considering Warwick's desire to behave as a 'Man of the World', his naivety and emotional volatility emphasise his incompetence as a protector of his family (102). Warwick's misuse of his own spatial agency means that he is unable to rescue his wife, or later his friend, from the escalating drama of their situations.

As a final resort, Isabella abandons her usually careful behaviour to force her husband to respond to the threats inherent in his courtship behaviour. She, too, must act within the confines of the sentimental register he has introduced. Consequently, her tears ignored, Isabella removes herself. She sweeps out of their rooms to attend an exclusively female gathering, in a scene that is perhaps Smith's most Burney-like depiction of the colony:

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[21] Although it was unusual for a travel writer to mention the presence of their family with them, George D. Dekker describes the changing demographic of those who took the Grand Tour in this period. Increasingly, he writes, it became 'an extension of rather than an escape from the domestic sphere'. Smith plays with this extension to combine the sentimental genre with that of travel writing; *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism: Radcliffe, Scott, and Mary Shelley* (Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 2005), p. 13.

> [Isabella] was dressing for a party of three or four ladies only, at the house of an Englishwoman of fashion lately arrived […] she haughtily bade me console myself with my Creolian favourite: then, without seeking to sooth the pain she had inflicted, went to her engagement, which was to dine with her female friends[.] (44)

It is only this that alerts Warwick to danger. Once his wife begins to behave as though she has agency over her own body and placement, Warwick is outraged. Smith parodies his shock and general emotional volatility in Warwick's first-person narrative:

> Though it was only by degrees that [Villanova] ventured to disclose to me the villainous conduct of Sir Randolph Aldborough, my indignation and rage could not immediately be restrained: I protested I would go instantly to the old monster, and reproach him with his perfidy–repay his detested loans–and treat him as such a wretch deserved to be treated. (55)

Warwick expresses himself in typically gallant and impulsive terms, and this speech, so delightfully exaggerated by Smith, may have influenced one of Maria Edgeworth's greatest comical scenes, where Virginia, the parody heroine of *Belinda* (1801), imagines her benefactor weltering in her arms, accusing her of perfidy.[22] For Virginia, a product of experimental Rousseauvian solitude, this crisis occurs only in her dreams, yet Warwick desires to act out the scene of melodrama. In *Belinda*, Virginia's behaviour is the result of a disordered imagination and unhealthy seclusion, but, crucially, Clarence (the hero) provokes this result with his attempts to shape and control her. In *Wanderings,* Warwick succumbs to the generically-bound role that in *Belinda* is eventually successfully rejected. Unable to provide stability in economic terms, Warwick displays even greater emotional instability. This colonial space, at first so synonymous with home and health, reproduces all the troubles of the English sentimental novel: the sexual and economic persecution, the force of social expectations, and the danger of sentiment and emotion itself.

Smith disrupts the fantasy of the colony: the Warwicks' expectations of English and non-English boundaries make them vulnerable to the reinvention or repetition of the dangers they escaped through their initial elopement. English political and economic forces, whilst seemingly geographically at a distance, are actually still in operation and we see the repetition of patterns of behaviour, control, and immorality. Before providing a dramatic background of gothic or Catholic persecution, south-west Europe initially works as a backdrop for the export of English corruption. As Warwick tries to re-establish a courtship plot, all the dangers inherent in that reappear. Smith highlights Warwick's fallibility alongside that of the operation of British society and, as usual in Smith's work, it takes all the tranquillity of a walk, and all the calm reasoning of disinterested Villanova, to dispel drama. This walk facilitates the retelling of Villanova's failed romance too, changing the direction of the plot as the two stroll 'near the town' (44). As in *Desmond*, walks with a companion allow for distraction, direction, and emotional processing on a smaller, less fantastic scale than that experienced in Smith's scenes of isolation.

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[22] Edgeworth, *Belinda,* p. 468.

The insertion of Villanova's tale serves outwardly to extricate Warwick from the colony and motivate their further travel together, but the freshness of this plot attracted contemporary attention:

> About half the volume, and the most interesting part of it, contains the history of a Portuguese […] his languishing and sentimental character well contrasts with the gayer and lighter dispositions of Warwick and his wife[.][23]

It was not uncommon for critics to review these inserted tales with enthusiasm otherwise denied the novel: Laura Glenmorris' romantic tale in *The Young Philosopher* attracted similar attention.[24] Here, Villanova drives the plot forward. Despite his avowed disinterest in them, choices of location are actually steered by Villanova's romantic and religious hopes. For example, Villanova proclaims: 'If there is nothing wherein I can immediately serve her, I shall take a ramble, I know not'–and, added Don Julian, sighing–'I care not whither' (54). Villanova then immediately suggests a form of pilgrimage towards Montserrat. Despite the travel options opened up by Villanova's financial generosity, leaving behind the social control of the colony merely launches the Warwicks into an equally dangerous Spanish space. Spain is full of warring dangers: corruption, poverty, extreme Catholicism and ongoing warfare. While Smith touches lightly on some of these topics, this alien space is highly dangerous to Warwick. Although he is forced to abandon his control of the courtship narrative, Warwick continues rashly and selfishly to sexualise the landscape until Villanova's death.

Warwick has learnt little from his experiments with the courtship register: his adventures with Villanova are described in alternately detailed and flippant remarks. At times, Smith uses descriptions of nature to create reflective pauses in the continual movement of her protagonists. At others, Warwick uses that trick we saw repeatedly in *The Banished Man*, of acknowledging intentional omissions, here using the authority of a first person narrative to make choices about which spaces are described.[25] As with D'Alonville, Warwick regularly remarks upon his options: 'I could give you a curious detail of all the scenes I passed through before I was established in this precarious business' (97). It is a plot, like those seen in *Desmond* and *The Banished Man*, that is driven by travel, but a type of movement that is distinguished from the calming and productive walking seen outside Paris or Caldos. Warwick tries to introduce an adventure narrative that lacks a triumphant climax, he writes a travelogue without enough information, and he poses as an aesthetic judge, but for purely selfish reasons. Despite Villanova's warnings, Warwick seems to delight in opportunities for narratorial power. Although he tries to demonstrate a similar objectivity to that expressed by Villanova, it becomes clear that this is an attempt to establish Warwick's own credentials, to make the men appear similar. Villanova's reading deteriorates alongside this: he transfers romantic emotion upon the sites they pass, hoping to find a soothing or spiritual experience to counteract his turmoil. Smith presents the locations through their two perspectives, playing with a kind of double vision that prevents Villanova from finding healing. Rather, Warwick's constant sexualisation of the land pushes Villanova further into despair and obsession. Smith produces a kind of Radcliffean travelogue and then travesties it because of Warwick's interference: even when commenting on the beauties of the landscape, Warwick interprets them sexually.

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[23] *Critical Review*, n. s. 11 (1794), pp. 84-89 (p. 88). *British Critic*, however, did not enjoy Villanova's story because of his suicide, n. s. 3 (1794), pp. 678-80 (p. 680).

[24] For details, see Chapter Four.

Having undermined colonial superiority, now Smith portrays Warwick as a dissatisfied visitor sampling the sweets of Spain. Yet Warwick reveals his ignorance instead of displaying learning. Instead of viewing the Spanish countryside from the perspective of a cosmopolite or linguist (like Villanova), Warwick enjoys his power as surveyor and critic of all he sees: 'I believe we contrived by our own industry to let little escape us that was worth seeing; and there is not much in any part of Spain' (81). He uses the language of violent acquisition ('little escapes' them), whilst devaluing the 'worth' of such a foreign space. Warwick's arrogant English superiority and consumerist behaviour increase as Spain becomes correspondingly more foreign. First, he attempts to give reading recommendations whilst, of course, carrying Philip Thicknesse's volumes with him, and then positions himself as the recorder of a similar narrative. Thicknesse, who published accounts of his own experiences between 1777 and 1788, was a popular author for those travelling to Europe. Marianna D'Ezio observes that 'Early eighteenth-century travel literature was the essential reference and starting-point for any traveller who intended to give his/her own mindful contribution to this literary canon'.[26] For example, Hester Lynch Piozzi records carrying John Moore's volume (1781) with her to Italy.[27]

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[25] For more on the close timings of writing and publication of these two novels, see *Biography*, pp. 211-13.
[26] D'Ezio, 'The Advantages of "Demi-Naturalization"', p. 167.
[27] Rosemary Sweet, 'The Changing View of Rome in the Long Eighteenth Century', *JECS*, 33 (2010), 145-64 (p. 155).

Whereas Piozzi's portrayal of Italy has been seen as unrealistic because it was 'overly positive', Warwick's writing style lacks the 'ethnographic observation' expected in such works.[28] Warwick tries to help the reader understand the landscape, but his own understanding is flawed. Smith plays with creativity and construction, having Warwick use a range of strategies and draw upon a canon of wider reading. In all of her fiction, Smith refers to a huge range of authors, both contemporary and historical, but Warwick's use of secondary reading is not just a repetition of this technique. He is not attempting to make one particular point or use a reference to help elucidate his work, but amalgamates genres to disguise reality and bolster his own authority as entertainer and travel writer. Warwick's apology for not satisfying his readers' 'botanic gratification', Fletcher suggests, was motivated by Smith's own insecurities about inaccuracy after her errors in *The Old Manor House*.[29] I would argue, however, that it fits with Warwick's refusal to scientifically or rationally view his surroundings–he opts instead for a sexualised prospect view.[30] Botany, even though it had sexual connotations, would force an objectivity of observation that Warwick would then have to apply to his own behaviour. The reality of his own insignificance and his attempts to control the presentation of the landscape would be exposed.

Wanting to remain in control, Warwick refuses to surrender to this popular discourse, instead using the established rhetoric of modesty:

> I have reason to believe, however, that this country would afford to a botanist gratification which I of course could not find in it, and with which I would only fatigue you, and perhaps betray my own ignorance. (61)

Warwick is not interested in education, but in the saleability of his own experiences. He comments upon the productivity of the men and land, but only on the 'beauty' of the 'nymph-like women', privileging their desirability above their productivity (60-61). Warwick justifies his extensive viewing by using it to flatter his wife, but she, along with the reader, is unconvinced and a little concerned.[31] His attempts to place the Spanish sights within an English perspective are justified by references to the travelogue, a format that informed the reader at home in relatable terms. Saglia describes the 'conventions' of the Grand Tour having 'peculiar modes of observation and evaluation', which Dean MacCannell argued, allowed tourists to experience space as stage-managed ‘sets’.[32] Fay describes readers ‘avid for insights into foreign lands made only somewhat more familiar through the growing British Empire’.[33] Notice here that the landscape is made to serve the ‘passenger’, or visitor, rather than the local inhabitants:

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[28] For more on Piozzi, see *Women's Travel Writing in Italy*, eds Annie Richardson and Catherine Dille, 9 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009-2010), I (2009), p. xxi. For more on the observation of travel writing, see Elizabeth Fay, 'Travel Writing', in *The Cambridge Companion to Women's Writing in the Romantic Period*, ed. Devoney Looser (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp. 73-87 (p. 74).

[29] *Biography*, p. 291. See Grenby for more on Smith's sourcing of Portuguese description, 'Introduction', p. x.

[30] Labbe's work discusses Smith using detailed botany and the prospect view unapologetically, *Romantic Visualities*, pp. ix-xii, p. 3.

[31] Grenby discusses the silence of Isabella and other women in this novel, 'Introduction', pp. xii-xiii.

> I have passed through villages where the houses, low indeed, and without glass in the windows, were shaded by beautiful bay-trees, as large as trees which are called timber in England, contrasting their deep and glossy verdure with the white cottages they sheltered; while along the middle of the street (as we call a double row of houses in England) are constructed a sort of rude treillage, on each side of which […] rich clusters of purple grapes offer themselves to the passenger. (60-61)

Warwick first subjects each landmark to his observation, then translates it into an English context, and fits it to his purpose. The plants themselves ‘offer’ up their service to the British, as the habitat transforms into recognisably, definably, British shapes. He anglicises the land, thus asserting his control over it, and suggesting a superior familiarity with it. This familiarity, however, rings rather hollow in Warwick’s following attempts to correctly interpret and respond to his friend’s interaction with the scenery. The scene, literal and dramatic, eludes Warwick’s control.

Such use of the increasingly popular travelogue is highlighted by the quick succession of registers, each one obtrusive, and the ‘imaginative and emotive’ description Warwick gives, so essential to an interesting account:[34]

> We often dined upon the grass, under the shade of a tuft of cork trees, chestnuts, or evergreen oaks; and fancied we should see Don Quixote and Sancho come out from among them.–We longed to invite the courteous Knight to partake of our banquet, and to see his ‘Squire sharing the sumptuous repast of our domestics; so exactly did the scenes we were in remind us of the descriptions of that excellent work.
>
> At length, without any accident worth relating, we arrived at Barcelona, and prepared, after resting there some days, to visit the celebrated mountain which had induced us to take so long a journey; and of which our countryman, Mr. Thicknesse, has given an account, which had left, ever since I read it, an

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[32] Saglia, ‘Looking at the Other’, p. 13; Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley: University of California, 2013), pp. 100-07 (p. 100).

[33] Fay, ‘Travel Writing’, p. 73.

[34] Dekker, *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism*, p. 83.

> impression on my mind, that had continually made me wish to see a place, of which the best description can give but a very inadequate idea. (66-67)

We see in Warwick's openly mocking references to *Don Quixote* (1605, 1615) that the narrative has taken another, unreliable turn. Warwick deliberately encourages us to misread this space by forcing a fictitious interpretation upon an otherwise dull list of activities. Although Sterne famously made a similar reference in 1768, Warwick's stylistic choices mimic those of the fictional character he references.[35] E. C. Riley writes of Cervantes that 'he made fun of chivalric romance in a way that did not rule out affection for it'.[36] In the midst of teaching us about reading, Smith too seems to enjoy these moments of experimentation; her own narrative sends up the style her protagonist enjoys.

Interestingly, although Smith's use of a contemporary travel writer suggests the intrusion of reliable fact, actually Thicknesse's letters show his own misunderstandings about cultural habits and scenes.[37] After recording such incidents, Thicknesse participates in the standard parlance of inadequacy, modestly attributing his brevity to his awe at God's skill in creation:[38]

> [I] found it, in every respect, infinitely superior to the various accounts I had heard of it. I will attempt to give you some idea of it─to give a perfect description of it is impossible─to do that, it would require some of those attributes which the Divine Power, by whose almighty hands it was raised, is endowed with.[39]

For Thicknesse here, God is attributed with, not only the power and originality of first creation, but the ability to verbalise an otherwise incomparable site. Warwick, contrastingly, is silent only because the chore of description has been completed by someone else. Thicknesse admits his own limits and sets up God as the divine author, whereas Warwick obscures his own limits by collating the knowledge of others. Smith continues to foreground these different presentational choices: Thicknesse describes the land and its inhabitants with some frankness, particularly the soldiers encountered upon his journeys.[40] He seems to write with equal candour of everything and everyone he sees. Warwick, conversely, strays away from the reality of a land peopled by real inhabitants. He replaces industrious workers with attractive women. He manipulates Thicknesse's content just as he selects which sites to describe and, instead of knowing how to relieve Villanova's distress, Warwick accidently increases it because he is distracted by the commercial potential of his experiences. In one example, Warwick views the Moorish ruins they visit as collectable experiences, ignoring the emotional impact they have upon his more sensitive companion. He is distracted by the economic attractions rather than understanding fully the symbolism of the scene.

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[35] Laurence Sterne, *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, eds Ian Jack and Tim Parnell (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p. 11.
[36] Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, ed. E. C. Riley (Oxford: OUP, 1992), p. ix.
[37] Grenby identifies Thicknesse as Smith's main source, n. 35, p. 483. For particulars of Thicknesse's problems, see Philip Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey through France and Part of Spain* (1775), 3rd edn, 2 vols (London: Brown, 1789), II, pp. 165-76, Letters XIX-XX.
[38] See *Unravelling Civilisation: European Travel and Travel Writing*, ed. Hagen Schulz-Farberg (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2005) for more information on the financial and leisure detail usually included.
[39] Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey*, Letter XIX, p. 203.
[40] Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey*, Letter XX, p. 199

Warwick's misappropriation of non-urban space has real consequences once the group reach the 'banks of the Lobregate' and impending disaster is first suggested (67). Strolling at night, with their destination outlined by the moon, Warwick, Isabella, and Villanova wander the riverbank. The scene is quiet, interrupted only by the sound of oars and the incanting of the 'evening hymn to the Virgin' with which Villanova joins his own harmony. The monks can be heard singing from the Montserrat mountain, and sensitive Isabella responds as if to a supernatural experience. Villanova, however, is unable to enjoy the religious spectacle, despite his understanding of it. By continually desiring and imagining Xaviera within this mystical experience, Villanova follows Warwick's example: his sexualisation of the landscape begins a downward spiral of desire and despair.[41] Villanova's comment, '[A]ll would to him be a terrestrial heaven with her!', shows that his desires are caught up with each other, religion is infused with romance (71). Two different voices begin a duet and are dramatically revealed as Villanova's escaped lover and her new favourite (68, 71). The song Villanova had enjoyed as a calming, spiritual reflection was in fact an expression of romantic love by the wholly desire-driven Xaviera. The eruption of desire and deviance into a seemingly sacred experience deprives Villanova of both comforts in one blow. He is forced to abandon the idealisation of his lover and, by extension, of Catholicism.

The inescapability of this failure is seen in Smith's choice of natural detail: the healing that Villanova seeks is represented by the biblical 'balm of Gilead', but contrasted with rosemary's symbolism of remembrance (70). Although Thicknesse provided some details of this area, Smith adds plants that emphasise remembrance and paradise. As such, the surroundings suggest the inescapability of Villanova's suffering: he will not be able to forget it, or to escape it in death. When his romantic fantasy comes to a dramatic end, it is unsurprising that Villanova seeks to abruptly end his religious commitment also. As a Catholic, committing suicide would cut him off from divine paradise, and by extension, the paradise he had pictured sharing with Xaviera. The Warwicks describe their heavenly surroundings aesthetically, but to Villanova, the eruption of romantic nightmare in the midst of a scene he had imbued with religious symbolism deprives him of all reasoning ability, and exposes the flaws in both his romantic fantasy and his religious hopes, supported by nature.[42]

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[41] Franklin also describes both men as 'unreliable narrators', 'Introduction' (1992), pp. x-xi.

Xaviera's escape is confirmed in letters Villanova receives in Madrid (78-82). Blind to this dramatic change, Warwick remains preoccupied with the economic value of their experience and continues to facilitate their exploration of ruins of 'castles and palaces built by the Moors'. He is so caught up in aesthetic and financial anticipation that his only remark is that Villanova 'enjoyed my sketches' (80). Warwick significantly ignores Thicknesse's emphasis upon the Moors' reputation for melancholy.[43] Indeed, it is Warwick's preoccupation with the aesthetic that allows a space for suicide:

> This mixture of wood with buildings so oddly constructed originally, and now so broken by time, had a happy effect for the landscape painter: I took my drawing-case therefore from the servant who carried it–sat down on a cluster of stones, a few paces from the entrance that was most picturesque, and began to make a sketch of it. (82)

Warwick jests about his own future positioning with plans to 'publish my travels with engravings', but Villanova refuses to engage in his economic plans. Warwick tries to frame the foreign space with artistic boundaries and Villanova flatteringly encourages this attempt at control. In keeping with Warwick's distraction, Villanova offers to find himself a painterly position in the view, as one of William Gilpin's 'ornament[s] of the scene.'[44] Instead, though, he moves through the archways, away from view, to commit suicide. Elizabeth Dolan has written about the use of the picturesque landscape as a source of healing but here Warwick uses his viewing position to take control, exercising what Labbe refers to as the 'right to govern' that was associated with this perspective.[45] The scene quickly shifts from a practical use of the picturesque, to a dangerous display of sublimity that undermines Warwick's uses of the view. Although Gilpin's favourite moments were described as those when 'atmosphere' combined with such scenery, giving 'it a double value', for Warwick the atmosphere is a sellable rather than emotional experience.[46] He is so caught up in the economic possibilities that he is surprised by disaster. Despite encouraging Villanova to sink himself into the landscape, he is appalled when Villanova effectively does this.

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[42] Thicknesse's description of the pilgrimage is much more bluntly critical of Catholicism. He describes the behaviour of the pilgrims: 'some cutting and slashing their naked bodies with wire cords, or crawling to it on all fours, like the beasts of the field, to obtain forgiveness of their sins, by the intercession of *our Lady of Montserrat*', *A Year's Journey*, Letter XIX, p. 208.

[43] Thicknesse, *A Year's Journey*, Letter XX, p. 225.

[44] William Gilpin, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: To which is added a Poem, on Landscape Painting*, 2nd edn (London: R. Blamire, 1794), p. 45.

[45] Elizabeth Dolan, *Seeing Suffering in Women's Literature of the Romantic Era* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2008), pp. 77-99; Labbe, *Romantic Visualities*, pp. ix-xi.

[46] Gilpin, *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, p. 44.

The consequences of this scene are Villanova's suicide and Warwick's arrest for his murder, and for several following chapters the plot is caught up with the potential gothic repercussions of this. Warwick continues to attempt to control the presentation of the plot, but gothic and sentimental registers become more relevant to his experiences than his formerly educational language. Whilst Shelley and Wollstonecraft would use travel writing early in their careers to 'hone' their novel skills, in *Warwick*, Smith uses the travelogue to highlight narratorial control.[47] Warwick demonstrates that his choices of interpretation and presentation have consequences. Of the plot overall, Grenby observed the following:

> Were it not for the fact that he has his Penelope with him from the start, Warwick might be regarded as a sort of Ulysses, beginning as hero in the war in America, and then seeking to find his way home, being buffeted from one adventure to another, until eventually he returns.[48]

Nonetheless, Warwick does have a measure of control over his odyssey: he is not just a victim of circumstances. In Smith's previous novels, she has demonstrated concern about the reader's or heroine's construction of space. In this novel, she draws attention to the way in which others can deliberately encourage the misreading of space, for various motives. Instead of personal interpretation or ignorance being to blame, it is the authors or agents who encourage misreading that we must now be wary of, and the consequences their choices of register may have.

Montalbert

As became so popular in publications during the turbulent political times of the late eighteenth century, Smith uses the beach or cliff top to provide a strategic point of observation, reflection and expectancy. With the uncertainty generated by the war with America and then France, looking to the borders and boundaries became an increasingly popular sign of British unease regarding the spread of revolutionary fervour. The South Coast in particular provided views of passenger and trade ships, which held reminders of Britain's relationships further afield that were so essential to economic success at home. The clifftop and its surrounding beach was a favourite image for Smith; brought up in Sussex, her poetry and novels are full of references to the South Coast–to her own experiences, and those of the even less fortunate.[49] The latter are represented most clearly in Smith's *A Narrative of the Loss of the Catherine*, written to raise support for a widow and her child who survived wreck off the coast of Weymouth in one of a series of disastrous shipwrecks. With this context in mind, Smith's frequent use of the cliff or coast to represent a period of suspense or uncertainty in the plots of her novels is particularly haunting. Whilst her characters await news from the sea, Smith shows the surrounding landscape defined by uncertainty and fracture. Even the most concrete of foundations (be they geological, governmental, or economic) are vulnerable to unexpected rupture. Non-urban or natural space, previously enabling retreat in Smith's prose, shows signs of disruption, under pressure from struggles for ownership. Whilst in *Wanderings*, the beach could be observed from a confident position, in Smith's later work, particularly in *Montalbert* and *Marchmont*, it is a dangerous, changeable and unowned site. Fractures in its landscape parallel the dangers of seeking independence in the non-urban space as much as they reveal the difficulties there are in ordering or categorising spaces liable to rupture.

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[47] Fay, 'Travel Writing', p. 74.
[48] Grenby, 'Introduction', p. xi.
[49] Kevis Goodman, 'Conjectures on *Beachy Head*: Charlotte Smith's Geological Poetics and the Grounds of the Present', *ELH*, 81 (2014), 983-1006 (pp. 983-84).

Up until this point, Smith's increasingly experimental use of nature has often favoured her characters: largely they find refuge or relief in non-urban spaces. Circumstances had been, admittedly, chronologically darkening as national displacement became more widespread, but these spaces remained relatively useful. In *Montalbert* and *Marchmont*, Smith portrays a further disintegration of the non-urban space as evinced in *The Banished Man*, where we saw Smith experiment with a darker side to mental instability prompted by the invasion of places that seemed to offer escape. *Montalbert* and *Marchmont* display natural spaces heavy with premonition or anxiety. This amplifies the increasing frailty of Smith's idea of a landscape that enables an independent or rational response to generic motifs and controlling communities. *Montalbert* and *Marchmont* are similar in their return to an examination of the responsibilities of the family in England, and the invasion of the alternative 'homes' available to the heroine. In both novels, women are ejected from different representations of home—locations that are already fraught with power struggles—and their subsequent vulnerability or solitude provokes the formation of illicit relationships through which these women attempt to find protection, provision, and affection.

Indeed, recent editor Adriana Craciun calls *Montalbert* Smith's 'darkest vision of sexual politics and marriage'.[50] The novel charts the sufferings of two generations of women and their forced separation from their lovers. Rosalie, the heroine, is the primary victim, but her story echoes that of her mother. Rosalie escapes her neglectful adopted family by eloping abroad with an Italian nobleman—Montalbert. An earthquake in Sicily separates her from her lover and she is forced to rely on the protection of his lecherous friend, Count d'Alozzi. Rosalie's vulnerability is accentuated by the confusion over the legality of her marriage. Unprotected by father or husband, a situation exacerbated by her financial dependence, Rosalie finds that even nature conspires to throw her into the path of danger and attack, represented most powerfully by a series of earthquakes. Montalbert's mother is next to abduct her, and Rosalie and her baby are imprisoned on the southern coast of Italy. This incarceration is exacerbated by the danger of passing pirate ships: Rosalie's prison is located on the border of Italy, near Africa (177). Thankfully, this coastline position enables Rosalie's meeting with the wealthy Englishman, Walsingham, who transports Rosalie to the coast of Sussex, a more familiar but no less dangerous coastal setting. In the trajectory of this plot, as well as in those moments where Rosalie's position is described in detail, Smith showcases the threats invading non-urban and borderline spaces, most particularly those of the coast.

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[50] Adriana Craciun, 'Introduction', p. xi.

In Messina, whilst Montalbert is present, Rosalie can strategically ignore the wildness of her foreign surroundings. Once he has gone, however, she attempts to sanitise the Italian landscape, appropriating the space for English appreciation; it is an attempt at control which fails on several levels:

> A garden, which even the false Italian taste could not spoil, arose behind the house, and its orange trees fringed the foot of a hill, which would in England have been called a mountain. Even the verdure of England was in some measure enjoyed here amid the glowing suns of Italy […] [S]hrubs, which are carefully cultivated in England, grew spontaneously[.] (142)

Smith's choice of 'false' as an adjective supports her presentation of this as a site that cannot be trusted: one that is not as it seems. Smith alludes to the Italian fashion for more formal gardens, which gains a certain fictional notoriety. For example, in Maria Edgeworth's *Helen* (1834) the false heroine Cecilia is seen planting such a formal Italian garden. Here, however, such formality seems mediated, at least in Rosalie's mind, by the 'verdure of England'. In *The Italian* (1796), Ann Radcliffe suggests the improvement of the social order by importing a present-day English garden into Italy:

> The style of the gardens, where lawns and groves, and woods varied the undulating surface, was that of England, and of the present day, rather than of Italy, except […] such gigantic loftiness of shade, and grandeur of perspective, as characterized the Italian taste.[51]

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[51] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian* (Herts: Wordsworth Editions, 2011), pp. 461-62.

Radcliffe's scene suggests a kind of staged nature, with an 'undulating surface' similar to those created by Capability Brown. Smith's Italy seems generally larger and warmer than England, and is spontaneous rather than stylishly arranged. Smith's passage has similarities to the description of Abbey Mill Farm in Austen's *Emma* (1815), where the scene of 'English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive' suggests a cultural climate of liberty.[52] Smith's, however, is simultaneously an Italian scene where such freedom remains elusive. Natural growth outweighs both English cultivation and Italian fashions for reorganisation. Significantly, once Montalbert, Rosalie's protector and instructor, is absent, the terrain becomes more threatening and Rosalie's positive observation changes to one of intimidation:

> There was an aweful sublimity in the great outline of Etna; its deep forests, and magnificent features, which afforded a kind of melancholy pleasure. (144)

Posing as a member of an Italian family with Montalbert allowed Rosalie to respond positively to the landscape but, as soon as the nuclear family unravels, Rosalie realises her vulnerability. She is cut off from communication with the mainland, and subject to the impending sublime, represented by Etna's threatening magnificence.

Intimidated, Rosalie attempts to recreate her position as an obedient wife. She hopes that nature will submit to her artistic arrangement; she also hopes that Italy will recognise her as a legitimate local, but her marriage is not legal. Therefore her position, her speech and her authority are perceived as unclear or unconvincing, as 'uncertain' as her drawings:

> In the mean time she determined to pass the heavy, heavy hours cultivating the talents [Montalbert] loved. She took up her pencils, and, strolling into the garden, placed herself on the seat where, as they often sat together, he had pointed out to her some points of view which were particularly favourable to the painter; she would have sketched them but her efforts were faint and uncertain. (144)

Seeking safety, Rosalie intentionally re-adopts a position chosen for her by Montalbert, repeating her obedience to him and submitting to his perspective of the landscape. Rosalie, however, is as unable to find the view shown to her previously as she is to recreate the scene on paper. Her attempts to draw without Montalbert's tutelage are similar to Celestina's recreation of the walks she took with Willoughby, and to Emily's exploration of Petrarch's poems in *The*

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[52] *Jane Austen*, VI, p. 391.

Mysteries of Udolpho (1794).[53] To escape this failure to relate to the landscape, Rosalie then imagines exploring the area, but only once Montalbert has returned. She struggles to maintain enough distance to observe nature, whilst also wanting to become familiar with the local community.

Without Montalbert's intervening presence, Rosalie fears being sunk into nature itself, losing her identity within the boundless expanse of wild land. This is tied up, it seems, with her concerns about remaining 'English':

> [Rosalie] repeated frequently some pieces of poetry she was fond of, […] sometimes longing to hear the sound of an English voice, and fancying, that if Montalbert's absence was lengthened, she should forget her native tongue, or pronounce it like a foreigner. (148)

Rosalie is nervous of losing her Englishness, yet it is this affinity with Italy that allowed her to escape her foster family originally. As an accomplishment, speaking Italian gave her some power and independence. By speaking the language, however formally, Rosalie was able to discourse with Montalbert and arrange her elopement.[54] Now Rosalie is fearful of a complete change of identity: she is wary of trusting Italian people and the land itself, and attempts to maintain some residual Englishness by verbally reasserting her mother tongue.[55] She is neither English nor Italian, nor is she legitimately daughter or wife. This state of limbo has dangerous consequences and although Rosalie tries to treat the illegitimacy of her position as if it has no relevance, it leads to confusion and vulnerability in terms of her placement geographically, financially and sexually. Her anxieties are emphasised by the perspective of the local inhabitants who continue to see Rosalie as completely foreign. The pure Italian that she has learnt, impressive and attractive as it is, is too classical to be useful with the local workers. Although, in England, Rosalie seemed to slip without effort into what was portrayed as an Italian role, the reality of occupying a place at Messina is quite different. What seemed to be a natural talent in England appears artificial in the context of real Italy.

Instead, Rosalie has become the 'foreign' intruder: the villagers dread her proximity to their children. Here it is the Englishwoman who is seen as alien and threatening. This portrayal holds a suggestion of something darker, perhaps linked to fears about an English (or French) invasion.[56] More directly, the local community are aware of the authority and control of Count d'Alozzi who owns the surrounding land. It is only the economic power exercised by her abductor that enables Rosalie to have shelter in the community. The land itself has allegiance to the Count and Rosalie's attempts to anglicise the countryside could be read synonymously with her attempts to treat Count d'Alozzi's assistance with innocence. Whilst attempting to artistically appreciate or assimilate nature, Rosalie forgets who the land is owned by. She tries to respond to the countryside as if it were a place of natural and innocent retirement. This is very different to Emmeline's rationalisation of the gothic: here, the dangers are real and Rosalie ignores them. The violence of the land and that of its owner erupts through this management, to reveal very real physical attack.[57] This situation provides a stark contrast to Rosalie's mother's experience of nature as something which facilitates her own desire. Initially, interior windows allowed Rosalie's mother, Mrs Vyvian, to look longingly toward the outdoors as a place of unremitted desire, outside the fierce control of her father, and with similarities to Rosalie's own experience. However, Mrs Vyvian is seduced out of doors, in the 'temple', and capitulates to her own 'fatal passion' with Ormsby. The outdoor space becomes a terror to all the inhabitants of the house who imagine that the 'restless spirit [of Ormsby] haunted the house and gardens' (127). Faced with the consequences of her behaviour (pregnancy, incarceration, and forced marriage), Mrs Vyvian projects horror onto the nearby Catholic ruins, but this is a horror she finds useful, seeking 'the only sure asylum of all sorrows' in the ancient cemetery (125). Rosalie, despite being the product of this affair, refuses to acknowledge that the outdoors holds the threat of desire or danger. Smith uses the terror of the supernatural to warn about sexual danger. Yet this supposed haunting is false, and the ghostly threat is unravelled. It may be this resolution that encourages Rosalie to imagine the subsequent sexual threat to her own body is equally resolvable.

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[53] For more on Emily's discoveries, see Adella Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Cambridge, CUP, 1999), pp. 125-27.

[54] Craciun suggests that the 'privileged' language and Rosalie's use of it lead her into transgression, 'Introduction', pp. x, xvii.

[55] For more on the alienation of British women from their own culture and Italy, see D'Ezio, 'The Advantages of "Demi-Naturalisation"', p. 168.

Although Mrs Vyvian's body has been identified with the wild landscape, Rosalie continues to attempt to classify nature to avoid addressing the wildness of her own sexual choices. Yet neither the classification and control of the landscape implicit in Rosalie's knowledge of botany, nor the aestheticising tendencies of art, can prevent this identification of the female body as a natural site of desire. Determined to undermine this trend, Mary Wollstonecraft was one of the most outspoken writers against the identification of ephemeral display with the female body, particularly expressed in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).[58] As Samantha George has remarked, Wollstonecraft 'approved of botany as a female pursuit but she deplored sentimental analogies between women and flowers'. Instead, she inspired 'botanical satires' to 'unmask the false sentiment behind these tropes'.[59] Smith uses the study of botany to suggest that women can step outside this over-identification with flowers and with nature more generally. Here, however, she seems to hint at the dangers of reabsorption.

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[56] For more on French and Italian power struggles, see Craciun, 'Introduction' pp. xiii-xiv.

[57] Messina is also used as a place of trickery for Venoni, who is convinced his fiancée Josepha has died there; M. G. Lewis, *Venoni, or the Novice of St Mark's* (1809).

[58] *Mary Wollstonecraft*, v, pp. 121-46, 211-20.

For Rosalie, her initial movement to the English garden represented the first stage of separation from domestic constraint. She then moves to isolated Messina and is finally cut off by the earthquake. Rosalie proceeds into increasingly unrestrained locations, and as she does so, her problems with desire increase in ferocity. Whilst the increased distance from her resentful adopted family is good, Messina as an alternative is too isolated and uncontrollable to be safe. As Rosalie ventures into the wild, Smith draws upon wider reading to add verisimilitude to her description. As Adriana Craciun has observed, 'despite incorporating […] traditional aspects of the English Gothic's vision of Italy, *Montalbert* also covers new ground by exploring the unique properties of Calabria and Sicily'.[60] Smith's treatment of the earthquakes in Messina is particularly interesting. She first mentions Etna in the context of the sublime aesthetic (141), then as a marker of the changing of seasons (148), but quickly progresses to a depiction of contemporary research into volcanic behaviour to support the detail of her plot. Craciun explores Smith's references to William Hamilton's account of volcanic activity around Calabria and Sicily in 1783, published in William Mavor's *Celebrated Voyages* (1797).[61] David McCallam in particular has commented upon the dramatic increase in publications between 1768 and 1794 that concerned seismic activity, informed by accounts from both scientists and laymen.[62] Whilst Smith's specificity may work as a correction to her geographical errors in *The Old Manor House*, she primarily draws upon Hamilton to create suspense around the threat of further catastrophe. For example, the clefts in the ground first described by Hamilton are here manipulated by Smith to separate her heroine from her accommodation and from her meeting place with Montalbert. The terrain changes to such an extent that Rosalie comments upon the indiscernible difference between water and land, a detail that resembles a local account that Hamilton translated in his own letters, recounting that the earth and sea appeared as one due to 'ashes, stones and smoke' (152).[63] Interestingly, while in Hamilton's account Messina's death toll figures much less dramatically, Smith increases the terror of the situation with a greater number of fatalities, and Rosalie learns later that the earthquake generated a giant wave which drowned most of the destitute survivors remaining on the island after her removal (159). Again, Hamilton had described something similar.[64]

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[59] Samantha George, *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing 1760-1830* (Manchester: MUP, 2007), pp. 6-7, 22.

[60] Craciun, 'Introduction', p. xiv.

[61] See Craciun, n. 24, p. 297.

[62] For more information, see David McCallam, 'Exploring Volcanoes in the late French Enlightenment: The Savant and the Sublime', *JECS*, 29 (2006), 47–59 (p. 54); Haraldur Sigurdssan, *Melting the Earth*, (Oxford: OUP, 1999); David Constantine, *Fields of Fire: A Life of Sir William Hamilton* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001).

[63] William Mavor, *Historical Account of the Most Celebrated Voyages* (London: E. Newberry, 1797), XX, p. 133.

Whilst Hamilton uses pragmatic terms, Smith's emphasis on the violent disruption of the earthquake is redolent too of economic, political and sexual threat.[65] Terence Hoagwood has criticised literary interpretations that present natural disasters 'literally and only literally', and it is now a critical commonplace that occurrences such as earthquakes have widespread implications as they did in the rhetoric of revolutionary debate.[66] Particularly exemplary of such popular symbolism is James Gillray's political satire, which shows the head of Charles Fox being offered to an erupting Vesuvius.[67] McCallam describes the 'scientific, aesthetic and metaphorical images of [volcanoes] simultaneously diffused to a much wider, better-read public, as the relationship between natural disasters and political and sexual threats became increasingly recognisable during this period'.[68] Surprisingly, Stuart Curran has dismissed Smith's use of the earthquake as an attempt to reuse and extend 'the claptrap associated with Radcliffe's gothic'.[69] For Smith, as well as drawing upon this popular 'political' symbolism, the exoticism of a natural disaster adds originality and horror to the more typically sentimental threat of rape. Smith does move through a series of stock images: her heroine initially resembles the women Hamilton described, buried in the disaster and discovered in a position of supplication, protecting their children with their bodies, a 'position that indicated female tenderness and maternal fondness'.[70] Rosalie, appropriately, first shields her child and pleads with God. However, she then becomes the distanced viewer, looking out over the island and its coast with the authority to describe the changed view. Finally, another quake betrays her, separating Rosalie from her last meeting place with Montalbert, and causing her to succumb both to the violence of the rippling land, and that of Alozzi's attack. When consciousness returns, Rosalie is inescapably under the control of the Count, on his boat, cleverly separated from her one loyal servant in the confusion, and betrayed by both protectors: her husband's friend and, more importantly, nature itself.

As Craciun observes, after the earthquakes, Smith turns Italy into a 'nightmarish hinterland of European civilisation, ruled by predatory men'.[71] The real nightmare, however, is that Rosalie escapes the Count's captivity only to be abducted by servants who seem to be acting for Montalbert's mother. The latter is portrayed as lacking any feminine tenderness, as authoritative as a ruling patriarch. Rosalie is forcibly removed to another coastal location and documents this experience in letters intended for Montalbert. As is often seen in Smith's prose, with a change in narratorial perspective comes a shift in power: Rosalie's first person narrative gives her brief and exclusive presentational control as she describes her attempts to negotiate increasing spatial freedom with her warden. The position of this gothic castle upon the coast, about seventeen miles from Squilace, means that Rosalie lives in terror of invasion from pirates from Africa and Turkey, yet Smith's use of terror here is quite intriguing (183). Despite Rosalie's repeated description of her jailor as displaying the appearance of a nun, Smith establishes that the jailor is not actually the member of a religious order (176). Neither is she as proscriptive as initially perceived; her main crime is to remain unmoved by the sight of Rosalie's child (171). Rosalie is frustrated because her jailor refuses to respond to her distress in a sentimental manner. She also describes her prison as a 'tomb', despite a contrasting description of the set of rooms (172). The boundaries of her confinement are both verbally and materially obscure and Rosalie's emotions are not always supported by the information that is given.

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[64] Hamilton remarks that many women survived being washed out to sea as they knew how to float, Mavor, *Historical Account*, pp. 90, 92-93.

[65] For more on Hamilton's 'language of industry', see Gillian Darley, *Vesuvius: The Most Famous Volcano in the World* (London: Profile Books, 2011), pp. 64-95 (p. 85).

[66] Terence Hoagwood, 'Introduction', in *Beachy Head with Other Poems*, ed. Terence Allan Hoagwood (New York: Scholars' Facsimiles, 1993), pp. 3-11 (p. 6).

[67] James Gillray, *The Eruption of the Mountain,–or–the Horrors of the 'Bocca del Inferno'* [Hand-coloured etching and aquatint] (1794).

[68] McCallam, 'Exploring Volcanoes' p. 54. See also *Natural Disasters and Cultural Change*, eds John Grattan and Robin Torrence (London: Routledge, 2002).

[69] Curran, 'Intertextualities', p. 187.

[70] Mavor, *Historical Account*, p. 85.

[71] Craciun, 'Introduction', p. xiii.

This is particularly interesting given Rosalie's reference to Smollett's *Travels* to portray her guards whilst travelling to the castle.[72] She draws upon literature and satire, and then seems to give way to exaggeration and sentiment. Once able to access the beach, however, Rosalie discovers a much more classical site, in which she can adopt a more archetypal position of isolated and pensive reflection without contradiction. Yet, despite her seeming desire to portray generic experiences of helpless distress, Rosalie demonstrates an advanced understanding of the imprecise nature of the surrounding landscape. In her dealings with her rescuer, Walsingham, Rosalie strategically chooses a border of the property for their secret rendezvous. She describes 'deserted grounds that were once a garden' (183). Whilst technically within the 'grounds' of her imprisonment, the gardens are derelict, forsaken, and thus controlled by nature rather than their owner, and it is easier to undermine the authority of an owner who is unable to contain their property. Where, in Smith's children's fiction, accuracy is healthy, here imprecision enables freedom. Rosalie, however, underestimates the power play enacted in these seemingly liberating spaces, and although Walsingham's rescue is needed, his constant presence prevents Rosalie experiencing any real relief.

It is interesting that Smith switches back to a third person narrative to describe Rosalie's seat on the ruined port, and then to describe the arrival and progress of Walsingham. It lends objectivity to the description, but also positions this meeting as the popular pose of a painting–a captured moment in time. The change in perspective serves to hide Rosalie's emotional response from the reader, and foregrounds Walsingham's view. Rosalie surrenders her brief role as reader of the scene and instead becomes the object or adornment to be admired and collected. Walsingham's arrival returns Rosalie to the role of distressed romantic heroine. This is another unusual beach for Smith, and Rosalie is in a strange position. As Craciun observes, the 'combination of entrenched absolutism and ethnic and national allegiances makes the region ideal for Smith's disorientating exploration of female vulnerability adrift in a transnational landscape'.[73] The complexity of the landscape is reflected in Rosalie's uncertain position. She is sat among the fishermen's huts (symbols of normality and humility) but is simultaneously surrounded by artistic props of historical merit: 'among them lay scattered many remains of magnificent buildings, pieces of large statues and broken pillars' (185). Smith goes on to describe:

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[72] Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, pp. 242-52, 293-303.

> fallen ruins of a temple […] now covered with grass and low shrubs, but through them a marble capital, or an half-buried column, here and there were visible. On one of these last Rosalie sat down to rest. (185)

Having finally bargained for more spatial freedom, Rosalie is now swift to reposition herself as an artistic addition to the aesthetic ruins, enabling her observation of the horizon whilst simultaneously posing as an object to be observed. She enjoys the mementoes of classical Italy and the liberty of the ruins, yet she is simultaneously restricted to being the subject of study. There is a danger that in adopting the role of agent of taste, or aesthetic judge, women find themselves once more vulnerable, and categorised as objects. Instead of being seduced in the temple, like her mother before her, Rosalie finds her spatial freedom and simultaneous objectification confusing. This seems to be an instance of Smith struggling to find a vantage point of safety for her heroine. Botanising seemed to provide an option for agency, as did the role of aesthetic judge, since both suggest rationality but, unfortunately, both positions collapse. In her novels *Maria* and *Mary*, Wollstonecraft tries similarly to craft a form of rationality and sensibility that will allow women to escape from more sexualised sentiment.[74] However, both her heroines are nonetheless put in sexual danger, and escape proves elusive. This failure is replicated as Rosalie adopts the same position as her mother in the 'temple', creating echoes of masculine interpretation and control despite her successful negotiation with the jailor.

Walsingham is initially positioned as a wealthy explorer: his attitude to the landscape is one of inquisitive education, as he comes ashore solely to satisfy his curiosity about ruins and curios (185).[75] Of travellers in this period, like Walsingham, Susan Bell records the habit of collecting and exporting curiosities.[76] Smollett famously mocks this propensity among the British to be suddenly 'seized with the ambition of becoming connoisseurs' and Rosalie's escape is complicated by Walsingham's decision to contrast her with antiquities (191).[77] Smith here highlights the dangers of the desire to establish superiority through collection when women become the curios. However, after listening to Rosalie's situation, Walsingham swaps his artistic role for that of a sentimental hero. Rosalie's melancholic history persuades Walsingham into a degree of shared intimacy about his own romantic tragedy, but this reciprocation becomes increasingly unhelpful for Rosalie. She struggles to show appropriate compassion without becoming subsumed by the sentimental. Claudia Johnson discusses the difficulty of 'articulating women's suffering within the discourse of male sentimentality, where men occupy the site of legitimate suffering, even when they seem to be feeling sorry for women'.[78] In line with this, Rosalie too has difficulty separating her experience from that of Walsingham, which complicates her escape. Despite these signs of sentimental manipulation, Walsingham's typical wealth and selflessness enable him to rescue Rosalie and return her to England. Together they move from a foreign, threatening, ancient space, to a familiar, local landscape where there is still no solace. While in *Emmeline* the heroine had a choice between gothic and rational readings, for Rosalie neither the heightened sentiment of the foreign nor the satire of the familiar offer release. As in *Wanderings,* Rosalie struggles with the sentimental and melancholic reading of her situation by Walsingham, but with very limited success.

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[73] Craciun, 'Introduction', p. xv.

[74] *Mary Wollstonecraft,* I.

Once on the Sussex coast, one of Smith's favourite settings, Rosalie constantly alternates between extreme terror at 'being seen', or rather, accosted, outdoors, and a pressing need to observe the seascape to relieve her feelings of fear and anxiety. The social perils of Eastbourne are a far cry from the gothic horrors of Italian imprisonment, but this anti-climax is very effective. When invasion and attack do occur perhaps they are more powerful because they are occurring in such a non-gothic space. Rosalie and Walsingham regularly visit the beach to find relief for their separate griefs, yet they find that this site, as with Eastbourne generally, is not dramatic enough to carry the weight of their emotions. Instead, Walsingham projects other beach narratives onto the site, to recreate or exacerbate his own experiences of suffering. He exclaims:

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[75] For details of the increasing interest in antiquities, the categorisation of spaces in Rome in particular, and the changing tone of travel writing, see Sweet, 'The Changing View of Rome'.

[76] Susan Bell, 'Women Create Gardens in Male Landscapes: A Revisionist Approach to Eighteenth-Century English Garden History', *Feminist Studies*, 16 (1990), 471-91 (p. 472).

[77] Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, pp. 242-52 (p. 251).

[78] Johnson, *Equivocal Beings*, p. 97.

> ‘I can imagine […] the cries of wretches driven on the inhospitable coast […] He sees a drowned man, which, another wave will cast at his feet, he steps forward –.’
>
> ‘In God’s sake, Mr Walsingham, (cried Rosalie shuddering), forbear to draw such images of horror!’–‘I will forbear, (answered he), if they distress you, Mrs. Montalbert, but to me they present not images of horror ……. Ah! no–at this moment I envy those who are dead; I almost wish *I* were so!’ (234-35)

Walsingham chooses to experience suffering that is neither present nor ongoing. He recreates or invents distress, inappropriately initiating the sentimental register. This recalls Sterne’s *Sentimental Journey* (1795) in which the narrator imagines the sufferings of a fictional prisoner.[79] Whilst Sterne ridiculed his protagonist, Rosalie tries to correct Walsingham’s reading and separate her own response, but is prevented by Walsingham’s unceasing narration. As Emily’s father in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* remarked, ‘Those who really do possess sensibility ought early to be taught, that it is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight’.[80] Adella Pinch writes that ‘every participant in the great debate over the French Revolution accused his or her opponents of exhibiting either too much emotion or not enough’.[81] Rosalie–as an intelligent heroine–correctly recognises the beach as a site of waiting, mourning, and processing. However, Walsingham frequently shows himself unwilling to remain rational, regularly falling into exaggerated tales, despairing sonnets, or predictions of his future demise. In this way, Walsingham creates a sentimental scene as adeptly as he creates suffering, and perpetuates both. Walsingham is determined to call attention to his own ‘capacity to feel’ rather than to attend to the suffering Rosalie.[82] Rosalie tries to restore reason by calling Walsingham’s attention to botanical language in which he had previously given her ‘easy lessons’:

> with a view to detach his mind from the subjects that so painfully engaged it, [she] gathered a branch of the sea poppy, and another of the eryngium, that grew among the stones of the beach, and began to talk of marine plants[.] (235)

Commenting on the ‘link’ between plant life in the sea and on land, seeking to categorise even the ‘margin’ of the beach, Rosalie attempts to correct sentiment with botany.[83] Walsingham sentimentalises even this lesson: ‘Ah! You would not now have found spirits to talk on such subjects, if you did not exert those spirits for me!' (235). He uses a discussion of vegetation as an excuse to quote his poetry and to draw Rosalie into the same miseries that he suffers. Seaside liberty is meant to be healing but here it is bleak and self-indulgent.

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[79] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey*, pp. 59-61 (p. 61).
[80] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, pp. 79-80.
[81] Adella Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, p. 111.
[82] Dolan, *Seeing Suffering*, pp. 10-12 (p. 12).
[83] Smith repeats this when Mrs Belmour uses natural history as a correction for affectation in *Minor Morals*, in *Charlotte Smith*, XII, pp. 209-255 (p. 220).

Smith underlines the performative aspect of Walsingham's behaviour by having him applauded by two eavesdropping amateur female poets. These women, despite their comical attempts to ingratiate themselves, actually form the dangerous intrusion that Rosalie dreaded. The older woman, Lady Llancarrick, is similar in appearance to Harriet Freke from Edgeworth's *Belinda* (1801).[84] Both dress and speak as men, desiring to display a manly intellect and to attract attention. Freke's intention is to cause suffering, but although Lady Llancarrick is predominately clumsy rather than intentionally devious, her behaviour is equally dangerous. Lady Llancarrick's misuse of the assumptions she makes about Rosalie's situation provoke Montalbert to abduct his son. Rosalie consequently collapses into madness, her own father, newly restored, risks abandoning her as a moral indictment, and several duels threaten the key men that Rosalie is dependent upon. Whilst she has tried to use botany to undercut sentiment, the consequences of Rosalie's emotional turmoil undermine the insincere poetry and creativity of the other women. The beach site in particular is polluted by sentimental intrusions in a manner that cannot be simply reasoned away.

Smith's use of non-urban space is complicated by this novel. We see a more positive response to a similar situation in Austen's *Persuasion* (1817), when Anne Elliot calmly but compassionately comforts Captain Benwick in his grief (and penchant for Romantic poetry) and then rationally manages a nearly tragic accident amongst their company.[85] Unfortunately for Rosalie, she is unable to operate with this level of detachment, and it is she who must undergo tragedy: her increasing madness robs her of all the rational characteristics she attempted to induce in Walsingham. Rosalie's experience at Eastbourne, the familiar and local beach site, reveals that these spaces once clearly labelled as areas of retreat can still be areas of attack. Invasion–by women, by excessive sentiment, by the promotion of individual desire–is halting the healthy work that has previously gone on here. The manipulation of border spaces by Smith's characters is, if anything, more sinister, more selfish, and more commercial. Instead of having Emmeline learn to remove gothic content from the space of the island or the beach, here Smith is trying to warn her reader against individuals who attempt to put the passion back in.

Marchmont

If both *Wanderings* and *Montalbert* suggest the dangers of others imposing generic colouring on an increasingly disrupted landscape, *Marchmont* suggests a growing difficulty with the more positive rescripting of the lives of those who, in their distress, inhabit border spaces. Although heir to her mother's narrative, Rosalie had been unable to learn from her mother's concerns. Now, in *Marchmont*, the family inheritance is purely one of debt. Here, in a novel that has received little critical comment despite its semi-autobiographical concentration on legal and economic suffering, nature is overwritten by the law. As Mr Vampyre and his colleagues demonstrate, all of the spaces the heroine, Althea, visits are invaded by lawyers or spies, and so independence and self-determination become all but impossible. In their introduction, Kate Davies and Harriet Guest discuss how 'bleak' this novel is and note 'how stark and without comfort the political and economic climate' was.[86] Rational thought by itself is not powerful enough to overcome economic difficulty: Althea's intelligent response to threatening representatives of the law does not prevent their invasion of her home. Areas of retreat have been co-opted, with non-urban land being frequently used to pay debt. The inability of Smith's key characters to find rest in their circumstances speaks, not only of their personal inadequacy, but of the increasingly contentious nature of the landscape. Beaches, cottages, woodland glades, and botanical patches in this novel are already observed or occupied by other suffering characters, individuals less able to gain benefit from spatial release and whose presence constricts the behaviour of the protagonists. Driven by their desperation, these suffering secondary characters are more likely to take advantage of the lack of authority exercised over these troubled spaces, and use this liberty to instigate their own form of justice. The consequence of this differs from in *Emmeline*, where the heroine is able to rescue Adelina from all the suffering represented by permanent madness; in *Marchmont*, Althea is unable to find a positive conclusion for Phoebe Prior.

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[84] Grenby's Introduction to *Wanderings* explains that Mrs Manby is a caricature of Hannah Cowley; here a similar technique is used, p. xvii.

[85] See *Jane Austen*, VII, pp 108-09, 118-24

As Smith describes the landscape of Althea's first banishment, she refers to a contrast between the past natural and current manmade circumstances: a contrast used effectively in *Desmond*. Now the ancient trees are sold by creditors, and economic power, however undeserved, is privileged and protected by law:

> The country around indeed would have been singularly beautiful, if the unfeeling rapacity of the creditors had not long since stripped all the land that formerly belonged to the Marchmont family of its ancient woods, and even of the trees in the hedge-rows that were fit for sale.–The iron ploughshare of oppression, in the form of law, seemed every where to have passed over the domain. (89)

This description echoes that of Comte d'Hauteville's land, yet the problem here is not of proprietorial disinterest versus the desperate need of the people. Whilst in *Desmond* the hungry peasants strip the trees to compensate for their own neglect, in *Marchmont* the lawyers wield the axe. It not only demonstrates that the economic has invaded every site, but that the economic is defended by the law. The lawyers are simultaneously breaking down signs of ownership, and privacy, and the borders of land. Smith is commenting upon the changing climate, providing a critique of modernity where property rights are defended not by arms, but by lawyers. Smith's language suggests that they have gone too far in their 'rape' of nature. Debt collectors become the 'iron' instrument that oppresses both people and landscape.

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[86] Kate Davies and Harriet Guest, 'Introduction' in *Charlotte Smith*, IX (2006), pp. vii-xxv (p. xvii).

In a section similar to *Avis au Lecteur* in *The Banished Man*, Smith provides a brief commentary upon Arcadian imagery and the mistaken belief that it can be separated from corruption. Smith attacks romantic views of nature, because to separate money and space–or to believe in an edenic rural space, empty of crime or law–is to be fooled by romance. The constant presence of the law prevents any escape or respite: Smith's protagonists are no longer able to gain detachment or wisdom with which to return to the urban. Instead, signs of the urban are constantly present with them:

> Those who have imagined that at a great distance from London there reigns Arcadian simplicity, and that envy, detraction, and malice, only inhabit great cities, have been strangely mislead by romantic description. Every bad passion of the human heart thrives as luxuriantly under the roof of the old-fashioned farm-house, two hundred miles from the metropolis, as in that hot-bed itself; and some are even more flourishing. (93)

Smith's rejection of the urban ties in with the concerns of other authors about the spread of industrialisation, represented by the city, such as is seen in the work of poets like William Cobbett and William Wordsworth.[87] It is also reminiscent of George Crabbe's reaction against Oliver Goldsmith's 'idealization' of village life in *The Village* (1783), and Jennie Batchelor has drawn attention to Smith's echoing of Wollstonecraft's critique of a similar ideal.[88] Smith challenges the binary distinction of urban corruption and rural idealism, here suggesting that the non-urban itself is filled with a level of corruption, thriving in a similar 'hot house' that at least equals that of the metropolis. Smith's references to practices of botany are important: forced growth or unnatural fruitfulness extend the economic motifs Smith used in *Desmond*. She seems to argue that the diversification of trade, power, and finance has led to an erasure of the marginal locations so important to her work, an erasure perhaps on a par with the loss of those common, country spaces to the increasing encroachment of enclosure. The exercise of power is increasingly hard to avoid, which leads Smith's characters to search for independent escape in increasingly bizarre locations. Now, more clearly, the need for independence is acknowledged without Smith posing a method for achieving it, or a space to enable it.

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[87] On the response of Wordsworth and Cobbett to the city, see Mark Keay, *Wordsworth's Golden Age Theories during the Industrial Revolution in England, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 68-127 (pp. 89, 107-12).

[88] Brean Hammond, 'Verse Satire', in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Christine Gerrard (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014), pp. 369-85 (p. 388); Batchelor, *Women's Work*, p. 84. Also see Caryn Chaden's chapter, 'Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village*, and George Crabbe, *The Village*', in Gerrard's *Companion*, pp. 303-15.

Despite Althea's isolation at East Woodleigh, her able management of the household and its environs is suggested when she visits the gothic chambers and is unwilling to concede to their ambience. Althea responds with commendable rationality, causing frequent moments of light wit to break up the increasing suspense of the narrative:

> '[F]or these three nights the girl and I have traced the print of feet clear enough in the snow […] I cannot imagine, for my part, what any living mortal can want here. I am sure there is no earthly thing for any body to take.'
>
> 'It must be some persons who come with a design on your poultry,' said Althea. (125)

As with Emmeline, Ethelinde and Celestina before her, Althea is initially able to reason with the gothic terrors that are suggested to her, and offer an alternative interpretation. Despite her own isolation, Althea is able to translate the housekeeper, Mrs Mosely's horror stories into warnings that allow her to avoid those spaces occupied by sexual (rather than spectral) threats. Despite isolation and separation, Althea shows no sign of reacting like a dramatic heroine until the romance narrative is introduced.

Ultimately, the natural landscape itself is more of a threat. Although the invasion of the domestic space is a metaphor for sexual danger that Althea can understand, she needs to learn a new suspicion of the wild outdoors. Nature becomes increasingly unreliable and, as mist cloaks villains, the surroundings depress rather than lift Althea's spirits:

> Amid this black and sullen stillness, which seemed like a general pause of nature, Althea at length reached the last field but one next the house, which appeared larger, and frowning in more sublime ruin through the half-obscuring mist. (197)

The 'pause' of nature and of time signifies dysfunction. It is here, that 'suddenly from behind one of the trees' Althea is first accosted (197-98). That a gothic ruin seems a secure alternative to this shows the extent to which the natural sanctuary has deteriorated. Both outdoor and indoor spaces are obscured and mystified by the mist and its unhealthy associations. Upon Althea's attempts to reach the house unmolested, five men attempt to prevent her shutting the door, and Smith describes them in the most threatening terms, with voices 'echoing like the Indian warwhoop round the ruined walls' (198). This language, recalling scenes from *The Old Manor House*, recreates the ferocity of attack described in Smith's earlier work. Attack is now centred upon lone and unprotected women and the forcefulness of the law makes them more vulnerable, even though Althea is entitled to live at East Woodleigh.

Unable to move freely, Althea's thoughts begin to mimic her movements, circular, dark and without change. Where, in *Emmeline*, we saw the heroine rescue Adelina from descent into madness, Althea fails in a similar task. In Phoebe's tale, Smith displays all the physical and mental consequences of economic persecution upon the unprotected. It echoes *A Narrative* as local villagers prioritise potential salvage material from a shipwreck over the possibility of saving lives (320, 323). The liberty of the beach is actually a disadvantage: there are no physical boundaries to be guided by, and no domestic space to which to run. Michael Wiley describes the Sussex coast as a 'threshold environment' and here that instability is emphasised.[89] The only limits described are the tide and the eroding cliff walls: both are in the process of constant movement and so are unreliable.[90] In her first visit, Althea indulges her mawkish imagination, picturing herself in a similar position to that of Phoebe: shipwrecked and desolate. Althea recreates the pathos of Phoebe's tale without the economic, mental, or physical consequences. Smith's atmospheric description of the surroundings lends much to the pathos of the scene, yet this is contrasted with local detail:

> All was wild, solitary, and gloomy; the low murmur of the water formed a sort of accompaniment to the cries of the sand-piper, the *puffin-awk*; while the screaming gull, and the hoarse and heavy cormorant, were heard, at intervals, still louder. Althea, as she sat on a fragment of stone, surveying the scene and listening to these noises, could have fancied herself thrown by shipwreck on some desert coast, where she was left to solitude and despair. (170)[91]

The 'cries' of the birds add to the 'gloomy' emotions Althea experiences; the 'hoarse' and 'screaming' creatures add an intensity to the scene. It is not until Smith describes her 'sat on a fragment stone' that Althea's solitude becomes more familiar: she has adopted a recognisable sentimental position. The romance of this pose undermines Althea's experience of the space and Smith draws upon this image of the mourning wife long after Marchmont has left the shore.

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[89] Michael Wiley, *Romantic Migrations: Local, National, and Transnational Dispositions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 58.

[90] Davies and Guest have commented on the signs of conflict represented in the landscape, 'Introduction', p. xii.

[91] On the identification of the area, see notes 60, 78 and 79 on pp. 436-38 of *Marchmont*, in particular the references to Polwhele's *History of Devonshire.*

Despite her seated position, Althea's role is far from passive: she uses the hiatus from social constraint to make rash romantic choices, replacing the botanical surroundings with her shipwreck fantasy. She refuses a rational analysis that would implicate her:

> When he was gone, she sat down breathless, and with a beating heart, on her former seat; hardly daring to recollect what had passed, or to enter on any self-enquiry as to the propriety of her conduct. With eyes fixed on the sea, she waited in an undescribable [*sic*] state of mind for the sight of the boat, and fancied that, amidst the low and almost imperceptible murmurs of the tide, she heard the dashing oars. (181)

Literally fixing her gaze allows Althea to avoid metaphorically looking at the consequences of her behaviour: the scenery becomes part of her fantasy. The beach experience seems changed by the presence of a heterosexual relationship: romance blocks a correct reading of the space. As with Walsingham's impingement upon Rosalie's rationality, Marchmont has transformed the beach space for Althea. Instead of contemplating Phoebe's situation, Althea uses her imagination to fantasise. This provides a direct contrast to Samuel Johnson's praise of the imagination that enables us to place ourselves in the 'condition of him whose fortune we contemplate'.[92] Desire becomes prominent, and the reasoning that should surround Althea's consideration of a rash romantic commitment is ignored in favour of the 'sight' of the boat and her fancies. Her compassion toward real suffering, Phoebe, is replaced, or undercut, by her anticipation of excessive sensibility.

The beach, in its constantly changing state, seems to provoke emotional extremes: it facilitates their romantic climax, but also enables Althea and Marchmont to imagine future despair, aware of the practical implications of their behaviour. Lily Gurten-Wachter describes the beach as a 'border space rife with questions of immigration, commerce, smuggling, fishery, shipwrecks, war, and perhaps primarily, anxieties about a French invasion'.[93] Althea's romantic choices are foregrounded and accentuated by their contrast with a more factual narrative: that of Phoebe, who was injured and robbed after a shipwreck, and whose husband died attempting to save her. Phoebe's visits to the beach are equally dramatic, but have very real consequences:

> Her mind runs on the notion, that if she goes to the sea-side she shall meet Prior– and when that notion takes her, she will sit whole hours upon the rocks talking to

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[92] Samuel Johnson, 'No. 60 [October 13, 1750]', in *The Rambler*, 6 vols (London 1752), II, pp. 207-15, <http://www.samueljohnson.com/ram60.html> [accessed on 23 September 2017].

[93] Lily Gurten-Wachter, '"An Enemy, I suppose that nature has made": Charlotte Smith and the Natural Enemy', *European Romantic Review*, 20 (2009), 197-205 (p. 200).

> herself, and sometimes fancying he answers her: and once she was lost all night, and was found the evening of next day in one of the caverns down there by the shore, half dead with cold and hunger and nearly insensible. (195)

Phoebe is unable to turn her emotions into verse, like Marchmont, and, unlike Althea, hers is a genuine despair that borders on insanity. Phoebe faces real economic, mental and romantic crises of a permanent and inescapable nature. Returning to and from the beach mirrors her journey back and forth between clarity and madness. The site is far too unbounded to be safe and its lack of stable boundaries makes Phoebe more vulnerable here than when she is confined within the domestic. Althea's unsettling fantasy of increased suffering is contrasted with the reality of what is actually occurring for Phoebe.

Something similar happens to Marchmont, who describes his own fantastic reverie abroad, only for it to be interrupted by a cowbell. Ongoing local experiences undermine the sentiment of these fantasies of suffering. Phoebe tries to recreate the experience that killed her husband in a mad attempt to be reunited with him, whilst Althea and Marchmont use fantasy to exacerbate their suffering for no need. Here romance destabilises sense and undermines the real trauma of the individual. This trauma is emphasised in Smith's descriptive detail:

> The worst is of a stormy night–it is a difficult thing then to keep her quiet, because the howling of the wind, and the beating of the rain, puts her in mind of the time she was wrecked.–Sometimes she walks about wringing her hands, and crying out to Prior, her dear Prior, to save her! and sometimes she wants to rush out of the house and go down to the beach–and she entreats the people about her to go also, in order to save any poor creatures who may be shipwrecked–as Mr. Marchmont did save her from being killed by the cruel folks that waited upon the shore. (195)

The beach evokes dangerous memories of the force of nature for Phoebe, but it is the 'cruel folks' and not the 'howling' and 'beating' of nature that threaten her. Nature exposes and exacerbates her suffering, but she is attacked by local, recognisable figures. Smith's romantic plot is unable to cope with the weight of suffering here, so she figures it instead in this subplot, using Phoebe to picture the ramifications of what could await Althea, with the unkindness of Phoebe's relations and neighbours standing in for the feelings of Lady Dacres toward Althea. Like Althea, Phoebe's 'place' is difficult to resolve now that she lacks an economic or romantic identity. Althea is destitute, yet she is portrayed as a ministering 'angel', despite her fickle desire to imagine her own disasters as grievous as those of Phoebe. Phoebe deserves compassion because of the reality of her experience, and Althea does help her financially. As Davies and Guest observe, Smith seems to decry the idea of a utopian conclusion 'in favour of individual acts of benevolence'.[94] However, despite her ability to sympathise with real suffering, Althea misuses nature to generate a narrative of suffering herself rather than focusing on the real examples in front of her.

There are few examples in this novel of the healthy use of the spaces available; romance warps otherwise reasonable choices, and is contrasted with tales of more genuine despair. Smith's final example is again more reflective of the contemporary climate and not typically sentimental: she seems to resort to increasingly bizarre locations to explore the possibilities for independence. In her depiction of debtors' prison, Smith creates a small model of the social system that operates on a purely economic scale of priority.[95] Marchmont describes the strategies women in prison used to distract themselves from suffering and Smith's most practical reference is to Madame Roland, who introduced the interest and pleasure of botany to an unnatural and constrictive environment to distract herself from impending death at the Bastille:

> [E]ven in these nose-offending regions of poverty and punishment that instinctive love of nature prevails, which points out what man ought to be, and marks his place in the creation as a cultivator of the earth; […] the wretched woman [who] hardly earns enough to keep from perishing the meagre and ragged infants that surround her, makes even here some poor attempts at a garden. (386)

Although the language of this quotation is the exaggerated parlance of romance, Roland and her fellow inmates are shown choosing to focus on practical hobbies and 'firmness' of mind (386). Self-control, decidedly absent in Althea's romance, finally has a champion. Unfortunately, it has to be exercised in the prison community rather than in a more natural, supportive environment. For Roland, nature was the only source of cheerfulness in her imprisonment, and her biography records her jailer calling Rowland's room 'the pavilion of flora'.[96] As Roland explained in her letters, the link between nature and happiness was forged in her childhood, and is now reintroduced to her 'narrow confines' to console her:

> The sight of a flower always delighted my imagination, and flattered my senses, to an inexpressible degree. Under the happy shelter of my paternal roof I was happy

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[94] Davies and Guest, 'Introduction', p. xxiv.

[95] This is similar to the operation of the colonial community in *Wanderings*.

[96] Lydia Maria Child, *The Biographies of Madame de Staël, and Madame Roland* (Boston: Carter and Hende, 1832), p. 233.

> from infancy with my flowers and books; in the narrow confines of a prison with books and flowers, I can forget my own misfortunes and the injustice of mankind.[97]

Recalling Roland's categorisation of her emotions, Smith chooses to organise and classify the prison inmates in the terms of botany.[98] Looking forwards, the novel concludes that it will be Althea's 'work' to mimic this categorisation, to introduce botany to dispel unpleasantness, and to organise space in such a feminine and beautiful manner that will enable her family's contentment.[99] Minute botany is used because large natural spaces are no longer an option.

In this novel in particular, women try to manage their responses to space and the interpretation of it but are prevented by the language of sentiment or romance. Correct spatial reading is also blocked by the increasing subjectivity of nature, which is heavily nuanced if not directly infiltrated by the narrative of economic power, represented by the law. Adela Pinch conjures up a powerful image of rural space in this period:

> It is easy to imagine what a popular novel of the 1790s might be nostalgic for: a landscape different from the changing countryside of agrarian capitalism; a landscape in which peasants danced, rather than a countryside in which relations between classes displaced and threatened many, a world in which one could travel freely, […] an idealized, unanxious leisure.[100]

Although this level of nostalgia has little realistic basis, these novels have repeatedly emphasised some of the consequences of the 'changing countryside'. The non-urban is less distinguishable from the urban because space is co-opted by figures of authority, enmeshed by the economic, and influenced by contemporary circumstances. Natural and unnatural families struggle to find a space that can accommodate their needs and their circumstances. Instead of creating an idyllic community space, Smith allows the realism of secondary characters' circumstances to press through the overall romantic plot to generate moments of insight and compassion. She concludes with this example of using botany to moderate the dynamics of space, however unpleasant or populated the space otherwise is. It is the introduction of rational categorisation and both its usefulness and its distraction that will enable Smith's characters to understand the options open to them. By gathering together botanical specimens, moral lessons and these secondary examples, Smith begins to collect tales similar to those we see brought together in *The Young Philosopher* and *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*.

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[97] Child, *Biographies*, p. 232. Also Mary Hays, *Female Biography; or Memoirs of Illustrious and Celebrated Women*, 6 vols (London: Thomas Davison, 1803), VI, p. 106.

[98] For more on Madame Roland, see Sian Reynolds, *Marriage and Revolution: Monsieur and Madame Roland* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).

[99] On the complex representation of women's work in this novel, see Batchelor, *Women's Work*, pp. 74-80, 85-88.

[100] Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, p. 118.

4. Chapter Four

Gathering Samples: Fables and Forests in *The Young Philosopher* and *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*

Smith's interest in using journeys or movement through space pedagogically is reflected in the very titles of her first forays into children's fiction, *Rural Walks* (1795) and *Rambles Further* (1796). Written simultaneously to *The Young Philosopher*, these collections are used to gather together material–stories, plants, settings, characters–that, despite their difference, are used for a cohesive pedagogic goal.[1] Similarly, in *Letters* the Wanderer's travels allow him to collect and link narratives from different genres, periods, and locations. Both novels include different texts and fragments, and as such are both openly concerned with the construction or compilation of experience.[2] Like a botanist collecting samples, Smith draws together tales that present examples of radical values played out in different spaces. Judith Pascoe describes Smith's later publications as 'hybrid works', 'telling enactments of the early nineteenth-century preoccupation with natural history collecting, as well as oblique commentaries on a more fraught order of things.'[3] Critics of Smith agree that this preoccupation is reflected too in her increasing interest in the minute in her poetry.[4] Smith drew upon this alternative, and increasingly fashionable, frame of engagement by including botanical and geographical particulars in these collected stories. Arguing that some of the botanical detail Smith uses in this period may overflow from her work in other genres, Elizabeth Dolan writes:

> [Having] unsuccessfully proposed a botanical guide to Cadell and Davis in August 1797, Smith infused *Minor Morals* with a great deal more botanical detail than she included in her previous children's books, a feature shared by her novel *The Young Philosopher*.[5]

Indeed, Smith discussed her intentional use of botanical detail in the prose with the President of the Linnaean Society, Doctor Smith.[6] In both *The Young Philosopher* and *Letters*, we see

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[1] See Elizabeth Dolan, 'Collaborative Motherhood: Maternal Teachers and Dying Mothers in Charlotte Smith's Children's Books', *Women's Writing*, 16 (2009), 109-25, and her 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, XII (2005), pp. vii-viii.

[2] A. A. Markley describes this complexity in *The Young Philosopher* as a 'step' towards the 'new form' of *Letters*, 'Charlotte Smith, the Godwin Circle, and the Proliferation of Speakers in *The Young Philosopher*', in *Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism*, pp. 87-99 (p. 98).

[3] Judith Pascoe, 'Introduction', in *Charlotte Smith*, XIII: *What is She? Conversations Introducing Poetry; A Natural History of Birds* (2007), pp. vii-xxii (p. xiv).

[4] Ruwe discusses Smith's increasing 'specificity' in her poetry, 'Charlotte Smith's Sublime', pp. 122-24. Knowles and Horrocks also discuss this, *Charlotte Smith: Major Poetic Works*, pp. 37-38.

[5] Dolan, 'Introduction', XII, p. xi. See Ann B. Shteir, *Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science: Flora's Daughters and Botany in England, 1760-1860* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 1996), pp. 68-73 (p. 71).

[6] See *Collected Letters*, p. 314.

Smith's continued interest in and analysis of the natural world, its classification, and the deep absorption such analysis necessitates that brings relief to the reader or writer. Dolan observes that, 'Smith infused the literature she wrote during the last twelve years of her life with reference to scientific botany. She portrayed this life-long interest as pleasurable, as intellectually engaging, and increasingly as therapeutic'.[7] Such therapeutic pleasure is only one side of the coin, however. Smith also uses her emphasis on science to correct both the self-absorption prompted by excessive sensibility, and the generalised anxiety prompted by the ongoing surrounding revolutionary change. Smith encourages rational consideration instead of the reading of world events and the landscape in which they take place through a filter of self-pity or anxiety. These two texts show more narratives of anxiety than in Smith's previous work, but also she uses a series of narrators to model alternative perspectives.

In her frequent use of distinct didactic third and first person narrators, Smith emphasises the construction of tales, particularly in *Letters.* Yet the latter publication seems to function as a dystopic parallel to the children's fiction: many of the lessons come too late for many of its key characters. Similarly, in *The Young Philosopher*, Smith's protagonist, Delmont, seems to remain in the frustrating position of the infant learner rather than progressing to mature adulthood. At the beginning of the novel, Smith introduces a parental guide (similar to Mrs Woodward) in Laura Glenmorris, and after Delmont falls in love with her daughter, Medora, Laura adopts responsibility for them both.[8] Mark Fulk writes that:

> In many ways, Laura's communication with Delmont both here and in her interpolated story is intentionally pedagogical, training Delmont out of his naive impetuousness and forming him into a mature, reasoning, realistic husband for her daughter.[9]

Indeed, Delmont spends more of the novel listening to the experiences of others than he does telling his own.[10] Having grown up at a distance from metropolitan society, Delmont needs educating about the dangers of real life, but he continues to need overseeing at the conclusion of the novel. Laura assumes authority over the development of Delmont and Medora's romance, and over the narrative itself, interrupting Delmont's history with her own personal narrative, thus splitting the novel between a contemporary *bildungsroman* and a romance staged a generation previously. Yet this is more than a source of suspense and variety: it shows Delmont as yet unable to narrate. He still needs pedagogical intervention, and Laura uses her own experiences to give him the education he needs by describing the different positions she has occupied and the problems they involved, first at her parental home and then after in her marriage. As Delmont continues to respond dramatically to unfolding events, the Glenmorris family look to America as another, safer arena for development.

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[7] Dolan, *Seeing Suffering*, pp. 101-32 (p. 101). Dolan discusses the use of botanical guides to avoid nervous illness, pp. 106-09.

[8] Dolan discusses a similar surrogate motherhood in Smith's children's fiction, in 'Collaborative Motherhood'.

[9] Mark Fulk, 'Mismanaging Mothers: Matriarchy and Romantic Education in Charlotte Smith's *The Young Philosopher*', *Women's Writing*, 16 (2009), 94-108 (p. 100).

[10] I include in this Delmont's fascination with Armitage and his desire to replicate his friend's beliefs, behaviour, and the arrangement of his home. Chris Jones discusses the dependency and anxiety of men at this time, *Radical Sensibility*, pp. 178-79.

Even when Delmont leaves the Glenmorris women to rescue his brother, in his letters home he chooses to narrate a story retold by his host rather than relate his own experience. Delmont seems better able to gather specimens of political and financial injustice than he is to engage with his own responsibilities as landowner and lover. These traits are seen in the Wanderer too: both men are better able to retell the dramas of others than successfully resolve those generated by their own positions. For the Wanderer, this is justified by hints of past suffering that prompt his attempts at distraction. Delmont, however, is transfixed by his own romantic and political ideals, and he avoids even the practical considerations raised by his sister's marital options. Instead Delmont escapes into a sheltered romance with Medora, and ignores the subsequent vulnerability of both lover and sister. Consequently, Laura teaches Delmont about her own romantic past and the suffering tied up in it. This overtly provides a contextual framework for Medora's present circumstances, but also works as a dramatic, gothic warning to Delmont of the variety of dangers that he needs to avoid, or, at the very least, to identify, particularly if he is to have responsibility for Laura's young daughter.

Within this education, spaces that are particularly useful include the parental home that Laura escaped, and the Hebrides with their history of gothic horrors; the final imagining of America as an alternative site for radical politics has divided critics because it is representative rather than realistic. In particular, whilst Smith has used both gothic description and the site of the forest repeatedly in her earlier work, here they seem to be used to rectify each other. Delmont misunderstands or underestimates the vulnerability of female isolation, especially in the local forest glade, and the gothic story then told him by Laura is meant to provide a corrective to this failure. While Zoë Kinsley has argued that this novel is 'overwhelmingly […] about female experience', that experience, I contend, is strategically used to educate men.[11] For Fletcher, the weakness of the men in this novel serves to 'undercut received notions of gender and hierarchy'.[12] It comes with a warning, too, that such stories should not be misused to generate sentiment or abstract philosophising by either gender, but to help resolve practical problems and teach caution and alertness, particularly about women's vulnerability in different spaces.

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[11] Zoë Kinsley, '"Ever Restless Waters": Female Identity and Coastal Space in *The Young Philosopher*', in *Gender and Space*, pp. 101-15 (p. 104).

[12] *Biography*, pp. 282-83.

It is Delmont's mother who provides the first example of education. She gathers, tends, and assesses botanical specimens, and houses these securely within a conservatory, sheltering and tending Delmont with the same care that she shows her extensive collection. Upon her death, Desmond adopts this maternal role toward his sister. This effeminate positioning bodes ill for his future interaction with the world, however. Susan Staves observes that 'husbands, fathers, guardians, lawmakers and lawgivers–pillars of patriarchy–are more conspicuous through the default of their duties' in the fiction of this period, and Delmont is no exception.[13] By becoming absorbed in the woodland glade that initially accommodates the Glenmorris women, Delmont neglects his responsibilities at home. Smith emphasises the security of Delmont's home through her use of William Cowper: 'A fortress where Flora retreats ǀ From the cruel assaults of the clime' (37).[14] Whilst Cowper's 'fortress' of 'retreat' seems increasingly necessary for the vulnerable women, Delmont's lifestyle of retreat sits awkwardly with his responsibilities.[15] In Smith's initial description, Delmont is portrayed as a young and active landowner, constantly leaving the house to be out exploring and working his own land. Yet he is soon seen using the outdoors to avoid social duties indoors and to retreat from romantic entanglement and philosophical disagreement. Instead of engaging with the local community and the land he owns, Delmont's interest is in escapist space and romance within it.

There are elements of this setting that might remind the reader of Sarah Scott's *Millenium Hall*: Delmont's home is equally hidden away and he is surrounded by tenants and neighbours in need of help. In *Millenium Hall* (1762), education in retreat is only part of the story: the women also provide practical help to their neighbours and the poor. For Sarah Scott, this exemplary retreat provokes improvement in her protagonists as they observe philanthropy in the community.[16] Smith's novel begins similarly, but Delmont's retreat is experimental and romantic, and his interest in the vulnerabilities of those around him decreases as his infatuation with Medora grows. Consequently, the ideals and philosophies that underlie his behaviour seem a little hollow: Delmont does little practical good to the dependents around him. To counteract their own vulnerability, Laura and Medora Glenmorris eventually 'retreat' to Delmont's house, Upwood, like Delmont's mother before them. They resort to this 'fortress' in a desperate attempt to reproduce conditions indoors that will enable what has become impossible outdoors–the reproduction of nature in its first innocence (Eden) and the flourishing of an education and value system that is innocent of the increasing commercialism and corruption of the outside world.[17] While A. A. Markley has argued that such an ‘escape’ is available in nature itself, I would argue that such idealism is only possible here within a forced construction of nature.[18] This sets the tone for the remainder of the novel, as Smith experiments with representations or constructions of space that have little reliability or realism about them. Instead she uses artificially rural or segregated spaces, like the greenhouse, or the isolated Highland retreat, or the far off and largely symbolic countries of Switzerland and America. Each of these spaces either have to be abandoned or prove more idealised than they are realistic. Kinsley argues that for Smith such ‘liminal locations’ ‘facilitate’ the ‘critique of the values and power systems of mainstream British society’, and although this is largely true, Smith emphasises the fallibility of retreat, and the hostility of the ‘natural’ climate itself.[19]

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[13] Susan Staves, 'Don Quixote in Eighteenth-Century England', p. 197.

[14] Explanatory Notes, n. 41, p. 439.

[15] Stephen Bending discusses the difference between male and female experiences of retreat, *Green Retreats: Women, Gardens and Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), pp. 1-7.

[16] Sarah Scott, *A Description of Millenium Hall and the Country Adjacent* (1762), ed. Gary Kelly (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1995), pp. 57-77 in particular.

The failure of the forest glade is significant. Smith’s use of Cowper implies that the protagonists must make themselves, not simply an artificial bower to escape corruption, but a fortress to protect them from assault.[20] In Cowper’s poem, Mary must prove herself against the difficulties of winter and sorrow, and this is an ominous foreshadowing of the difficulties Laura and Medora will face. Yet the ‘cruel assaults’ they experience are not those inflicted at the hands of nature, like Mary, but rather involve others making choices that exacerbate their vulnerability. However, Flora is presented as ‘softening’ the ‘grief’ of Medora and Laura once Delmont leaves them, and whilst resorting to life as separate from society as is possible, Medora avoids the risk of social interaction even in her reading material.[21] She is described as preferring books that prioritise nature, ‘where descriptions of scenery are exchanged only for accounts of the simple lives of the natives; or for such books as describe the great phenomena of nature’ (213).[22] Yet real rural space is difficult to classify, and has proved too easy to invade: Medora’s forest glade, abandoned for Delmont’s conservatory, is arguably Smith’s most vulnerable and sexualised repetition of this space thus far. Smith has Delmont and Medora engage in gathering fruit and nuts, reclining and eating their spoils, described in general metaphors for fruitfulness and sexual appetite (67). The obvious sexual connotations are noticed by Laura, and contradict Delmont’s rather weak protestations of brotherly affection toward her daughter.[23]

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[17] Eleanor Ty’s argument about the threat of Laura or Medora’s productivity–the ability to provide an heir, or an inheritance–ties in with the spreading power of the rising commercial, the increasing economic motivation for characters to invade and control Smith’s geography, *Unsex’d Revolutionaries*, p. 151.

[18] A. A. Markley, ‘Introduction’ *Charlotte Smith*, x, pp. vii-xix (p. xv).

[19] Kinsley, ‘Ever Restless Waters’, p. 101.

[20] See lines 1-8 of *The Winter Nosegay* in particular.

[21] See Sam George on Smith’s representations of Flora in *The Young Philosopher*, *Botany, Sexuality, and Women’s Writing*, pp. 125-28 (p. 125).

[22] Botany, like sentimental reading, is still unable to help Medora navigate the world. It was also considered ‘at odds with femininity’, George, *Botany, Sexuality, and Women’s Writing*, p. 89. See Theresa M. Kelley, *Clandestine Marriage: Botany and Romantic Culture* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2012), pp. 90-125.

[23] See Elizabeth Kraft, ‘Encyclopedic Libertinism and 1798: Charlotte Smith's *The Young Philosopher*', *Eighteenth-Century Novel*, 2 (2002), 239-72 (pp. 250-57), for more on the links between the Linnaean system and sexual passion.

Smith repeats the pattern seen in *Montalbert* and *Marchmont:* it is Mrs Crewkherne (Delmont's aunt) and other neighbours who comment upon the significance of Delmont's behaviour. These women harass the Glenmorris women, forcing mother and daughter to retreat to the even more compromising location of Delmont's house. Mark Fulk has referred to such bullying as 'patriarchy cross-dressed', an attempt by women to enforce rigid dominant social control.[24] Yet, although her methods are devious and her intentions malevolent, Mrs Crewkherne's observations are more accurate than those of the hero. Delmont–absorbed in acting out the sexual dynamics inherent in surrounding nature–shows ignorance of his own threat to the women, and the sexual nature of such a threat. Experienced Laura, however, is much more alert to the generic and physical signals of impending attack. Subsequently, she welcomes the possibility of retreat to Upwood if its owner will be absent, to hide from the observations of their neighbours. Thus, whilst Delmont travels to his brother, Medora and her mother move into a vacated Upwood, adopting the empty places left by Mrs Delmont and her daughter Louisa, and Medora is distracted from her troubling position by cataloguing plants.[25] Until Delmont recognises and engages with the dangers inherent in a responsible role in contemporary society, he is unable to create a retreat from them. Smith places her reader alongside the more experienced Laura Glenmorris: able to see and worry over the innocence of this young couple and the futility of envisioning their edenic retreat as a permanent home. This ever-present sense of anxiety is justified when Laura retells her own history: her narrative effectively disrupts the romance, foreshadows the abduction of Medora, and frightens Delmont into more heroic behaviour.[26]

Despite not recognising the vulnerability of the women, Delmont can acknowledge his brother's needs.[27] Adolphus promptly takes advantage of this bias, describing Delmont as a 'sabine hero of old' and calling upon his younger brother repeatedly and unreasonably to pay off his debts (203-04). This has consequences for the Glenmorris women: Delmont leaves them unprotected, and refuses to acknowledge the consequences of Adolphus' debt upon the future of his own wife. He values the risk to his family reputation more highly than the risk to his finances. This ignorance about material circumstances continues. Although he recognises how to refute anxiety generally, Delmont ignores real persecution (represented by contemporary gossip and interference) and refuses to listen to Laura's concerns about Medora's position. Delmont is aware of the threat of 'hurt', but misunderstands the type of persecution that he forces the Glenmorris women to encounter. He addresses Laura thus:

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[24] Fulk, 'Mismanaging Mothers', p. 96.

[25] Kraft, 'Introduction', in *The Young Philosopher* (Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), pp. ix-xxxii (p. xxviii).

[26] Garnai mentions foreshadowing, *Revolutionary Imaginings,* p. 50.

[27] Kraft criticises Delmont's unnecessary obligation, 'Encylopedic Libertinism', pp. 263-66.

> Now don’t silence me by another proverb or maxim. I know you could talk very well from a book, but I desire rather to hear you from the fullness of your own liberal mind. You have told me, that on many occasions, when a terrific image has been set up before you, by that superstition or that prejudice which make scarecrows of every thing or nothing, you have ventured to approach it, to look resolutely at it, and calculating its real power to hurt you, have presently seen it vanish into thin air. Be assured that my venerable sybil of an aunt, though an admirable scarecrow for the misses of ******* need not curtail you and Medora of one walk, whether you botanize with me, or poetise with Armitage, or philosophize with us both. (85)

Delmont mistakes rational fear for sentimental histrionics, but much more is at stake here than imagined or overly ‘terrific’ anxieties. Chris Jones highlights the symbolism of Delmont’s remarks: his ‘faith in reason is not just a complacency in his own clarity of vision but a faith in a general awakening which is irreversible’.[28] Instead of dispelling a false or exaggerated threat, though, Delmont attempts to rationalise away very real concerns about the female body and its vulnerability.

It is not the niggling threat of local restriction that Laura fears: soon after she is interred in a madhouse, and her daughter abducted. Delmont presumes he is as able as Laura to identify and demystify impending danger yet, on the contrary, he miscalculates the ‘real power’ of characters like his aunt. As a consequence of this, the position, the reputation, the finances, and the bodies of these women come under direct attack. Delmont is unable to mitigate the causes of difficulty, such as his brother’s predatory behaviour toward both the estate and Medora, and instead acts in a way that increases the vulnerability of both. It is in the hope of educating Delmont that Laura recounts her gothic history, assuring him that her experience of real danger is extensive, and as such her ability to recognise or anticipate threats is reliable. Delmont, in his attempts to reassure and reason with Laura, reveals his own naivety about the dangers acting upon unprotected women and this emphasises just how much he needs an ‘awakening’ of his own. Laura mothers him, telling her own story with the ostensible excuse of explaining Medora’s family history, but really she teaches Delmont about the threats to the vulnerable operating in eighteenth-century Britain, even if they hide behind a generic façade.

Laura’s history takes up the whole of the second volume of the novel and is depicted in a series of deliberately dramatic episodes. Whilst many reviewers objected to the length of this subplot, *The Monthly Review* praised Smith’s vivid portrayal of both Laura and her abductor,

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[28] Jones, *Radical Sensibility*, pp. 180-83 (p. 181).

Lady Kilbrodie.[29] A. A. Markley has highlighted the similarities between Smith's structural choices and those seen in William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794): both use foreshadowing narratives and explore the 'psychological effects of pursuit'.[30] In this exploration, Smith extends the work she began in *Celestina*: isolated regions of Scotland are used to accommodate a tale outside the norms of contemporary society. Smith's use of bleak non-urban space and the clan arrangements emphasise her most desperate plot yet. Although Laura's tale begins with the typically sentimental pattern of early rejection and domestic confinement, this is unusually relieved by her elopement north with Glenmorris, to a settlement of which he is the clan chief. The narrative escalates into a horrific story of infanticide and incarceration, of persecution and lust, then kidnapping, poverty and attempted suicide. Smith uses this to flesh out the dangers of dependency, especially in contrasting forms of community. The Highlands host a loyal clan, an alternative to the feudal power exercised by Laura's mother, Lady Mary de Verdon, in England. These two countries contrast nicely in physical description, but both represent ties of social and economic dependency. Both are ultimately bleak too: they enable the imprisonment of Laura physically, and are sites of fierce contestation–whether this is seen in the silent struggle between Laura's parents to control and arrange their domestic space in Lancashire, or the fight over leadership and ownership in the Highlands.[31]

The former location, Sandthwaite Castle, was purchased unwillingly by Laura's father, having been linked to his wife's family 200 years previously:

> It had at that period been a fortress, and still retained many marks of its former strength. The country it stood in was wild and gloomy, and from its gothic windows there was a view of the Irish channel, and an immense extent of sand, covered only at times by the tide, which took off the bold grandeur of a sea view, and left only ideas of sterility, danger, and desolation, in its place. (111)

Once powerful and well positioned, the house has since lost its 'former strength' and 'view', and its location no longer sets it up aesthetically, but rather makes it vulnerable to danger and sterility. Smith describes unwelcoming surroundings: the sandy beach is a no-man's-land between the channel and the countryside and seems as dangerous and unfriendly as the sea itself. The land belonging to the house is equally obstructive, repelling Lady Mary's attempts to modernise and control it: the narrative describes trees that 'had absolutely refused to grow'

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[29] See Markley's 'Introduction' for the responses of contemporary reviewers, pp. xvii-xviii. He also discusses Laura's first-person narration and the influence of Godwin and Wollstonecraft, 'Proliferation of Speakers', pp. 90-92, 93.

[30] Markley, 'Introduction', p. xvi. Kraft discusses Godwin's influence upon the novel's title, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', pp. 239-41. Also Markley mentions the influence of Godwin, Rousseau, and Wollstonecraft.

[31] For more on the use of the Highlands in novels of this period, see Dekker, *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism*, pp. 1-13, 65-66, 83-85.

(112). Despite their wealth, Laura's parents–the latest generation–are unable to turn the land into something containable or controllable.[32] Lady Mary is unable to understand it or successfully manipulate it, although she can recognise the aesthetic and economic value of nature.

This absence of control is true within the building too: rather than creating a light, contemporary space through her introduction of modern lighting, Lady Mary obsesses over her heritage to the extent that it infects her servants with superstitious terror. Despite her extensive modifications, it is Lady Mary's dubious link to Geoffry Plantagenet that sets the tone for this interior. Consequently, the servants fear the ghosts of the past, and Laura and Glenmorris are able to manipulate these fears to affect Glenmorris's entrance and Laura's escape. Laura, like Emmeline, Orlando and Althea, can take advantage of gothic motifs when they are tied to an unhealthy or unrealistic understanding of space. She helps Glenmorris use Plantagenet's armour to terrify the servants and escape:

> I knew that old Amos was the butt of all the servants on account of his cowardice and superstition, and I silently acquiesced, while I helped to dress Glenmorris in the armour of the heroes of the red rose. (122-23)

The reluctance of Laura's mother to relinquish the past has resulted in their servants maintaining old, outdated, views of the causes of terror. Initially only the 'old' servant is terrified, but by the end of Laura's escape, even the most cynical servants are frightened or confused by Glenmorris's actions. This use of disguise and the manipulation of superstition align Laura and Glenmorris with Emmeline, able to take advantage of patterns of fear. However, although their joint manipulation of superstition enables Laura's escape, it means that when she and Glenmorris encounter similarly gothic scenarios in the future, they risk underestimating the real danger that can hide behind such trappings.

Until this escape, Laura's movement at home is restricted. Her deliberate positioning by the family is described by Kinsley:

> Laura's parents isolate her from the urban, civilized culture which her newly married sister enjoys, and in doing so underscore her inferior status within the family hierarchy. Her consignment to Sandthwaite […] associates her with the family's past and its detritus.[33]

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[32] Kinsley writes further on Lady Mary's power over her husband, 'Ever Restless Waters', pp. 105-06.

[33] Kinsley, 'Ever Restless Waters', p. 105.

The brief journey from Laura's inferiority to marriage is presented in a series of physical movements through which she must outmanoeuvre her mother's control of the domestic and surrounding space. First she gains access to the garden, then to her lover, and finally, to the wilder outdoors.[34] Laura has to transgress a series of domestic or artificial boundaries–first the window, then the terrace, the edge of the garden, and then the fencing around the estate. She finally exits the controlled space permanently. Yet in her spontaneous transgression of these boundaries, Laura underestimates the real power of unstable space. She and Glenmorris must overcome the physically unstable land of the marshes and beach to complete their escape. Nearly drowned on both sites, a dramatic crescendo is reached and then belittled. Zoë Kinsley observes that these sites provide 'spaces of opportunity, where fortunes change and freedom from oppression becomes a possibility'. However, she continues, 'they are also places of sorrow, frustration, violence and criminality'.[35] In this example the desperate escape from the tide, at night, is only successful because Glenmorris and Laura are aided by a mysterious criminal bandit who, it transpires, is also a local tour guide.

This smuggler is the only other character taking advantage of this transgressive time and landscape, able to help the lovers because of his own confused social position. Ultimately, he triumphs over this dangerous site, not because of his power or mystery as a bandit, but because of his day job: helping travellers across the sands. He is aware of the dangers he faces in losing track of their physical position, and of losing his economic position if his night-time criminality is exposed.[36] Here, as we saw in *Ethelinde* and *The Old Manor House*, power is increasingly up for negotiation by a whole range of primary and secondary characters. Loss of life and loss of livelihood take on equal significance, and an understanding of the economic context of the space provides the smuggler with a serious practical advantage.

There are other similarities between *The Young Philosopher* and Smith's earlier work: Glenmorris–in the fallibility of his judgement, and the desperation of his desire–reads a little like Orlando. In a fit of despair, Glenmorris gambles away part of his inheritance, and then, in his rescue of Laura, he considerably miscalculates the tide so that it is only by stopping this bandit with a 'loud and authoritative manner', weapons, and bribery that Glenmorris manages to affect their escape (124). Gambling, largely linked in this novel to Adolphus–Delmont's older brother–was a behaviour usually ascribed to an insecure or irrational character, a habit that received serious censure in reformist writings of the 1790s, and in Smith's own work.[37] Its disastrous consequences upon the gambler's dependents, and the far-reaching impact of such behaviour, is emphasised in Godwin's *St Leon* (1799), for example. Of course, Smith's own experience of debtor's prison, one of many consequences of her own economic difficulties, is referenced in many of her novels and Angela Keane observes that 'the shadow of theft, debt and insanity in this narrative intimates a broader context of emotional and economic overspend in wartime Britain'.[38] Happily, here, after acknowledging his vice, Smith allows Glenmorris an early source of escape from the downward spiral of addiction, but he must escape into exile, an unproductive and comfortless space with Laura. He confesses his weaknesses to Laura and plans their spontaneous and ill-conceived elopement to the Highlands, far away from temptation, and far away, indeed, from everything. Glenmorris's poor financial judgement ties in with his inability to navigate the boundaries between sea and land, and his optimistic views of their future.

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[34] For more on the garden reinforcing and destabilising the home 'as protected retreat', see *Women, Literature, and the Domesticated Landscape: England's Disciples of Flora 1780-1870*, eds Judith W. Page and Elise L. Smith (New York: CUP, 2011), pp. 1-3, 6. Also John Hunt, *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), pp. 1-11, 29.

[35] Kinsley, 'Ever Restless Waters', p. 102.

[36] Keane discusses the similarities between Laura, Glenmorris and the smuggler, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, pp. 108-09.

Thus, with such mistakes at the start of their journey, Laura and Glenmorris travel to one of the few legacies that Glenmorris has not yet gambled away because of its location: 'I have yet a property left in the highlands […] With you, Laura, the wildest mountain of my rugged country would be to me an Eden' (118). Instead of marriage achieving access to the 'urban' centre as it did for her sister, Laura is forced further away, to a new culture completely. Glenmorris's use of 'Eden' echoes earlier descriptions of Upwood, yet this retreat is certainly more 'rugged' than the other locations Smith has described. Bare of warmth, food, company, and even connection by basic roads, the Scottish location is dramatically bleak and impractical from the beginning. The story is set before the successful creation of a usable road network: the isolation of this setting is emphasised by the reality of the property's detachment from other communities.[39] Like Laura's tale itself, the land is more complex than it seems.

As A. J. Youngson summarises, 'In the eighteenth century, when travel was so much more difficult, the diversity of the region was even harder to grasp than it is today'.[40] Samuel Johnson, travelling in 1773, described the Highlands as equally 'unknown' to the British as 'Borneo'.[41] This exoticism is taken up and exaggerated through Laura's gothicisation of her experiences: she creates another boundary of distance between the more standardised metropolis, and the inaccessible, gothic, properties of the 'Celtic peripheries'. This whole plot seems more historically distanced than it is, partly because of the difference of the clan from the philosophical idealism attempted at Upwood, and because the two communities are separated by great physical distance. Yet some of the behaviour Smith describes in modern London is as controlling and threatening as the examples seen in Scottish isolation. The initial loyalty of Glenmorris' clan is the only visible example of positive community, however. Sadly, the successful functioning of this clan ends with its changes in leadership: first when Glenmorris is kidnapped, and later when he intentionally abandons Britain altogether. Although the clan provide a timely, and in some ways idyllic, example of community, Smith demonstrates their failure as an antiquated model.

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[37] A. A. Markley has written on this in more detail, including brief reference to *Emmeline*'s Delamere, 'Aristocrats behaving badly: gambling and duelling in the 1790s Novel of Reform', *European Romantic Review*, 17 (2006), 161-68.
[38] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 106.
[39] Kinsley discusses the different networks built and recorded in the early eighteenth century, *Home Tour*, pp. 5-6.
[40] Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line*, p. 14.
[41] Johnson, *To the Hebrides*, p. 186.

In her presentation of the Highlands, Smith uses historical filtering to make the land seem more alien, drawing upon the Jacobite Rising of 1745 and its consequences for the local populace.[42] She simultaneously uses or mimics specific, relevant, contemporary detail from travel narratives to add solidity and authenticity to the unfolding events. This playfulness with genre is, for Juliet Shields, what makes up the national tale, commonly the main form of the 'Scotch novel', an amalgamation of historical, gothic and travel narratives.[43] Smith's work precedes the 'mania' for this style of fiction, combining these same genres, but with more gritty detail it seems, and less romance. In Laura's tale, Smith gives us practical minutiae–the smell of the interiors, and the dress of the servants–that she may have gleaned from contemporary travel narratives.[44] For example, Laura remarks excitedly upon finding a servant who would wear shoes (128). In Edward Burt's *Letters From a Gentleman in the North of Scotland* (1726), one traveller describes an encounter in which he accosts a highland couple, the man wearing shoes, and the woman walking barefoot.[45] Outraged by what he sees as shockingly discourteous behaviour, the traveller forces the highlander, at sword-point, to relinquish the shoes to his wife. It later transpires that this behaviour, to prioritise the man's appearance over the woman's comfort, was a display of the chief's superiority over other clans.[46] By bringing shoes for her servants, Laura tries to make the clan more familiar and more recognisable as domestic servants. Carol Bolton describes a similar strategy used by Robert Southey:

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[42] Youngson discusses the ensuing changes in the economy, in land management, and in issues of identity and loyalty, in his introduction.

[43] Juliet Shields, 'From Family Roots to the Routes of Empire: National Tales and the Domestication of Scottish Highlands', *ELH*, 72 (2005), 919-40 (p. 920). Shields refers to Sarah Green (1824) who warns against the deluge of Scotch novels, and their mania for Scottish appearance and dress, contrasted with the reality of poverty and dirt.

[44] Claire Grogan discusses a similar mixing of genres in *Politics and Genre in the Works of Elizabeth Hamilton, 1756-1816* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), p. 132.

[45] Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line*, pp. 107-08. Kinsley also discusses shoes and status, *Home Tour*, pp. 175-77.

[46] John Dwyer similarly contrasts Edinburgh with the Highlands, an 'economic backwater' where household objects could be used as currency. John Dwyer, *Virtuous Discourse: Sensibility and Community in Late Eighteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1987), p. 2.

> Southey has his colonisers control the foreign landscape by overlaying the familiar outlines of a knowledge system from their home country, onto one that is alien and still largely unknown to them in this way.[47]

Bolton goes on to describe a similar precedent evident in the travel narratives that Southey read: the newness of a 'discovery' would be quickly assimilated or framed in familiar terms of reference. Perhaps, for Smith, this transference of English cultural values upon an isolated Scottish location is also a reference to the increasing attempts by the government to impose uniformity upon the less accessible regions and communities of the Highlands since 1745. Kinsley, in particular, describes a trend in women's travel writing to compare and contrast the women of the Highlands and Lowlands with those of more 'civilised' and accessible areas.[48] This kind of categorisation, for Smith, is only temporary as the clan is soon abandoned to Glenmorris's relatives.

Unfortunately for Laura and Glenmorris, the very inaccessibility of their situation, instead of increasing their distance from threat and affording them some privacy and independence, actually increases their vulnerability. Glenmorris is attacked by pirates from abroad and Laura by relatives from nearby precisely because this is an unregulated space. Glenmorris is abducted and transported to America, and Laura is imprisoned by Lady Kilbrodie, a Jacobite aunt of Glenmorris who claims the land for her son after presuming Glenmorris' death. The Highlands, a site of archaic community loyalty, also become a location in which abduction, attack, and mental torture occur as a matter of course, and from which Laura must repeatedly attempt to escape with little or no help. Even in the midst of this dramatic tale, Smith uses detail from other travelogues, such as the Welsh corpse candles, first described by Thomas Pennant in his tour of 1769.[49] Instances of oppressive Catholic and Highland superstitions are further exaggerated by Smith's descriptions of the landscape. This strategy may have been suggested by Pennant's records, particularly of his tour of Skye, that describe the strategic use of 'nature' by locals to 'increase superstitious terror'.[50] The real habits and strategies recorded in these journals and used in Laura's narrative support the otherwise gothic and remote adventure.[51]

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[47] Carol Bolton, '"Green Savannas" or "Savage Lands": Wordsworth and Southey's Romantic America', in *Robert Southey and the Contexts of English Romanticism*, ed. Lynda Pratt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), pp. 115-32 (pp. 127-28).

[48] Kinsley, *Home Tour*, pp. 171-74.

[49] Kraft identifies Pennant, Johnson, and Collins, n. 64, p. 369 in *The Young Philosopher* (1999).

[50] Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line*, p. 188.

[51] See Kraft for a discussion of Smith's use of facts to suggest authority and comprehensiveness, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', pp. 243-45.

By referring to such factual detail, Laura is able to combat particular fears with very specific reasoning. In one instance, the superstitions intended to terrify Laura are ineffective because she knows she is the wrong nationality to be a victim:

> The cry of an English bogie or sprite was heard, intimating a person of that nation– but that was rather a miscalculation on the part of those who directed this machinery, for I was not only *not* a native of England, having been born at Florence, but I had never been naturalized. (137)[52]

Smith repeats the ghostly sounds heard by Johnson on his travels, effectively creating an atmosphere of tension and fictional eeriness, but it is the vicious strategy behind these sounds that is so terrifying. Smith describes Lady Kilbrodie's attempts to induce an abortion by manipulating Laura's mental health, and the whole landscape reflects her cruelty: 'The country beyond was in unison with the horrors of the cell I have described!'[53] Yet the plants, the life of the landscape, refuse to participate: 'scarce would the hardiest plant that tapestries the rude bosom of the north, lend its reluctant vegetation here' (135). Whilst Lady Kilbrodie's behaviour has affected the land she owns and has the weight of local tradition behind it, nature refuses to participate in her plans. Nothing can flourish. Cruelty here is not born of the gothic, the supernatural, or even of the exotic Highlands themselves, but is exercised deliberately by a grasping and manipulative woman and the control she has over her own community. The supernatural itself does not threaten Laura, but belief in it leads the surrounding community to a vulnerability similar to her own, and although she escapes through a window, her servants must wait longer for general reform.

To escape the tactics of Lady Kilbrodie, and the imminent threat of rape from her son, Laura's only chance of escape is to run to the coast. Although it eventually becomes a place of action and rescue, the beach initially offers two options to Laura: she can commit suicide in the sea, or starve on the shore. Laura cannot return to her family and, on the mainland, she risks being caught by the new Lord. The coast is equally dangerous, though, either because of its barrenness or because she might be discovered and betrayed by Glenmorris's clan, who are now accountable to that same man. In Mary Brunton's *Discipline* (1814) the clan space is an alternative to the space of commerce. The clan's chief is an abolitionist, and so he and, representatively, his clan, have a beneficial effect upon wider society. The clan of Glenmorris, to the contrary, are insular, nervous, and economically reliant upon their new chief because of his power to reacquire their land and resources. Laura's choices are to suffer at the hands of man (rape/bigamy) or nature (suicide/drowning/starvation) and the escape she does find is only 'temporary'. Smith's reference to Thomas Wharton's 'The Suicide' is particularly apt, as Mark Fulk explains:

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[52] Craciun argues that Laura's multiplicity of heritage makes her 'immune' to 'superstitions', *British Women Writers and thhe French Revolution*, p. 159. Maunu comments briefly on Laura's 'national identity' as 'in flux'. Kraft describes the Glenmorris family 'proudly' lacking a nation of affiliation. Leanne Maunu, 'Home is where the heart is: national identity and expatriation in Charlotte Smith's *The Young Philosopher*', *European Romantic Review*, 15 (2004), 71-91 (pp. 62-63); Kraft, *Women Novelists*, p.139. For more on the diversity of nationalities mentioned and represented, see Craciun, p. 11, pp. 137-78 (pp. 158-63).

[53] Harriet Guest describes Lady Kilbrodie as 'characterized by barbarous and oppressive primitivism', 'Suspicious Minds: Spies and Surveillance in Charlotte Smith's Novels of the 1790s', in *Land, Nation and Culture, 1740-1840*, eds Nigel Leask, David Simpson and Peter de Bolla (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 169-87 (p. 181). Keane discusses Smith's reference to Wollstonecraft, solitude, and infanticide, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 185.

> Smith's incorporation of this poem locates Laura's suffering within a Gothic context and simultaneously critiques the Gothic's romanticizing of escape, despair, and suicide for its female readership.[54]

Although Laura does escape, the death of her child and the violent kidnapping of her husband drive her to consider the space of suicide as a favourable alternative. Caught between sea and land, Laura's prospects are bleak and she only escapes detection because one or two of the local fishermen choose to help her. Instead of accepting a new clan, these fishermen choose to outwit their new master, secretly remaining loyal to Glenmorris by supporting his wife and removing her to a nearby cave.[55] Their rebellion against the new Lord, and the strategic manoeuvring within the clan area, signal a shift in Smith's presentation of the Highlands. Their beach habitat, a reminder of the ambiguity of peripheral spaces, allows them some flexibility and these men overcome their fear to use their knowledge of the inaccessible and inhospitable land to find Laura a dwelling until such a time as they can find a more feasible escape for her.

Here, in the cave Laura inhabits, she begins to use natural detail to describe the scene: the 'romanticizing' of her rescue becomes a frank, practical narrative. She describes the food and protection available, and the value of protective relationships, even between those who are unable to find a mutual language (151). The emotional climax has shifted: only a few miles away from the site of despair, there are identifiable berries, and all sorts of plants and vegetation. Once Laura moves beyond the beach, the description becomes seasonal and cyclical, instead of linear. Whilst isolation in the gothic abbey meant death, isolation in this cave allows healthy sorrow. Laura loses sense of time in her fascination with the surroundings and practical considerations. Her description of the Highlands is no longer an anglicisation, an attempt at colonisation, but turns into an attempt to discover a mutual language–perhaps that of science–in which the characters can all communicate about practical survival. Sam George describes

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[54] Fulk, 'Mismanaging Mothers', p. 103.

[55] Smith may be drawing upon government experiments with the British Fishing Society in the 1780s and 90s, see Youngson, *Beyond the Highland Line*, pp. 29-32 (p. 31).

'vegetation and plant life' offering 'a realm of freedom and discovery to [women] in contrast to the castles and houses of their imprisonment'.[56] Although the Highlands themselves are in constant danger of invasion, the botanical detail of this space provides an alternative to the gothic via immersion in nature and botany, and the details of practical daily life. Markley observes that 'Smith's use of technical detail presents nature as an alternative version of reality in which, in sharp contrast to British society, there is no distinction or hierarchy'.[57] Instead Smith's focus on material circumstances is helped by her 'detailed and scientific view of nature', which Dolan contrasts to a traditional Romantic inclination towards a more transcendent use of nature.[58] The appreciation of this area by characters who speak different languages shows nature transcending, too, national and cultural difference in favour of a practical dialogue of survival. The detail included, Elizabeth Kraft argues, means that the reader 'is led by allusion, or cultural cross-referencing, outside the text, into the realm of botanical discourse where he or she is invited to ponder more deeply the significance of the traumas Laura has endured'.[59] This objectivity, the self-conscious reading Smith encourages, can be applied to the spaces Laura has visited or tried out.

In one of her letters preceding this publication, Smith expressed the concern that:

> [t]he present rage for gigantic and impossible horrors […] makes me almost doubt whether the simple pleasures afforded by natural objects will not appear vapid to the admirers of spectre novels and cavern adventures.[60]

Yet, it is Laura's 'cavern adventure', having escaped the new Lord, which allows her to discuss the environment objectively and reflect upon her suffering.[61] Whilst the dramatic nature of Laura's isolation is still acknowledged–for example, there is a reference to Calypso as in *Celestina* (158)–Smith also gives details of local resources such as goat milk, oatmeal and whisky (152). She describes a handmade path and provides an observation of the neap tides, using footnoting to explain the surroundings and the practical functions of Glenmorris's clan (150). Whilst this factual material is linked to the overall plot by several reminders that Laura is narrating these descriptions, it is still remarkably different to the rest of the novel (156). The reader, like Laura, has time to observe the scenery and reflect on its significance to the plot thus far.

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[56] George, *Botany, Sexuality and Women's Writing*, p. 126.
[57] Dolan, 'Introduction', p. xv.
[58] Dolan, *Seeing Suffering*, p. 102.
[59] Kraft, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', p. 251. For more on allusion, see pp. 249-50, and on Linnaean studies, pp. 250-57.
[60] Smith's letter of 15 March, 1798, to James Edward Smith, President of the Linnaean Society; *Collected Letters*, pp. 314-15.
[61] Kraft identifies key sources in her notes, pp. 370-71 of *The Young Philosopher* (1999). See also Kraft, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', and Curran, 'Intertextualities', pp. 76-77.

Laura's experience, despite being related in increasingly precise and pedagogic language, ends with drama, as the misinterpretation of her conduct prompts a duel and death. Delmont, too, reintroduces drama: whilst travelling to his brother Adolphus, he writes to Laura and Medora, not to reassure them but to retell another's story. Delmont's writing style replicates that of a sensational tale: instead of providing the anxious women with his geographical and economic position in any degree of accuracy, Delmont dwells on his presentation of one particular space as a romantic, creative, and desolate location, a site that exposes a tale of grief, despair and suicide. Where in *Wanderings*, Warwick accidentally revealed detail about himself through his observation of the land and its subjects, Delmont's choice to retell the narratives of other characters allows him to elide his own behaviour, becoming observer rather than actor. He seems unwilling to correctly read or respond to reality, choosing instead to lose himself in other dramatic alternatives and other people's stories. Kinsley observes that 'Delmont's growing fascination with the tragic fate of Elizabeth offers him a detached, vicarious experience of emotional, and psychological suffering upon which he can "philosophise," but from which his gender renders him fundamentally remote'.[62] Delmont seems to respond better to 'vicarious' experiences than those of the present moment. He begins to understand the vulnerability of women, the tragedies open to them, but his attempts to enter into their distress are unrealistic because he can never recreate their vulnerable position. Whilst able to join in with the drama and sentiment of these women's experiences, Delmont also overlooks the descriptive precision needed to rationalise such events and thus misses out on the lessons such tales and spaces offer. Although Delmont can visit the same sites as them, and although these spaces still prompt some emotional processing, the contrast of Delmont's woes with the suffering of the women gone before him is quite uncomfortable.

The Highland episode, for all its educational usefulness about vulnerability and dependence, is set firmly in the past. Smith contrasts this with America, which serves as a supposedly natural future model, but the landscape itself is strangely neglected in this novel.[63] Rather, it seems to operate as a signifier of hope and liberty. Leanne Maunu agrees:

> America, in fact, substitutes for the role that France played in *Desmond*, as the land with the most promising outlook for the future. Smith essentially fashions America

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[62] Kinsley, 'Restless Waters', p. 114. See also Kraft, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', pp. 264-65.

[63] For more on America as utopian, see Renee Slater and Kate Fullbrook, 'Revisioning the American Landscape: From Utopia to Eco-Critique', in *Writing and America*, eds Gavin Cologne-Brookes, Neil Sammells and David Timms (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 216-32. Also Bolton, 'Green Savannas', pp. 115-31. Kraft writes on the uncertainty of the final location, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', p. 266.

> into a political and social utopia, which she had never done with America or even France in any of her previous texts.[64]

However, Smith's lack of physical or geographical detail is telling: the space of America is more of a philosophical ideal than it is a practical home.[65] Because it seems an empty space, it is easier to fantasise about without needing to engage with real cultural or economic difficulties. Keane describes this novel as the one offering 'the most complete fantasy […] of relocation', yet the 'utopian ending' has only a 'projected setting'.[66] Whilst 'the injustices and inequality of British society are insurmountable', Smith's 'glowing vision' of America is a key problem too.[67] Johanna Devereaux positions America not as utopian but as a corrective that highlights the 'dystopian lack of agency for women in England'.[68]

Whilst Laura escapes her Highland adventure, her later abandonment of Upwood proves disastrous for her and her daughter. The trickery of Medora's abduction mimics the plot of *Emmeline*, but here the sheer number of male characters able and willing to abduct Medora makes Smith's earlier sentimental fiction pale in comparison. Laura's experience, though seemingly distanced in a gothic past, is repeated in Medora's contemporary, modern ordeals. Smith's use of repetition serves to pull Laura's plot through to the present day, and show that these sufferings, seemingly archaic, are not at all relegated to the past. Although Smith reuses the abduction plot, she uses it to show that there seem to be fewer and fewer places that persecution cannot reach, and thus fewer places where nature can provide respite. This is seen finally when, at the conclusion of the novel, another glade houses a threat. Medora is fooled into resting at a dairy farm, ignorant of the predatory nature of the gentleman owning the surrounding land. He abducts and grooms young women with such frequency as to have a reputation with local drivers and tradespeople. Rather than providing safe respite, this glade is more dangerous than even public spaces of travel.

Smith planned this novel as a 'distinct departure' from her other work and with its philosophical focus, it clearly is.[69] Simultaneously, Smith continues to show concern about the reading of spaces through different registers that affect her vulnerable characters. Although Smith has used escaping abroad as a solution previously, in this novel none of the alternatives to England are convincing. This irresolution is continued in *Letters*, in Smith's portrayal of forests where her characters are either interrupted in their attempts to escape, or when the spaces they visit already contain other escapees. Smith tries to countermand personal and national uncertainty with specificity, giving known, unchallengeable, natural detail, but even the most rationally described woodland areas harbour characters whose attempts to escape their own individual suffering frequently force them to terrorise other visitors to non-urban spaces.

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[64] Maunu, 'Home is Where the Heart is', p. 58.

[65] For more on the problems of projecting ideas onto America, see Wiley, *Romantic Migrations*, pp. 3-5, 55-102. See also Robert Bechtold-Heiman, *America in English Fiction, 1760-1800* (Baton-Rouge, LA: Louisiana UP, 1937), and W. M. Verhoeven, *Americomania and the French Revolution Debate in Britain, 1789-1802* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013).

[66] Keane, *Women Writers and the English Nation*, p. 106, p. 102.

[67] Kinsley, 'Ever Restless Waters', p. 104; Rogers, 'Romantic Aspirations', pp. 80-81.

[68] Johanna Devereaux, 'A Paradise Within? Mary Astell, Sarah Scott and the Limits of Utopia', *JECS*, 32 (2009), 53-67.

[69] Macdonald, 'Introduction' in *Charlotte Smith*, XI (2007), pp. vii-xviii (p. vii).

The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer

Unlike *The Young Philosopher*, the title of *Letters* explicitly flags up its own structural diversity. *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer: Containing Narratives of Various Description* (1800-1802) is a five volume work that gathers together 'narratives' from across Europe and the British Empire. By this point, Smith had published a variety of children's fiction and in the Preface to Volumes One and Two of this, she hopes that the 'local description' of her novel would enable 'young persons' to learn, despite their dislike 'for anything but narrative' (3).[70] Despite Smith's attention to 'local description', *Letters* seems to lack pedagogical intention. This collection comprises a confusing and busy mix of locations: the Wanderer writes from and of an impressive variety of places, both in England and abroad. As was common in the period, Smith's mention of geography comes to encompass sociological issues–the government, and different forms of oppression–as well as topographical features. The 'various description' of Smith's narratives refers to the different styles or registers in which they are related, and the historical setting each is given. By using such variety, Smith makes her analysis specific to particular cultures and governments, whilst warning of universal dangers. Overall, *Letters* features different scenarios of oppression which are navigated with differing levels of success.

Although various narrators attempt to objectively describe their surroundings, as soon as they begin to botanise in detail, their scientific language is halted by interruption from other characters or events.[71] Whereas in *The Young Philosopher*, Smith at times countermanded emotional uncertainty with botanical specificity, in *Letters*, it is the other way round: science is interrupted by drama, and spaces of rescue are already full of revolutionary turmoil. Smith encourages her characters to recognise and respond to the gothic machinery that so often accentuates their situation but it is not always a case of defeating or rationalising the gothic now. Sometimes the gothic is shown to represent very real and practical threats. Smith's use of botany or of precise description is used to correct perspective as in her earlier work, but factual detail can also support the presence of the gothic danger. Smith's protagonists still have a choice to make about reading the landscape accurately, but frequently using a gothic register is legitimate. It is the rational attempt to read space that matters, however deteriorated that space might be.

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[70] *Letters*, p. 3. Guest describes the influence of booksellers' demands, 'Suspicious Minds', p. 175.

[71] Dolan comments on Smith's choice of Linnaean language to 'organise and name the external world', *Seeing Suffering*, p. 112.

Reading space is complicated when such spaces contain previous inhabitants, and when other characters try to direct or choose a particular reading of space. The Wanderer himself is such a director: the five volumes are bound together by his retelling of various narratives that have been related to him. His treatment of these stories as collectible curios positions him initially as an onlooker, which sits at odds with the desperate situations he describes, and the romantic disappointment he is fleeing.[72] The Wanderer, by intending his letters to entertain his friend in England, is selective about which elements of his experience to share, similarly to D'Alonville and Warwick.[73] Frequently time passes, or locations are changed, without more than a cursory notification in the standard epistolary format. Even though we know his tale was intended for a sixth volume, Smith also gives the impression that the Wanderer is trying to elide his own suffering by focusing on the narratives of others.[74] Each of the tales features an emotive crisis, which drives the characters further into practical difficulty, regardless of their class, gender, or nationality, contextualised by widespread revolutionary turmoil. The Wanderer is engrossed temporarily by his retellings.[75]

These stories are dominated by emotion, and it seems that contemporary criticism of *Letters* has mimicked this tendency. Reactions to this text have been strong, personal, and almost uniformly negative. Although editor David Lorne Macdonald disagrees with Fletcher's description of *Letters* as 'disappointing', he nevertheless argues that Smith resorted to throwing her 'heart' into its construction, rather than any real skill, concluding that '[i]t will never be considered Smith's finest work'.[76] It is certainly a troubling collection, and our knowledge that Smith had more to tell in a sixth volume may encourage curiosity, or even dissatisfaction amongst her readers.[77] The text struggles to detail a wide range of countries and the modes of transport between them, fraught or loaded spaces such as the Indies and Bohemia, and a consistently challenging portrayal of the borders and boundaries of Britain itself. Yet Smith's use of space is at its most expansive. Smith's regular settings–the glade and the beach, Switzerland, and references to Italy, for example–now host diverse tales of varying historical periods to emphasise the universality of the dangers that invade such locations.

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[72] For more on the fashion of collecting practices see Dolan, *Seeing Suffering*, pp. 123-24.
[73] His anti-botanical friend allows for satire, p. 7.
[74] See Macdonald, 'Introduction', pp. vii-ix. There are no recorded letters from Smith to Lowe regarding Volumes One, Two and Three, see Judith Phillips Stanton, 'Recovering Charlotte Smith's Letters: A History, with Lessons', in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, pp. 154-73 (p. 168).
[75] Charlotte Sussman discusses teaching engrossing the teacher in *Consuming Anxieties: Consumer Protests, Gender and British Slavery, 1713-1833* (Stanford CA: Stanford UP, 2000), pp. 159-87 (p. 168).
[76] Macdonald, 'Introduction', p. xviii, with reference to *Biography*, p. 295.
[77] The process of publication of the collection was fractured, too, with Volumes Four and Five sold at auction after publisher Samuel Low's unexpected demise. Garnai has discussed the novel's lack of closure and development, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, pp. 62-63.

A key problem for contemporary critics has been the classification of this publication. Although it may not easily be neatly categorised, that is part of its interest, and it highlights openly the diverse aspects of Smith's prose. Macdonald dislikes Fletcher's description of *Letters* as a 'collection', but that is in essence what the Wanderer does: he collects narrative samples, like a botanist gathering plant data, but of revolution played out in different spaces.[78] The tale here features as a curio, an attractive narrative in itself, and the Wanderer has the agency to choose where to travel, which tales to tell, and how much to experiment with the telling of them. It is this agency that gives value to his collection of tales: the Wanderer picks and chooses different examples to entertain. This device is seen in Smith's children's fiction: the collecting and selective re-telling of different tales within a didactic framework, but frequently enhanced by description of the natural surroundings. These are all different samples, drawn together by being cohesively sorrowful or gothic, but of much further reach than stories retold by a mother figure. Dolan observes that Smith 'develops her interest in collecting individual stories of suffering in order to expose social problems', and Markley argues that *Letters* is a 'new and highly original experiment in the form of the novel'.[79] The breadth of this collection of narratives of suffering demonstrates different ways of responding to space, of handling the fictional recreation of space and its collapse. *Letters* in this way forms a model for reorganisation.

In *Letters*, the troubled location of the woodland glade shows off some of the changes in Smith's style and strategy. The forest as a setting has been described by Jeffrey Theis as removed from 'the flow of history'–an observation broadly true of Smith's own forests located in different countries, at different points in time, and often theatrically set aside from external events.[80] From the beginning of Volume One, Smith depicts non-urban space as confusing and often divisive. For Edouarda, the heroine of the Wanderer's first tale, the outdoors is initially set against the domestic space, but both harbour similar dangers. Smith has Edouarda escape imprisonment in her father's house with regular walks in the woods and Edouarda uses the woodland to elude the surveillance of the Catholic priests. She is simultaneously eager to attract her father's attention there, to accost him whilst he is in a position of isolation, rather than when surrounded by his controlling entourage. To win his favour, and perhaps to efface her own independence, Edouarda adopts the habit of a nun before wandering in search of him. Rachael, the servant, finds Edouarda dressed thus and urges a change in appearance:

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[78] See Macdonald, 'Introduction', p. vii; *Biography*, p. 266; *Collected Letters*, p. 302. See Kelley, *Clandestine Marriage* on naming and categories, and Garnai on the novel as an outlet for 'radical concerns', *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 21.

[79] Dolan, 'Introduction', XII, pp. xxii-xxv (p. xxv) concerning *A Narrative of the Loss of the Catherine*; Markley, 'Proliferation of Speakers', pp. 87-89 (p. 99).

[80] Jeffrey Theis, *The Wildwood and Sylvan Pastoral: Nature, History, and Genre in Early Modern England* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2002), pp. 14, 24.

> Step back, Miss, step back into the wood, pray do, and just change clothes with me; I can creep round a way you will never find, wrapped up any how; but if you are seen dressed as you are crossing the park, and just too under Sir Mordaunt's window, we shall none of us stay in the house three days longer. (30)

The woodland more broadly becomes a place to organise identity, or to make changes to it. Instead of stepping indoors to change, Rachael suggests the wood as a place of privacy and exchange. Although Edouarda had posited the woods as a safe location for confrontation, being outdoors exposes her to possible observation. For Rachael, her own dress is of no importance: she can as easily wear a nun's habit, or Edouarda's clothes, as her own, without causing speculation or inviting judgement. She is sure of her identity and is more fearful of Catholic penance than she is of unemployment. Indeed, knowing the grounds better than Edouarda, Rachael can not only use her invisibility to advantage, but knows the 'way' to move seamlessly between different spaces and identities. Edouarda was earlier encouraged to adopt Catholic dress whilst travelling so as not to attract sexual attention. Now, it seems, she has gone too far, and instead of gliding unseen, she risks observation and punishment. Edouarda must transform into a servant girl to escape the consequences of her actions. That she must go back to the wood to achieve this, a place she already knows to contain other men, shows that Edouarda is not as adept at playing with or understanding identity as her servant.

Although unsuccessful in her attempts both to use disguise and to understand the perimeters of the spaces around her, Edouarda continues to force an exit from confining rooms as often as possible. When she stays indoors, or explores the interior further, she risks becoming increasingly sunk into the gothic itself: turning into a symbol of it, rather than subjecting it to her will. Rachael's frank comments are frequently illuminating: 'Why, you are cold as a marble stone. It's enough to make one all of a tremble to feel your hands' (44). By inhabiting the gothic space, or becoming inseparable from it, Edouarda risks resembling her mother, the ghostly captive hidden in the vaults of the house. Instead, she tries to refresh her identity and independence by entering the woodland, creating breaks in the plot escalation and breaks in her increasing affinity with the gothic interior. Edouarda tries to use these moments with nature to restore herself, as advocated in Smith's earlier works, but nature itself is too heavy with premonition and danger. This portrayal begins in Smith's description of Edouarda's chamber:

> Each room was lighted by one long gothic window in a very thick wall; they looked into a square court, three sides of which were buildings; the light paved cloister formed the fourth, beyond which was an old plantation, chiefly of yew, fir, and cypress. The ivy which had sprung up among these trees had here and there

> found its way within, so as to mantle with its perennial leaves the fretted arches of the open cloister. (20)

Smith deliberately peoples the scene with signs of death and suffering. Macdonald elucidates in a footnote that 'the common yew, *Taxus baccata,* is entirely poisonous except for its berries […] Yews and cypresses are traditionally graveyard trees'.[81] Smith's choices are ominous. Even the ivy has crept 'within', invading the indoors as much as the out, and blurring the distinction between the two. What is more, the invasion is unceasing: the use of 'perennial' suggests a permanence, a persistence, a repetition of nature's intrusion. Lisa Plummer Crafton explains Mary Wollstonecraft's similar description in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men*:

> Using the organic metaphor of ivy adorning/destroying the tree, Wollstonecraft both incorporates a Burkean metaphor of the English state as sturdy oak tree and suggests that the drapery/costume metaphor he uses is dangerous because it not only is predicated on a superficial appreciation of artifice, but also extols a destructive agent.[82]

In Smith's description, we see the ivy providing a 'mantle', covering and protecting, yet the reality is intrusive: it has 'found its way within'. Nature is taking over the domestic space, one here that was so thoroughly given over to the gothic already. Not only is the indoor area cold, dark, and tomb-like, but signs of nature are creeping through its weak spots to expose it to the elements. There is no real separation: there are poisonous relationships indoors, and poisonous plants outside. Edouarda's situation, her family home, England itself, are all in trouble.

Even when Edouarda manages to escape to the woods, they are as threatening. Indoors, she feared death, madness and imprisonment. Outside, the forest is eerie, secluded, and open to invasion. Initially Edouarda finds some emotional relief: solitude enables her to soliloquise. She uses nature strategically to allow sense to resurface, to reason away the terror of seeing her captive mother, and to rationalise the emotions she is experiencing:

> 'Yes, I will collect courage to address this dear shade, if a shade it be, should I ever be suffered again to behold it.'
>
> When Edouarda began the soliloquy that led to this resolution, she was in the pine coppice. It was dusk though hardly four o'clock; the air was remarkably still; and hardly a bird fluttered among the firs and underwood that crowded on each

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[81] *Letters*, n. 73, p. 502.

[82] Lisa Plummer Crafton, *Transgressive Theatricality, Romanticism, and Mary Wollstonecraft* (Farnham, Ashgate Publishing, 2011), p. 83.

> side over a very long strait walk that was once grass, and would still have been so but for the drip of the trees. (49)

What seems to be a break in the escalating drama of the indoors is soon upended. Edouarda's collected 'courage' is needed as the outdoors becomes equally, dramatically, dangerous. The delicate balance of Edouarda's sanity is overthrown by the appearance of incompatible and unbelievable facts after she has worked so hard to be reasonable. Although the woods seem to provide an escape from the mental and physical confines of the indoors, for Smith, as we saw in *The Old Manor House,* stillness in nature is unnatural in itself. This stillness suggests stagnancy, a lack of progress, an absence of natural movement and living community. The persistent drip of the trees, the early dusk, the 'crowded' undergrowth, are all persistently, silently oppressive, and they signal, not relief, but an immediate second confrontation with terror.

Smith continues:

> All the resolutions she had just formed vanished in such extreme dread, that every limb trembled, and a cold dew was on her face. To remove her eyes from the still approaching figure was however impossible, but it was too remote for her yet to distinguish what it might be. (50)

> A person was already at her feet. […] In look, in size, and even in voice–it was herself appearing to herself! (50)

Despite having rationalised her fears, Edouarda is confronted with yet another family ghost. As much as the forest facilitates her thinking aloud, it also facilitates a new level of dread. Edouarda's new peace is instantly overthrown and this is supported by the same natural phenomena that were so calming and familiar to her a moment ago. She needed a break or contrast to the mad gothic of her father's house, but in the woods Edouarda is still vulnerable, and a range of threats (and of men) are waiting to accost her. Furthermore, as it is revealed that the figure is not 'herself' but Falconberg, Edouarda's brother, it becomes increasingly difficult here to distinguish between a threat, a ghost, and a relative.

Smith sets up a contrast between this vulnerable experience of nature with the childhood experiences of Falconberg. Having grown up in the woods of Italy, and with no knowledge of his own heritage or background, extensive exposure to nature has helped Falconberg develop his body and his mind as naturally and healthily as possible:

> Amidst the mulberry avenues and chestnut-groves of his adopted country, the heart of the English boy had often been dilated by the magnificent spectacle of nature.

> His ears were accustomed to sounds of the purest harmony; his eyes, to scenes of unrivalled beauty. (69)

> With an active though athletic frame, great personal courage, and that consciousness of acting right which alone gives consistency and value to character, Henry Falconberg seemed designed by heaven for all that is good and great. (70)

Despite living in the same space as a community of other misfits, and even though it is 'poverty' who is anthropomorphised as his mother, Falconberg has 'nature' as his teacher. The result is an ability to read and judge character from physical appearance which enables Falconberg to select helpful accomplices in his search for his family, and largely to read and act well regardless of his location. He is a healthy specimen of an otherwise sickly family. Both Edouarda's hopes and the plans of 'heaven' rest upon him. Yet nature, having raised Falconberg so well, also foreshadows the disaster that awaits him.[83] Once he is waiting in a nearby cottage to visit Edouarda and their mother in England, a storm relentlessly attempts to break into each of their domestic spaces:

> [As] the storm increased, and the rain was driven with extreme violence against the old casements, menacing to shake them from their moss-grown frames, Edouarda thought of her brother waiting in his clay cottage on the wold for the approach of evening, when perhaps he might be under the necessity of facing the tempest to reach the house of his father, where, clandestinely received, peril only awaited him. (70-71)

The ancient architecture is unmovable despite nature's 'extreme violence'. Instead, it falls to the Falconberg children to fear the brunt of the storm. Yet this tempest pales in comparison to the physical outburst of their father, who kills his son, his wife, and then himself in one swift fit. It is madness that actually causes disaster, although the rampaging storm seems to urge on the dramatic crescendo. Both the house and the outdoors facilitate drama and horror.[84]

Only the final interruption of another father who understands the processes and rules of spatial control in England can introduce reason into this dramatic situation, and even this is insufficient to save the space. The house is abandoned, and Edouarda breaks away from reminders of her family, and from England entirely. She recognises the dangers of unhealthy cyclical behaviour, as well as the dangers of her own particular circumstances. To halt the generational pattern of illness, Edouarda chooses celibacy, which also liberates her from the control of the other men hovering nearby. To finalise this she moves to Italy, to recreate the isolation and peace of her brother's early experiences. Italy, however, is too reminiscent of the religion that controlled her family. She must move again, this time to Lausanne, for Smith a location that has been symbolic of political neutrality, and provides a natural site for a sensible, rational, and hopefully peaceful conclusion.

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[83] Henry 'repeatedly' anticipates his own death, Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 66.

[84] Garnai discusses the 'totally pessimistic' vision of this story, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, pp. 63-67 (p. 65).

Edouarda, despite the trauma she experiences, finally is allowed the freedom and the finances to move abroad and escape reminders of her past. For Henrietta, the heroine of the main plot of Volume Two, physical movement is more heavily prescribed, and by her family also. Whilst celibacy offers an escape for Edouarda, Henrietta uses her imagination to distract herself from her father's vicious behaviour. However, difficulties in differentiating between real and projected spaces arise, and Henrietta hovers between escapist romantic fantasy, a travelogue style captioning, and the real gothic horrors of captivity in Jamaica. Sent for from England by her harsh and controlling father, Henrietta is held captive in Jamaica until her uncle (hidden in the jungle) and her fiancé (who follows her by boat) manage to rescue her from both her father and the native army. Completely powerless practically, Henrietta chooses to interpret the locations she visits in a way that provides her with increasing reassurance; she intentionally makes the alien spaces more familiar to come to terms with her bizarre experiences. Once in Jamaica, she is completely within her father's control: he owns the workers and the land they work. Further afield, he has economic control over the representatives of local institutions of power, and has propagated his home and land with illegitimate children to further increase his surveillance.[85] The only escape open to Henrietta is that facilitated by her imagination, but once she is recused from her father's control, the non-urban space is not as liberating or safe as Henrietta had imagined it.

Here follows a description of the isolated house Henrietta's father eventually sends her to, in the hopes of forcing an arranged marriage upon her. When she arrives, the house is empty, and she attempts to sanitise the surroundings by refiguring them as a familiar, enjoyable space:

> To the southward run out green promontories, covered with mountain palms and plantains, with all the singular appendages of Indian landscape. Around the house here […] is an inclosure like a small English park; and here are many beautiful trees and shrubs; the tree jasmine, the pomegranate and the mango; together with groups of oranges, lemons, limes, and shaddocks, that perfume the air with almost

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[85] We also find later in the story that he had his brother's ownership overthrown so as to be completely in control. Nigel Leask's 'Introduction' is a useful tool in understanding authority structures in South America and the Caribbean at this time. *Travels, Explorations and Empires*, eds Tim Fulford and Peter Kitson, 8 vols (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001-2003), VII (2003), ed. Nigel Leask, pp. vii-xxi.

> oppressive odours. Behind the house, and beyond this half natural shrubbery, rise the mountains […] of which many parts of them have, as I am told, never been visited by Europeans. (125)

The use of the present tense makes the description sound progressive and contemporary. The land is described in the language of conquest: an exploration by 'Europeans' is needed before it can be knowable. Similarly, Henrietta attempts to take control over the land she occupies. To some extent, she is able to measure and quantify the landscape and the plants within it, but Henrietta is also vulnerable because of her ignorance: there are some areas neither she nor 'any European' is familiar with, and some plants are overwhelming because they are so unusual. Smith's descriptions here are similar to those of contemporary reports from Jamaica: she accurately describes the produce of the land, the different meteorological features, and the behaviour and health of local inhabitants.[86] Henrietta narrates these details to introduce objectivity into her otherwise fantastical situation.

From the beginning, Henrietta repeatedly apologises for her inability to read her own situation (120). Once in Jamaica, her attempts to classify her surroundings are corrected by nature itself. Every time Henrietta attempts to anglicise the space, she is interrupted in her reading of the surroundings, and overwhelmed by their exoticism. To combat this, she tries to relate the experience to past happiness: 'The nights are now more calm and mild, and the climate not much unlike the south of France; at least I love to recall that country, where I was happy, and where we first met' (126). The phrase, '[A]t least I love to recall', signifies Henrietta's failure to convincingly fit the two spaces together. She is unable to impose past happiness and the features of France on to her present location. This is partly because it is so foreign, but partly too because Smith champions staying in and reasoning with present circumstances.

By attempting to recreate this romantic memory, Henrietta evokes a courtship narrative and accidentally opens herself to a sentimental pursuit, here by her father's servant, driven to rescue her because he wants to elope with her. Included in Henrietta's development is the correction of her sentimental reading. Torn between visions of the past, apprehensions of the future, and the very strange and unusual present, Henrietta's perspective begins to alternate between all three. In the midst of her attempts to regain tranquillity, both nature and natural instruments begin to signal the sounds of local warfare between the mulatto army and her father's people:

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[86] There was a tendency to relate discussion of medical health to topography, particularly in the Indies. See Emily Senior, 'The Colonial Picturesque and the Medical Utility of Landscape Aesthetics', *JECS*, 36 (2013), 505-17. Also William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), pp. 69-90.

> To the north, a heavy swelling sea broke monotonously, though violently, on the rough shore; the rocks and caverns re-echoed to the thunder of the waves. In the measured pauses […] were now and then heard […] noises which, I was informed, are the signals used by the Maroons and runaway negroes to collect their numbers of hold their councils. Sometimes it was a few dull notes struck in a particular manner on their gombay or drum, answered by the same number of strokes from another quarter. (126)

Henrietta acknowledges the impending threat, but her treatment of it is level-headed. She attempts to ignore the warning of danger in favour of providing cultural description. Unintimidated by the communication between the local army, Henrietta describes the situation as naturally as if she were on tour, explaining the significance of different noises, and the local resources used to create them. The swelling of the sea is as natural and as justified to Henrietta as the civilised meetings being held. She comments on the rhythm of the waves and the drums equally. Simultaneously, rather than describe the vulnerability of her own position, she shows compassion and a kind of romantic hope for the oppressed, sentimentalising them as ‘sylvan’, and hoping they can be ‘sequestered from oppression’. Because of the distancing she uses, seen in the phrase ‘they say’ for example, Henrietta underestimates the dangers surrounding her; it is only her subsequent abduction by the army that teaches her to be more cautious of and alert to signs of impending threats.[87]

Contrastingly, her fiancé Denbigh uses scientific reasoning to mitigate the effect of real injury. He employs contemporary species identification to select and manipulate plants in order to save himself from bleeding to death:

> I gathered some leaves, and folding one on another, applied them to my wounds, which I thought I perceived would not be mortal, if the loss of blood they occasioned did not exhaust me. On these high regions there are few cocoa or other fruit-bearing trees; but I found some of the fruit called sweep sop, which for a while extremely refreshed me. (135-36)

Denbigh correctly identifies the plants and applies them to his wounds. Simultaneously he makes foolish spatial choices, misinterpreting his location, and the gestures and communication of those around him. This is most obvious when, instead of distrusting the attacking ‘Maroons’, he becomes suspicious of the very figure who rescues and restores Henrietta to him. Smith creates a delightful location for this plot: an interpretation of Robinson Crusoe's hideaway, constructed by this secretive islander–Henrietta's rescuer–later revealed to be her uncle. Denbigh is removed to the hideaway to heal, whilst Henrietta is kept hidden there from the local men (137). Even in this labyrinthine sanctuary, the Maroons regularly invade, but although it is not safe, it does provide means of relief. Henrietta talks at length about her own inability to find relief in nature:

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[87] Peter Kitson discusses portrayals of race and culture in ‘Races, Places, Peoples, 1785-1800’, in *Romanticism and Colonialism, Writing and Empire 1780-1830*, eds Tim Fulford and Peter Kitson (Cambridge: CUP, 1998), pp. 13-34 (p. 25).

> [Then] I wept, and my tears were not tears of despair. They relieved my bursting bosom, and I breathed more at liberty. Now, I try the same means to obtain only the power of weeping. I go out into the open corridor, and gaze on the magnificence of heaven[.] The palmetos and mountain cabbage […] bend their graceful heads, and wave their feathery leaves in the soft land wind which blows here at night. All is still and calm; even the slaves who have toiled through the day, now rest in tranquillity; but I am wretched, my eyes are turned towards heaven, filled with burning tears of hopeless anguish. It seems hardly in the power of Heaven itself to help me. (120)

Although she imagines that the slaves find relief, Henrietta cannot manipulate her surroundings to induce 'calm'. She dramatises her situation and emotion to such an extent that her suffering, despite her ability to cry, seems to be increasing.

Henrietta's uncle, the hermit, is in a similar position of unremitting distress. Although he lives in nature, even his extreme retreat cannot protect him from the reminder of his own suffering: 'Yet here, even here, amid the mountainous forests of a tropical island, does the voice of misery reach me. Hither am I pursued by the sight of sufferings and sorrows which man brings on man' (139). The awe induced by nature, and the soothing and gentle sounds and sights around them, induce tranquillity in the exhausted and oppressed slaves, but for Maynard, isolation in nature is also dangerous. His cave seems an escape from society, but as Kraft observed of Laura's experience, a return to cave dwelling warns that 'history is destined to repeat itself'.[88] Indeed, as Garnai remarks, 'Smith continues to delineate madness, trauma and their afterlife'.[89] Having left England after losing his closest friends and family, Maynard resorts to conversing with his dead son, and imagining their future reunion after his own death:

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[88] Kraft, 'Encyclopedic Libertinism', p. 140.

[89] Garnai, *Revolutionary Imaginings*, p. 61.

> From this description of my feelings, which more than half the world would, I am well aware, call madness, you will judge, my friend, how unfit I am to return to a place in that world. It is among my rocks and trees, then, that I can indulge this weakness, if weakness it be; and there are times when I rise above it. When […] I listen to the heavy waves bursting against the northern cliffs of the island; when the clouds that bear the thunder are gathering around me, and afar off at sea I mark the signs of an approaching tornado; then it is that I feel myself elevated, sublimed above this earth, and partake in some degree of the beatitude of those beings who dwell beyond the tempest and earthquake. (185-86)

Here, nature is used to facilitate grief, but not in the healthy, expressive, relief that Henrietta tried to find through tears. Instead, the violent physical shaking of the natural world brings Maynard closer to life after death, as if to rise above natural phenomena is to make himself like the dead. His own story shows him unable to find a ‘place’ in the ‘world’: he lists his attempts to satisfy his wife, to bring himself peace, and to educate his son. Only here, on the island, does he feel a sense of belonging that comes with isolation (as Celestina did on Skye). Maynard refers to ‘my’ rocks, and ‘my’ trees, and an ability to ‘rise above’ natural phenomena. The confusion between the supernatural and the natural or meteorological makes it seem as though he has achieved some level of transcendental state.

There is a contrast between Henrietta’s desire, recommended by Denbigh, to use grief as a release, and Maynard’s use of isolation to behave uncontrollably, like the phenomena he observes. This is seen too in Maynard’s use of his freedom to chase across Bohemia for revenge. Whilst Denbigh is concerned by Maynard’s choices, he also recognises that by taking Maynard home with them, they would be subjecting his madness to a surveillance which could only result in Maynard’s incarceration and Henrietta’s shame.[90] Instead, they leave madness in Jamaica, allowing Maynard to roam freely in an already sufficiently troubled and troubling space, one which can accommodate further deterioration. Despite the difficulty of portraying such a breakdown, this is an interesting method for handling the topic: whilst this isolation in nature is dangerous and unreliable, it facilitates, or allows, the expression of emotions and experiences outside of the social norm. Although Maynard’s madness is distressing, Smith has no suggestions for an alternative for him, and Maynard’s opportunity in this landscape to honestly identify his emotional state still seems to be treated as a positive one.

In Volume Three, the forest is again full of competing characters. It hosts political intrigue and crossdressing, and encourages observation and capture. Set in sixteenth-century

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[90] For more on madness, see Peter Elmer, *The Healing Arts: Health, Disease and Society in Europe, 1500-1800* (Manchester: MUP, 2004).

France, the socio-political context of this tale obviously differs from others in the collection and Macdonald praises Smith's appropriation of the historical novel to criticise courtly ideology. She goes further than this, however, as the forest accommodates a variety of threats to body, family, money, and politics, as well as heads of state.[91] The forest seems to allow the masking of identity, but such experimentation is risky. After her father is abducted and Corisande is left unprotected, she changes her appearance in order to search for him: 'she appeared like a village boy of eleven or twelve years old; and such an appearance was, even at that half-civilized period, a protection' (217). On meeting the Queen of Navarre, the forest itself prevents both the women from distinguishing between friend or foe (219, 221). The Queen is expecting her own people, but is unable to see clearly, and her royal position prevents her frankly acknowledging what and who she can see (221). The scenario is so bizarre that it has similarities to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (1605): Corisande imagines the 'whole scene was a dream', but these initial complexities lead to her entanglement in court life (222). Whilst the wood allows Corisande to approach the Queen on equal footing, their differences are quickly and persistently emphasised. Not only is Corisande unable to forget the Queen's power, but the Queen, by unmasking herself, is forced to continually confront her own restrictions in the political scenarios around them. Despite their ability to change dress and behaviour, these women are fiercely powerless. With similarities to the Hebridean scene with Montague Thorold, as soon as a male figure appears, the powerlessness of these women resurfaces. Although Corisande adopts a gender and class less likely to be victimised, she ends up in yet another vulnerable position.

Right at the beginning of her journey, Corisande becomes lost in the 'extensive' forest that she was directed to skirt around. Its vastness and unfathomability have something in common with the complex authority structures that Corisande attempts to escape. The spread of the court, and the vastness of its influence, is seen, even here, for the forest houses a whole range of courtly characters, and Corisande, young and inexperienced as she is, struggles to distinguish between help and threat, between political parties, and men and women. Corisande's own intentional blurring of identity seems to impact her ability to see clearly, particularly in this space. The danger of the woods, in the blurring of identity, is key, and Smith's representation replays William Shakespeare's use of the forest arena to explore identity and loyalty. Caught up in crossdressing reminiscent of *Twelfth Night* (1602) and *As You Like It* (1623), the Queen expresses her concern that women may fall in love with disguised Corisande, as Olivia did with Cesario. This is similar, too, to the politically-driven adventures of Rosalind and Celia in the Forest of Arden. Despite the determination of these women to protect their independence and identity (political and romantic), their vulnerability is unaltered. Unlike in Shakespeare's comedies, things do not automatically come right for Smith's characters. Whilst the forest can enable the ‘identity’ each character hopes ‘[it] will support’, it simultaneously is able to disrupt this idealism precisely because it can be ‘appropriated and re-appropriated for very different reasons’.[92] Whilst the forest can allow a detachment from the pace and context of the world, this separation is itself a risk.

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[91] Even the army barracks are hidden within, p. 204.

Finally, Smith uses the woods differently again in Volume Four. At its opening, we find the Wanderer seeking permission to travel further afield, disappointed by Germany and the French Revolution. The tale told him by the Hungarian Leopold repeats details of Denbigh’s tale in Volume Two. Leopold uses his knowledge of plants to find food and sanctuary. Similarly, Leopold’s understanding of the function of the surrounding land and its range of workers is seen in his description:

> I met several parties of the Zingari, who are what are called in other countries of Europe, Bohemians or Gypsies, but who not unfrequently obtain a transient subsistence in the forests of Hungary, by being employed to burn charcoal for the supply of the powder mills. Numbers of asses, or small horses, are frequently seen passing through the woods, loaded with charcoal, and driven by families of these wandering people. (335-36)

Leopold, having been raised by the dominant family in the area, shows great understanding of his local landscape and the communities it supports. Yet, once he has decided to woo Gertrude, Leopold strategically uses this knowledge both to save and seduce her:

> I urged my horse immediately under the thick trees and underwood, which concealed some of the persons who were speaking, and saw with astonishment Gertrude surrounded by a group of women, who seemed to have terrified her so much, that she had no power to move from them. (336)

First he rescues her from gypsies, a scene which is replayed in Austen’s *Emma* when Frank Churchill rescues Harriet from a similar group. Emma sentimentalises Harriet’s rescue, encouraging romantic expectation in Harriet, which then fails.[93] In contrast, Leopold’s sentimental rescue provides an introduction for romance. Leopold uses his new role as chivalrous rescuer to enjoy being alone with the vulnerable heroine:

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[92] Theis, *The Wildwood and Sylvan Pastoral*, p. 14.
[93] Jane Austen, VI, pp. 360-64

> By degrees, as she was unable to walk fast, she recovered her breath, and I thought no other opportunity might offer for the declaration I meditated. (336)

His familiarity with the land enables him, too, to find food when needed: ‘The chestnuts and other wild fruits were not yet ripe, but I somewhat appeased my hunger by a species of mushroom that I gathered growing about the roots of the beech trees’ (350). In short, because Leopold knows how a forest functions, he can interrupt or participate in the activities within it. Outside of the forest, however, he demonstrates an inability to navigate social and political change. His skills are only useful in this familiar space.

Although Smith continues to use the forest as a place of escape, we see in Corisande’s experience and in the gypsies’ presence that frequently the protagonist is not the only character in need of a different space to find relief in. The forest contains a mix of classes, observers, and intruders, all seeking different kinds of freedom. Its physical description sometimes breaks convention, and this allows its visitors to break with convention too. Smith shows it as a site that can generate gothic horrors, sometimes even more effectively and inescapably than those of the haunted family home. Although the Wanderer is frank about his desire for sensation and excitement, once he hears the consequences of real drama, he wants to help alleviate them. The homelessness experienced by those trying to escape the impact of revolution in their families, homes, cities and countries is contrasted with the novelty the Wanderer seeks. There are similarities between the movements and choices of the Wanderer and Desmond, but whilst Desmond’s use of space is dictated by Geraldine’s movements, the Wanderer’s travel is a way of getting specimens or stories. Smith is not content, however, with a detached cataloguing of these experiences. Instead the Wanderer needs to become alert to his own need for interpretive skills. His isolation, never complete or fully believable because of his ongoing correspondence, is undermined when he becomes involved in the stories he collects.

Indeed, the structure of *Letters* suggests that non-linear progression through space offers something different. The activity of wandering is itself valuable: the Wanderer’s experience and the tales told to him along the route, whilst illuminating Smith’s anxieties about community function and formation, to some extent demonstrate that this isolation is also protective. To be contributing toward the alleviation of some of these tales of grief is more valuable, however, and this seems to be reflected in the conclusion. In Smith’s work, non-urban spaces are always contextualised by signs and stories of struggle, whether personal or national. Characters able to read these accurately, she suggests, will better understand their own future options, and hearing about different experiences of non-urban space, much like observing and analysing the landscape itself, provides another educational tool.

In these two texts, although key characters try to use the woodlands for their own relief, frequently the danger, the insanity, and the poverty experienced in this difficult arena cannot be easily dismissed. Smith includes fascinating and unusual woodlands in her catalogue of spaces but even these must be abandoned because of the madness, the savagery, and the loneliness they contain. They hold plots and characters who are unable to find good resolution. Characters are either forcibly removed from their woodland retreat, or seem to remain there forever. These spaces are dark, but primarily they are complex, marked by signs of war, both recent and historical, and both national and personal distress. The observations of Laura Glenmorris and of the characters the Wanderer meets seem more crucial than ever. It is much easier to be educated through someone else's experience than to suffer first hand. Smith's primary intention is to induce a sense of wariness into her protagonist, to encourage them to be alert to their surroundings and to choose intelligently how to respond to them. This response–like the Wanderer's suggested involvement with Leonora, and the Glenmorris's escape to America–may not form a solution or be completely free of distress, but at least it involves some element of freedom, and of personal independence.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored how Charlotte Smith used non-urban spaces in her fiction to demonstrate how to analyse and interpret first the landscape itself, and then personal circumstance. It has brought together all of Smith's prose for adults and, by examining these works in thematic groups, has traced strategic repetitions and experiments in Smith's analysis of the landscape, primarily emphasising her diverse use of different registers with which to describe these outdoor spaces. Throughout her prose, Smith's playfulness with descriptive language encourages a probing of landscape and its depiction, not simply to improve readerly skill generally, but to educate the interpreter about vulnerability. She takes characters away from their constraining urban environments, and in a new space–a non-urban landscape–they learn to assess their literal and figurative situation, and to utilise the agency that comes through this education. Throughout Smith's prose, there is an emphasis on gaining or being denied agency, and Smith makes her characters confront these possibilities through their experience of the non-urban landscape. Her pedagogical intervention in the plots of romantic or travelling protagonists always teaches an increased wariness about the interpretative interventions of others, and the importance of analytical skills personally. Smith tests out a plethora of positions from which to view or judge the landscape, and different types of interpretation are inflected particularly by recognisable language associated with different registers. These perspectives are given different levels of value. Primarily, by the end of her life, Smith is systematically promoting education, reflection, and the practice of being attentive to botanical detail.

Whilst the extensive work of Jacqueline Labbe and others has demonstrated the subtlety of Smith's skill in both manipulating and creating forms of poetry, this thesis demonstrates that Smith does no less with her prose, incorporating fashionable generic trends and lessons learnt from her other works into novels that defy staid categorisation. She pulls together a host of allusions, topics and styles, but–more than this–in all of her authorial manipulation and intervention Smith draws attention to the work she is doing, the registers that she makes compete against each other, to encourage alert reading. In this way, Smith's experimentation runs alongside the development of travel writing. As travel writers included increasingly diverse and sudden sections of entertaining fictions in their factual accounts, so Smith reverses this process, interrupting her romantic plots with precise details, changes of perspective, and financial and practical information. These interruptions draw attention to the experience of reading fiction, and run parallel to the examples of reading space, both modelled for the reader. Whilst studying the novels individually has allowed contemporary critics to intensively trace Smith's engagement with different events and trends, grouping this body of work together shows the range of Smith's skill as she manipulates these different forms. It also highlights the similarity of her seemingly disparate works, united by their experimentation with description.

Her use of language to provide different representations of landscape has a continuity to it. A similar continuity has been hinted at in the cross-genre analyses of Elizabeth Dolan and Theresa Kelley, and in Stuart Curran's insightful introduction to the Pickering & Chatto collection, but is explicitly explored in this study, across Smith's prose. Where previous research has considered Smith's novels separately, this study provides a meaningful framework for future work around Smith's fiction, drawing attention to the identity of the body as a whole, as well as exposing the skill involved in individual constructions.

Within her experimentation with landscape depiction, there is a chronological trend in Smith's novels. She begins with an open exploration of spatial agency and liberation for her heroines, using non-urban space to facilitate the ideal education in 'reading' or assessing the situation around them. Smith progresses, through her war-related novels, to discuss the custodianship of non-urban space, showing the vulnerability of those living on other people's lands, or whose spatial choices are controlled by their relationship to landowners, relatives, or husbands. After this, Smith provides several examples of women becoming vulnerable to other characters–both men and women–who control the dynamics of the landscapes that others inhabit. Smith highlights the danger of giving in to others' spatial control, yet these vulnerable characters have little opportunity to find a healthy isolation in which to re-read their situation.

By 1796, Smith's novels are set in locations that are already full of troubled characters, and there is–for all concerned–a distinct lack of spaces of refuge or retreat. To some extent, this deterioration of Smith's ideal experience of non-urban space reflects the changing climate in which she was writing. With political developments abroad, and the parallel upheaval at home in England, some of this extreme unrest is communicated through Smith's depiction of the landscape as cluttered with characters in need of peaceful retreat. Smith's own deteriorating financial and physical health, too, became increasingly stressful, and with her personal library seized by creditors, and her favourite daughter still grieved for, it is astounding that Smith's final novels are as botanically and historically dense as they are. The changing tone of her work reflects both these national and personal difficulties, but also shows the complications of constructing useful space alongside the real and constantly changing landscapes of late eighteenth-century Europe.

In all of this, however, Smith continues to advocate the analysis of nature as a useful strategy. It is distracting, soothing, and useful, and, even in the complexity of the spaces of her later novels, Smith continues to grapple with the reality of the landscapes and circumstances familiar to her. Whilst Smith has no Queen of Navarre encounter like Corisande, her family are also spread far and wide in service, and, with an émigré for a son-in-law, we see in Smith's situation the same busyness, fracture, and cosmopolitanism that is reflected in her final novels, and was felt in the real lives of many in England at the turn of the century. As Smith describes a great range of spaces, she still zooms in upon the detail of their makeup, despite finding them hard to define or pin down. She seems to no longer see it as practical or safe for women to escape into a rural liberty, but they can still attempt to analyse their surroundings. Instead of enjoying the freedom experienced by characters like Celestina, they must pragmatically learn to deal with the people and spaces open to them in ‘real life’. What feels like, and to some extent is, an increasing pessimism in Smith’s work is inextricably tied to increasing pragmatism, as even Smith’s most dramatic tales continue to show the consequences of different viewing options, as with romantic choices. These choices are followed, too, past romantic denouement, into a hint at–if not always an interrogation of–the location options open to the married heroine or the permanently restless traveller. Regardless of their future economic position and literal location, the analysis of space, the ability to appreciate and classify nature, and an increased sense of wariness about others’ mediation in the interpretation of their situation, will enable Smith’s characters to navigate whatever befalls them or their country as they move into the nineteenth century.

This thesis demonstrates that Smith’s novels all feature detailed and contrasting descriptions of landscape that, in their deliberate difference, highlight the reader’s options for interpretation. Smith uses the language of different, recognisable or familiar registers to depict non-urban spaces. One of the effects of this is to reveal the pressures operating upon her fictional characters to submit to others’ control of or reading of space. By allowing her heroines the agency to access and attempt to describe non-urban space independently, Smith is also teaching them the skills to recognise, and–to some extent–to negotiate other pressures acting upon them. These pressures are always related to the economic position of the heroine and frequently involve the options she has in marriage and in her future location. Increasingly, it is a factual or botanical description that is seen as most trustworthy and accurate. Botany, as much as it provides literal cues for the landscape Smith describes, also provides an alternative dialogue to that of personal distress. As well as championing the botanical register as the most useful, Smith uses it to teach suspicion of overly emotional responses to personal or national circumstances.

This study provides a strong, united analysis of Smith’s prose, including her neglected novels, *Ethelinde*, *The Wanderings of Warwick*, *Montalbert*, *Marchmont,* and *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer*. By examining these texts, this study paves the way for the future analysis of them, drawing attention to their merits as to their complexity. This thesis has argued that Smith’s use of landscape in the prose is much more than the inclusion of poetic moments. These natural spaces are as richly and complexly layered as are other sites in Smith’s work that have warranted scholarly attention–Beachy Head, for example. This layering of context and register is seen most clearly, I argue, in Smith’s use of the Highlands and the Hebrides, in her various beach scenes, and particularly in Smith’s varying depictions of Eastbourne and Messina. The work of Jacqueline Labbe has provided valuable analysis of the perspectives Smith used in her viewing of landscape, and Elizabeth Dolan has most recently contributed to Smith scholarship with her insight into Smith's complex use of botany. This analysis does something different by exploring how the combination of different perspectives and different descriptive registers, the contrast of these depictions of the same space, and the interruption of botanical or rational qualifying language in the description of the landscape all come together to demonstrate the variety of ways in which non-urban space can be seen. This multiplicity of perspectives is then extended to personal circumstance, both supplying the reader of space with the tools to better read their situation, and the ability to use these different and detailed strategies, including those revealed by Labbe and Dolan, to have the agency to do something more complex with personal circumstance. Rather than promoting one filter, such as botany, or one analytical framework, such as the prospect view, in Smith's use of landscape, this study argues that it is only by looking at the layers of perspectives, all of the varieties of language registers used, that Smith's landscapes reach their full, complex, potential.

Any study of eighteenth-century place, space, or geography occurring at this moment is both indebted to and part of the current critical fascination with the deconstruction of such topics. Still driving new research, conferences, and publications, this movement has gathered together a huge array of sources with which to understand space and literary space by drawing upon different fields of knowledge and layers of context. This thesis contributes towards this movement in two ways. Firstly, by analysing the contrasting or clashing modes of description Smith uses to render non-urban space, this project has highlighted the layered nature of such spaces. It emphasises the complexity of such outdoor locations as the cliffs around Eastbourne or the hills of Messina, for example, where Smith's multiple references draw upon natural history, personal experience, political activity, naval or seafaring traditions, botany, ecology, local disasters, and poetic description. Whilst this level of analysis has been fruitfully applied to the urban spaces of the eighteenth-century–their construction imaginatively and in terms of a literal mapping out–this study adopts a similar approach to non-urban space, and to the experience that urban characters have in rural spaces. Within literary studies, such analysis has primarily focused upon urban space, with popular sites, major cities, and domestic circles carefully deconstructed and rebuilt within the context of book history, geography, natural history, botany, philosophy, and various genres of the novel. Combining knowledge from these different fields has shed light upon the experience of urban space and its representation in fiction of this period. This thesis applies a similar unpeeling of the layers of context and meaning, but instead involves it in the deconstruction of non-urban space explicitly. Whilst, for Smith specifically, there are some similarities between this approach and the scholarly attention already paid to her famous *Beachy Head* poem, this style of analysis has been applied to one poem only. In eighteenth-century spatial criticism more generally, this examination of the multidisciplinary construction of non-urban space is both useful and original.

This thesis has demonstrated that the strategic unravelling of the construction of non-urban space is incredibly valuable, both to our understanding of the complexity of Smith's novels, and for the extension of eighteenth-century spatial analysis. It models a strategy for approaching or treating non-urban space in eighteenth-century novels, pulling apart the spaces and their construction to better understand the multiple disciplines and registers used in their construction, and thus to understand the complex creation and effect of non-urban space and its varying significance in literature of the late eighteenth century. This is particularly linked to our understanding of literary experimentation, as Smith here merges aspects of travel writing with the fictional novel to noticeably shift our understanding of and interaction with non-urban space and narrative intervention. By examining Smith's prose alongside the current spatial trend, this thesis draws attention to her highly original contribution to our current understanding of space, and it models the complexity involved in understanding non-urban spaces as clearly as we have begun to understand explicitly urban locations. Smith's complex spaces encourage agency both for those fictional characters visiting such non-urban landscapes, and for those able to recognise and understand them in their reading of Smith's fiction.

In Chapter One, we saw Smith examine the position of dependent and vulnerable women, and the authority figures intended to provide them with support. Smith encourages independent thinking in her protagonists so that they might find economic stability as well as romantic resolution. Confronting the injustice of engendered victimization, Smith's heroines refuse to concede to generically typical roles, instead using their visits to non-urban spaces to subvert, re-read and negotiate expectations of themselves, as of their locations. Such reflection and independence is enabled by the liberty of the landscapes they visit, and by exposure to other vulnerable characters and their histories. Independent thinking enables these women to respond intelligently, if within strict confines, to the threats around them, and to consider their future options. Smith uses the liberation of the outdoors to allow her heroines to think for themselves, to develop an awareness of their own agency, to learn to recognise different interpretations of their situations in particular, and to choose how to subsequently read their spatial, economic, and romantic positioning.

Chapter Two demonstrates the fracture of outdoor space across Europe, particularly in France, and particularly to emphasise the responsibilities of land owners for those reliant upon them and their properties. Responsible land ownership is linked to radical politics, and characters who improve their ability to acknowledge and adapt to their responsibilities toward dependent people, as toward the land itself, earn Smith's praise. Conversely, the refusal to adapt to change by those in positions of power has unhealthy consequences for the population more widely, as well as for their own property specifically. Choosing to ignore or escape changing landscapes is equally unhealthy, as we see in Orlando's harking back to feudal behaviours in *The Old Manor House*. Finally in *The Banished Man*, Smith's innovative narrative interruptions develop this sense of instability and danger still further, as both the register of the novel and the spaces described within it are hard to pin down, unsafe in their uncertainty.

In Chapter Three, I traced a variety of examples of other key characters enforcing interpretations of space upon women, stifling their independence, and frequently exacerbating their distress. This, Smith warns, is what will happen if her characters do not learn how to read the landscape for themselves, although the rare periods of isolation in which they can do so are now extremely dangerous to them. Smith draws attention particularly to the coast as an unstable locale, where even the botanising Rosalie cannot enjoy the refreshment of scientific specificity in the face of Montalbert's sentimental monologues and the interruptions of unoriginal poets. Smith suggests that the process of categorisation, attempted by Rosalie, can help escape both vulnerability and suffering. Madame Roland's behaviour, described at the close of *Marchmont*, emphasises this.

Finally, in Chapter Four, this thesis traces Smith's use of the woodland glade as a particularly confusing site that highlights a pedagogical goal: to use the collection and study of many different spaces to educate the reader in the vital importance of sifting through and attempting to unpeel the layers of significance and meaning found in these different experiences of space. There are clear examples of multiple different descriptive registers in both *Letters* and *The Young Philosopher*, but fewer portrayals of a correct reading of complex spaces. It is the awareness and alertness towards circumstance that Smith emphasises. The confusion within the different woods is symptomatic of the variety of interpretations open to the reader, but Smith is not interested so much in a correct or conclusive reading as she is in the probing of the landscape, and the choices of how to respond to it. In all of this, the lessons learnt about non-urban space are essential for the development of agency and for the successful functioning of the independent individual, and they need to apply these newly found skills to their own economic and romantic circumstances, whatever their age. That there are fewer choices and spaces open to them at the end of *Letters* only serves to make Smith's educational efforts more urgent.

Future Trajectories

It is a fruitful moment to make suggestions for further research into the work of Charlotte Smith. With the publication in May 2017 of *The Major Poetic Works*, Claire Knowles and Ingrid Horrocks encourage scholars to explore the relevance of Smith's innovative poetry to such topics as the ethical treatment of asylum seekers and the complicated nature of women's vulnerability. It is, however, another (excellent) book-long study that exclusively addresses Smith's poetry. With the ongoing, widespread critical interest in space, however, chapters and articles that feature Smith's prose and poetry are appearing with regular occurrence, making her work increasingly accessible to the new student or researcher, and unpacking some of the complications of Smith’s use of different spaces across different genres. The publications of Elizabeth Dolan and Theresa Kelley–by broadening their analyses of Smith’s use of botanical language to include multiple genres of her work–provide excellent examples of the insights such an approach can reveal. Smith’s use of poetry in her prose has certainly something to offer too, even though the occasional remarks of Stuart Curran and Loraine Fletcher concerning this have yet to whet the appetite of new scholars. It would be interesting to see further investigation into the use of Smith’s poetry within her prose explicitly, providing another angle to the use of multiple genres.

In terms of the texts covered in this thesis, there are many interesting examples and experiments that have been set aside here for the sake of concision. Exploring these further would allow some patterns to come to the fore: both in the variety of different locations Smith draws upon (the range of beaches, for example), and in the complexities that can be seen within her use of any one particular genre (such as the travelogue), to present these spaces. The more neglected novels–*Ethelinde*, *Warwick*, *Montalbert*, and *Letters*–could furnish studies of their own, and warrant closer examination on any number of subjects. As our understanding of eighteenth-century spaces evolves, such analysis is bound to become both more complex and more fruitful than this thesis has allowed.

Born and bred in Sussex myself, and educated in Chichester, I have a particular interest in pursuing Smith’s use of Sussex as a setting, as well as her early interest in the Hebrides and the Lake District. In terms of language, Smith’s allusions to John Milton, the Bible, and William Shakespeare have some mileage to them, as does her relationship with and use of William Cowper, William Godwin, and the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. Her fascination with the economic management of her fictional characters would also be worth further study if it can be productively considered apart from Smith’s use of biographical detail. Finally, as Dolan argues that Smith’s fascination with botany in her adult prose is related to her children’s fiction, it would be of particular interest to see how Smith’s experimentation with register and her extensive use of the outdoor world varies in that oeuvre when compared to the prose this thesis has considered; it is a topic I was sad to set aside.

This thesis has traced a decisive, pedagogic strain in Smith’s experimentation with landscape and its description that emphasises and recommends individual, intelligent, independence. Having examined the manner in which the interaction of different registers is used to explore and promote personal agency, it is clear that Smith’s interactions with the style of eighteenth-century travel writing and the language of botany are particularly unusual. Revealing this aspect of her descriptive experimentation can only enlighten future research into the literary spaces of the eighteenth century, even while both the consistency and the explicit nature of such experimentation seem to be original to the prose of Charlotte Smith.

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