

The Politics of Quotation:
Charlotte Smith's Radical Fictions and their Allusions to the Works of Milton,
Rousseau, and Voltaire

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Abstract

Charlotte Smith is both a known radical sympathizer and an allusive writer. This thesis investigates the political meanings embedded through the selection and treatment of allusion in each of Charlotte Smith's novels published between the outbreak of the French Revolution and the end of the Reign of Terror. Specifically, it investigates how Smith utilizes quotations from authors connected with political radicalism—John Milton, Voltaire, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau—to work through the nuances of her own political thought. I argue that these specific authors feature significantly in her work because of their known republican sympathies. Yet, Smith frequently deploys these quotations in a context far from that which was originally intended by her source, capitalizing on their republican significations but making the actual polemical content all her own. Both the frequency and diversity of her allusive engagement increases during the period of the Revolution, which marks the Revolutionary period as one essential to the development of Smith as both a novelist and as a radical. Through tracking the presence of quotation in each novel, one published each year between 1791 and 1794, the thesis traces the evolution in Smith's political thought and, specifically, her changing attitudes toward the French Revolution as it moves through its early utopian stages to the violence and excess of the Reign of Terror. Not only does this study contribute to recent scholarship on the use of quotation in eighteenth-century writing, but it also provides an in-depth study of Smith's evolving radicalism. In this way, the project demands reassessment of critical studies of Smith's work which have failed to recognize the extent of the polemical content within the first work in the sequence, *Celestina*, and the continuing commitment to republican sympathies despite burgeoning conservatism in the last, *The Banished Man*.

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I. Introduction

Charlotte Smith's use of quotation across her novelistic oeuvre is abundant and grows as she moves beyond her first two, more sentimental, novels to her most committed revolutionary works in the early to mid-1790s. She quotes Shakespeare extensively in each of her nine novels, and mentor and most-admired poet William Cowper at least once in each of them. However, it is her utilization of three writers explicitly associated with the debate on legitimate resistance to authority—John Milton, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Voltaire—which forms the basis of this study. I aim to explore how Smith chooses these authors in order to align with established republican tradition and thus code the politics of her work as well as locate it in a dynamic political spectrum. In doing so, she contributes to the construction of the revolutionary era reception of these authors by naming and quoting them in polemical fiction. I am interested particularly in how Smith employs direct quotation not only to reflect or make more accessible to the public the views of her source but also, and more often, as a filter through which she refines her own beliefs.

Charlotte Smith refers to other writers from the outset of her career as a novelist, yet she does so more frequently—and becomes more engaged with these three authors specifically—as her authorial career develops. Hence, I examine her growing interest in these writers and in the act of quotation in conjunction with her evolving political beliefs. I demonstrate how her earliest novels suggest a basis for her beliefs so often labeled revolutionary even in the years before the French Revolution becomes a reality. I then trace how Smith's use of quotation shows us how these same burgeoning politics evolve with each novel and each passing tumultuous year in France.

Though this argument could also apply to Smith's poetic works, this study confines itself to her novels. Smith's fiction underwent less revision and fewer editions than her

poetry; her letters are littered with references to authorial edits and the changes were often significant—adding or removing poems, changing the order they appear within a collection, and adding or removing citations for allusions. Mary Anne Myers records how Smith’s revisions of the *Elegiac Sonnets* steadily dilute the original Petrarchan influence, demonstrating how her seemingly minor changes greatly affect our reading of Smith’s poetry.¹ The frequency of her editorial intervention in her poetry would make an assessment of her response to immediate political culture difficult to isolate. Nonetheless, her poetry is not unconnected to her prose fiction; several of Smith’s poems originate within a novel.² Of Smith’s novels, however, Fletcher records that “though she did not publish serially, the demands on improvisation and memory were the same. Each volume was copied and despatched to the publisher as it was completed, so there was no possibility of polishing or revision.”³ Thus, Smith’s novels intrigue me because they promise to capture her political beliefs and indeed, illustrate how she approached the act of writing her politics, in specific moments in her development as an artist.

Though I focus this study on Smith’s engagement with Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire, none are her most frequently utilized source. Allusion to previous generations of writers—or even, less frequently, well-regarded contemporaries—was common in the eighteenth century. Shakespeare was certainly one of the most frequently cited and for Smith, it is no different; yet I do not address in this thesis the many Shakespearean quotations in her novels. This is in part because excellent work on allusion to Shakespeare in eighteenth-century works already exists, but largely because I am interested in the way Smith’s allusive habits include but also expand beyond the most common figures. William St

¹ Mary Anne Myers, “Unsexed Petrarch: Charlotte Smith’s Lessons in the Sonnet as a Social Medium,” *Studies in Romanticism* 53, no. 2 (Summer 2014): 239-263.

² For example, both “To the Winds” and “To Vesper” from Smith’s *Elegiac Sonnets* originated in her novel, *The Young Philosopher*.

³ Loraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography* (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1998), 121.

Clair’s exhaustive study on the reading habits of the Romantic period illuminates how copyright laws led to the formation of a canon that included authors such as Shakespeare, Alexander Pope, John Milton, Thomas Gray, and William Cowper—all of whom Smith frequently cites—as well as individual works such as *Rasselas* and *Gil Blas*. This “old canon” is cited with regularity throughout Smith’s novels. We should bear in mind, however, the caveat that Smith’s reference to other writers generally increases through her career as a novelist; hence, the representation of these authors increases as it does with others. I include Milton within my triad for attention because it was in this period that he was acquiring a reputation within a “new” canon associated with progressive and republican sympathies and it is this area of Smith’s oeuvre in which I am particularly interested. Though numbers cannot neatly summarize my argument, they are nonetheless useful to give a brief glimpse at the patterns that inspire a closer analysis of Smith’s range of allusion. The following table shows the numerical value for instances of direct quotation or cited allusion in each of Smith’s first six novels for the three authors I will focus my study on as well as three representative members of the canon in Shakespeare, Pope, and Cowper.⁴

	Rousseau	Voltaire	Milton	Shakespeare	Pope	Cowper
Emmeline (1788)	1*	0	1	8	1	1
Ethelinde (1789)	1	1*	0	6	3	0
Celestina (1791)	2	0	3	20	5	0
Desmond (1792)	2	3	8	26	5	6
Old Manor House (1793)	1	0	3	15	1	2
Banished Man (1794)	3	8	7	23	6	6

Figure 1.1

Smith’s works become more allusive as she moves through the early part of her career in 1788-1791 and become positively steeped in allusion as she reaches *Desmond*, not

⁴ Asterisks mark instances of cited allusion but no direct quotation.

coincidentally her most politically radical work. We see a decrease in engagement when she writes *The Old Manor House* as Smith attempts to recover from *Desmond*'s poor reception and we see another increase with *The Banished Man*, which I argue is indicative of the way in which the novel re-examines Smith's radical politics through the works of the so-called progenitors of the French Revolution, Voltaire and Rousseau. To look more closely at the specifics of the texts Smith's chooses reveals even more:

	<i>Paradise Lost/Regained</i>	<i>Areopagitica</i>	<i>Comus</i>	<i>Samson Agonistes</i>	<i>La Nouvelle Héloïse</i>	Rousseau letters/pamphlets	Voltaire's dramatic works	Dictionnaire Philosophique	Voltaire letters/pamphlets	Voltaire Other
Emmeline (1788)	1				1*					
Ethelinde (1789)					1					1*
Celestina (1791)	2			1	2					
Desmond (1792)	5	3			1	1	2	2		
Old Manor House (1793)	3				1					
Banished Man (1794)	5		1	1	2	1	6		1	1

Figure 1.2

The “least political” of Smith's novels, *Emmeline* contains only two allusions to our chosen authors: one, to the oft-read and frequently cited *Paradise Lost* and another to Rousseau's *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Héloïse*. The “most political,” *Desmond*, also utilizes Milton's anti-censorship tract *Areopagitica* as well as more overtly philosophical or political works of Voltaire.⁵ *The Old Manor House* drops all reference to Voltaire and again stays with the “safer” texts from Milton and Rousseau before *The Banished Man* sees a resurgence of Voltaire and, like *Desmond*, cites from a more political pamphlet of Rousseau's rather than solely *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. These patterns form a basis for the more detailed analysis of specific choices and their resonances for Smith and her readers I discuss.

⁵ By this, I refer to Smith's use of Voltaire's pamphlets and essays as well as her references to his intervention in the Calas and Sirven cases. This contrasts with her selections in *The Banished Man*, which primarily relies on Voltaire's dramatic efforts.

I do not attempt to argue that one cannot utilize Shakespeare or Pope politically and as St Clair writes, “almost everyone in the romantic period about whose reading we know anything, from lord to cottager, appears to have been familiar with old canon literature;” indeed, the aforementioned authors and works formed something very close to a national literature.⁶ This suggests that Smith’s references to Shakespeare or Pope were meant to be recognizable and accessible in meaning to all readers in a way that not-yet-canonical authors such as Rousseau and Voltaire were not. I explore the way in which Smith uses quotations from Rousseau and Voltaire specifically to engage with the language of the French Revolution and to speak to like-minded readers who read outside of this English “national literature.” I also include Milton, a canonical figure, to demonstrate how Smith at times operates within traditional models and cites recognizable lines and texts but nonetheless emphasizes Milton’s radical associations to politicize her work.

In this study, I primarily look to direct quotation, though the source of such quotation is not always acknowledged in the works. Though most of her quotations from Milton would have been easily recognizable to English readers, Smith makes great use of lesser known dramatic and political works by Voltaire and Rousseau, only sometimes naming her source. It is integral to my claims of Smith’s intentional coding of her work as political that these be included because some of the appeal of using authors associated with revolutionary thought is that, when the source is not cited, a given quotation might pass inoffensively by a casual reader but reveal deeper political meaning to a like-minded citizen astute enough to make the association. Although they are sometimes considered “paratextual,” epigraphs are investigated in this study. Also revealed is Smith’s reconfiguring of the politics of an entire chapter or volume in an individual work by her choice of quotation.

⁶ William St Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 138.

Wonderful work has already been done on quotation and allusion in the eighteenth century and indeed on Charlotte Smith specifically. Many, including Lucy Newlyn and Dustin Griffin, have written on the complexity of Romantic and eighteenth-century engagement with Milton and recently Alex Schulman and Zoe Beenstock have examined allusions to Rousseau in Wollstonecraft and Shelley, respectively.⁷ Stuart Curran's chapter on intertextuality in Smith comments on the political significance of her engagement with Rousseau and Voltaire but focuses on broader patterns rather than closely analyzing specifics of quotation.⁸ His work has occasioned that of others on Smith including: Susan Wolfson, who examines Smith's political voice in *The Emigrants* through her interactions with the male literary tradition; Bethan Roberts, who views Smith's river sonnets against the work of Thomas Warton; and Jacqueline Labbe, who analyzes the way in which Smith weaves Petrarchan and Rousseauian allusions throughout her novels to develop new modes of masculinity.⁹ Many, if not most, of these scholars focus on subtler allusions rather than direct quotation, which, as Kate Rumbold suggests in her excellent analysis of Shakespearean quotation in the eighteenth-century novel, can seem the more scholarly pursuit while direct quotation is frequently written off as unoriginal or mere textual embellishment.¹⁰

As previously stated, quotation was a common practice in eighteenth-century and Romantic literature but much can be said of individual quotation practices by Smith's contemporaries, especially her female contemporaries who wrote novels of similar

⁷ See Lucy Newlyn, *Paradise Lost and the Romantic Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Dustin Griffin, *Regaining Paradise: Milton and the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Alex Schulman, "Gothic Piles and Endless Forests: Wollstonecraft Between Burke and Rousseau," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41, no. 1 (Fall 2007): 41-54; and Zoe Beenstock, *The Politics of Romanticism: The Social Contract and Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).

⁸ Stuart Curran, "Intertextualities," in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 175-188.

⁹ Susan Wolfson, "Charlotte Smith's 'Emigrants': Forging Connections at the Borders of a Female Tradition," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2000): 509-546; Bethan Roberts, "Literary Past and Present in Charlotte Smith's *Elegiac Sonnets*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 54, no. 3 (Summer 2014): 649-674; Jacqueline Labbe, "Romantic Intertextuality: The Adaptive Weave," *The Wordsworth Circle* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 44-48.

¹⁰ Kate Rumbold, *Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel: Cultures of Quotation from Samuel Richardson to Jane Austen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 6-7.

popularity. For instance, Sophia Lee references quotations from the period in which her historical novels are set and Mary Shelley, though she more commonly uses more subtle allusion than direct quotation, frequently refers to the works of her parents in order to marshal their political positions for her own purposes. Of Maria Edgeworth, critics have noted two distinct allusive styles. Victoria Warren charts Edgeworth's repeated engagements with Pope in *Belinda* via quotation as well as more subtle allusions.¹¹ Marilyn Butler records Edgeworth's inclusion in her Irish tales of quotations from recent Irish folksongs, legends, and propaganda to ensure the English and Irish reader have differing reading experiences.¹² In the former strategy, Edgeworth responds to Pope's arguments through allusion with her revisions, though these are not necessarily explicitly political in nature. In the latter, Edgeworth is less adaptive or revisionary, rather employing references to events, places, or narratives that she wishes to draw upon politically.

Similarly, critics have noted that Ann Radcliffe utilizes quotations from Shakespeare to situate herself within an English literary tradition extending from Shakespeare through Milton and Thomas Gray and establishing herself as a writer to be taken seriously with her novels full of "cultural capital."¹³ In these instances, any political importance of Shakespeare to Radcliffe's novels has been largely ignored, though Angela Wright has claimed that Radcliffe's novels also reveal Rousseauian inspiration that she revises to suit her own philosophies or political agenda, rewriting, for instance, his assessment of self-love. It is here that Wright's argument is similar to my own project.¹⁴ Elsewhere she claims that Walpole and Radcliffe utilize Shakespeare as a literary defense against ways in which their novels

¹¹Victoria Warren, "Maria Edgeworth's *Belinda*: A Dialogue with Alexander Pope," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 30, no. 4 (Summer 2018): 539-569.

¹²Marilyn Butler, "Edgeworth's Ireland: History, Popular Culture, and Secret Codes," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 267-292.

¹³EJ Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Tavistock, Devon: Northcote House Publishers, 2000), 53-57.

¹⁴Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic 1764-1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 100-101.

advance French ideas, allowing in Radcliffe's case for her novel's to be misconstrued as conservative. Though one might argue that Smith chooses to cite Milton or Shakespeare for similar reasons, this project aims to demonstrate that this is not quite the case. Though Milton, Shakespeare, and Pope all gesture to an English literary tradition, this does not negate the political potential of the sourced works or quotations. Thus, I do not claim that politicizing one's work through quotation is an entirely unique enterprise on which Charlotte Smith embarks, but that Smith is employing a method distinct from what has thus far been acknowledged for her own allusive techniques or the political content of her novels. It is a necessary extension of this project that it inaugurates discussion of political quotation or allusion as a practice of the eighteenth century and beyond, for I believe it is inevitable that upon further study we will locate similar techniques in Radcliffe's Shakespeare or Edgeworth's Pope, to name just a few.

Christopher Ricks, in his study of how allusion serves the literary pursuits of canonical poets, states that an allusion is necessarily something that the author hopes the reader will recognize. However, as others have claimed, "the fact that there is pleasure in recognition presupposes that an allusion is not all that obvious."¹⁵ It is upon this theory of the necessity of a knowing reader that this project's study of allusion is based. That is, as Irwin claims, allusions depend on more than substitution of referents to be understood and such substitutions might require specialized knowledge of varying degrees.¹⁶ For the purposes of this study, which seeks to identify the political argument of Smith's novel as a stable object in itself, recognition of the source text from which she quotes, and understanding of the political framework of the source text is required, so that a reader can recognize the

¹⁵ Michael Leddy, "Limits of Allusion," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 32, no. 2 (April 1992): 111.

¹⁶ William Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 288.

adaptations and revisions made by Smith. Thus, allusion is an endeavor that is not entirely textual—it rests on the reader to make Smith’s politics at any one moment coherent.

Smith makes use of various allusive techniques—from a quick reference to the Rocks of Meillerie meant to construct an elaborate though subtle association between a Smith hero and Rousseau’s St Preux (as Jacqueline Labbe has demonstrated) to characters invoking (but not quoting) the name of Voltaire or John Locke or Joseph Priestley. However, I focus on direct quotation as Smith’s primary method of allusion. We might argue that quotation is not best understood as allusion. However, Joseph Pucci claims that allusion “advertises” its otherness, demanding recognition by the reader, and direct quotation necessarily does this work (as does invoking the name of one’s referent, another technique frequently employed by Smith).¹⁷ However, as Michael Leddy astutely observes, quotation “may or may not serve to invoke associations” but merely ask for acknowledgement of their source.¹⁸ Certainly not all authors use quotation politically. Sometimes quotation may be a textual adornment as Rumbold suggests or merely a reference to a prior literary tradition, as Clery and Wright argue. However, Smith’s deploys direct quotation, it is evident, within frameworks designed to evoke characters, events, or political references from her source texts that she has adapted to new contexts. Thus, she establishes her own quotation practices as allusive: they demand recognition, are not accessible to all readers, and require specialized knowledge of referents and contexts to make their meaning complete.

Ricks writes that “since allusion involves availing yourself of another’s game without just being a poacher...any successful allusion is comprised of what is half created and what is perceived.”¹⁹ It is precisely this aspect of Smith’s use of direct quotation that interests me.

¹⁷ Joseph Pucci, *The Full-Knowing Reader: Allusion and the Power of the Reader in the Western Literary Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 39.

¹⁸ Leddy, 116.

¹⁹ Christopher Ricks, *Allusion to the Poets* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 114.

Direct quotations both are and are not equivalent to their source. These are the exact words of another author but they are employed in a different way from the function they would serve in the source, thus departing from their source. Of course, the invitation of the reader into the interpretive process stresses the extratextuality of allusion—the meaning is not bound in only the words on the page but in the connective properties of the reader. I will make a distinction here between the idea of understanding and understanding “correctly” to defend the author-focused study I undertake here. Irwin claims that, though the reader must fill in these gaps, in order for understanding to be genuine, it must coincide with authorial intent or the result is the creation of entirely new meaning.²⁰ This is, of course, the danger inherent in such a study since without texts or letters in which Smith articulates her intentions, we cannot definitively claim her intent and the texts themselves are not without ambiguity. Thus, I will be performing the role of the full-knowing reader but with the understanding evoked by Pucci that:

the allusive dialogue spoken by the full-knowing reader, then, is a speaking for the author, who given the nature of allusion itself, cannot speak for herself. At the same time, since the reader of the allusion is not the author of the larger text in which the allusion exists, to which it must be returned in order to harbor interpretive value, the voice of the allusion’s reader disappears when the allusion is placed in the text in which it arises, where it becomes the voice of the author.²¹

That is, since Smith cannot now speak for herself either in the act of alluding or in the critical mode, I as reader turn to close reading of her texts and allusions to speak for Smith and elucidate what I deduce to be her allusive intent.

Quotation in Smith can prove difficult to identify as she often misquotes, if only slightly usually, though on a few occasions (as with some of the allusions to Voltaire’s dramatic works in *The Banished Man*) her quotation can be nearly unrecognizable as the source. Taking our cue from Harold Bloom’s seminal *Anxiety of Influence* or Kristeva’s

²⁰ Irwin, 293.

²¹ Pucci, 45.

work on the poetic parent figure might suggest that Smith's misquotations represent a purposeful usurpation of a literary forefather, but I argue that Smith evidences no such concerns as an heir of previous poets.²² However, I give a great deal of attention to the way in which Smith frequently imbues new meanings in her quotations that do not necessarily resonate in their original sources. Lucy Newlyn writes of the persistent engagement with Milton of the Romantics that "without a doubt, *Paradise Lost* represented a challenge to the poetic ambition of those who came after Milton; but it also voiced certain theological and political ideas, and stood for certain moral and aesthetic values, more powerfully than any other poem in the language."²³ I argue that Smith elects to quote Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire because they voiced specific political ideas and moral values she understood and that were accepted in Smith's England during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century. Any discrepancy between the original intent of the source author and the textual engagement in Smith only provides insight into how Smith values and interprets these morals and politics and how she sees them functioning in a changing England. However, one cannot draw a clear distinction between quotation and other forms of allusion in Smith's work. Often, they work in tandem. What begins as quotation is woven into a more subtle and complex allusion. Thus, this study, though primarily focused on direct quotations, will also consider how these quotations at times engage in a more complicated interplay with other forms of allusion to add layers of nuance to the novel in which they occur.

Of course, to acknowledge the ways in which Smith departs from her sources and their original contexts is to ask questions of far she conforms in this with contemporary reading practices. In particular, to note that Smith may not have had continued access to those sources and may have relied on her recall of texts she had previously read. J.E. Elliott

²² See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) and Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).

²³ Newlyn, *Paradise Lost*, 2.

has shown that even at century's end, cheap volumes were costly and substantial book ownership was a rarity.²⁴ With a great many children to support and well-documented money struggles, it is likely that Smith borrowed rather than owned books. Several recent studies have demonstrated how book borrowing changed reading habits including forcing readers to read volumes out of order or to copy extracts hurriedly. Though one might consider history immutable and not subject to the same whims as novel-reading, Mark Towsey has demonstrated that readers kept records of the histories they read and, in the process, they abridged, abstracted, and compiled from multiple sources, often editing to reflect their own memories and revisiting them later in life to reflect personal or political changes.²⁵ In this way, readers also "owned" and made their own works of history. Smith may have approached in the same way the political history that informed her texts—for example in revisiting the American Revolution in 1793's *The Old Manor House* with the full knowledge of the initial stages of the French Revolution at hand.

Partial reading practices defined the eighteenth century and there were accusations of "cheapening" the import of a particular text when more digestible forms such as excerpting became such common practice, leading to knowledge of common quotations kept separate from a source's meaning. This would inevitably affect our understanding of allusion but Abigail Williams has also shown that partial reading may have meant a deeper appreciation of individual passages or excerpts and that the elocution movement led to a belief in reading "correctly" and therefore a new privileging of close textual analysis.²⁶ Like those eighteenth-century readers, I explore allusion primarily through close reading of the text and the passages immediately surrounding it, exploring the depth of the source text in excerpt as the

²⁴ JE Elliott, "The Cost of Reading in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Auction Sale Catalogues and the Cheap Literature Hypothesis," *ELH* 77, no. 2 (Summer 2010): 374.

²⁵ Mark Towsey, *Reading History in Britain and America, c.1750-c.1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

²⁶ Abigail Williams, *The Social Life of Books: Reading Together in the Eighteenth-Century Home* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

contemporary reader likely did. The eighteenth-century reader made extensive use of commonplace books, filling them with passages deemed interesting or useful, whether intellectually or socially. This provides some insight into the “full-knowing reader” (to use Pucci’s term) of Smith. Even a voracious reader who had encountered Voltaire’s plays or Rousseau’s *Lettre à d’Alembert* may not have remembered a quotation nor even the context of the original work, if they had not indexed the work thoroughly in their commonplace book. Smith’s more adventurous allusions would have likely been recognizable to a select population already predisposed to commonalities with Smith’s own politics if they had so assiduously indexed the works of authors such as Voltaire and Rousseau. Commonplace books encouraged being judicious with space, therefore quotations were the ideal ingredient. Because of the practice of returning to former ideas and books previously read and annotating them with personal insights, quotation in commonplace books might be seen to evolve from the source into something highly individual, possibly changing over time and differing political climates. If Smith commonplace, there is no surviving record. Without the insights that such records could provide, I seek in the following chapters to reconstruct from the evidence of her works the same intersection of quotation, political climate, and personal insights that commonplace books often provide.

Smith’s adaptive practices have been shown to extend as far back as her first authorial endeavors—translations of French works. Scholars such as Terry Hale and Angela Wright have shown how Smith manipulates her translations from the French to suit her own ideology.²⁷ In fact, Wright argues that though Smith appears to conform closely to the original French, in the places she does deviate, she demonstrates a judicious and positive portrayal of France and complex views of the legal system and female victimhood—the same

²⁷ Terry Hale, “Translation in distress: cultural misappropriation and the construction of the Gothic,” in *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760-1960*, ed. Avril Horner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002) 17-38 and Wright, 55-58.

ideological concerns, I will argue, that Smith displays in her original works. We might consider that Smith advanced her quotation techniques through her earlier efforts in translation as they both reveal Smith's methodology in which she blends the content or ideology of her source with her own. Given that so many of her sources of quotation are French in origin, Mary Helen McMurrin invites us to consider the complexity of this issue as she challenges the very idea of two national literatures or cultures when Britain and France are so intimately connected and both literature and culture so freely exchanged.²⁸ So though a quotation might originate from the French, its source did not lack for cultural context within Smith's England and Smith, at times, employs this cultural context as much as she does the specifics of an individual quotation. Smith expects her quotations to impart meaning to her own original work, but by adapting them to a unique political and cultural moment within her own particular context, she also gives entirely new meaning to the words of her sources. Espagne and Werner remind us that this is the condition of all acts of cultural transfer, that any object or quotation takes on new meaning as it moves from one cultural context to another.²⁹ They also contend that nations are not homogenous but influenced by multiple cultures, blurring our sense of the boundaries between nations. Smith's blending of sources seems inspired by a similar aim—by crafting the politicized worlds of her novels from both English and French inspirations, she casts the ideal political situation as one not inherently of either nation but as one crafted from the mutual exchange of the best of *both* nations. An alternative account of the history of England and France from historian Linda Colley sees England and France defining themselves in opposition to the other.³⁰ However, Smith, in her translations and in her allusive practices, constructs a complex process of abstracting,

²⁸ Mary Helen McMurrin, "National or Transnational? The Eighteenth-Century Novel," in *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel*, eds. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 50-72.

²⁹ Michel Espagne and Michael Werner, *Qu'est-ce Qu'une Littérature Nationale?: Approches Pour Une Théorie Interculturelle Du Champ Littéraire* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1994).

³⁰ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

translating, and adapting from both English and French “national” literary constructs to elucidate her own political ideology. Often, this means deploying quotation in unexpected ways, such as using Milton to affirm the necessity of the Revolution in *Desmond* or Voltaire to condemn Jacobin rhetoric in *The Banished Man*. In this way, Smith demonstrates what Cohen and Dever identify as cross-channel exchange, especially in the modern novel, in that she both vindicates and challenges contemporary ideas of the nation-state.³¹

Smith published nine novels between 1788 and 1802. I examine in detail the novels composed from the beginning of the French Revolution in July 1789 through the end of the Terror in 1794, in order to understand her evolving political thinking in response to those events. *The Wanderings of Warwick* is not included, though composed at the same time as *The Banished Man* in 1794, because it is a short piece without the extended thinking we can trace in her novels. Moreover, I have not been able to identify in *The Wanderings of Warwick* quotations from any of the three writers with whom this thesis is concerned; many scholars see it as a perfunctory sequel to *The Old Manor House* that may not have been taken seriously by Smith. Smith’s patterns of quotation and allusion, as previously noted, suggest an increasing stake in the arts of quotation and allusion as her career as a novelist develops. *Emmeline* contains just a single quotation from Milton and *Ethelinde* a single quotation from Rousseau and one inaccurately attributed to Voltaire but Smith quotes from these three authors no less than fourteen times in the later work *Desmond*. In concluding my study, I will show how *Marchmont* (1796) and *The Young Philosopher* (1798) are no less political than *Desmond* and that they quote Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire just as frequently. However, in focusing on the period from the French Revolution’s origins through its most radical years, I aim to cover Smith’s development of this particular method of allusion and

³¹ Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever, *The Literary Channel: The Inter-National Invention of the Novel*, eds. Margaret Cohen and Carolyn Dever (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002) 12-13.

follow it through the period in which both the Revolution and Smith herself were at their most radical. *The Banished Man* occupies the concluding chapter, where we can see that Smith—at the end of the Terror—begins to question earlier ideals yet continues to view and shape her politics through the words of these republican figures, suggesting she does not abandon her beliefs to the extent some scholars have proposed.

After an introduction which outlines Smith's personal life, political reception, and writing career, I provide a summary of the politics and reception of Milton, Voltaire, and Rousseau in the later eighteenth century, followed by a brief examination of Smith's early politics as evinced by her first two novels, *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*. Each subsequent chapter focuses on the novels published between 1791 and 1794, considered in chronological order so as to trace Smith's political evolution not only by novel but also by contemporaneous political events.

Charlotte Smith

To understand Charlotte Smith's politics over the years of the French Revolution, we must also understand how her personal experience resonated with that political upheaval. Smith's personal troubles often made their way into her novels. Married off at just fifteen to a profligate spouse named Benjamin Smith, Charlotte (née Turner) birthed twelve children and the earnings from her writing allowed her to support them. Smith began her career as a poet, writing *Elegiac Sonnets* in 1783 while she and her family served time in King's Bench debtor's prison thanks to Benjamin's wastrel ways. She left her husband in 1787 and began writing novels shortly thereafter, novels proving a more lucrative means of supporting herself and her family. Associated even in her own time with radical ideals, Smith may well have been especially sensitive to many of the reforms that would later be proposed in the wake of

the revolution in France, particularly those that related to marriage and inheritance laws. Her family difficulties are often discussed in relation to her political leanings, particularly because “it seems that most of the Smith family’s troubles came from the husband’s inability to act as executor of his grandfather’s estate.”³² Though the marriage arranged by Smith’s family was typical, it has been claimed that her husband’s ineffectual handling of their estate may have influenced Smith’s views on property equality for women.³³ Indeed the effects of Smith’s personal life on her politics may be seen in part in her letters. In what Judith Stanton, the tireless collector and editor of Smith’s letters, estimates to be one of Charlotte Smith’s earliest surviving letters, Smith writes,

No disadvantage could equal those I sustained; the more my mind expanded the more I became sensible of personal slavery; the more I improved and cultivated my understanding, the farther I was removed from those with whom I was condemned to pass my life; and the more clearly I saw by these newly-acquired lights the horror of the abyss into which I had unconsciously plunged.³⁴

She wrote often of her unhappiness in her marriage, and later of her struggle to provide for her many children through her writing after her separation. The troubles caused by his family as she attempted to recoup inheritance money for her children are recounted in a letter from 16 December 1792 for a Mrs O'Neill by way of Joseph Cooper Walker: “I have been ill & perplex’d with the cruelty of my Childrens tyrannical Aristocratic relations.”³⁵ Smith was undeniably frustrated with the inheritance laws in Britain, but her reference here to her “tyrannical Aristocratic relations” may also be a nod to the revolutionary politics of 1792 and her willing subscription to the imagery emanating from France of the tyranny of the patriarchal state, a trope which she also invokes—as we will see—in both *Celestina* and *Desmond* around this same time.

³² James R. Foster, “Charlotte Smith, Pre-Romantic Novelist,” *PMLA* 43, no. 2 (1928): 466.

³³ Foster, “Pre-Romantic,” 466.

³⁴ Charlotte Smith and Judith Stanton, *The Collected Letters of Charlotte Smith* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 2.

³⁵ Smith, *Letters*, 61.

The works of Charlotte Smith have often been linked with her political sensibilities, but recognition of Smith's political thinking is not limited to interpretation through its representation in her literary works. She wrote often of the events in France, not hiding her feelings in a letter to Joel Barlow dated 3 November 1792 in which she proclaims, "that glorious Government will soon be so firmly establish'd that five and twenty thousand emigrants or three times the number cannot affect its stability."³⁶ Her faith remained strong that France would establish a stable republic, and indeed she wrote to Barlow again not long after on 18 November 1792 asking a favor of him should he be in Paris: "I may trouble you with a trifling enquiry to be made for me there who am trying to go over in March or April, an enquiry which is to assist in this plan on which my rebellious heart is set."³⁷ This letter indicates Charlotte Smith's intention to travel to Paris in the midst of the Revolution, a trip which she refers to in the preface of *Desmond* as her source for the political opinions that novel contains.³⁸ Smith's letters also indicate her relationships with other known British Revolutionary sympathizers in a way that her novels cannot. A letter to William Davies on 21 May 1797 asks him to pass along a letter to Elizabeth Inchbald, often named alongside Mary Wollstonecraft as one of the most radical female authors of the period.³⁹ On 24 June the same year, she mentions "Mrs Inchbald, to whom I was talking the other day of the sale of Novels," suggesting the two had at least a limited correspondence, if they did not later develop a greater relationship.⁴⁰ Regarding one of the more avowedly political and radical authors of the period, William Godwin, Smith's letters indicate that between them there was an established friendship that included visits as well as Smith's writing of the prologue to

³⁶ Smith, *Letters*, 49.

³⁷ Smith, *Letters*, 51.

³⁸ Smith writes in her preface: "As to the political passages dispersed through the work, they are for the most part, drawn from conversations to which I have been a witness, in England, and in France, during the last twelve months." Charlotte Smith, *Desmond*, eds. Antje Blank and Janet Todd (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2001), 45.

³⁹ Smith, *Letters*, 276.

⁴⁰ Smith, *Letters*, 279

Godwin's play, *Antonio, A Tragedy*, in 1800. Many of Smith's letters, particularly prior to the Revolution, have been lost but her thoughts during the course of the actions in France and her friendships with other known pro-Revolution writers and philosophers are well documented.

There is also no doubt that Smith communicated her politics in her novels. In fact, leading Smith scholar Stuart Curran writes that "there scarcely seemed a more determined literary Jacobin."⁴¹ Modern scholars have, at times, taken issue with the terminology of Jacobin and anti-Jacobin as applied to British literature but this was a contemporary taxonomy and Jacobin was a term associated with Smith and her fictions. As Matthew Grenby demonstrates, literary Jacobinism is not clearly defined and was variously characterized by elements (not always all present) of anti-clericalism, sexual license, incest, and assaults on the monarchy. However, he also argues that "the majority of politicised popular novelists manifestly did not seek, nor achieve, any degree of ideological ambiguity in their fiction, but rather attempted exactly the opposite."⁴² Given Smith's textual engagement with the French and American revolutions and her politicized prefaces, we should understand her, too, as not attempting ideological ambiguity but asserting her radical politics in each of her fictions. That these fictions were received by contemporary reviews and modern scholars alike as "Jacobin" or radical only reaffirms the clarity of her novels in delineating her political position.

Though "Jacobin" was the contemporary term of favor, Smith's politics more accurately aligned with the Girondin faction of the French Revolution. While they were arguably not a true political party, Girondins were associated with the Jacobins in the early

⁴¹ Stuart Curran, "Charlotte Smith and British Romanticism," *South Central Review* 11, no. 2(1994): 69.

⁴² M.O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

years of the Revolution and broadly radical.⁴³ Yet, by the time of the National Convention in August 1792, they established themselves as separate from the increasingly violent Jacobins and sat just to their right, “suggesting a shift from liberalism to moderation.”⁴⁴ As was the case for many English writers, Smith’s literary politics after 1792 reveal a similar shift—if not necessarily *toward* moderation, then explicitly *against* violence. Like Girondin leader Jacques Pierre Brissot who authored pamphlets against the monarchy but advocated to spare the life of King Louis XVI, we shall see how Smith admits regret for Revolutionary violence in *The Banished Man* only two years after advocating for England to initiate its own revolution in *Desmond*. Smith’s works also have affinities with those of prominent Girondins such as the Marquis de Condorcet, whose *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795) argues for equality within and between nations, against colonialism, and asserts that inequality is a result of an imperfect society—all of which, we shall see, Smith argues within her own novels. Indeed, Gareth Jones writes of the similarities between Condorcet and Paine—the latter also associated with the Girondins and a member of the committee to author the Girondin constitutional project of 1793—and Smith not only frequently engages Paine in her allusions, but directly defends him in *Desmond*.⁴⁵ However, perhaps the greatest issue in relating authors of the period to either Jacobin or Girondin factors is that a large number of novelists declared as literary Jacobins—including William Godwin, Robert Bage, Thomas Holcroft, and Elizabeth Inchbald—authored liberal texts before the fall of the Bastille. In fact, Grenby argues that it was the events of the 1790s that

⁴³ It has been argued whether the Girondins can be considered a political party and whether the term was created by historians after the Revolution had passed. I do not argue here for its status as a political party but that the Girondins represented a group of loosely-affiliated individuals with similar ideologies. See Frederick A. De Luna, “The ‘Girondins’ were Girondins, After All,” *French Historical Studies* 15, no. 3(1988): 506-518 for more on the debate over the historical accuracy of the term “Girondin.”

⁴⁴ Beatrice K. Reynolds, “Context of Girondin Rhetoric,” *Western Speech* 35, no. 4(1971): 262.

⁴⁵ Gareth Stedman Jones, “An End to Poverty: The French Revolution and the Promise of a World Beyond Want,” *Historical Research* 78, no. 200(2005): 193-207.

made each of these authors seem more radical.⁴⁶ This introduction will trace a similar narrative for Charlotte Smith, who begins to reveal a political ideology that will recur in each of her later novels beginning with her first work in 1788. Though Smith did not conceal her favor for the French Revolution and was referred to by her contemporaries as a Jacobin, I prefer the term “radical” for her liberal beliefs because it more accurately describes her reform-minded ideology made more intense by the French Revolution rather than directly tied to its ideals or outcomes.

Whatever we term them, the spectrum of Charlotte Smith’s opinions is broadly republican and, generally, pro-Revolutionary. Smith entered the literary realm at an interesting time. Though she considered herself primarily a poet, the novel, particularly the sentimental novel, was increasingly popular and indeed Smith’s novels were bestsellers. Outram writes that “the nature of revolutionary politics... was to make political discourse central, and political discourse shaped the very motor of revolution itself. The Revolution was the first point in French history at which persuasion of a mass audience was crucial and an integral part of the political phenomenon.”⁴⁷ Smith’s radical ideals translated easily to the sentimental novel wherein readers could absorb the philosophy and literary thought the British radicals sought to convert them to. Conversion of the masses to the cause was crucial if a movement in Britain, even on a much smaller scale than the French Revolution, was to have any purchase. Furthermore, British radicals struggled with their desire for universal suffrage and the lack of education of the average individual. Their conclusion was to educate

⁴⁶ M.O. Grenby, “Novels of Opinion,” in *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, ed. Pamela Clemit (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 161.

⁴⁷ Dorinda Outram, *The Body and the French Revolution: Sex, Class, and Political Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 29.

politically not only those sympathetic to the Revolution and the Jacobin cause, but the public as a whole.⁴⁸

The literate public could be reached through print mediums and “print was particularly suitable for a revolution that aimed to operate within individual consciousness rather than by external forces and constraints,” thus establishing literature as a significant tool for the revolutionary cause.⁴⁹ Not only did the print culture allow women to participate as authors and readers of literature, but the revolutionaries themselves also “easily experienced that spontaneous empathy which Rousseau described as the surest foundation of virtuous sensibility,” meaning that they were perhaps most suited to reach their target audience through the literature of sensibility that so often accompanied both Romanticism and female authorship.⁵⁰ This combination of ease of print media and revolutionary sensibility made the sentimental novel the ideal vehicle for the cause. Smith’s novels sought to articulate the argument for class, gender, and inheritance reform in her novel through the model of the family politic. Notably, Smith and several of the similarly liberally-minded writers cited earlier—including Bage and Inchbald—were also bestselling authors in translation across the channel. Katherine Astbury notes that the way in which these authors were selected for translation, publication, and review by the literary press clearly demonstrated that texts were selected on the basis of political association.⁵¹ The sentimental novel of the sort that Smith authored was an integral part of this transition to France during the years of the Revolution, where the French sought narratives of restored social order achieved through personal trials and broadly egalitarian and democratic ideals. Though Smith wrote fiction primarily for its

⁴⁸ Günther Lottes, “Radicalism, Revolution and Political Culture: an Anglo-French Comparison” in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, edited by Mark Philp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 95.

⁴⁹ Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing, and Revolution 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 9.

⁵⁰ Patrice Higonnet, *Goodness Beyond Virtue: Jacobins During the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 1.

⁵¹ Katherine Astbury, *Narrative Responses to the Trauma of the French Revolution* (London: Legenda, 2012), 80-83.

monetary advantages over poetry, the sentimental novel was not only a politicized form in this period, but her further politicization of the form—through her politically-inflected sentimental plots and her politically-motivated use of quotation within them—established Smith as one of the best-known authors of her time, both in England and France. The sophistication of her political engagement varies but through the text itself, her intertextual engagements, and—at times—her prefaces, Smith makes clear that her works are political and based on certain societal truths—the vulnerability of women, the inequality within families, the destructive potential of inheritance laws, and the tyranny of social hierarchy. In those works, she also proposes alternative possibilities that ask England to consider a new future. Let us now turn to a closer look at these three writers who shaped Smith’s thinking and who feature ever more prominently in her novels as her career continues to develop. In what follows, as well as introducing each author, I explore the affinities Charlotte Smith may have found with them.

Milton

In the eighteenth century, allusion to or quotation from the works of John Milton in new works of fiction began to rival that from Shakespeare. He was particularly popular among writers of the Romantic period such as Charlotte Smith, who referenced not only individual works such as *Paradise Lost* (1667) and *Comus* (1634), but also his reputation—both as a poet and as republican paradigm. John Milton may be the writer who is most associated with radical politics among Smith’s sources, having written prolifically on subjects ranging from legalizing divorce, opposing censorship, defending the execution of the King of England, and for the right to free speech. Yet, there were many across the political spectrum who praised him and those on both sides who denounced him. Though *Paradise Lost*

enchanted the eighteenth century, seeing publication over one hundred times, Charlotte Smith may have been particularly attracted to Milton's politics in the years after 1789. Toasted by the Revolution Society in 1788, Milton became for Richard Price and many other radicals a hero of the cause. His *Defense of the People of England* (1651) spoke to the right to rebel against an unjust government: "Nature has always looked, as she now does, not to the dominion of one man or a few, but to the safety of all, whatever may become the dominion of the one or the few."⁵² His follow-up in the *Second Defense* (1654) doubles down on the rights of the individual to pursue freedom and decries the existence of titles and the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates* (1649) argues that people confer power on their kings to rule and therefore have the right to depose them, all ideas which would be embraced by the French Revolutionary cause.

Lucy Newlyn writes of the abundance of Romantic authors who engage with *Paradise Lost* and the hindrances to politicizing the poem in the eighteenth century due to the effectiveness of neutralizing the politics of its reception. To aestheticize the subversive material, she claims, made him appealing to the majority of readers across a broader political spectrum.⁵³ Though there is no one political truth or interpretation for *Paradise Lost*, it was read politically by many authors of the period including Coleridge, Blake, Wordsworth, and Godwin. It is also significant that these politicized readings may have, at times, not been true to the text itself or Milton's intent—for instance, John Leonard's reception history of the epic reveals instances in which Smith's female contemporaries are "willfully quoting [Milton] out of context," altering the sexual politics of a passage.⁵⁴ I will argue in the conclusion that Smith's omission of lines from a passage from *Comus* does something similar. In this regard,

⁵² John Milton, *The Prose Works of John Milton with a Biographical Introduction by Rufus Wilmot Griswold*. In *Two Volumes* (Philadelphia: John W. Moore, 1847).

⁵³ Newlyn, *Paradise Lost*, 33.

⁵⁴ John Leonard, *Faithful Labourers: A Reception History of Paradise Lost*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 655.

Smith may well have been drawn to the complexity of Milton's allegories. Though all allegories suggest an openness to interpretation, it is said that Milton in particular "rejected a simple ratio of literary representation to history and cleared the way for his revolutionary reader to perform interpretive acts in the future."⁵⁵ So though he may not have foreseen the application of Smith's proto-feminist perspective to his work, Milton's devotion to the creation of complex art permits the flexibility of interpretation that then allowed for subsequent revolutionaries to adapt his epic to their own political needs. A similar openness to interpretation allows Smith to appear to conform to conventions of the sentimental novel: it supports her republican agenda for the politically aware reader while still allowing for an apolitical aesthetic interpretation for the less politically-alert reader.

Though *Paradise Lost* is her most oft-quoted work by Milton, Smith does engage with relative frequency with *Samson Agonistes* (1671) as well as the political tract *Areopagitica*. Fittingly, Smith utilizes *Areopagitica*, a defense of free speech published in 1644 and thought too radical for its time, in her own most radical work, *Desmond*. *Samson Agonistes* ultimately speaks to the right to overthrow subjection, even when violent action is the means, and perhaps it is fitting here, too, that Smith embraces this concept in *Desmond* but returns to question it in *The Banished Man*. However, it is to *Paradise Lost* that Smith returns in each of her novels. It was of course commonplace to quote *Paradise Lost* in literary works of the eighteenth century and many of the specific quotations Smith chooses would have been easily recognizable by the everyday reader. But, as argued by Prickett:

the Milton that had been adulated by earlier generations of the eighteenth century was a carefully sanitised version; Milton the religious heretic, the social, political and sexual rebel had been tacitly allowed to drop from sight...the re-invocation of Milton after the French Revolution never lost sight of the fact that his poetry was inescapably bound up with his attack on the political and social status quo.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Sharon Achinstein, *Milton and the Revolutionary Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 202.

⁵⁶ Stephen Prickett, *England and the French Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education, 1989), 139.

Invoked by so many radicals of the time, Milton was for Smith a polemicist and radical thinker and this becomes more clear as she moves from *Celestina*'s cautious exploration of hope for a new regime to *Desmond*'s outright defense of revolution where Milton is cited more extensively.⁵⁷ But if we apply Prickett's argument to Smith's fiction, we can explore whether her quotation of *Paradise Lost* post-Revolution is just as political as her references to Milton's pamphlets. Smith's attraction to Milton was likely not confined only to his polemical republicanism. In his advocacy for the legality of divorce, he argued that domestic freedom was essential to a civilized society, something borne out in each of Smith's novels and an issue personally significant to her. And in his *Second Defense*, he writes that he meets his tyrant on the field of battle with his pen and plunges it into his throat, his fight for the political freedom of every individual accomplished through the act of writing. Smith, in supporting her large family solely through her writing, not only fought for her domestic freedom with her pen but openly engaged with the political world at large, arguing against inequality in each of her novels for those astute enough to see it. In her later prefaces she seems empowered by the act of political writing and may have been increasingly attracted to the more overtly political works of Milton (and Rousseau and Voltaire) in her later novels as her confidence and convictions grew.

Voltaire

As a dramatist, Voltaire was immensely popular in the eighteenth century in France, and became even more so during the French Revolution. In the period between his death in 1778 and the outbreak of the Revolution, his works were performed at the *Comédie*

⁵⁷ Refer to Figures 1.1 and 1.2

Française 553 times. The following decade saw 896 performances.⁵⁸ In 1790, when it was proposed that the church of St Geneviève be renamed the Pantheon and house the bodies of the heroes of the new French Republic, Voltaire was immediately suggested. On 9 July 1791, his coffin sat in the shadow of the Bastille and theatres across the city honored Voltaire with productions of his works, a festival to be held in his honor when he was interred in the Pantheon the following day. His association with the republican cause in France only added to the hostility with which he was received in England. Schilling notes that Voltaire suffered an unfavorable reputation in England as late as 1892 and quotes the 1799 Monthly Review that denounces the influence of the *philosophes*, claiming “for 30 years past, [we] have been perfectly aware of the avowed, systematic, and ostentatiously notorious cooperation of the Encyclopedists to overthrow Christianity.”⁵⁹ As with Rousseau, much of the hostility directed toward Voltaire centered on his opposition to religion, albeit more fairly in the case of Voltaire. And in this respect, too, he may have been attractive to Charlotte Smith.

Much of the difficulty in pinpointing whether Voltaire’s political theory contributed to French Revolutionary ideologies lies in the sheer volume of his oeuvre and the obvious discontinuities between what he says in his dramatic representations and political and philosophic pamphlets. Yet, freedom of religion was certainly a known preoccupation in all his works, including in 1733 in praise of England’s religious liberty and appreciation for the arts while *La Henriade* (1723) imagined a king neither Protestant nor Catholic, advocating

⁵⁸ Marvin Carlson, *Voltaire and the Theatre of the Eighteenth Century* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1998), 161. The statistics are in reference to performance data from the *Comédie Française* in Paris to demonstrate Voltaire’s association with the Revolutionary cause in the minds of the French public. His dramatic works were also performed in England, though understandably far less frequently given this association. However, among performances at several smaller theatres across England, his works were also occasionally acted at the patent theatres during the decade 1789-1800, including *Zara (Zaire)* in October 1791 (and again December 1796) and *Mahomet the Imposter* in April 1795.

⁵⁹ Bernard Nicholas Schilling, *Conservative England and the Case Against Voltaire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 4, 195.

for “politically oriented toleration that set peace and concord above all else.”⁶⁰ *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763) encouraged tolerance and reason and the support of unorthodox beliefs and he began writing his infamous phrase “écrasez l’infame” during this time—“crush the infamous,” in reference to the Catholic Church. However, it is not clear that Voltaire would have supported the Revolution. His dramatic works often support hereditary rule, as in *Méropé* (1743) when the heroine cannot bear to betray the rightful ruler, or *L’Orphelin de la Chine* (1755), which sees a couple sacrifice their own child to maintain the dynastic line. Yet, as I will demonstrate through an analysis of Smith’s selections for quotation, in nearly all of these works, lines expressing anti-tyranny sentiments or speaking favorably of similarities between the rich and poor can be manipulated to promote beliefs convincingly more pro-Revolutionary than Voltaire could have imagined. Indeed, the soldier’s response to Méropé’s horror, “he who serves his country well needs no ancestors,” was adopted by the revolutionaries and became a popular battle cry despite the drama’s Royalist sympathies.⁶¹

Though his dramatic works spoke frequently of support for hereditary rule, Voltaire’s personal interventions established him as a symbol of opposition to tyranny. Voltaire famously wrote in support of Jean Calas, a Protestant man convicted in 1762 of murdering his own son, supposedly for the latter’s intention to convert to Catholicism. His campaign of letters, pamphlets, and satires eventually saw Calas’ conviction posthumously overturned in 1765 and established Voltaire as a champion of liberty. In the Revolutionary years, Rabaut St Etienne summarized Voltaire’s work by claiming that all of the founding principles of the Revolution could be found in his writings. Perhaps, but only if reading selectively; it is far more accurate to say that, like Rousseau, Voltaire became a symbol of the Revolution, whose

⁶⁰ John Renwick, “Voltaire and the Politics of Toleration,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 185.

⁶¹ Russell Goulbourne, “Voltaire’s Masks: Theatre and Theatricality,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 100.

works the revolutionaries read as they saw fit. More recently, Schilling comprehensively and rather succinctly captures Voltaire's political complexity:

He had *no sympathy with democratic ideas of universal suffrage and political equality*. He had the aristocrat's willingness to do all he could to improve the condition of the masses, without any belief in their ability to govern themselves. He favored some administrative reforms, and fought to weaken superstition, intolerance, and persecution, and to put an end to all needless suffering...He was born under monarchy and for it, having *no belief in the popular capacity for political liberty*. In spite of his fanatical dislike for Christianity, he showed an 'habitual indulgence towards reprehensible monarchs' and was *indifferent to the natural rights of the people*.⁶²

In these terms, Smith's attraction to Voltaire seems peculiar. Her engagement with Voltaire is particularly interesting amongst the three sources that I will investigate in this project, largely because she rarely utilizes him in her earlier novels but she employs his voice heavily throughout *The Banished Man*, largely through quotation from his dramatic works. It appears that Smith turned to deeper inquiry into Voltaire's *oeuvre* in the wake of the failing Revolution, perhaps in search of the "origins" that set the horrible scene in motion. Writing of the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1752), Renwick asserts that though the entries appear scattered, they are cohesive in their objection to tyranny and "obsessive insistence [on] an all-inclusive vision of liberty: personal liberty, civil liberty, liberty of conscience in matters of faith, and by extension, the liberty to speak and write."⁶³ It may well have been this inclusive liberty that attracted Smith, particularly the liberty to continue to write about politics and her personal struggles even after the complaints against these elements in her earlier works. Grenby notes that Rousseau and Voltaire often appeared in novels of the period, but never for any philosophy they espoused, featuring most often as fictional characters to capitalize on their image, reputation, and association with Revolution.⁶⁴ Though it is true that Smith looks not to Voltaire's political and philosophic works in *The Banished Man*, but to many of his

⁶² Schilling, *Conservative England*, 234 (emphasis my own).

⁶³ Renwick, "Politics of Toleration," 187.

⁶⁴ Grenby, *Anti-Jacobin*, 77.

plays, she engages far more deeply with the material than to merely reference Voltaire as an abstract character. Certainly widely read, she quotes from no less than five distinct works and, on several occasions, selectively chooses passages that advance her narrative at the expense of the original intent of the source. This suggests that despite the relative conservatism of Voltaire's actual politics, Smith engaged with him as a founding voice for the claims of the Revolution and that ultimately she returned to him to negotiate the widening gap between her evolving ideals in 1794 and those that ostensibly originally guided the revolutionaries.

Rousseau

Historians have long questioned the role of Rousseau in the “origins” of the French Revolution. Furet writes that “Rousseau may well have been the most far-sighted genius ever to appear in intellectual history, for he invented, or sensed, so many of the problems that were to obsess the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. His political thought set up well in advance the conceptual framework of what was to become Jacobinism and the language of the Revolution.”⁶⁵ However, as early as 1801 his popularity was discussed as an effect of the Revolution rather than a cause, and the particular lack of popularity of his *Du Contrat Social* (1762) pointed to as reason to doubt the political awareness of the revolutionaries who claimed him as their paragon.⁶⁶ Joan McDonald argues that while Rousseau was regarded as the patron of the revolutionary cause, the cult that assembled around his persona was not at

⁶⁵ François Furet, *Interpreting the French Revolution*, trans. Elborg Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 31.

⁶⁶ James Swenson, *On Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Considered as One of the First Authors of the Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 15.

all based in his political theory, though the revolutionaries believed themselves to be embodying the ideals that had inspired his other writings.⁶⁷

This contradiction between the actual politics of the man and the revolutionary application and idealization of his works or his figure is particularly important to my argument regarding Charlotte Smith. I do not intend to claim that Smith dissected Rousseau's political theory and used it to refine her own political thought, but that she, like most of her contemporaries, associated Rousseau broadly with the Revolutionary cause and with certain ideals of morality and equality and, like them, she referenced and sourced him in her novels to identify those works as sympathetic to pro-revolutionary ideals. Her quotations and allusions do not reconstruct the intention, or even the most obvious interpretation of, the work they derive from in Rousseau. Rather, she interprets and utilizes them in a way that reveals her own evolving political consciousness. In this symbiotic relationship, by invoking Rousseau to mark her own works as liberally minded, Smith contributed to cementing the legacy of Rousseau as prophet of the Revolution and sage of the Jacobin cause.

It is crucial to my claims that we understand Rousseau to be associated with the French Revolution, and more particularly to radical thought, in late eighteenth-century England. His influence in France is clear and he was associated with inaugurating the Revolution early and often. A 1793 pamphlet, *Alphabet des Sans Culottes*, named him (along with Voltaire) as a man that prepared the Revolution but his Pantheonization, arguably the most convincing example of the esteem in which Rousseau was held by the new republican government, originated as early as 1791. A petition demanding his reburial was initiated in 1791 in which Ginguéné wrote that "Rousseau was the first, under the very eyes of despotism, to systemically establish the equality of rights among men and the sovereignty of

⁶⁷ Joan McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution, 1762-1791* (London: Athlone Press, 1965), 3.

the people.”⁶⁸ Israel remarks that the primary pro-Revolution journals from 1789 deliberately propagated the works of the *philosophes*, including Rousseau and Voltaire, so that their ideas on morality and philosophy would reach a wider audience.⁶⁹ In effect, in Revolutionary France, Rousseau was everywhere. Roger Barny challenges McDonald’s assertion that revolutionaries were largely unfamiliar with the intricacies of Rousseau’s political theory and that *Du Contrat Social* was little read, but for a great many, Rousseau’s name invoked revolutionary potential rather than close allegiance to his specific political footprint.⁷⁰

I do not claim that Charlotte Smith was unfamiliar with *Du Contrat Social* or uninformed regarding Rousseau’s politics—to the contrary, she quotes from several pamphlets in addition to the more frequently exploited *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and often from memory, suggesting that she was widely read in his works and certainly we understand her to be alert to the political nuance of different writers’ positions. Rather, I suggest that her selection of quotations from Rousseau shows a very specific engagement with his work peculiar to her position as an English woman writer observing and responding to his French context to reveal something of herself and her own politics. She often removes or modifies Rousseau’s words to suit a political theory more feminized, more English, less religious, than her source, which gives us insight into how Smith interprets her own liberal politics through the lens of the *philosophe*. Though I will examine closely the distinctions between Smith’s interpretation of a quotation and its original source in the subsequent chapters, let me first briefly touch on Rousseau’s political theory in *Du Contrat Social* itself to understand why it may have been important to Smith.

⁶⁸ As found in Swenson, *On Rousseau*, 10.

⁶⁹ Jonathan Israel, *Democratic Enlightenment: Philosophy, Revolution, and Human Rights 1750-1790*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 773.

⁷⁰ “for a very large number of people...it was the myth of Rousseau rather than his political theory which was important in the mind of the Revolutionary generation” McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution*, 173.

Put very simply, *Du Contrat Social* asserts that society ruins man, who is whole on his own, by forcing assimilation into the larger whole of society. It necessitates an opposition between nature and society and targets industry and the arts and sciences among the numerous social entities complicit in the deterioration of man. Yet, there persists the possibility for “good” social institutions, ones that transform one into the whole. The most important of Rousseau’s rules for what constitutes an ideal society are: that society must be liberated from unnatural desires such as the desire for property; that there must be freedom in resisting these desires; that trading one’s natural freedom must be in exchange for a society formed around the values of freedom and equality. Ultimately, the social contract is the agreement of all the individuals to sacrifice individual rights and personal freedom for the general will. As Beenstock puts it, “its freedom is really tantamount to conformism.”⁷¹ Part of the complexity of the general “will” is that it is less willful than mandated; Rousseau understands that citizens may desire to conform but be swayed by temptation in which case the general will becomes enforced rather than elective.

Whatever Rousseau’s political intent in publishing *Du Contrat Social* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (the two of his works most often cited), it is true that many Jacobins and Girondins adopted him as a preceptor and believed by many to have contributed to making possible the French Revolution. In assessing the influence of Rousseau’s political theory on the cult of Rousseau, Joan McDonald writes that the only way to understand how revolutionaries thought about Rousseau is to read and analyze how they used Rousseau, an aim shared by this project.⁷²

Smith was, for many years of her life, an avowed supporter of the revolutionary cause. She also quoted Rousseau in each of her novels of the 1790s, a time in which she

⁷¹ Beenstock, *Politics of Romanticism*, 63.

⁷² McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution*, 20.

shifted and refined her political position with each subsequent novel and each tectonic movement of the new republican government. And, as Mortensen argues, Rousseau was “quoted primarily by sympathisers, who sought to promote what they took to be his progressive views concerning politics and sexuality.”⁷³ But why Smith’s particular interest in Rousseau? Though he was closely linked to the Revolution, so were many other authors including Helvetius, Diderot, D’Alembert, and Condorcet, to name but a few. The British vilification of Rousseau and Voltaire surpassed all of these men, however, and the much more prominent association in late eighteenth-century England between these particular *philosophes* (rather than their contemporaries) and their role in the French Revolution likely influenced her desire to engage with them.⁷⁴ However, whatever her feelings may have been for the entirety of Rousseau’s canon, it is likely that Charlotte Smith found political kinship with certain aspects of his writing. *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, for example, sees St Preux as a philosopher, suggesting that “sentimental literature and philosophy essentially perform a similar function,” something that would have been increasingly appealing to Smith as she began to assert her right to political opinion in her prefaces and only thinly veiled references to the destructive gender inequalities that beset her personal life in her novels. Indeed, though Wollstonecraft and others took issue with the portrayal of Julie in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Beenstock writes that Rousseau emphasizes the toll of social contract conformity on the female body and—though Smith’s earlier representations of Julie and St Preux are

⁷³ Peter Mortensen, “Rousseau’s English Daughters: Female Desire and Male Guardianship in British Romantic Fiction,” *English Studies* 83, no. 4 (August 2002): 356.

⁷⁴ Pascal Fischer discusses how “reviled” Rousseau and Voltaire were, particularly in the works of Edmund Burke and in anti-Jacobin novels, writing that “Rousseau was demonized” and that he functioned as a “bogeyman.” See Pascal Fischer, “Reading Rousseau in the Anti-Jacobin Novel,” in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and British Romanticism: Gender and Selfhood, Politics and Nation*, eds. Russell Goulbourne and David Higgins (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 113-130. Indeed, Fischer claims that “while Burke does not explicitly blame Rousseau for the Revolution, the way the work connects Rousseau’s sentiments with the Revolutionary doctrine of the day helped to establish the conviction that the Revolution was Rousseau’s brainchild.” (116) Furthermore, he argues that it was *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* in particular that Burke considered so emblematic of Revolutionary thought. As I shall demonstrate, Smith quotes from Rousseau’s *Julie* but so, too, does she allude to Burke so the particular anti-Jacobin approbation of Rousseau may have been especially intriguing for her.

idealistic—by the time of *The Banished Man* she seems to have taken on board this concept of the systematic societal abuse of Julie. Neither is Smith alone in revisiting and revising Rousseau; her contemporaries in both England and France adapted his works to fit within their own ideologies. Indeed, both Smith’s friend and contemporary Elizabeth Inchbald and Jane Austen, who would take inspiration from Smith’s works when she began her own career as a novelist, are noted by Mortensen for how they radically revise *La Nouvelle Héloïse* within their own personal, politicized contexts—often far from what may be interpreted as Rousseau’s “intent.”⁷⁵ Smith’s evolution in how she uses one particular character and text—that of Julie in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* —is as interesting as her sheer variety of quotations from Julie’s author, because it allows for a direct comparison from novel to novel. As we shall see, a vague allusion in *Emmeline* becomes optimistic hope for a state of nature in *The Old Manor House* which in turn acknowledges impracticable reality in *The Banished Man*.

It is probable that Smith felt other affiliations to Rousseau, or at least to the public perception of him. Wollstonecraft wrote of his eloquence and charm, but also that he “forcibly depicted the evils of a priest-ridden society, and the sources of oppressive inequality.”⁷⁶ Rousseau was castigated by Edmund Burke and English newspapers of the period for his antagonism toward established religion.⁷⁷ Though he was actually quite conservative on religion, the perception of Rousseau as apostate contributed to his low regard in England throughout the period and for Smith, who struggled with organized religion and often portrayed it unfavorably in her work, association with such a figure may have clarified her position.

⁷⁵ Mortensen, 356-370.

⁷⁶ Mary Wollstonecraft, *An Historical and Moral View of the Origin and Progress of the French Revolution and the Effect it has Produced in Europe* (London: J. Johnson, 1795), 10.

⁷⁷ Regarding a measure proposed to Parliament, the Telegraph of London reported on a speech by Earl Mansfield that insisted “it was the doctrine ‘that to kill a tyrant was sanctioned by religion’” and in which he decried the changes to the graces of France’s society as effected “solely by those who vilified every civil and religious establishment (Voltaire and Rousseau).” *Telegraph* (London, England), Nov. 11, 1795.

Du Contrat Social also decried the desire for private property and Rousseau's criticism of it negotiated the gap between the rich and the poor and linked poverty with lack of freedom in a way that would have interested Smith given how often she returns to portrayals of orphaned and estranged women and the injustice of being born a younger son.⁷⁸ But most obviously, Rousseau's ideal community was based on shared love for liberty and equality and eschewed nationalistic boundaries or artificial communities based on language, sentiments that would be echoed in the conclusions to several of Smith's novels that see the integration of multi-national societies. Vincent writes that Rousseau's "ideal republic was conservative in its respect for community, custom, and local attachment, and radical in its challenge to feudal social divisions and embrace of equality and of individual rights."⁷⁹ Put in these terms, Smith shares the same radical ideals. Mary Trouille traces a class difference in women's reception of Rousseau's works in which middle class women were more enthusiastic about his portrayal of domesticity and motherhood whereas those from humbler origins felt most compelled by his egalitarian vision for society.⁸⁰ Smith, of genteel roots but a struggling single mother with debts, seems to blend these theories as she adapts Rousseau's Clarens—the idealized community of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*—for herself. With the exception of *Desmond*, she offers a positive and encouraging portrayal of domesticity and motherhood but even within that model, attempts to propose something resembling a more democratic ideal.

However, neither Smith nor her female contemporaries often engaged Rousseau as he might now be read by modern scholars; rather, they abstracted his philosophy to suit their own political endeavors. In fact, while many have written of Rousseau's misogyny, Behrendt

⁷⁸ Robert Wokler, *Rousseau, the Age of the Enlightenment, and Their Legacies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), 162.

⁷⁹ Patrick Vincent, "Enchanted Ground? Rousseau, Republicanism and Switzerland," in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and British Romanticism: Gender and Selfhood, Politics and Nation*, eds. Russell Goulbourne and David Minden Higgins (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 93.

⁸⁰ Mary Seidman Trouille, *Sexual Politics in the Enlightenment: Women Writers Read Rousseau* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 294-296.

claims that many contemporary feminists chose to read Rousseau not in proscribed gender terms but with a “more expansive and inherently political” take on women as informed political citizens.⁸¹ Trouille records that he was popular amongst proto-feminists, who might otherwise be expected to be the most affronted by his espoused beliefs and she points specifically to the French Revolution as a time when his sexual politics were altered by women writers to suit their reformist needs.⁸² Seen in this broadest of scopes, Smith’s employment of Rousseau makes sense. She does not read the minutiae of his political theory in hopes for complete agreement, but takes the expansive view of his desire for liberty and equality and applies it to her revolutionary concerns, particularly her most active pursuit, rallying against the unjust abuse of women. Each quotation she selects is, therefore, particularly worth investigating. She utilizes Rousseau for his broad association with pro-Revolutionary politics, but because there is much to disagree with, Smith’s choice of passages and how she negotiates the blending of the source material with her own political message reveals not only just how politically savvy Smith is, but also how she evolves with each novel. Smith’s move from appropriating Rousseau more or less at face value in early novels to manipulating the message of lesser pamphlets in later novels reveals a maturation of Smith as a political citizen even as her so-called Jacobin tendencies waned. Let us now examine Smith’s earliest novels and their engagement with these three authors so that we may better evaluate the influence of the French Revolution on her evolving politics.

⁸¹ Stephen C. Behrendt, “Rousseau and British Romantic Women Writers,” in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and British Romanticism: Gender and Selfhood, Politics and Nation*, eds. Russell Goulbourne and David Minden Higgins (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017), 12.

⁸² Trouille, 3.

Emmeline

Published in 1788, *Emmeline* features the titular heroine as illegitimate daughter and resident of Mowbray Castle. Her uncle, Lord Montreville, sees Emmeline as unfit to marry his son Delamere and much of the novel follows Delamere's pursuit of Emmeline against his father's wishes. As was to become common in Smith's novels, the plight of the unprotected woman is a central feature. Emmeline is threatened with loss of support and even her own name if she refuses to marry an alternate suitor, Rochely, who has presented himself to Lord Montreville. Emmeline eventually learns that her parents were indeed married and she inherits both Mowbray Castle and a considerable fortune. Fletcher accurately posits that a central concern of the novel is a debate about which potential heir deserves to inherit the castle, with Montreville abandoning it and Delamere lacking the desire to improve it. However, an equally prominent issue is the vulnerability of women and Emmeline's body is threatened repeatedly by both male and female figures in the text with Lady Montreville declaring that she regrets that there exist no laws in England allowing for Emmeline's abuse whereas in France her husband could employ a *lettre de cachet* to have her sent away. Emmeline is physically threatened, even by those who are morally obliged to protect her. Through the account of these afflictions Smith reveals early concerns with women's position in society and develops, through characters like Godolphin, the ideal of the worthy egalitarian man that would become the basis for her later Willoughby and Belleville.

Delamere actively pursues Emmeline from his first encounter with his unfortunate cousin but sees her only as a possession or prize to be won. Revealing both his unsuitability as heir to Mowbray Castle and as romantic hero, he speaks of his first visit thusly: "I already begin to see great capabilities about this venerable mansion. I think I shall take to it, as my father offers it me; especially as I suppose Miss Emmeline is to be included in the

inventory.”⁸³ Though Emmeline rejects his advances and promises Lord Montreville she will not engage herself to Delamere, he continues to pursue her and the two develop an acquaintance. It is while Emmeline sings innocently to entertain her cousin that Smith makes the novel’s only Miltonic reference: he “hung over her enamoured.”⁸⁴ The connection is a minor one—the novel quotes just these four words as Delamere watches Emmeline’s performance. In *Paradise Lost*, Adam awakens and

His wonder was to find unwak'nd Eve
With Tresses discompos'd, and glowing Cheek,
As through unquiet rest: he on his side
Leaning half-rais'd, with looks of cordial Love
Hung over her enamour'd, and beheld
Beautie, which whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar graces.⁸⁵

Like Adam admiring the beauty of a sleeping Eve, Delamere’s ardent affections are directed here and throughout the novel at Emmeline’s outward appearance and feminine graces. His affections are not portrayed as sweet or innocent as prelapsarian Adam’s may be, but misplaced and far too zealous. Just as Adam is yet to know of Eve’s dream and future betrayal, Delamere is unconscious of the damage his obsession is yet to cause Emmeline, who incurs the wrath of Lord Montreville when caught singing to the eager Delamere. The contrast between Adam and Delamere makes clear the difference between naïveté and willful ignorance, the latter of which Delamere clearly displays when he repeatedly endangers Emmeline’s livelihood by pursuing her throughout the country in defiance of his father’s explicit orders. The oldest son and his mother’s particular favorite, he is never in danger of losing his position while Emmeline’s meager support is repeatedly threatened and she eventually abandons the only home she has ever known just to escape Delamere and attempt to preserve her tenuous relationship with her uncle.

⁸³ Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline*, ed. Loraine Fletcher (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2003), 61.

⁸⁴ Smith, *Emmeline*, 130.

⁸⁵ *Paradise Lost*, V. 9-15. All quotations from *Paradise Lost* are from John Milton, *The Riverside Milton*, ed. Roy Flanagan (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 475.

Sadly, it is not merely her pecuniary existence which is threatened by Delamere, but her chastity as well. Delamere plans and carries out her abduction when other attempts to secure a relationship with Emmeline fail. He instructs servants to assist him and though Emmeline attempts to run, lifts her with “gentle violence” into a chaise that hastens away. Emmeline is unable to speak in her shock and terror.⁸⁶ Yet, this is not the only occasion in which the vulnerable Emmeline is threatened with rape. A guest at the castle, Crofts, pins Emmeline into a room, calling her a “sly little prude,” intimating the pending attack. He cites Emmeline’s kindness toward another man as justification for his actions and she is literally grabbed hold of before she can run for safety.⁸⁷ Men continually treat Emmeline as a possession, either one to be disregarded as Montreville wishes to do, or used as her pursuers intend. Her societal vulnerability is her physical vulnerability and both are the result of her sex; her oppressors are not simply males but those from the established social hierarchy. *Emmeline* sees Smith experiment with a trope that will reappear throughout her novelistic career—the privileged yet worthy suitor, a younger son, who offers an alternative to malignant society from within its narrow confines.

While Delamere is a favored child and heir to the family fortune, Emmeline’s eventual husband is the clear frontrunner for her affections from the outset as the younger son in a respected family. Fletcher writes of this relationship that it was seen as potentially transgressive by some readers that Emmeline does not marry her first choice for potential husband in *Delamere*; but through this innovation, Smith offers women, even those in precarious situations like Emmeline’s, an empowering choice.⁸⁸ So, too, does she rewrite history for Adelina, the sister of Godolphin urged into marriage to at a young age only to find her husband is a drunk and a gambler. When she is ignored and mistreated, she allows

⁸⁶ Smith, *Emmeline*, 168.

⁸⁷ Smith, *Emmeline*, 248.

⁸⁸ Fletcher, *Critical Biography*, 98.

herself to fall for FitzEdward and finds herself pregnant with his child. Rather than succumb to novelistic convention and certain death, Adelina is assisted by Emmeline and allowed to fortuitously and legally marry her lover in the end. This radical rewriting of possibility for vulnerable women would be a concern for Smith for the rest of her career and hints at some of the aspects of the French Revolutionary rhetoric she would find enticing just a short time later. When Smith warns in *Emmeline* that “the gentlest and mildest temper will revolt against insolence and oppression,” it foreshadows the events in France that would captivate her attention and her writing for years, but it also demonstrates that Smith’s particular mode of feminine politics, while modified by the Revolution and refined throughout its duration, can be traced as far back as her first published work.

Ethelinde

Smith’s second novel, *Ethelinde*, was published in 1789 and explores the ways in which the cruelty of empire destroys families while in pursuit of wrongful wealth. Like Emmeline before her, Ethelinde Chesterville is rendered vulnerable by the men in her life with a father deeply in debt and a profligate brother and no money of her own. Again, Smith correlates the pecuniary vulnerability of a woman to the possibility of sexual violation when a man named Davenant imprisons Ethelinde and offers her money to be his mistress. However, in *Ethelinde* Smith’s focus is less on the bodily consequences of her heroine’s precarious financial position and more on the means of attaining and retaining wealth and the victims in these processes.

The novel’s hero, Montgomery, is established as one of Smith’s many worthy younger brothers—in this case a descendent of the “younger branch of the noble family of his name in Scotland,” the younger brother of a younger branch who married equally well but

equally poor.⁸⁹ Thus established as worthy societally by consequence of birth but also worthy emotionally because he is rendered vulnerable by the same financial constraints that face Ethelinde, Montgomery is the only feasible love interest for the heroine amidst a host of admirers in more advantageous economic circumstances. The real radicalism of Smith's portrayal of Montgomery's family is told through the story of his mother's life. Mrs Douglas, the mother of Mrs Montgomery, was left without any support upon her husband's death. Lord Pevensey, whose wife is confined to an asylum, makes Mrs Douglas his mistress and raises her daughter, the future Mrs Montgomery, as his own. Upon Lord Pevensey's death, his brother is named heir to the fortune and takes everything, sending Pevensey's sons to France and forcing them to abandon the family name. He then attempts to force Mrs Montgomery to become his mistress, forcibly assaulting her in the process.

Though Smith yet again highlights the physical assault on financially vulnerable female bodies, the story of the Montgomery family focuses on the potential for familial economic abuse. It is not the fact that they lack connection to families of consequence that render Mrs Douglas or the sons of Lord Pevensey defenseless, but rather their exploitation by their own family members and the laws that allow and encourage them to such mistreatment. Smith emphasizes this in her portrayal of Ethelinde's brother, Harry, who inherits a significant sum late in the novel. Though Ethelinde alone was responsible for securing some stability for their family and Harry mismanaged money throughout the novel, as sole male heir and elder brother he believes himself the rightful recipient of the entirety of Harcourt's fortune and refuses to share with his sister. While many of Smith's future novels will explore the financial insecurity of being a woman or a younger sibling and the issues with the laws that exploit the weakness of these more vulnerable classes, *Ethelinde* is far more concerned

⁸⁹ Charlotte Smith, *Ethelinde*, ed. Stuart Curran (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005), 44.

with inter-familial cruelty than her later novels, which will see her focus turn more to the systemic.

Though the novel acknowledges the need to acquire wealth, Smith harshly judges those who do so at the expense of others and particularly condemns the nation's colonial efforts. Despite his birth into a noble family, Montgomery cannot provide for a married life for himself and Ethelinde due to his unfortunate family circumstances. As such, he is obligated to join England's pursuits in India and secure enough wealth to return to Ethelinde in some years' time so that they may comfortably live. The novel is quick to make clear that his engagements in India are "inconsistent with his feelings, with his principles; but he fancies, with the warm enthusiasm of his age, that he can preserve his integrity amidst temptations the most powerful; and acquire opulence, not by being the plunderer but the protector of the people among whom he proposes serving."⁹⁰ Montgomery's remarks are naïve, particularly the language about "serving" the people while he is complicit in appropriating their resources for England's, as well as his own, economic gain. But his regret at his role and his intention to work with an eye toward preserving the native culture nevertheless reminds us of Montgomery's enlightened principles and places him in opposition to the novel's many men who seek self-aggrandizement at any cost.

To reinforce Montgomery's worthiness, Smith has him quote from Rousseau: "Soyons heureux et pauvres; ah! quel tresor nous aurons acquis! J'ai des bras, je suis robuste; le pain gagnè par mon travail te paroitra delieieux que les mets des festins. Un repas appreté par l'amour, peut-il jamais, être insipide?"⁹¹ The quotation aligns him with the admired, if intense, romancer St Preux from Rousseau's successful novel, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. These

⁹⁰ Smith, *Ethelinde*, 112.

⁹¹ "let us be happy and poor: ah, what a treasure we will have acquired! I have arms, I am strong; the bread earned by my labour will appear to you more delicious than banquet delicacies. A meal crowned with love, can it ever be insipid?" As translated by Stuart Curran. Smith, *Ethelinde*, 370.

particular words come early in the novel after St Preux has been separated from his lover, Julie, and writes to her increasingly despairing over her absence. He calls himself a “victim of prejudice” and blames Julie’s father for keeping them apart, drawing attention to the illicit nature of their relationship. He also claims that without Julie, “je n'aurais jamais senti ce contraste insupportable de grandeur au fond de mon âme et de bassesse dans ma fortune; j'aurais vécu tranquille et serais mort content, sans daigner remarquer quel rang j'avais occupé sur la terre.”⁹² Like St Preux, Montgomery is reasonably content to live in relative poverty and in opposition to the lifestyle becoming of a gentleman (though a gentleman in “soul” for St Preux rather than by birthright for Montgomery) until the prospect of marrying Ethelinde necessitates that he make enough money to provide for their comfort. Though the quotation and alignment between Montgomery and St Preux suggests an illicitness to the courtship of Montgomery and Ethelinde, it also highlights it as a relationship of excessive romance. Montgomery paints his efforts in India as a regrettable means to an end because he is quite happy to live in poverty with Ethelinde with only love and his daily toil to provide for their survival.

As an interesting counterpoint to Montgomery and Rousseau, Ethelinde’s brother Harry also quotes—or attempts to quote—a French author. In response to Ethelinde’s dismay at Harry’s greed, he invokes Voltaire by name and claims “que les maux ne sont bon que pour oblir” or “evils are good only to be forgotten.”⁹³ I could not locate this particular quotation in any edition of Voltaire’s works and Stuart Curran notes in his edition of

⁹² Part I, Letter XXVI. “I would have never felt this unbearable contrast of grandeur in my innermost soul and meniality in my fortune; I would have lived peaceably and died content, without deigning to notice what rank I had occupied on earth.” As translated in the following English edition: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie, or the New Heloise*, trans. Philip Stewart and Jean Vaché (Hanover: Dartmouth College Press, 1997), 73.

⁹³ Smith, *Ethelinde*, 453. It is indeed the older “oblir” rather than “oublier” in Smith’s provided quotation. All quotations in Smith’s works are referenced throughout this thesis exactly as they are given in the printed editions, rather than correcting them either for grammar or spelling or to accord with French language editions of the period or later. It is not possible to establish whether apparent errors are authorial or originate with the printer.

Ethelinde that it is potentially an inaccurate quotation. Smith notoriously cites from memory in many of her quotations which often leads to error, or it may simply be a general expression inaccurately ascribed to a favored author. However, because the quotation is specifically referenced as Voltaire, we must consider the significance of naming him as its source. Perhaps the most obvious text from which it might have arisen is *Candide* (1759), Voltaire's notorious invective on optimism. No translation provides a near-enough paraphrase of this line, but it is nonetheless a text which expressly concerns itself with the nature of evil. In its satire on the acceptance of the world as "the best of all available options," *Candide* criticizes those who do nothing to resist evil. If Harry quotes from *Candide*, taking a line such as "evils are good only to be forgotten" at face value rather than satire as Voltaire intended, it figures him as a bad reader—the tribulations faced by *Candide* were so outlandish and perpetually unfortunate that to fail to see irony in them renders Harry almost willfully obtuse, perhaps suggesting that Smith believes willful blindness the only way someone could choose to ignore their role in perpetuating the suffering of others. In fact, Gopnik writes that one of the arguments of *Candide* is "to subsume individual suffering or pain within a larger equilibrium is to accept the logic of the slaughterhouse," yet this is exactly the crime of which Harry—and indeed most of those fortunately born eldest sons in the novel—is guilty.⁹⁴ As soon as he has money, he is willing to accept the suffering of *Ethelinde* as he becomes another piece of the larger societal machine that cares not for the rights of the individual to object to their mistreatment. It is attractive to consider the possibility that Harry's misuse of Voltaire and inability to recognize his own actions as antithetical to many of Voltaire's tenets only further renders him an unworthy male and contrasts his undeserving character to that of Montgomery, who skillfully employs Rousseau to code himself as a believer in enlightened principles. In this manner, Smith might also be said to demonstrate the importance of the

⁹⁴ Adam Gopnik, "Voltaire's Garden: The Philosopher as a Campaigner for Human Rights," in *Candide*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016), 112.

fully-aware reader, perhaps suggesting to her audience that additional layers of meaning can be uncovered in her texts with due attention to her allusions.

In *Ethelinde*, one can continue to find evidence of Smith's burgeoning radicalism. As in *Emmeline*, she does not condemn disadvantaged women for making choices that would be ill-regarded by society, which she demonstrates in her support of Mrs Montgomery's tragic family story. So, too, is she conscious in this novel of the constraints of a poor marriage, even extending this to men when she is sympathetic toward Edward Newenden's unhappy marriage and his adulterous feelings for Ethelinde. But in this novel, she also embarks on her first criticism of nationalist expansion, specifically in her disparagement of colonialism. Later novels, we will see, are more emboldened in their critiques of British imperialism, particularly in the portrayal of soldiers in *The Old Manor House*. Smith's disgust at cruelty within families, particularly when wielded through monetary means, will also recur in the novels that follow, though she begins to question more the societal structures and laws that allow for such abuse rather than relying on the vilification of those individuals who inflict suffering on others through their systemic privilege. *Ethelinde* was written just at the outset of the French Revolution and yet, one can see in this second novel all the elements of Smith's radical politics: the need for reform of inheritance laws as well as inequality between classes and genders, alongside criticism of nationalism and its ideological and economic effects.⁹⁵ Though her understanding of her own politics would be shaped and refined by the events and thinkers of the Revolution, it is vital that we acknowledge their existence in these, her earliest writings, to fully appreciate the attention and complexity with which she increasingly treats them in the later novels.

⁹⁵ Smith's letters reveal that she conceived of *Ethelinde* in December 1788. She began the final volume in late June and was nearly finished at the beginning of August, thus the novel was completed during the period immediately after France convened the Estates General and concurrently with the formulation of the new Constitution and the storming of the Bastille in June and July 1789.

II. Celestina

Celestina provides insight into Charlotte Smith's immediate response to events in France. The first mention of the novel in Smith's letters occurs in August 1789, when she writes that "if my Aunt would come down and inhabit my house, I should leave my Girls without being uneasy [...] and I should be able to get off the thorns for a little while & begin a New Novel."¹ This suggests that *Celestina* was being shaped in the wake of the storming of the Bastille on 14 July of that year.² This is borne out in the novel's plot, which is the most utopian of the prospects Smith offers to her readers. Like her earlier novels, the first three volumes are predominantly concerned with portraying the negative effects of a hierarchical and patriarchal society but the final volume sees the action removed to France, where the protagonists are able to achieve resolution, thus presenting that country as a place of idealism and hope.

Smith quotes directly from Milton and Rousseau on a combined total of just five occurrences. Yet, her use of a consistent reference to prelapsarian or pre-social heterosexual union to draw attention to the subversive union of Celestina and Willoughby links the work consistently to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social*. Here, I argue that Smith uses quotation from *Paradise Lost* but also structures a "fall" for her central characters to emphasize the motif of sympathetic incestuous attraction and tie it to the implied consanguineous relationship between Celestina and Willoughby. In doing so, she marshals the tradition of idealized sympathetic incest frequently employed in the period, utilized by such authors as Frances Burney, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth and later,

¹ Smith, *Letters*, 22.

² She later mentions on 8 September 1790 that she had as yet only composed the poetry for *Celestina* but had "no doubt of putting the whole upon paper (since it is already settled in my head)." Thus, we can understand the majority of the composition of *Celestina* to correspond with roughly the period first year of the French Revolution. *Letters*, 29.

Lord Byron and Percy Shelley.³ In utilizing quotations from Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* while gesturing to possible consanguineal ties between her lovers, Smith marshals Adam and Eve's marriage characterized by mutual respect to politicize her work through the contrast between the idealization of mutuality and equality in fraternity over the greed and exploitation of patriarchy.⁴ To clarify, Smith's allusions to Adam and Eve do not *create* the perception of sympathetic incestuous attraction within the text—that is achieved through the pair's adopted sibling relationship and through the letter that Willoughby receives which suggests the relationship may, in fact, be consanguineal rather than adoptive—but through her allusions to Adam and Eve at key moments in the Celestina-Willoughby relationship, Smith further emphasizes the positive equalities of sentimental incest that so interested the Romantics and ties these qualities to the burgeoning French Revolution.

The motif of incestuous attraction is central to the novel; the plot hinges on Celestina's parentage. Two quotations from *Paradise Lost* regarding Adam and Eve occur early and late in the novel, asking the reader to evaluate Celestina and Willoughby just after their "fall" and as they leave Eden. For *Celestina*, these moments coincide with the couple

³ For examples of the discussion of sympathetic incestuous attraction in the works of Romantic poets, see For examples of accounts of the sympathetic treatment of fraternal incest in the Romantic period, see Alan Richardson, "The Dangers of Sympathy: Sibling Incest in English Romantic Poetry," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 25, no. 4 (Autumn, 1985): 737-754; Peter Thorslev, "Incest as Romantic Symbol," *Comparative Literature Studies* 2, no. 1 (1965): 41-58; Allan H. Pasco, *Sick Heroes: French Society and Literature in the Romantic Age, 1750-1850* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), particularly the chapter "Incest in the Mirror." For accounts of incest in novels of the period, see Ellen Pollak, *Incest and the English Novel, 1684-1814* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) and Ruth Perry, *Novel Relations: The Transformation of Kinship in English Literature and Culture, 1748-1818* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁴ Though Smith avoids any reference to the other incest within *Paradise Lost* in *Celestina*—the relationship between Satan, Sin, and Death—Romantic allusions to incest in *Paradise Lost* as viewed through the lens of contemporary English politics were not uncommon. In reading *The Old Manor House*, and to a lesser extent *Marchmont*, I will discuss Smith's use of the Satan, Sin, and Death trio and the relationship between graphic portrayals of these characters and contemporary politics. Roughly two decades after Smith's engagement with incest, politics, and *Paradise Lost*, Shelley would allude to Adam and Eve in his *Laon and Cythna* to emphasize fraternal incestuous attraction and to Satan, Sin, and Death in *The Cenci* to emphasize the horrors of parental incest, with the former celebrated and the latter vilified. Both texts are considered to engage with the rhetoric of the French Revolution. For more on Shelley's allusions, see Monica Brzezinski Potkay, "Incest as Theology in Shelley's 'The Cenci,'" *The Wordsworth Circle* 35, no. 2 (Spring 2004): 57-65 and Elisa Beshero-Bondar, *Women, Epic, and Transition in British Romanticism* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2011), 58.

being driven apart by the machinations of patriarchal tradition and as they are reunited after learning of Celestina's French heritage. The quotations from *Paradise Lost* and their characterization of the novel's lovers are reinforced by references to *Samson Agonistes* and *La Nouvelle Héloïse* which continue to emphasize distinctions between the egalitarian ideals of the young couple and the manipulative and selfish concerns of the upper classes.

As Celestina is due to be cast out of her childhood home—the home shared with her adoptive brother and love interest, Willoughby—she “almost involuntarily” utters the following quotation from Milton's *Paradise Lost*:

“O unexpected stroke, worse than of death!
Must I thus leave thee paradise? thus leave
Thee native soil, these happy walks and shades...?”⁵

In *Paradise Lost*, Eve speaks these words upon learning she and Adam are to be cast out of Eden for her sin. Celestina spent her early childhood in a convent in the South of France before her adoption by an English widow named Mrs Willoughby, who raised the young orphan alongside her own children, Matilda and George, whom she has gifted with the names of an English monarch and an English saint. With George Willoughby now grown, Mrs Willoughby tells him of her desire to marry him to his cousin, Miss Fitz-Hayman. When Willoughby mentions to his mother his potential feelings for Celestina, her response is to scold him: “surely you are not imprudent enough to entertain an idea of her otherwise than as a sister. There are objections—insuperable objections.”⁶ Her only aversion to the proposed relationship seems to lie in the familial bond engendered over years, which encourages him to believe a mysterious letter later in the novel that suggests that his relationship with Celestina may be consanguineal. It is at this point in the novel that Smith quotes the aforementioned lines from *Paradise Lost*. The disruptive letter encourages Willoughby to break from

⁵ Smith, *Celestina*, 165. The lines are *Paradise Lost*, XI. 268-271.

⁶ Charlotte Smith, *Celestina*, ed. Loraine Fletcher (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2004), 65.

Celestina and she is forced to leave the home they once shared, which Celestina sees as a “fall” such as that experienced by Adam and Eve.

Throughout the remainder of the novel until the truth of Celestina’s heritage is revealed in the final volume, Willoughby is under the impression that he and his adoptive sister may also be related by blood. Celestina and Willoughby were raised together and share the mutual history that made sympathetic portrayal of incestuous attraction between siblings popular in the Romantic period, but the letter suggesting a true blood relationship between the pair makes the incestuous connotation impossible to ignore.⁷ Yet, the relationship between the pair is only treated positively, aided by the association to the Edenic relationship. Francisco Vaz da Silva writes that “if we define incest as the supposed return of body substance upon itself through sexual contact, it is clear that sex between halves of the primordial person is incestuous.”⁸ However, I will show below that Smith’s focus in *Celestina* seems to be on the egalitarian ideals represented by her idealized lovers, so I believe that she is instead marshalling the “pure benevolence and mutual veneration” that Samuel Johnson described when referring to the love between Adam and Eve.⁹ Eve was created by God as a partner and wife for Adam, but as she is formed from the body of Adam and is in a very literal sense his flesh and blood, she can also be seen as a sister or a double figure and thus their relationship may be understood to be incestuous. Given Milton’s engagement with incest and politics elsewhere, this may well have been his intent, and it is reinforced in the text by the fact that both Adam and Eve continue to cast God as father,

⁷ “Romantic incestuous couples tend instead to have a history together going back to infancy (although it may be temporarily disrupted during early adolescence). Indeed, so strong is the power of shared childhood experiences that adopted siblings, or foster siblings, or even neighbors who grew up together tend to have the same valence in Romantic narratives as do siblings by blood.” Alan Richardson, “Rethinking Romantic Incest: Human Universals, Literary Representation, and the Biology of Mind,” *New Literary History* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2000): 553.

⁸ Francisco Vaz da Silva, “Folklore into Theory: Freud and Lévi-Strauss on Incest and Marriage,” *Journal of Folklore Research* 44, No. 1 (Jan-Apr 2007): 5.

⁹ From Johnson’s *Lives of the English Poets* (1781) as cited in *The Critical Response to John Milton’s Paradise Lost*, ed. Timothy C Miller (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1997), 104.

classing them as like siblings rather than Adam as parent.¹⁰ Though modern critics have seen Eve as secondary to Adam—which was very possibly Milton’s intent—what Johnson identifies and Smith seems to capitalize on is the language of love, respect, and equality with which Milton imbues this relationship. That is, they can cast aside “not equal, for thir sex not equal seem’d” to focus on the couple “linkt in happie nuptial League” and as two halves of one whole.¹¹ In this way, Adam and Eve become exemplars for Smith of an egalitarian relationship that she ties to Celestina and Willoughby. As adoptive siblings, they accentuate the democratic aspects of their relationship by uniting “siblings” with shared experiences but also a first-born son of the landed classes with a poor orphan of no known background.

Celestina speaks these lines right after the “fall,” at the most pessimistic point in the novel. She has been driven from Willoughby’s companionship, their future in doubt, much as Adam and Eve must leave Paradise and Eve holds little hope for what their future entails. As we investigate the cause of the “fall,” the letter that Willoughby receives is later revealed to be from Lady Castlenorth, Willoughby’s potential mother-in-law should the marriage to Celestina be disrupted. In that regard, we turn to how parental authority is figured in the novel. Throughout the novel, the Celestina-Willoughby relationship sits in opposition to the relationship between Willoughby and his cousin, Miss Fitz-Hayman. It is in pursuit of this marriage that Lady Castlenorth sends the anonymous letter to Willoughby, halting the imminent wedding between him and Celestina. It is particularly in keeping with this novel’s subtle, yet insistent, focus on incestuous relationships that the two possibilities for marriage in the novel for Willoughby are with a “sister” and a cousin. Mrs Willoughby’s declared reason for keeping Willoughby and Celestina apart is her preference for maintaining the titles and land ownership of her brother by uniting her son with her brother’s daughter. Her

¹⁰ Milton uses incest in *Eikonoclastes* to reject claims of parricide against Charles I. See Erin Murphy, “‘Paradise Lost’ and the Politics of ‘Begetting,’” *Milton Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (March 2011): 25-49.

¹¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 339 and 488.

motivation is that her brother, “Lord Castlenorth, is the last male of a line distinguished since the conquest; your cousin, his only daughter, will inherit his fortune; the titles die with him. It is equally natural therefore for him and for me, to wish that you, my son, in becoming the husband of my niece, may possess the estates and honors of my family.”¹² After Mrs Willoughby dies, Celestina and Willoughby confess their mutual affection for one another and plan to marry. In doing so, they establish their relationship as a subversive one—one that goes explicitly against parental doctrine. Mrs Willoughby is figured as the unreasonable one for inflicting upon her son demands solely based on the preservation of land and titles. The primacy given by Mrs Willoughby and her brother, Lord Castlenorth, to patriarchal values is outdated, which is represented in their physical weakness—and in the case of Lord Castlenorth, his growing senility. Though we today consider cousin marriages to be incestuous in many cultures, not only were these marriages legal but often actively desired by titled families for precisely the reasons espoused by Mrs Willoughby and Lord Castlenorth. Indeed, half of all aristocratic cousin marriages in the eighteenth century were between children of brothers for the purpose of keeping the estate within the father’s own family.¹³

In contrast to the liberally minded Willoughby, those who marry for this kind of status in *Celestina* are not afforded many, if any, personality traits beyond pride. Smith writes of Lord Castlenorth that “the pride of ancestry was now the most distinguishing feature in a character where it appeared with the greatest prominence, from the faintness and insipidity of the other traits, for being no longer able to pursue the dissolute manner of life which he adopted rather from fashion than inclination, he had now in other respects no character at all.”¹⁴ The name “Fitz-Hayman” itself, the surname of Lord Castlenorth’s daughter (the Fitz prefix was associated with nobility from the medieval period and especially illegitimate

¹² Smith, *Celestina*, 64.

¹³ Adam Kuper, *Incest and Influence: The Private Life of Bourgeois England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 22.

¹⁴ Smith, *Celestina*, 86.

children of the nobility) ties the family to the same strengthening of ancestral ties. In fact, incest laws prohibited several degrees of incest, including that which occurred between in-laws which was, of course, not incest at all. Prohibiting in-law relations while allowing for cousin relations exemplified the cultural valuation of marital ties and their influence on societal structure over the supposed impurity of consanguineal relations.¹⁵ Ruth Perry writes that “incest implies the violation of genealogical principles and hence the attempt to short-circuit true succession and disrupt history.”¹⁶ Willoughby and Celestina are already represented as disruptive for their violation of parental doctrine but in linking them to Adam and Eve through Milton, Smith emphasizes the revolutionary potential of their pseudo-incestuous fraternal relationship in direct opposition to Willoughby’s other marital option—the consolidation of inherited power through marriage to his cousin.

Yet, it is significant that though Mrs Willoughby is one of several family members who attempts to stand in the way of a Celestina-Willoughby union, she is not portrayed as a bad mother. Her desires for her son are represented as misguided, but well-intentioned. Smith is careful to present multiple forms of destructive privilege; Mrs Willoughby is better than most and showed her generosity in raising Celestina as her own, but she remains attached to tradition. This is in stark contrast to the predatory behavior of her sister-in-law, Lady Castlenorth. The latter’s initial description speaks volumes:

Lady Castlenorth was as well by her rank as her talents and her travels, qualified in her own opinion for universal dominion. Not content therefore with governing her Lord with despotic sway, (which indeed saved him the trouble and probably the disgrace of governing himself) she affirmed towards the rest of the world a style equally dictatorial.¹⁷

Though Lord Castlenorth is not entirely blameless for his attachment to his family’s history, Smith makes clear that Lady Castlenorth is not motivated by tradition or inherent dues owed

¹⁵ Perry, 121.

¹⁶ Perry, 393.

¹⁷ Smith, *Celestina*, 87.

to her by station of birth, but by her ambition actively to consolidate and expand power. Thus, Smith demonstrates that the inequalities and excesses wrought by a patriarchal society are not the sole responsibility of men. Smith clearly condemns Lady Castlenorth and she cites Milton to strengthen this position, the reference to “despotic sway” a quotation from Milton’s *Samson Agonistes*. The line, offered by the Chorus, is part of a misogynistic tirade on women:

Is it for that such outward ornament
 Was lavish’t on thir sex, that inward gifts
 Were left for hast unfinish’t, judgment scant,
 Capacity not rais’d to apprehend
 Or value what is best
 In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?
 Or was too much of self-love mixt,
 Of constancy no root infixt,
 That either they love nothing, or not long?
 ...
 Therefore God’s universal law
 Gave to the man despotic power
 Over his female in due awe¹⁸

Smith reverses the power in the relationship, giving her Dalila—Lady Castlenorth—the despotic sway. Dalila shares many of Lady Castlenorth’s attributes, namely her power-hungry nature and desire to “be nam’d among the famousest/of women, sung at solemn festivals/living and dead recorded.”¹⁹ But in linking Lady Castlenorth to Dalila, who is also termed in *Samson Agonistes* “a manifest serpent,” she also links her to predation upon the innocent or naïve: the serpent is the agent of evil that drove a wedge between Adam and

¹⁸ Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 1025-33 and 1053-55.

¹⁹ Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 982-984.

Eve.²⁰ Unlike Mrs Willoughby, who merely asks her son not to marry *Celestina*, Lady Castlenorth stoops to deception, through her letter, to ensure compliance to her wishes. In the end, she, too, occasions a “fall.”

Lady Castlenorth’s seemingly unrepentant cruelty contrasts with the idealism that otherwise pervades Smith’s novel. Rousseau famously surmised that human nature was innately good, and socialization—or, bad society—its ruin. This is loosely true for most of *Celestina*’s characters. Even the libertine suitor, Vavasour, shows some promise at his core in the way he provides for a fallen woman. Rousseau’s theory held that “institutions” as man knew them, the patriarchal and aristocratic society extant in the eighteenth century, were responsible for the ills of the world but that, seeing as a natural state was never really possible, “good” social institutions should be modeled. Those were institutions based on “mutuality that overrides mere self-gratification.”²¹ Lady Castlenorth’s pursuit of self- and familial gratification and willful participation in an oppressive and damaging society reveal her incompatibility with the Rousseauian ideal and establish her in opposition to the revolutionary potential inherent in the transgressive union of Willoughby and *Celestina*.

Smith more than loosely draws on Rousseau’s political and social theory; she twice in the course of the novel alludes to his *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Though *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was frequently cited in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the years between the publication of *Ethelinde* in 1789 and *Celestina* in 1791 had seen it acquire new resonance. Nicola Watson writes that “the logic of Rousseau’s plot came to inform much of the discourse stimulated by the Revolution in England, to the point where even the most passing allusion to its heroine, Julie, might operate as a convenient shorthand for multiple anxieties surrounding

²⁰ Milton, *Samson Agonistes*, 997.

²¹ Beenstock, *Politics of Romanticism*, 58.

female sexuality, national identity, and class mobility.”²² *Celestina* first references *Héloïse* when the heroine refuses the advances of Montague because her heart remains with Willoughby: “Il n’y a point d’homme pour celle qui aime; son amant est plus, tous les autres sont moins.”²³ These are the words of Julie speaking of St Preux and link the transgressive nature of the Julie-St Preux relationship (which is pursued in defiance of the father’s explicit prohibition) to that of *Celestina* and Willoughby. *Celestina* is offered an alternate suitor in Montague, but despite his ability to provide for her when she is alone in the world and the lack of obstacles in their path, she refuses him in favor of the proscribed relationship with Willoughby. Montague is excessive and romantic and, in many ways, quite similar to St Preux. Yet, *Celestina* insists that he is not a potential husband, emphasizing the significance of the transgressive aspect of the Willoughby relationship. *Celestina* here rejects an equivalent to Wolmar, who signifies the acquiescence to filial duty. Like that of Julie and St Preux, *Celestina* and Willoughby’s relationship is a subversion of parental doctrine that represents a social reformation.

The language is then reversed, when Willoughby repeats lines from one of St Preux’s letters, thus further establishing the analogy with his own relationship. Eventually, his desperate search for *Celestina*’s true heritage leads him away from England and he finds himself wandering France, quite purposefully during the summer of 1789. One day in the Pyrenees, comparing the scenery to the Rocks of Meillerie he imagines *Celestina* at his side and refers to Rousseau: “Il sembloit que ce lieu désert, dût être l’asyle de deux amants;

²² Nicola Watson, *Revolution and the Form of the British Novel, 1790-1825: Intercepted Letters, Interrupted Seductions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 5.

²³ Smith, *Celestina*, 229. Translated by Loraine Fletcher as “For a woman in love there is no such thing as a man; her lover is more, the rest are less.”

échappés seuls au bouleversement de la nature.”²⁴ Smith renders the Pyrenees with a similar threatening landscape to that of the Rocks of Meillerie:

A mountain stream formed by the melting snows carried muddy water to within twenty paces of us, noisily ferrying it with clay, sand, and rocks. Behind us a range of inaccessible cliffs separated the esplanade where we were standing from that part of the Alps which is named les glaciers...forests of dark spruce shaded us gloomily²⁵

Dashing down amongst these immense piles of stone, the cataracts, formed by the melting of the snows, and the ice of the glaciers, in the bosom of the mountains, fell roaring into the dark and abyss-like chasms...shaded by immense pines or cedars²⁶

Willoughby’s quotation recalls this landscape as one of asylum for the lovers, but its foreboding nature speaks more accurately to its truth. Ultimately, for St Preux and Julie, the day at the Rocks ends in tears for Julie and homicidal-suicidal ideation for St Preux as it reiterates the impossibility of their relationship. Willoughby has his own revelation about the seeming impossibility of a relationship with Celestina moments later. Willoughby and Celestina, then, can no more than St Preux and Julie escape the “general wreck of nature,” with nature here holding the double entendre of the sibling relationship Willoughby still presumes to exist. He believes that their relationship means that Celestina is “destined to make the happiness of Montague Thorold,” seeing Willoughby continue to mirror the doting St Preux who watches Julie fulfill her destiny with Wolmar. However, duty always wins in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* and Smith is unconcerned with blind adherence to societal expectations so she navigates for her lovers a path to happiness.

The fourth and most overtly revolutionary of the novel’s volumes sees Willoughby setting off for Paris in hopes of learning the truth of Celestina’s parentage. It is here that Smith returns to *Paradise Lost* and Adam and Eve’s departure from Eden, citing the famous

²⁴ Lorraine Fletcher’s translation of Smith reads, “it seemed that this desert spot was designed as an asylum for two lovers, who had escaped the general wreck of nature.” *Celestina*, 475.

²⁵ Stewart and Vaché, *Julie*, 424.

²⁶ Smith, *Celestina*, 474.

lines, “The World was all before him where to chuse.”²⁷ In Milton, this line refers to Adam and Eve as they leave behind the gates of paradise (“The World was all before them, where to choose”).²⁸ Though he is banished from Eden, Adam has seen the potential for future salvation through the Archangel Michael and he and Eve leave Eden hand in hand with Adam seeing hope for the future in the vast world before them. When these words are echoed by the narrator of *Celestina* as Willoughby heads to France at the onset of the French Revolution, it links the hope for salvation and a future for humanity with the events in France. However, it also establishes an important link with Smith’s earlier quotation from *Paradise Lost*. Then, Celestina and Willoughby had received the suggestive letter but had no knowledge of its truth or what possibilities existed for them in the future. When these lines occur at the end of Milton’s epic, it is as Adam has seen both the negative and the positive to come and “hast attend the summe/Of wisdom.”²⁹ We might then interpret this wisdom attained by Willoughby throughout the volume as both the determination of Celestina’s true heritage and what he learns of revolutionary idealism from Bellegarde, which occupies the majority of the volume’s content. The “paradise within thee, happier farr” that Celestina and Willoughby are thus to achieve by the volume’s end, then, is a union of their ideal fraternal bonds made stronger by the influence of revolutionary thought.

The volume is occupied primarily with helping Willoughby to achieve the wisdom to which Michael guided Adam. Wandering the Pyrenees, Willoughby comes upon the home of the Count de Bellegarde. The castle, Rochemorte, is:

a pavilion, which had once been magnificent, but was now in ruins. It was built of various-coloured marbles, found in the Pyrenees; was of Grecian architecture, and

²⁷ Smith, *Celestina*, 473.

²⁸ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII. 646. Smith changes the quotation to reflect that Willoughby is leaving England alone as opposed to Adam who leaves Eden with Eve at his side. Though Willoughby travels alone, his leaving England marks a departure from his intended future as a groom for Miss Fitz-Hayman and signals his hope (and eventual success) of learning more about Celestina’s heritage in France, mirroring the secure future Adam and Eve leave behind in Eden but the promise for a greater future.

²⁹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII. 575-6.

seemed to have been a work of taste. The pillars of the portico, though broken, yet supported its roof; and behind it were three apartments, that had once been richly furnished: one, as a banqueting room; the other two as rooms for the Siesta, which is usually taken here as in Spain. The canopies of yellow damask, were fallen, and the hangings of the rooms devoured by the moths, and decayed by the damp from the windows; which, having never been glazed the shutters had long since dropped down.³⁰

And of the area surrounding Rochemorte, Smith writes:

there used to be large trees all around it; and all manner of flowers; and the stream, that now almost stagnates among those reeds and rushes, and with difficulty finds its way to the moat of the castle, was then brought into a bath, behind the banqueting-house, and into a bason, which is now grown over with weeds and grass, so that it can hardly be traced.³¹

Rochemorte, the castle-home of a French aristocrat, both literally and figuratively stands for the *ancien régime*. Once grand as with the storied kings of long-ago France, it now stands tattered and broken from the strains of tyranny represented by Louis XVI and in Rochemorte by the original Count. By emphasizing that the glory of Rochemorte “can hardly be traced” in its current state, Smith stresses that the monarchy which the Revolution seeks to overthrow resembles the great monarchs of France in name alone.³² The Rochemorte outwardly in tatters that Willoughby visits is as the castle stands after the onset of the French Revolution. The original Count, the current owner’s tyrannical father, has died and his son, who once fled his father’s tyranny to fight for the American Revolutionary cause, has inherited it. Interestingly, then, though the Archangel Michael reveals to Adam both the evils and the wonders that will come from his sin, Willoughby’s own search for wisdom only looks positively forward. He arrives in France shortly after the storming of the Bastille, but traces nothing negative save the results of years of aristocratic tradition gone soured.

³⁰ Smith, *Celestina*, 485.

³¹ Smith, *Celestina*, 485.

³² Similar claims have been made elsewhere, notably by Fletcher, *Critical Biography*, 137.

The castle as a relic of a feudal home is a recurrent feature in Gothic and Romantic literature and also appears throughout Smith's novels.³³ Smith could expect her readers to be familiar with the same trope across literature from Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) to Edmund Burke, the latter of whom utilized the idea of the feudal castle in his *Reflections on a Revolution in France* (1790).³⁴ Though the first three volumes of *Celestina* are not as firmly grounded in Revolutionary rhetoric as the whole of *Desmond*, in the final volume in which the action moves to France and the readership is introduced to Rochemorte and the story of Count Bellegarde, Smith's intentions for *Celestina* are clearly no less political than they prove to be in *Desmond*. As Willoughby stumbles upon Rochemorte in late summer 1789, after the onset of the French Revolution, Smith describes the new owner and reluctant heir to a titled family as a man of reason and a defender of liberty who aims to "hasten to assist in the glorious business of securing the liberty of France [...] the immortal work of defending myriads yet unborn from ever suffering the oppressions, under which I have groaned."³⁵ Only an enlightened *philosophe* and a proven fighter for freedom in the American Revolution such as the younger Bellegarde can begin to overcome the damage done to France by the tyrants who ran it during the *ancien régime*. In her portrayal of Bellegarde, Smith alludes to the figures of the French Enlightenment—later to be embraced by the French Revolution—known as the *philosophes*, a group that included some of her favored sources in Voltaire and Rousseau. Indeed, we can see similarities between her description of Bellegarde and the definition of *philosophe* as provided by the *Encyclopédie*, the tome to which both Voltaire and Rousseau were famed contributors:

³³ A number of scholars of the Gothic discuss this particular motif, for one of the most comprehensive see Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

³⁴ "You possessed in some parts the walls, and in all the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you have built on those old foundations." Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. L.G. Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

³⁵ Smith, *Celestina*, 517.

The philosopher is not so attached to a system that he is unable to feel all the force of objections. The majority of men are so strongly attached to their opinions that they do not even take the trouble to penetrate those of others. The philosopher understands the sentiment that he rejects, to the same extent and with the same clarity that he understands the one he adopts.³⁶

Bellegarde, too, has felt the effects of both systems—those of tyranny and freedom—as one born to an illustrious and landed family in France, but who suffers under its power until he experiences America’s quest for freedom which ennobles him to return home with “newly acquired principles.” Like the *philosophe*, he is educated in the benefits and detractions of the life he rejects as much as the one he chooses to pursue. It was also necessary that the *philosophe* lack personal ambition and seek to be a productive member of society and Bellegarde establishes himself as such in opposition to the outdated reverence for the aristocracy displayed by his father, noting that the senior Count de Bellegarde “possessed a great share” of ambition and was “tenacious of his rank, and anxious to support it.”³⁷ Though the entry for *philosophe* was authored by DuMarsais, Smith nevertheless links Bellegarde to the established sympathies of these collective men so well-regarded by the Revolution and strengthens the relationship between Rousseau, the French Revolution, and *Celestina*’s final volume.

Bellegarde directly ties the concerns of the Revolution to *Celestina*’s heritage. When he tells Willoughby the tragic story of his life, he begins with his enlistment in the army to escape his tyrannical father, leaving behind a young sister named Genevieve. After several years in the army serving in the American Revolution, Bellegarde and his friend Ormond return to the family castle to find Genevieve. At Rochemorte, Ormond meets and soon falls in love with Genevieve while Bellegarde does the same with her poor companion, Jacquolina.

³⁶ César Chesneau DuMarsais, "Philosopher." The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project. Translated by Dena Goodman. Ann Arbor: Michigan Publishing, University of Michigan Library, 2002. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.did2222.0000.001> (accessed October 10, 2018). Originally published as "Philosophe," *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, 12:509–511 (Paris, 1765).

³⁷ Smith, *Celestina*, 492.

The couples are married in secret by a monk, eschewing the French law prohibiting the marriage of anyone under the age of thirty to any person without their father's permission. All four are soon punished when their location is betrayed. Relating his story, Bellegarde tells Willoughby:

you will hear a fresh instance of the barbarous policy which despotism encourages and protects. Her mother! She was compelled by my father, the last Count of Bellegarde, to enter into a convent of Carmelites, at Bayonne, and there to take the vows. She was my wife, by the laws of God and man, but I was absent with my regiment, I was unable to protect her—and the power of the governor of the province, and of an enraged and tyrannic father, were united to tear her from me.³⁸

This passage is significant not only because Smith explicitly links the power of a tyrannical father to the power of a provincial leader to imprison, but also because Bellegarde ties the tyranny of the oppressors to the work of the church in his account of how Bellegarde's father forces Jacqueline to join a convent. Furthermore, because the couples were married in secret and later betrayed, Bellegarde has more than ample reason to suspect that the monk who married them was in fact the one who turned the couples over to the fate dictated by Bellegarde's father. A critical aspect of Girondism is "a vigorous anti-clericalism which made them claim the *philosophes* as their ideological ancestors in pre-revolutionary France."³⁹ Such representations of the immoral monk or convent were central to pro-Revolutionary accounts. Girondins such as Smith wanted to curtail the power of the Catholic church, and Girondins in France succeeded in abolishing monastic vows in 1790 and limiting the number of clergy that would be recognized by the state. However, such open disdain for organized religion also serves to again link Bellegarde to the *philosophes* and specifically to Rousseau, who was frequently criticized for his anti-religiosity. Indeed, the anti-Jacobin newspaper *True Briton* wrote in 1793:

³⁸ Smith, *Celestina*, 490.

³⁹ Lottes, "Revolution," 79.

The two grand springs of Government which the Convention have put in motion, are Plunder and Terror [...] The project of abolishing Christianity was another means adopted by the Jacobins for perfecting their system. The plan of ROUSSEAU for establishing an Universal Worship in honour of reason, instead of divine Revelation [...] which might be called the Gospel of Equality [...] the Revolutionary Tribunal thus consolidated with ardor, by blood and ashes, the present popular Government.⁴⁰

The conflict between Bellegarde and the Church emphasizes his status as a *philosophe* as well as the opposition between the tyranny of institutions and the enlightened mind. Of Charlotte Smith's anti-clericalist tendencies, Fletcher writes,

this close relationship of castle to abbey or church is always found in Charlotte's Gothic. Religion and the state buttress each other, threatening or crushing individual liberty. By the time of Willoughby's visit, the Benedictines have abandoned their vows and left. Rochemorte is battered and ruinous in places, but impressive and comfortable in the inhabited rooms. As Willoughby sees the castle in the first months of the Revolution, it is burgeoning with new and active life, plants growing in its mortar and birds nesting in its turrets. The greenery between the stones and in the moat and the shrill cries of the birds contrast with threatening images of darkness, stasis and enclosure to suggest the reanimation of antiquated institution, achieved by the Revolution.⁴¹

In this Revolutionary vision of Rochemorte, positive changes are beginning not only because of the *presence* of the younger Bellegarde, but the *absence* of the monks whose Benedictine fortress had overlooked the castle. Though Smith's anti-clericalism is evident in her illustration of Rochemorte, her decision to link the motifs of the feudal castle prison and the corrupt clergy to yet another Girondin motif, that of the *lettre de cachet*, draws even more attention to the political implications surrounding Celestina's birth and thus to the Celestina-Willoughby relationship.

After Bellegarde has communicated his betrayal and that of Jacqueline, he describes a scene in which his bedroom was invaded in the middle of the night and he was "confined by heavy chains; and when I enquired why I was thus fettered like a malefactor, I was shewn a Lettre de Cachet, which directed me to be conveyed to the Bastille."⁴² Calling it "one of the

⁴⁰ Emphasis as appears in original. *True Briton* (London, England), 7 December 1793.

⁴¹ Fletcher, *Critical Biography*, 135.

⁴² Smith, *Celestina*, 506.

worst abuses of the ancien régime,” the *lettre de cachet* is described quite well by Fletcher in a footnote as “a letter signed by the King or by someone to whom this power was deputed, that authorised the imprisonment of the victim without term and without trial.”⁴³ The inclusion of the *lettre de cachet* and Bellegarde’s subsequent imprisonment emphasizes the link between the patriarchal authority of the family and of the king. The appearance of the *lettre de cachet* after the Count has displeased his noble father, and the lack of indication that the Count has done anything else that could be perceived as illegal or opposed to the state, mean it is likely that the Count’s father requested the *lettre* only as a consequence of being disobeyed by his son. Over half of the *lettres de cachet* in Revolutionary France were requested by fathers and they represented the recourse of the patriarchal figure when the child was disobedient, literally standing in for the authority of the king: the resulting imprisonment gave influential fathers the ultimate control over the fate of their children when demands regarding marriage, inheritance, or any number of other mandates were not met.⁴⁴ Because the *lettres de cachet* were enforced by the government of the king, they linked the father to the king beyond just the nature of monarchy as patriarchy ruled by an authoritarian male figure. While Bellegarde is immediately thrown into the Bastille, the two young women (Genevieve and Jacqueline) are whisked away into a convent, again tying the church to the state, where both gave birth to daughters. It is here that Willoughby learns that Celestina’s true parents are Genevieve and Ormond, thus enabling them to marry. This moment represents Willoughby’s ascension to the “summit of wisdom” referenced by the Archangel Michael and it is significant that it is occasioned by the *philosophe* Bellegarde. At this point in Smith’s narrative, Willoughby has not only learned of Celestina’s heritage, permitting their

⁴³ Smith, *Celestina*, 506.

⁴⁴ Suzanne Desan, *The Family on Trial in Revolutionary France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 45.

marriage, but he has also learned enough of the motivations behind the French Revolution to identify with the cause, calling it a “noble struggle for freedom.”⁴⁵

This revelation establishes that Celestina’s parents are, like she and Willoughby, rebels who pursued their relationship in defiance of parental doctrine. Like Bellegarde and Jacqueline, positive romantic representations belong to those who do not conform to the demands of family tyranny or societal expectations, whereas those who marry for status like Matilda are relegated to boredom and dissatisfaction. This, too, recalls the English reception of Rousseau in the year of *Celestina*’s publication. Edmund Burke in his anti-Rousseau invective to the National Assembly in 1791 asserted that by erecting a statue in his honor “they dispose of all the family relations of parents and children, husbands and wives” and that he is “certain that the writings of Rousseau lead directly to this kind of shameful evil.” In fact, he refers specifically to Rousseau’s novel, so frequently cited by Smith, writing that “by the false sympathies of this *Nouvelle Éloïse* they endeavor to subvert those principles of domestic trust and fidelity which form the discipline of social life.”⁴⁶ Indeed, we might assume that Smith purposefully invokes the *philosophes* and the purported sympathies of Rousseau so frequently in her portrayal of Bellegarde to perform exactly this subversion of the principles of contemporary English society.

It is critical to the interpretation of the novel’s politics that Willoughby only learns the truth of Celestina’s parentage after the Revolution has been established. The Count remarks on his own pleasure in the turn of politics after the Revolution in the course of relating his past, saying “at this time [before the Revolution], power did every thing in France, and nature and justice were silenced. Thank God it is so no longer!”⁴⁷ The Count’s comment about

⁴⁵ Smith, *Celestina*, 473.

⁴⁶ Edmund Burke, *A Letter from Mr. Burke, to a member of the National Assembly; in answer to some objections to his book on French Affairs* (Paris printed, and London: reprinted for J. Dodsley, 1791), 128.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Celestina*, 514.

justice silenced relates to the story of Willoughby and Celestina. Though Willoughby has searched for answers regarding Celestina's parentage for many years, he only discovers the truth post-revolution. His mother and father passed away many years before but the tyranny of the privileged, in this case Willoughby's own aunt and uncle, deceived him for their own gains (the marriage to their daughter Miss Fitz-Hayman). Only after the fall of the monarchy and thus the end to the tyrannical rule that Willoughby's relatives represent, does Willoughby gain truth and justice for himself and Celestina and a future for their relationship. A major argument of revolutionaries, particularly the female revolutionaries, was that "marriage, like the state, should be built on a freely chosen contract and should cultivate both individual and collective happiness."⁴⁸ Bellegarde's post-1789 revelation allows for a marriage of love between Willoughby and Celestina rather than one for money or titles between Willoughby and Miss Fitz-Hayman and signifies a further condemnation by Smith of the state of marriage and status. Willoughby is a suitable hero not only because of those revolutionary sympathies demonstrated in the final volume, but because he shuns familial and societal expectations for his marriage. In stark contrast to Lord Castlenorth, who loves his family crests but is senile and powerless within his own marriage, Willoughby reacts with horror to giving credit to ancestral pride. His angry tirade against such marriages in which he denounces "foolish family pride, for which I am meditating to sell my freedom, in acquiescence with narrow prejudice" paints him, too, at the novel's close, as a burgeoning *philosophe*.⁴⁹

That the Celestina-Willoughby relationship is politicized by its closeness to the French Revolution is reinforced by returning to the couple's association with Adam and Eve. Smith emphasizes this as Willoughby searches for his answers by specifically referencing the unfolding Revolution, in which Willoughby found himself

⁴⁸ Desan, *Family on Trial*, 45.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Celestina*, 411.

still more charmed by the sublime views, which, in this romantic line of country, every where offered themselves to his sight; and hearing, and *but* hearing, at a distance the tumults, with which a noble struggle for freedom at this time (the summer of 1789) agitated the capital, and many of the great towns of France.⁵⁰

Smith's use of italics here invites readers to think beyond the link between the timeline of the volume to the Revolution; it suggests that merely hearing of the late events in Paris was insufficient and that some part of Willoughby desired to participate in the struggle for freedom, but his search for Celestina's parentage otherwise occupied his time. In this small addition, Smith solidifies the suitability of Willoughby as a radical hero and subverter of the status quo. However, these lines also serve to strengthen Smith's quotation from *Paradise Lost* at the outset of the volume. To return again to Adam's revelations before leaving Eden, it is notable that Adam expressed surprised joy at the wonders to come despite his sin, saying:

That all this good of evil shall produce,
And evil turn to good; more wonderful
Then that which by creation first brought forth
Light out of darkness! Full of doubt I stand,
Whether I should repent me now of sin
By mee done and occasiond, or rejoyce
Much more, that much more good thereof shall spring⁵¹

Given Willoughby's discreet reference to the "tumults" experienced in Paris and elsewhere in the summer of 1789, we might then augment the interpretation of the knowledge attained by Willoughby as Adam to include the possible negative outcomes of individual moments or events in the general struggle for revolutionary freedoms. That is, though Adam was initially struck by the horrors that awaited mankind, in the end the struggles revealed to him an awaiting paradise so glorious that he doubts whether he should repent his original sin. For Willoughby and Smith, this suggests an awareness of the struggles and violence—that which

⁵⁰ Smith, *Celestina*, 473. Emphasis Smith's own.

⁵¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, XII. 470-476.

has already been experienced and that which is expected—of revolution and the pursuit of greater freedoms. By tying Adam and Willoughby together throughout the novel, Smith invites her reader to consider these moments unfortunate but necessary obstacles to the greatest of rewards.

For Smith, the systematic societal abuse of women was a predominant concern and marriage one of its most significant causes. Her portrayal of Celestina's vulnerability and the mistreatment of Genevieve and Jacqueline reflect these concerns and though the rapid resolution of the plot belies its serious commentary, Smith nevertheless centers her story, as in *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, on the precarious position of women in a patriarchal system. In this most hopeful of Smith's novels, the beginnings of the Revolution in France—with the revolutionaries themselves claiming their foundations on the humanity and reason of the *philosophes*—has occasioned in Smith a portrayal of a possible way forward for English society. Du Marsais wrote that humanity and rejecting prejudice were central to the definition of the philosopher; Rousseau that pity was essential to establishing good society.⁵² The novel's *philosophes*, Bellegarde and Willoughby, reject prejudice and ancestral pride to marry women rendered vulnerable by society. Their unions, overt rejections of parental authority that achieve possibility in post-Revolution France, signify the outdated modality of the English system in contrast to the possibility and freedom represented by France.

The mere act of a woman participating in the political conversation was a form of transgression even before one considers Smith's purposeful engagement with other authors and various political philosophies. During this "early Romantic period, women's political

⁵² "The majority of the highborn, to whom dissipation leaves insufficient time to meditate, are ferocious towards those whom they do not consider their equals. Ordinary philosophers who meditate too much, or rather who meditate badly, are ferocious towards everyone; they flee men, and men avoid them. But our philosopher, who knows how to divide his time between retreat and the commerce of men, is full of humanity. He is Terence's Chremes, who feels that he is a man, and whose humanity alone makes him interested in the fortunes of his neighbor, good or bad." DuMarsais, "Philosopher." For more on Rousseau and pity see Swenson, *On Rousseau*, 100-102.

discourse—across the ideological spectrum—occupies a position of dissent. Simply to speak about politics is to place oneself *against* the political establishment, where women’s role is normatively defined solely by silent obeisance.”⁵³ Though less obvious in its associations than *Desmond* or *The Banished Man*, *Celestina* is no less politically focused than Smith’s later, and most overtly Revolutionary, works. Throughout the novel, she repeatedly alludes to Milton and Rousseau to link the transgressive relationships of Adam and Eve and Julie and St Preux to the relationship between her central characters, emphasizing their political potential. Though it features a representation of incest that is neither consummated in the course of the novel nor even legally incestuous, *Celestina* also utilizes Milton to position the metaphorically political interpretation of fraternal incest in an explicitly political context with the resolution of the novel’s final volume in France. In these earliest stages of the Revolution, Smith’s radicalism is less fleshed out than it will be in *Desmond*, but she builds on her patterns of allusion to Rousseau and Milton from her previous novels to display a hopefulness not present in *Ethelinde* in early 1789.⁵⁴ And though we saw the foundations of her burgeoning radical beliefs in *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, the action of the novel’s final volume cements *Celestina* as the novel that inaugurates Smith’s overt engagement with the French Revolution and as an important step in her political evolution.

⁵³ Marlon B. Ross, “Configurations of Feminine Reform: The Woman Writer and the Tradition of Dissent,” in *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776-1837*, eds. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 92.

⁵⁴ By this I refer to Smith’s increased engagement in *Desmond* with numerous authors of political pamphlets and treatises in both France and England, as well as her more frequent references to specific events and laws of post-Revolution France.

III. Desmond

Desmond, published in 1792, is widely acknowledged to be Charlotte Smith's most radical novel. Set in France during the height of revolutionary excitement, it is an epistolary novel, so the effect for the audience is one of having access to private discourse. Smith's only epistolary effort, the radical enthusiasm of *Desmond* might be compared to that of Helen Maria Williams' *Letters Written in France* (1790), in which access to the private discourse of the author showcased natural excitement over the Revolution as the most understandable reaction of a person of sensibility. Smith claims something similar of the reasonableness of pro-Revolutionary thinking in *Desmond*'s preface, writing that "I have given to my imaginary characters the arguments I have heard on both sides; and if those in favour of one party have evidently the advantage, it is not owing to my partial representation but to the predominant power of truth and reason, which can neither be altered nor concealed."¹ Indeed, the novel struck no one as bipartisan and was rejected by Smith's usual publisher, Thomas Cadell, for its overtly radical content. As Conway suggests, her preface itself "conflates national and domestic interests, refusing to distinguish the two by representing the private as already public" and would be mirrored in the novel in which Smith places lengthy political speeches amidst the domestic storylines "effectively [identifying] wife abuse as a political crime."²

Composed in 1791-1792, *Desmond* was written with the upmost optimism for the outcome of the French Revolution. She herself was resident in France for a portion of 1791 and had witnessed a hopeful country far from the image portrayed by Burke and his ilk back home in England. She found inspiration in Paris and infuses *Desmond* with the passion for reform that many so-called Jacobin writers possessed in these early years of the revolution. The novel's pointed political engagement and explicit republicanism is evident in Smith's

¹ Smith, *Desmond*, 45.

² Alison Conway, "Nationalism, Revolution, and the Female Body: Charlotte Smith's *Desmond*," *Women's Studies* 24, no. 5 (1995): 398.

frequent dependence on key works of the French *philosophes*, Rousseau and Voltaire. During the time of *Desmond*'s composition in 1791, Birmingham saw calamitous anti-Revolution riots in which the mob cry was "no philosophers—Church and King forever!"³ indicating the link in the public mind between the *philosophes* and the revolutionary cause. As she did in *Celestina* and will continue to do in future novels, Smith quotes Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* but, not content with the suggested polemical affiliation with these authors, her most frequent engagements in *Desmond* are with explicitly political tracts. Smith focuses less heavily on *Paradise Lost* to emphasize rather *Areopagitica* (1644), Milton's pamphlet on censorship, and while she never includes alternate works by Rousseau in other novels, for *Desmond* she has a female character, Geraldine, quote from his *Letter d'Alembert* (1758) on the formation of theatre in Geneva. And though her 1794 novel *The Banished Man* will see Smith engage heavily with Voltaire's dramatic works, here she only cites from his political or philosophic works, including the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764), *La voix du sage et du peuple* (1750), and *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations* (1756). Her purposeful selection of texts with political import should be unsurprising, given her passionate declaration in the preface for the right of women to engage in political debate. Indeed, Milton had become, for many radicals in the wake of the French Revolution, a "republican hero and champion of free speech" and free speech for women in the political arena appears to have been a particular concern of Smith's as we see in *Desmond*'s preface.⁴ What follows is an analysis of how each of these radical texts—either referenced in content or in association—serves Smith's overarching polemical purpose and allows for both a deeper understanding of Smith's radicalism and how *Desmond* can be read in relation to Smith's evolving political beliefs.

³ Schilling, *Conservative England*, 220.

⁴ Newlyn, *Milton*, 33.

When Smith quotes Milton's *Areopagitica* in a letter from Desmond to Bethel dated 19 July 1790, neither the political agitation of the quotation nor the explicitly radical context of this letter written on the heels of the Fête de la Fédération are in question. Desmond writes, "nothing is more unlike the real state of this country, than the accounts which have been given of it in England; and that the sanguinary and ferocious democracy, the scenes of anarchy and confusion, which we have had so pathetically described and lamented, have no existence but in the malignant fabrications of those who have been paid for their misrepresentations."⁵ As Helen Maria Williams did in *Letters Written in France*, Smith's Desmond writes excitedly from the center of Revolutionary France—Paris during the Fête de la Fédération—assuring those at home in England that rumors of unrest were grossly overstated and that the nation serves as the epitome of a hopeful republic. He goes on to speak of the glory of Revolutionary Paris, the streets devoid of aristocrats and their carriages that roll over the common man and luxuriates in the "real state" of the city now, in which there is no disorder and only a natural gaiety of its people. It is here that he quotes Milton, calling it a "prophetic sentence of our immortal poet" when he writes, "methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like the strong man after sleep; and shaking her invincible locks."⁶ *Areopagitica* is explicitly political—a speech to parliament on an executive order and one that argues forcefully and passionately for free speech and against censorship. Loewenstein writes that Milton's work "concerns the interconnection between renovation and revolution in history; yet even more than the early polemics, it develops the notion that historical renewal occurs as a consequence of continual friction between opposing forces and ideologies."⁷ The context Smith invites is unmistakable: a country "purging and unscaling her long abused sight" at the hands of the nobility and showing itself to be worthy

⁵ Smith, *Desmond*, 87.

⁶ Smith, *Desmond*, 89. Because Milton's *Areopagitica* contains no line numbers for reference, I will refer instead to page numbers within *Riverside Milton* throughout the thesis. *Riverside Milton*, 1020.

⁷ David A. Loewenstein, "Areopagitica and the Dynamics of History," *Studies in English Language 1500-1900* 28, no. 1 (Winter 1988): 78.

and powerful without them, capable of regeneration in the hands of only its people. It is a clear call for a revolution that, in the words of the English poet of an earlier revolution quoted by the English Desmond in the midst of a modern one, seems particularly aimed at the British reader.

According to Desmond, it is only the philosopher-citizens, the rational yet feeling men who refuse to see distinction between their fellow men that can truly appreciate the effects of the Revolution. Admiring his own support of the cause and appreciating finding it within others in Paris, he tells Bethel that “the philosopher, the philanthropist, the citizen of the *world*; whose comprehensive mind takes a more sublime view of human nature than he can obtain from the *heights* of Versailles of St James’s, rejoices at the spectacle which every where presents itself of newly-diffused happiness, and hails his fellow man, disencumbered of those paltry distinctions that debased and disguised him.”⁸ The language of philosophy and worldly citizenship, particularly in a letter written from France, alludes to the *philosophes*, predominantly Voltaire and Rousseau (whom Smith most frequently engages with, though Diderot is also briefly referenced in *Desmond*), and thus links the Frenchman Montfleuri to the philosophic founders of the revolution itself.⁹ The call for philosopher-citizens, though, also serves to incite Smith’s readers to realize their own revolutionary potential. The emphasis is on the achievability of this perfected state of potential, one not delineated by birthright or class but by expansiveness of mind, the openness of one’s mind such as what might be required of Smith’s own readers.

Montfleuri is a man born into nobility but “one of the steadiest friends to the people.” Montfleuri is of true revolutionary spirit, which is demonstrated by his rescue of his sisters

⁸ Smith, *Desmond*, 89.

⁹ Despite the heavy engagement with Rousseau and Voltaire in both *Desmond* and *The Banished Man*, it is notable that the other *philosophes* are very infrequently quoted or referenced in either work. An exception is this brief reference to Diderot’s *Père de Famille*. Smith, *Desmond*, 225.

from the convent immediately upon the changes in the law, taking them in and providing for them after his mother's death "left him at liberty to follow the generous dictates of his heart."¹⁰ But Montfleuri is also a gifted orator of revolutionary thought, which he demonstrates in a speech which Desmond recalls in his letter dated 4 August 1790. While walking through a garden with Desmond, Montfleuri decries the harsh English judgment of the French Revolution, lamenting the "Englishmen of mature judgment and solid abilities, so lost to all right principles as to depreciate, misrepresent, and condemn those exertions by which we have obtained that liberty they affect so sedulously to defend for themselves; when they declaim in favour of an hierarchy so subversive of all true freedom, either of thought or action, and so inimical to the welfare of the people."¹¹ Montfleuri expresses disgust at the veneration of English and French kings of the past when, as he argues, one or two decent examples of leadership are clearly outweighed by the numerous tyrants that have held the position. Instead, he admires "Voltaire [who] attacked despotism in all its holds, with the powers of resistless wit:-- Rousseau with matchless eloquence:-- and, as these were authors who, to the force of reason, added the charms of fancy, they were universally read, and their sentiments were adopted by all classes of men."¹² Smith through Montfleuri attributes the English aversion to the revolution as a product of "national pride and national jealousy," one that surely stands at odds with the otherwise rational thought of intelligent Englishmen. Montfleuri affirms this by quoting Voltaire, the use of the French serving to reinforce that the French citizens have become sensible to what is just but that it remains just out of reach of the English who refuse to enlighten themselves with the philosophies of the world.¹³

¹⁰ Smith, *Desmond*, 92.

¹¹ Smith, *Desmond*, 100.

¹² Smith, *Desmond*, 105.

¹³ "Ne sentez vous pas, que ce qui est juste, clair, évident, est naturellement respecté de tout le monde, et que des chimères ne peuvent pas toujours s'attirer la même vénération?" Smith, *Desmond*, 101.

Montfleuri's philosophic association with Voltaire is most overtly radical in one of those long political treatises with which Smith intersperses her narrative. Montfleuri experiences a hostile exchange with a stranger who claims that the French people seem "not at all happier since this boasted Revolution, not at all better off." Montfleuri responds, "enquire of them, whether they are not better for being relieved from the *taille*, from the *gabelle*, from the imposts levied at the gates of every town, on every necessary of life; for the relief they have obtained from those burthens that were imposed upon them, because they were poor; while their illustrious compatriots were exempt, because they were noble."¹⁴ Smith glosses this response from Montfleuri with a quotation from Voltaire's *La voix du sage et du peuple*: "Ce gouvernement serait digne des Hottentots dans lequel il seroit permis à un certain nombre d'hommes de dire, c'est à ceux qui travaillant à payer—Nous ne devons rien payer, parceque nous sommes oisifs."¹⁵ Smith's choice to use this particular 1750 work by Voltaire is interesting not least because it is claimed that Voltaire was "referred to more often than read, acquiring a cultural significance that was often decoupled from the philosophe's works themselves, 'Voltaire' [becoming] a token or signifier, a telegraphic way of staking claims, phrasing values and intervening in the political arena."¹⁶ Smith does enlist her radical characters to casually reference Voltaire in this manner, politicizing them by mere association, but in quoting directly from Voltaire's works and choosing a political pamphlet rather than a literary work, Smith not only emphasizes Montfleuri's radicalism, but her own. Not content blindly to associate either her characters or herself with these men and what they stand for, Smith's quotations reinforce that she has read the works the revolution was ostensibly founded on (however problematic that statement may be) and chooses to remain steadfastly committed to the cause. Here she engages directly with a specific problem of the

¹⁴ Smith, *Desmond*, 98.

¹⁵ Translated as "This government would be worthy of the Hottentots, in which a certain number of men would be allowed to say: 'It is to those who are working to pay we must pay nothing, because we are idle.'"

¹⁶ Daniel Brewer, "The Voltaire Effect," in *The Cambridge Companion to Voltaire*, ed. Nicholas Cronk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 205.

Revolution—the inequality of the tax system and unfair targeting of the lower classes, who contributed a disproportionate amount to the national tax and salt tax while the clergy and nobility remained exempt. She links Voltaire’s description of the idle nobility as barbarous for their disregard for the working classes with Montfleuri’s claim about the infinite improvement for the lower classes upon abolishment of the *taille*, marking a clear connection between the foundational principles of Voltaire and the actual events of the Revolution.

Interestingly, Montfleuri does not invoke only the French *philosophes*, but Milton as well, reminding Desmond of Galileo’s imprisonment in Italy and footnoted by Charlotte Smith with a quotation from *Areopagitica*: “‘There I visited,’ says Milton, ‘the celebrated Galileo, then poor and old, and a long time a prisoner in the dungeon of the Inquisition, for daring to think otherwise in astronomy than his Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought.’”¹⁷ Milton’s admiration of Galileo’s revolutionary thinking and his celebration of freedom of thought are obvious here, and support well Montfleuri’s rhetoric. But for those familiar with *Areopagitica*, the association with the text and with Galileo’s imprisonment resonate further. Regarding his visit with Galileo, Milton writes “that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament.”¹⁸ The comparison here between the Inquisition and English Parliament link the imprisonment of Galileo to the Licensing Act of 1643 and the tyranny of oppression at the hands of the ecclesiastical state with the tyranny of oppression at the hands of the legislature of the English government. Regarding the censorship of Galileo’s ideas as well as his own, Milton argues that “if it come to prohibiting, there is ought more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose first appearance to our eyes bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and

¹⁷ Smith, *Desmond*, 104. Milton, *Riverside Milton*, 1014.

¹⁸ Milton, *Riverside Milton*, 1014. Though scholars have debated whether Milton did, in fact, visit Galileo, the truth of Milton’s assertion is treated here as irrelevant to the intent of both his and Smith’s larger objectives.

plausible than many errors.”¹⁹ This sounds strikingly similar to the language Smith gives to Montfleuri and Desmond—the history of national prejudice and custom dim the eyes to truth when it is something that comes out of a new and revolutionary way of thought; the only thing that one sees clearly is that to which they are accustomed even when it is clearly wrong. Milton’s view of “censorship as nothing less than a political weapon to thwart national regeneration” is echoed by Desmond when he writes that “it has been an object with our government...to impede a little the progress of that light which they see rising upon the world.”^{20, 21} Just as Milton addressed Parliament with precedent “to make them aware of their ability to break away from it,” Smith employs Milton to link the revolutionary ideals of Montfleuri beyond the *philosophes* Rousseau and Voltaire to the prior, more tangible, successful revolution in England of the 1640s as if to remind the English reader of what is possible.²² Though Montfleuri clearly embodies the French philosopher-citizen, the fact that he invokes *Areopagitica* not only overtly politicizes his language within a specifically English rhetoric but also ensures that the worthiness of his cause is securely linked to England’s own successful revolutionary past.

Smith signals her intent to have *Desmond* read as a particularly English engagement with the French Revolution by framing the entire novel in response to Edmund Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Not only does she write *Desmond* entirely in epistolary format (the only novel in which she does so), mirroring Burke’s format, but “Charlotte Smith signaled she was answering Edmund Burke’s letters to Depont by constructing her novel as a series of letters primarily between her hero *Desmond* and his

¹⁹ Milton, *Riverside Milton*, 1022.

²⁰ Loewenstein, *Areopagitica and History*, 81.

²¹ Smith, *Desmond*, 87.

²² Loewenstein, *Areopagitica and History*, 81.

friend and mentor *Erasmus Bethel*.²³ In *Desmond*, however, the roles are reversed and while Bethel confesses that he is not fully convinced by Revolutionary ideals, Desmond is permitted to defend them heartily. But Smith does not limit her engagement with Burke and his politics to the implied and she specifically references Burke, including in a letter in which Desmond notes,

Though I have long been thoroughly aware, both of the interested prejudice and indolent apathy which exist in England, I own I never expected to have seen an elaborate treatise in favour of despotism written by an Englishman, who has always been called one of the most steady, as he undoubtedly is one of the most able of those were esteemed the friends of the people—You will easily comprehend that I allude to the book lately published by Mr Burke.²⁴

He also writes, “I foresee that a thousand pens will leap from their standishes (to parody a sublime sentence of his own) to answer such a book.”²⁵ Not only does Smith here challenge Burke by mocking his own turn of phrase, but in foreshadowing rebuttals to his ideas, she clarifies that she intends *Desmond* to be read as a reply.

In her rebuttal of Burke, Smith primarily focuses on the exaggeratedly dramatic nature of Burke’s account of the events of the Revolution thus far and his reliance on attractive rhetoric rather than fact.²⁶ In response to his theatrical representation of the Marie-Antoinette’s “attack” in her boudoir, Smith frames the King’s return to Paris as such:

I should call upon you to rejoice with me, my friend, at the calmness and magnanimity shewn by the French people, on the re-entrance of the King into Paris. This will surely convince the world, that the bloody democracy of Mr Burke, is not a combination of the swinish multitude, for the purposes of anarchy, but the association of reasonable beings, who determine to be, and deserve to be, free.²⁷

Smith contrasts Burke’s violent melodramatics, which can only be a product of imagination from his perch in England, with the purported authority of an eyewitness in Paris. She

²³ Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: Women’s Political Writing in England, 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 107.

²⁴ Smith, *Desmond*, 182.

²⁵ Smith, *Desmond*, 183.

²⁶ Indeed, she writes nearly exactly this. “Fine sounding poetical imagery is not matter of fact.” Smith, *Desmond*, 182.

²⁷ Smith, *Desmond*, 310.

capitalizes on this moment to have Desmond ask what the response of the King should have been if the monarchy had regained control of Paris, speculating “[no] indignities would have been thought too degrading, any punishment too severe for them. Then would the King’s castles have been rebuilt, and *lettres de cachet* have re-peopled the dungeons!”²⁸ In continuing from the reasonable response of the French citizenry to the imagined atrocities that would have been committed by the monarchy, Smith both affirms the necessity of the revolution and excuses whatever mild (by comparison) violence has taken place at the hands of the revolutionaries, nearly exactly reversing the rhetoric of Burke.

This authority of first-hand observation that Smith affords Desmond is continued in the character of Montfleuri, who reports of his time fighting in the American Revolutionary War. As Tarling notes, linking the two revolutions not only stresses their shared hopes for essential freedoms but also serves to point out Burke’s inconsistency and irrationality after his prior support of the American Revolution.²⁹ Montfleuri speaks positively of the uncouth Americans, who despite their lack of refinement possess “enthusiastic courage which animates men who contend for all that is dear to them, against the iron hand of injustice; and, I saw these exertions made too often vain, against the disciplined mercenaries of despotism.”³⁰ Because Montfleuri is French, he says what Desmond (and Smith) cannot in calling the actions of the British against the rebelling Americans tyrannous. He goes on to further explain that now, fourteen years after the war, America is “in the most flourishing state of health.” In doing so, he situates the cause of liberty as the correct cause and those who seek to quell it as decisively in the wrong. Not only does the explicit connection between the American and French Revolutions call for optimism in the current moment, with

²⁸ Smith, *Desmond*, 311.

²⁹ Barbara Tarling, “‘The Slight Skirmishing of a Novel Writer’: Charlotte Smith and the American War of Independence,” in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering&Chatto, 2008), 73.

³⁰ Smith, *Desmond*, 106.

the French having every possibility for the same success reportedly found in America, it reminds the British of their prior errors and gives them a chance to correct course.

It is here that Smith further develops her engagement with Burke by again quoting *Areopagitica*. Montfleuri has just finished telling Desmond of his experience in the war between America and its “unnatural parent” and his belief in the uncorrupted fledging government when Desmond is moved to relay the words of Milton, “of whom you know I am an incessant reader:”

For when God shakes a kingdom, with strong and healthful commotions, to a general reforming, it is not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing: but yet more true it is, that God then raises, to his own work, men of rare abilities and more than common industry; not only to look back and revise what hath been taught heretofore, but to gain further, and go on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth.³¹

The reference to “strong and healthful” commotions clearly proclaims the American Revolution as a rightful one, but prefaced as it was by Montfleuri’s assertion that able governors came forward in America and “are rising in France—they have, indeed, arisen,” it is also clear that again the American-French connection is most important for Smith. In the wake of vigorous, but rightful, demands for liberty, there will necessarily be false teachers like Burke who come out in its opposition. Indeed, she attacks Burke purposefully, writing that “I know that where sound argument fails, abusive declamation is always substituted, and that it often silences where it cannot convince” in response to his vitriolic attacks against the revolutionaries that relied heavily on histrionics rather than reason. But, Milton claims, men of rare abilities are produced in these moments. For Smith, this includes Thomas Paine, whose *Rights of Man* (1791) was hugely influential in the French Revolution debate and published while Smith was writing *Desmond*. She condemns Burke’s attack on Paine’s private life rather than engaging in the political issues at hand, seeing this as evidence of

³¹ Smith, *Desmond*, 107 and Milton, *Riverside Milton*, 1022.

Burke's "false teaching," but it also feels strikingly relevant to Smith's authorship as well. I will quote Smith's preface to *Desmond* at length here because it is, in itself, one of her more political passages.

But women it is said have no business with politics. – Why not?—Have they no interest in the scenes that are acting around them, in which they have fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, or friends engaged! Even in the commonest course of female education, they are expected to acquire some knowledge of history; and yet, if they are to have no opinion of what is passing, it avails little that they should be informed of what has passed, in a world where they are subject to such mental degradation; where they are censured as affecting masculine knowledge if they happen to have any understanding; or despised as insignificant triflers if they have none.

[...]

For that asperity of remark, which will arise on the part of those whose political tenets I may offend, I am prepared. Those who object to the matter, will probably arraign the manner, and exclaim against the impropriety of making a book of entertainment the vehicle of political discussion. [...] I can only say, that against the phalanx of prejudice kept in constant pay, and under strict discipline by interest, the slight skirmishing of a novel writer can have no effect: we see it remains hitherto unbroken against the powerful efforts of learning and genius—though united in that cause which must *finally* triumph—the cause of truth, reason, and humanity.³²

Smith's position on women's role in politics is radical, but reasoned—what is the point of an education in history if a woman is not permitted to have an opinion on the events as they happen? Here, Smith puts herself in opposition to the false teachers like Burke and raises up her own writing, if not so egotistically as to the level of Paine, to its own, significant, role in supporting the righteous causes of truth, humanity, and reason. Smith understands that as a woman writing about politics, her support of this noble cause will have little effect but in undertaking the effort at all, and defending it as such in her preface, she nonetheless assumes a position on a path "on some new enlightened steps in the discovery of truth."

As is fitting for a novel structured to rebut Burke, Smith engages frequently with Voltaire and Rousseau, both roundly condemned by Burke in his *Reflections*. As demonstrated previously, there is a determined link between Voltaire and Montfleuri, as

³² Smith, *Desmond*, 45-47.

might be expected of a liberally-minded French character. But Smith also takes care to align both Voltaire and Rousseau with her English hero, Desmond. In a passage remarkably similar to the speech by Montfleuri, Desmond engages in yet another lengthy political debate, this one with Montfleuri's *ancien régime*-sympathizing uncle, the Count de Hauteville. He is angrily confronted by the Count who demands to know what separates a man from his footman if all are equal under republican values, to which Desmond responds with a quotation from Voltaire:

Ceux qui disent que tous les hommes sont égaux, disent la plus grande vérité, s'ils entendent que tous les hommes ont un droit égal à la liberté, à la propriété de leurs biens, et à la protection des loix. Ils se tromperaient beaucoup, s'ils croyaient que les hommes, doivent être égaux par les emplois, puisqu'ils ne le sont pas par leurs talents.

Those who say that all men are equal, say that which is perfectly true; if they mean that all men have an equal right to personal and mental liberty; to their respective properties; and to the protection of the laws: but they would be as certainly wrong in believing that men ought to be equal in trusts, in employments, since nature has not made them equal in their talents.³³

The debate and its similarity to speeches by Montfleuri serves to align Desmond as the English counterpart to Montfleuri's revolutionary hero but also to provide a stark contrast between the beliefs of the Count de Hauteville and his nephew. The Count, stuck firmly in his *ancien régime* ways, is represented in his castle, antiquated and dilapidated in this new republican atmosphere whereas Montfleuri's emblematic castle shows him to be progressive and willing to dismantle established systems to instate a new order perhaps not yet quite flourishing.³⁴ For Smith and for Desmond, this choice of quotation from *Essai sur la moeurs et l'esprit des nations* shows, as before, a deeper familiarity with Voltaire than merely a desire for association with his name in the cause of liberalism. Smith again chooses a philosophical document (for it is as much one as it is a historical study) rather than a work of fiction, politicizing her effort further in its deliberate association with the *philosophe* side of

³³ Smith, *Desmond*, 139. Translation as glossed by Smith.

³⁴ For much more detail on the significance of the emblematic castles of *Desmond*, see Loraine Fletcher's *Critical Biography*.

Voltaire—the one linked to the fostering of the revolution itself. Though Desmond could have made the same logical argument without engaging Voltaire, the invocation of his name confirms the radicalism of the choice when Hauteville cries out “Voltaire! Why always Voltaire?”

Smith then writes that “against the defender of the family of Calas; the protector of the Sirvens; the benefactor of all mankind, whom he pitied, served, and laughed at; the Count now most furiously declaimed.”³⁵ Though Smith was arguably unfamiliar, as were many revolutionary supporters in both England and France, with Voltaire’s true politics, this brief aside to an obviously polemical reference to Voltaire suggests a manner in which Smith potentially most identified with Voltaire’s actual political efforts. In brief, Jean Calas and Pierre-Paul Sirven were both Protestants persecuted by the state in Catholic France. Calas’ case saw the death of his young son, for which Jean himself was tried and found guilty, tortured by multiple means including stretching and waterboarding before he finally died on the wheel. Sirven’s daughter disappeared, imprisoned by the Catholic Church in a convent under a *lettre de cachet*, and was eventually found dead. Like Calas, Sirven was tried for her murder and sentenced to death in absentia after fleeing the area. Thanks in part to a change in public sentiment after the Calas catastrophe and through the offices of Voltaire, who wrote publicly on his behalf, Sirven was eventually able to return home and was cleared. Voltaire wrote passionately on behalf of both men and while he was able to save Sirven, he was too late to save the life of Calas. However, he was responsible for the rehabilitation of Calas’ reputation in a posthumous exoneration of the murder charges. For Smith, whose opposition to the overwhelming power of religious figures and the interconnectedness of state and religion were well documented in *Celestina*, it seems likely that she viewed Voltaire as an anti-religion hero and defender of the underprivileged for his work on behalf of Calas and

³⁵ Smith, *Desmond*, 139.

Sirven. Smith would have been sympathetic to Voltaire's "longstanding conviction that there must be a necessary separation of the faith from all those activities which are useful, even vital to the state."³⁶ Her choice to quote from the *Essai sur la moeurs*, then, is especially pointed as Voltaire's history condemns the Inquisition no less than sixty times.³⁷ As such, her reference carries not only a broadly egalitarian message in line with republican ideals, but also a specific underlying implication for Smith's own personal politics.

As she does in *Celestina*, Smith aligns her male hero with the sentimental figure of St. Preux in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Like St. Preux, Desmond is not only devoted to a married woman in Geraldine, but also "writes despairing letters from the Pays de Vaud."³⁸ He makes the connection explicit himself when he writes to Bethel:

‘There are,’ says St Preux, in those enchanting Letters of the incomparable Rousseau, ‘but two divisions of the world, that where Julie is, and that where she is not.’—I forget the French, and I have not the book here. To the force of the sentiment, however, I bear witness.—*To me* the world is divided into only two parts; or rather, to me, it is all a blank where Geraldine is not.³⁹

Rousseau's envisioning of a future without boundaries is embraced in the radical sensibility of Desmond, whose republican humanity sees no difference between classes and suffers no national prejudice. Indeed, the quotation from Rousseau serves to foreshadow the extraordinary conclusion to *Desmond* which sees the promise of the union of Desmond and Geraldine, together caring for the daughter of Desmond and Josephine—a half-French, half-English child out of wedlock—and living with Bethel and Louisa and Montfleuri and Fanny in a multicultural utopia. If Desmond is aligned with St Preux, it follows that Geraldine stands in for Julie. Marso writes that *La Nouvelle Héloïse* presents Julie's transformation from daughter of the Baron d'Etange, keeper of the aristocratic order, to the wife of Wolmar

³⁶ Renwick, *Voltaire and Politics*, 186.

³⁷ Renwick, *Voltaire and Politics*, 186.

³⁸ C.B. Jones, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 164.

³⁹ Smith, *Desmond*, 252.

at Clarens, representative of a new republican alternative.⁴⁰ Similarly, Geraldine's journey sees her evolve from wife of Verney, aligned with the *ancien régime*, to wife of Desmond, revolutionary sympathizer, and mother to a child not her own. The mixed family with no regard for imposed national or familial borders mirrors the one at Clarens and presents a new republican state in direct opposition to the aristocratic one it supplants.

However, Smith's portrayal of Geraldine as Julie also demonstrates an awareness of Julie's less-than-happy life at Clarens. Ultimately, the self-imposed rules of the "idyllic" society at Clarens prove too much for Julie and make her life unworthy of living. So, too, does Geraldine suggest that marriage is inflicted upon women who suffer from their wifely bondage. She aligns herself with the supporters of the Revolution when she tells Bethel:

After what I know, and what I suspect of Mr Verney, I had rather meet death than be in his power [...] If I get among the wildest collection of those people whose ferocity arises not from their present liberty, but their recent bondage, is it possible to suppose they will injure me, who am myself a miserable slave, returning with trembling and reluctant steps, to put on the most dreadful of all fetters?⁴¹

Smith's parallel of the bondage of women in marital relationships with the oppression of the citizen by the state champions her most frequent political cause—the need for more rights and a larger political voice for women. Smith here gives Geraldine a political voice but it suggests a larger issue with the marital system that may not be limited to the obviously problematic Verney. Though Desmond is certainly no Verney, who stoops so low as to sell his wife, Smith's clear skepticism of a woman's position in marriage is confirmed at the novel's close. In the final letter, Desmond writes to Bethel of his optimism for their united society at Sedgwood: "dare I trust myself with the rapturous hope, that on the return of this month, in the next year, Geraldine will bear *my* name—will be the directress of *my* family—

⁴⁰ Lori Jo Marso, *(Un)Manly Citizens: Jean-Jacques Rousseau's and Germaine de Staël's Subversive Women* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 53.

⁴¹ Smith, *Desmond*, 303-304.

will be my friend—my mistress—my wife!”⁴² Desmond’s possessive references to Geraldine, accentuated by Smith’s italics, reinforce that Geraldine is ultimately still a secondary citizen in England, still a possession of her husband’s, no matter how revolutionary his sensibilities. In this way, Geraldine is even more closely aligned with Julie than perhaps first imagined, in that Clarens and Sedgwood are only imaginary utopias under whose constraints the wife will continue to suffer. As Antje Blank notes in her introduction to the novel, Geraldine’s story shows “domestic and state politics coupled, [in which] Smith demands, in a manner both subtle and unequivocal, the liberation of women.”⁴³ Clarens and Sedgwood are presented as preferential alternatives to an aristocratic status quo but nonetheless emphasize that women are still being excluded from a happy republican ideal.

As she insinuated in her preface, Smith confirms in her novel that she believes in allowing women a political voice. Though Geraldine is not often afforded one, she does engage in political discussion, as exemplified above as well as in a letter to Fanny in which she, like Desmond, quotes Rousseau. However, Geraldine does not quote *La Nouvelle Héloïse* as one might expect from a female character given the association with women and the sentimental novel, but from Rousseau’s *Letter to D’Alembert*. Rousseau’s missive was written as a response to the desire to build a theater in Geneva, to which Rousseau objected. The Genevan nobility frequented French theater and theater itself became symbolic of the moral and political corruption of the noble classes. In the letter, “through a critique of the theater, Rousseau delivers a devastating attack on the patriciate and its Frenchified values...purposefully he disassociates virtue from learning and refinement in order to reassociate it with patriotism and the republican values he thought necessary to sustain a

⁴² Smith, *Desmond*, 414.

⁴³ Blank, introduction to Smith, *Desmond*, 32.

democratic constitution.”⁴⁴ The Genevan political authority was composed of twenty-five men, “experts” who understood politics and were tasked with holding the best interests of the community at heart, freeing the citizenry to pursue their individual interests. Women were not included in the overtly political realm, rather, they were expected to uphold the values of the republic from the home. In Mary Trouille’s study of how French women read and responded to Rousseau, she charts Germaine de Stael’s efforts as a defender of the politically disenfranchised and her surprising engagement with the *Letter à d’Alembert*, which she rewrites in her work in order to challenge thinking on women’s roles.⁴⁵ I see Charlotte Smith as engaging something similar here. Smith completely removes the quotation from its original context and does not quote Rousseau to debate his views on theater, but rather to passionately defend the novelistic reading habits of women that were so often derided. She angrily condemns the school of thought that finds no flaws in allowing women a dramatic education but which objects to novel-readings as though the moral content is so inferior. In adapting Rousseau to a new context, she demands her case be read not as an irrational woman merely despairing of criticism for reading fanciful fiction but a rational and political thinker whose argument has been carefully considered and is deserving of attention.

Geraldine doubles down on her political voice when once again writing Fanny. Here, though, she engages in a direct discussion of recent political events, writing, “the deficiency of bread, which, in eighty-nine and ninety, was so severely felt at Paris, was artificial, and created by those, who not only had the power to monopolize for their own profit, but others, who had it in view to reduce the people by famine to obedience.”⁴⁶ It is clear that Geraldine, like Smith, possesses her own radical sympathies. And like Smith in the preface, she anticipates ill-feeling for a woman voicing political opinions, even to a friend when she

⁴⁴ Helena Rosenblatt, “On the ‘Misogyny’ of Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Letter to D’Alembert in Historical Context,” *French Historical Studies* 25, no. 1 (2002): 110.

⁴⁵ Trouille, 204.

⁴⁶ Smith, *Desmond*, 325-326.

admits “this excursion into the field of politics...where we, you know, have always been taught that women should never advance a step, may, perhaps excite your surprize.”⁴⁷ Situated as it is as a letter between two women, this passage feels as if Smith is addressing her female reader. Not only does she gift Geraldine a political voice but she also insists on the normality of her possessing her own political thoughts, writing that they come to her whenever she is not under immediate threat, that she is able to consider the world rationally when she is not actively being oppressed herself. In doing so, Smith defends her own novelistic endeavor and also encourages her female audience to consider what they, too, observe and reason about the world around them when they are not forced to consider the immediate concerns for survival for themselves or their families. Further, she demands that women acknowledge their oppression and questions whether women’s lack of political engagement, and specifically republican ideals, is because they have not been allowed to think. Here, Smith associates the republican cause with that of female liberty.

Geraldine possesses a political voice but she also acquires symbolic political significance. Throughout the novel, Geraldine is repeatedly shown surrounded by her children and her third child spends much of the time at her breast. This serves to associate Geraldine, again, with Rousseau and his promotion of breastfeeding and motherhood, and clearly marks Geraldine as an ideal mother figure who takes seriously her role and consistently places her children’s welfare before her own. But, as Conway notes, her figuration as the ideal mother means that she lacks the ability to transgress and become the disruptive force that will cause a revolution.⁴⁸ She refuses to leave Verney and only the happy accident of his death paves the way for change for Geraldine. Her doppelganger, Josephine, is not motherly but sexual, and her transgression does indeed cause a revolution in that it entirely changes the course of the novel when her affair with Desmond results in

⁴⁷ Smith, *Desmond*, 326.

⁴⁸ Conway, *Nationalism*, 399.

pregnancy. Her opposition to Geraldine is most clear here, she lacks any motherly tendency to such extent as she readily gives up her child and significantly, Josephine is never given voice. Though Josephine lacks morality for Smith, and the novel rewards virtue and motherhood, nonetheless the novel also clearly acknowledges that utter devotion to such standards of wifely and motherly perfection precludes women from initiating real, tangible change. Though Smith embraced the domestic vision espoused by Rousseau in the happy marriages of her earlier novels, in 1792 she appears to acknowledge the issues with the lack of a role for women in his political vision. Smith, then, urges women to be neither a Geraldine nor a Josephine. After all, Geraldine's future at Sedgwood looks to be only marginally superior to her life with Verney but the life of the child, born on English soil but born of transgression and to a French mother, represents pure potential. Pointedly female, the infant yet retains her disruptive power.

The radicalism of *Desmond* was never in dispute, whether for contemporary readers or modern critics. However, Smith's purposeful deployment of overtly political quotations from Milton, Voltaire, and Rousseau emphasize not only the novel's broadly liberal stakes but also further define Smith's specific polemic stakes in writing this novel. That is, she certainly expresses egalitarian and humanitarian concerns and advocates for reason and rationality. She calls on Milton and Galileo and Voltaire and Calas to disparage the relationship between church and state and she invokes Rousseau's depictions of wives and mothers to encourage women to find their political voices. To understand Smith's intertextuality in *Desmond* is to understand that *Desmond* is not merely her most radical novel in content, but in its inciting action for the revolutionary cause.

IV. The Old Manor House

After the struggle to get *Desmond* published and its poor reception relative to her earlier novels, Charlotte Smith moved away from explicit engagement with the French Revolution and focused *The Old Manor House* on romance, both personal and property.¹ Composed between August 1792 and January 1793, the fifth of Smith's novels was written during some of the most tumultuous months of the Revolution, encompassing the massacre of the Swiss Guards, the September Massacres, and the trial and eventual execution of King Louis XVI. Though one might consider the withdrawal from direct conversation with the events in France in *The Old Manor House* to be indicative of Smith's growing conservatism, her letters indicate that the events of the latter half of 1792 had done little to alter her radical beliefs. In a note about a letter from Smith to Lucy Hill Lowes, the latter's husband Thomas commented: "I liked her well enough for some time, but she disgusted me completely, on the acct arriving of the Massacre of the Swiss Guards at the Tuileries by saying that they richly deserved it."² In a letter from November 1792 to Joel Barlow, Smith writes, "I really pity the advocates for despotism. They are so terribly mortified at the late events in France, and as they had never any thing to say that had even the semblance of reason and now are evidently on the wrong side of the question both in Theory and Practice" and goes on to declare that the "glorious government" of the French republic will soon be firmly established.³ Though she does disagree with the trial of Louis XVI and objects to the exile of the emigrés, Smith's letters and Lowes' comment make clear that during the composition of *The Old Manor House*, she remained resolutely in favor of the French Revolution, even if events had taken a distasteful turn.

¹ Fletcher details the refusal of Smith's usual publisher, Thomas Cadell, to publish *Desmond* on account of its overt Republicanism and gives an account of some of the novel's poor reviews. It became her only novel published with famed Whig publisher George Robinson. *Critical Biography*, 152.

² Smith, *Collected Letters*, 39.

³ Smith, *Collected Letters*, 49.

An English property romance set during the time of the American Revolution, *The Old Manor House* is no less politically charged than *Celestina* or *Desmond*. Here, Smith's attention to inheritance laws and disenfranchised characters (younger brothers, illegitimate daughters) indicate that her interest had not waned in the issues that had always most interested her and impassioned her politically. However, *Desmond* also displayed overt engagement with not just radical authors, but some of their more political or philosophical texts. In *The Old Manor House*, Smith abandons this strategy and returns to the same intertextual methodology she employed in *Celestina*, quoting—if with less frequency—the more widely read English literary masterpiece *Paradise Lost* and sentimental novel *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. She quotes from these works only a few times however. Whereas *Desmond* saw fourteen direct quotations from Milton, Rousseau, or Voltaire, *The Old Manor House* has just four direct quotations—three from *Paradise Lost* and one from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*—along with a recognizable extended allusion to Rousseau's philosophies on education and nature. Two of the *Paradise Lost* quotations are brief two- or three-word references which Charlotte Smith returns to several times in her novels, “the darkness visible” of Book I and the stars which hide their “diminished heads” from Book IV.⁴ I will focus my analysis on the remaining unique Milton quotation and the quotation from and allusions to Rousseau in order to foreground the significance of the false chivalric hero and the role of nature in politicizing *The Old Manor House* in the tumultuous year since the publication of *Desmond*. Overall, the changes to her intertextual strategy give the illusion that the novel could even be apolitical; some scholars have noted that it might have appeared to be so to a casual reader. Such an approach seems a submission to the criticism she received in the press for her proud radicalism and indeed it is likely that, needing to sell novels to support her family, Smith made her revolutionary proclivities less explicit so as not

⁴ Quotations as they appear in *The Old Manor House*, 122 and 202, respectively.

to repeat *Desmond*'s struggles. Yet, her continued engagement with these authors and works and her careful placement of their ideas and radical associations—such as in the epigraph to a final volume that sees the resolution of a novel-long inheritance plot—nevertheless codifies *The Old Manor House* as a purposefully political text. Much as she admitted in her letters, her narrative choices acknowledge the problems of the French Revolution while remaining in support of the broader aims. I suggest that Charlotte Smith uses quotation from and references to Rousseau and Milton to indicate how she wanted *The Old Manor House* to be read politically—as broadly liberal, yet struggling with the material concerns of what that means for changes in actual laws, in favor of destabilizing the current class system while understanding that such a concept might remain a fantasy.

The epigraph to volume four of *The Old Manor House* is a quotation from Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "J'ai beaucoup souffert; j'ai vu souffrir d'avantage; que d'infortunés j'au vu mourir! Et moi, je les ai survécu."⁵ To link Orlando, possessor of an overtly romantic name, with Rousseau's sentimental novel reinforces the perception of Orlando as overly sentimental, fanciful hero at this important stage of the novel that sees an end to his time fighting in the American Revolutionary War and his return to England in hopes of reuniting with both his desired property and his lover. Throughout volumes three and four, Smith politicizes the landscapes of America and England and through her hero Orlando, who travels between them, she asks the reader to consider his qualifications as romantic hero and thus question the positivity of the novel's resolution.

Though Orlando's name is frequently cited as derived from Ariosto's chivalric romance *Orlando Furioso* (1532), Smith's Orlando shares a great deal more in common with

⁵ Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House*, ed. Jacqueline M. Labbe (Peterborough: Broadview Press, 2002), 389. From *La Nouvelle Héloïse* part IV, letter 3 and translated by John Rignall as provided in Labbe's edition: "I have suffered much; I have seen suffering even more; I have seen the death of so many unfortunates! And I, I have survived them"

his namesake from Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1623).⁶ The play opens with Orlando's complaints as a younger brother about the wrongs of a system of primogeniture. His reference to the "courtesy of nations" places the blame on the laws and expectations of various European countries for propagating such inequality and he vows to "mutiny against this servitude."⁷ Though actually awarded a reasonably generous inheritance, Shakespeare's Orlando believes his station in life deserves more. This is not unlike Smith's hero, also a dispossessed younger brother who feels some sort of right to Rayland Hall, or at the very least, that he is most deserving of inheriting it. Ultimately, *As You Like It* shares important thematic elements with Smith's novel as the play considers the propertyless as they interact in the Forest of Arden, whether they be so by station in life as are the vagabonds, or the victims of familial persecution like Rosalind and Orlando.

The name of Smith's Orlando, then, calls to mind not only the romanticized chivalric escapades of Orlando Furioso but also concerns about right to ownership and the abusive nature of inheritance law. That the lines from Rousseau quoted in the epigraph are from the heroine Julie, rather than St Preux, only further feminizes Orlando and the histrionics regarding suffering ask the reader to consider what has been achieved in the previous volume.⁸ Orlando is portrayed throughout *The Old Manor House* as resolutely romantic; though volume three sees him off to war, he lacks the stereotypical masculinity of the other soldiers and is, in fact, a failure, seeing nearly no actual combat, repeatedly losing his weapon, and spending most of his time in America in captivity. Through the link between Orlando and Julie, Smith reinforces Orlando's romantic heritage leading in to the novel's final volume. In so doing, she questions whether Orlando should be read as a hero at all,

⁶ Strangely, though, this is a text from which Smith does not quote in *The Old Manor House*, though she does quote from several other Shakespeare plays.

⁷ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It* (London: Printed for J. Wenman, 1777), I.i.

⁸ It should also be noted that it is likewise Rosalind who pursues Orlando in *As You Like It*.

which becomes particularly important as the volume concludes in the resolution of the novel's property romance.

Indeed, as Orlando leaves for America, it seems that even Mrs Rayland is skeptical of the sentimental Orlando's potential to be a deserving heir of her cherished estate. Orlando's service in the Revolutionary War is not merely an homage to feudalism but also an opportunity for Orlando to prove his worthiness and masculinity, to Mrs Rayland and to the reader. Orlando has fallen in love with Monimia, the orphan "niece" of Mrs Rayland's attendant, Mrs Lennard. Though reluctant to leave her, he secures a commission and pursues it in hopes of securing himself income not dependent on Mrs Rayland, though his service only aids in her favorable perception of him and likelihood of inheriting the estate. Unlike *Desmond's* Montfleuri, Orlando does not fight for the side of the revolutionaries but for the British on the side of colonialism; yet, Orlando's experience in America is what transforms him into a worthy heir to Rayland Hall, even at the temporary expense of losing Monimia. Though a younger brother pushed aside for the benefit of his brother who should be a sympathetic target for declaiming the ills wrought by inheritance law, Smith takes care to complicate her characterization of Orlando and chooses not to portray him as a hero of republican ideals. Indeed, much like his Shakespearean namesake, who rails against unequal property distribution but declares himself above the mere peasants and demands to be treated like a gentleman, Smith's Orlando is an imperfect alternative to the traditional line of succession. Not only is he gifted his name with the purpose of ingratiating himself into a family line that has no male heirs, but he also aligns himself with the colonial pursuits of the British military for the sake of money and property at the expense of love and humanitarian ideals that he, unlike Smith's many other military heroes, does not profess.

Orlando's military service conforms to expectations of a knight figure and therefore fits within the romance plot of *The Old Manor House*, but it is in Smith's portrayal of

Orlando's experience in the American Revolution that she most evidently espouses the political rhetoric of revolutionary transformation. Carmel Murphy writes that her "delineation of the brutality of military service, and the lack of provision afforded by the British government to its casualties exposes the inherent emptiness of the chivalric ideal propagated by figures such as Burke."⁹ Indeed, we might see this initial journey to America as in conversation with Burke and an ironic treatment of his reverence for tradition. The good knight Orlando travels to America repeating to himself all that he has always been taught about the glories of England, reasonably resolute in his ingrained patriotism. Despite the poor conditions on the ship that carries the soldiers overseas and the death and illness around him, he seeks to educate himself on cause and consequence in hopes of seeing England's actions justified. Facing trauma at sea, he recalls the names of the English greats, "our Henries and our Edwards" as he "endeavoured to persuade himself that it was for glory" but Smith intervenes in the narrative in the wake of Orlando's willful naïveté. Lamenting the present conditions of Orlando and his fellow soldiers and excoriating the notion of glory in which Orlando had initially tried to take comfort, the narrator asserts:

The ministry should, in thus purchasing glory, put a little more than was requisite into the pockets of contractors, and destroy as many men by sickness as by the sword, made but little difference in an object so infinitely important; especially when it was known (which, however, Orlando did not know) that messieurs the contractors were for the most part members of parliament, who under other names enjoyed the profits of war.¹⁰

In adding this passage, Smith makes sure to comment on the heartlessness of the English war machine, which relies on the loyalty of soldiers such as Orlando who cite the great historic accomplishments of those who have fought before yet denies them the necessities to succeed in their endeavors on behalf of the crown, all the while profiting from war while soldiers are dying. Smith ensures that while Orlando "did not know" of these circumstances, having not

⁹ Carmel Murphy, "Jacobin History: Charlotte Smith's *Old Manor House* and the French Revolution Debate," *Romanticism* 20, no. 3 (2014): 274.

¹⁰ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 354.

yet been jaded by the experiences of war, the reader is attuned to them and thus is aware where to place blame when Orlando's journey to America takes each of many downward turns. Smith casts aside Burkean veneration of chivalry, heredity, and tradition as Orlando journeys across the ocean to arrive in a land absented of all of these.

Upon arrival in America itself, Orlando is captivated by a land he portrays as nothing short of Edenic:

Every object seemed formed upon a larger scale. The rivers, more frequent than in England, were broader than the most boasted of ours, even on their approach to the sea; and the woods, larger than the oldest European forests, even those that Kings have reserved for their pleasure in France or England, consisted often of trees of such magnitude and beauty as must be seen before a perfect idea can be formed of them. What Orlando had often seen cherished in English gardens as beautiful shrubs, here rose into plants of such majestic size and foliage as made the British oak poor in comparison; and under them innumerable shrubs of many of which he knew not the names, grew in profusion.¹¹

It is significant that this new world is one synonymous not just with nature, but with natural perfection. It is not being compared solely with the modern civilization of England; the natural contents of America Orlando judges to be superior to those found in the whole of Europe. The America that Orlando encounters is not solely wild perfection, it is also inhabited by that legendary figure of Rousseau, the noble savage. For Orlando, this is the Wolf-hunter, an Iroquois who cares for him when he becomes a prisoner of war and to whom he refers as his "Indian friend."¹² Orlando joins the Wolf-hunter as they march "through a country known and accessible only to Indians."¹³ By casting the American wilderness as known only to Indians, and "known" rather than "owned," Smith comments on its infinite possibility. Thus, we may view Smith's America as in contrast to the Burkean England with which she recently engaged. Burke valued the conservation and preservation of land, but

¹¹ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 361-2.

¹² Smith, *Old Manor House*, 380.

¹³ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 381.

through the mechanism of inheritance which innately reinforces social hierarchy.¹⁴ Like Orlando at this moment in the novel, not every man had a manor house of his own through which he might enjoy the natural landscape. Because America is wild and not bound up in inherited estates, it represents a possibility for reform of the sort of patriarchal structures with which she routinely took issue. It also stands in opposition to the Rayland Hall that Orlando has left behind, its game parks and preserved landscapes emblematic of Burke's vision for England.

We might see Smith's portrayal of America as in conscious imitation of the utopia of Thomas Paine, who argued that America was the only place in the political world where universal reformation was possible.¹⁵ But so, too, does she reference Rousseau. Not only does she provide a representation of his figure of the noble savage but she has Orlando invoke Rousseau's name and make reference to his philosophy. As Orlando becomes more impressed with the sights of America's splendor, he directly compares America to Britain and "he found himself almost involuntarily assenting to some of the most gloomy aphorisms of Rousseau."¹⁶ We might suppose one such source for Rousseau's thought to be his *Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* (1754), Rousseau argues that man is just another beast, that there is no misery, and "the inequality of mankind is hardly felt, and that its influence is next to nothing in a state of nature."¹⁷ By comparing an English landscape preserved through systems of inequality with an American landscape more spectacular in its lack of control, Smith here appears to be propagating the Rousseauian belief that civilization promoted corruption and inequality and the hope for a purer, more equal society required a return to a state of nature. Orlando is left to make a direct comparison to

¹⁴ Katey Castellano, "Romantic Conservatism in Burke, Wordsworth, and Wendell Berry," *SubStance* 40, no. 2 (2011): 73-91.

¹⁵ Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings*, ed. Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 210.

¹⁶ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 362.

¹⁷ Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract, and Discourses* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1913), 205.

England—where his days are occupied with concerns over inheritance and his lowered status as a result of being born the second son—and the excessive beauty of the American colonies comes out ahead. Indeed, the combination of this Rousseauian references with the setting in America served to remind readers that “a republic based on the revolutionary ideals of equality and liberty had been successfully established” and clearly declares England on the wrong side of history for their efforts in America, with strong resonance in 1793 as England went to war with France.¹⁸

As Orlando becomes further involved in the American Revolution, he grows more and more disillusioned with England and receives a letter from Monimia that shows that his experiences fighting for profit and perceived glory for his country correspond to oppression at home. Monimia’s missive details the physical assault on her person and the unwanted disreputable pursuit of her person by Sir John against all semblances of honor. Here Smith depicts an English elite oppressing the unprotected members of their society. Orlando expresses reluctance to buy into the belief that he has promised service to the King and all else is irrelevant, reflecting that

he had always been told, that the will of the people was the great resort in the British Government; and that no public measure of magnitude and importance could be decided upon, but by the agreement of the Three Estates. Yet, the present war, carried on against a part of their own body, and in direct contradiction of the right universally claimed, was not only pursued at ruinous expence, but in absolute contradiction of the people who were taxed to support it.¹⁹

Orlando’s recognition here of the root causes of the American Revolution (taxation without representation) and the disquieting effect of his service against an arm of his own people displays the quickly changing nature of Orlando’s character after his exposure to the realities of warfare. However, it is Smith’s language here that is particularly interesting. Though Orlando speaks in terms of the British-American conflict, Smith uses the term “the Three

¹⁸ Blank and Todd, introduction to *Desmond*, 17.

¹⁹ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 363.

Estates,” the French terminology explicitly tied to the Revolution after the Estates General of May and June 1789 in which the Third Estate split to form the National Assembly and precipitated the storming of the Bastille and the outbreak of the French Revolution. The difference between Orlando’s naïve recitations on the ship and his complex political thought here demonstrates advances in Orlando’s education through his experience in America. As Dart puts it, “the project of education was central to the French Revolution: from the very beginning the political class recognized that in order for France to pass successfully from one régime into another, the French people would have to undergo a process of political instruction, so that they might come to understand their changed relationship to the state, government, and the rule of law.”²⁰ Orlando’s educational experience transforms him from a man blindly mumbling the names of the great kings of England, to one who understands and takes issue with the abuses of government and the violation of the rights of its citizens, effectively transforming him from an ordinary citizen who dares not resist the lot he has been dealt by the ways of his country into a revolutionary thinker—a man who desperately needed Rayland Hall as a victim of patriarchal society into one who would fight for his right to own it despite his circumstances and thus deserves it.

So, when volume three concludes Orlando’s experience in the war and volume four opens his experience journeying home, Smith continues the references to Rousseau’s understanding of nature and education when she quotes Julie. The language of suffering within the quotation is interesting, particularly as, McDonald writes, “the personal legend of Rousseau acquired a new significance as a result of the Revolution. Rousseau became the symbol of the virtuous man who suffers at the hand of tyranny, pride, and privilege, but who courageously fights back with the weapons of truth.”²¹ Orlando, however, is not Rousseau

²⁰ Gregory Dart, *Rousseau, Robespierre, and English Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 103.

²¹ McDonald, *Rousseau and the French Revolution*, 166.

but Julie. Though Orlando has certainly *witnessed* suffering at war at the hands of pride and privilege and the tyranny of colonialism, Julie insists that *she* has suffered, too. In Orlando's absence, Monimia has suffered very real difficulties as a young woman entirely dependent. Yet, by tying Orlando to Julie, the focus is on Orlando's suffering, manifested in the physical aspects of Orlando's return from war. He trudges through the South of England, encountering "Englishmen less humane than the rude savages of the wilds of America" and traveling through inhospitable weather conditions to reach Rayland Hall, which he finds in disrepair. In response to the glorious Burkean condition, "the wainscot had fallen down" and he discovers doors broken off their hinges and boards rotted away. The gallery of Mrs Rayland's vaunted ancestors had become "hideous spectres [that] seemed to beckon to him from the other end of it, and to menace him from the walls; though he knew that they were the portraits of his family."²² Orlando correctly surmises that Mrs Rayland has died, but the state of disrepair is remarkable since Orlando has been away for less than eighteen months.

Not only is the Hall nearly unrecognizable in its condition, but Orlando himself proves unrecognizable even to those closest to him. A servant of Rayland Hall, a tenant of Mrs Rayland's who knows Orlando well, and Orlando's own uncle all fail to recognize him despite the relative brevity of the soldier's separation. Perhaps most strangely, even a friend of Orlando's with whom he fought in America fails to recognize him, despite their absence from each other lasting just a few months. Orlando has undergone a journey of personal discovery mirrored by his journey through unfamiliar landscapes—first in America, and now through an unfamiliar England. Perhaps this lack of recognition that defies logical explanation represents a physical embodiment of the ways Orlando has been changed by his experience in America. Orlando attempted to conform early in the novel whilst at Rayland Hall, embody who he was expected to be, but as he moved through new landscapes, he began

²² Smith, *Old Manor House*, 401.

the process of personal education and evolution that render both he and the landscape itself unrecognizable just months later. That is, that he no longer fits within his role in English society and the estate life that had once charmed him so. The role of feudal knight has lost its lustre. Though Orlando remains invested in his inheritance of the Hall, it is only because it is his best option to secure his future with Monimia rather than in deference to his ancestral lineage. The remnants of his travels that manifest on his person, such as his haircut, are symbols of the way his Revolutionary encounter has altered him and the lack of acceptance of his appearance signify the unwillingness of the English uneducated (the bar folk who taunt him) and wealthy (his uncle) to accommodate alternate ways of thinking.

This changed perspective is enhanced by Smith's description of Orlando's time in France, which he passes through on his way to England, wherein he is treated well, welcomed immediately, and of which Orlando comments that it "seemed to him to be part of his country, and in every Frenchmen he saw, not a natural enemy, but a brother."²³ The language of brotherhood here, closely tied to the Revolution in France in *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, makes no mistake that Orlando is physically expressing Revolutionary sentiment after his return from America. By contrasting the positive experience in France with his negative return to England, Smith emphasizes the regressive and unwelcoming nature of English society at odds with the higher moral standards of those who seek progress and equality in other nations.

Indeed, Smith's portrayal of degradation at home while Britain engaged in colonial pursuits is emphasized by the depiction of the natural state in England on Orlando's return. In stark contrast to Orlando's America of lush vegetation and everything grander and more exciting than he had experienced before, he returns to a dark and violent England. Smith writes that his desire to get back to Rayland Hall, symbol of antiquarian aristocratic ideals, is

²³ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 392.

prevented by “the rain, [which] driven by violence, almost blinded, and the roaring of the wind and sea deafened him. Hardly able to stand against the tempest, he frequently stopped.”²⁴ Jeffrey Robinson sees walking in Romantic literature as an expression of political drivenness and the mobility of a radical mind.²⁵ As Orlando walks through America and then through an England in which he can only see changes, it marks Orlando’s journey back to Rayland Hall as one that is political and one that is a manifestation of his enhanced liberal sensibilities. Orlando notes that, on eventually arriving at the Hall, “all was still as death” and no horses or poultry abound where once they were plentiful. In mere months his former home has fallen into a decline. His experience of the true natural superiority of a nation fighting for the cause of liberty has forced him to recognize England as oppressive and seeking to harm those who fight for the cause of new freedoms. Indeed, England’s climate itself conspires with what he now knows of its politics when the violent storm hinders Orlando’s sight and sends him tumbling off a small cliff as he journeys home to try to claim possession of Rayland Hall.

Orlando’s quest for inheritance that comprises the majority of *The Old Manor House* links property and romance for several reasons, not least of which is the feudal depiction of his relationship with Mrs Rayland. Orlando is established early on as existing within the romantic tradition due to his name, which is both an homage to Mrs Rayland’s aristocratic fervor (being named after one of her revered ancestors) and a nod to overly romantic chivalric tradition. In fact, Orlando is mocked by both his brother and fellow soldiers for his fanciful name and manner, called names such as “Sir Knight” to draw attention to both his feudal devotion to Mrs Rayland and flights of romantic fancy. This figuring of a feudal relationship is only heightened when Orlando leaves to fight in the American Revolution,

²⁴ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 396.

²⁵ Jeffrey Robinson, *The Walk. Notes on a Romantic Image* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 52.

following the tradition of vassals performing military service for their lords, to which Mrs Rayland expresses pride and pleasure. Thus, Rayland Hall and Orlando's potential inheritance of it overtly plays a role in the romance of Orlando and Mrs Rayland, but it features too in the romance between Orlando and Monimia.

For much of the novel, Monimia works as a servant in Rayland Hall, where she is imprisoned in a turret upon the arrival of Orlando in the Hall's living quarters so as to separate the two from having the opportunity for more than a passing conversation. However, the Hall, aside from bringing the two together merely in proximity, becomes a participant in Monimia and Orlando's relationship. The Hall's many clandestine passages actually enflame the relationship when the couple discovers a hidden staircase that leads to Monimia's turret, at the top of which rests a door nailed shut just behind the head of Monimia's own bed. The illicitness of the Orlando-Monimia relationship alludes to St Preux and Julie, as well as to Rousseau's inspiration in Abelard and Héloïse. As in both Rousseau and his historical source, Monimia and Orlando undertake an affair that must be kept secret from their families and the passage's connection to Monimia's bedroom suggests sexuality that mirrors the sexual relationships engaged in by both sources. Secrecy is a primary concern of *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, and indeed Julie's first letter begins by crying, "Il faut donc l'avouer enfin ce fatal secret trop mal déguisé!"²⁶ In *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Julie has the most to lose if the affair is discovered whereas the historical Abelard (on whom St Preux's character is modeled) pushed for secrecy to protect his famed reputation and keep his career prospects open. So, too, does Orlando protect his interests through concealment. Though Monimia has but a precarious position in the Rayland household, Orlando depends on the secrecy of their involvement to protect his interest in inheriting the Hall and thus his entire future prospects. However, concealment of the affair is not left to the young lovers as it was

²⁶ Rousseau, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, Part I, letter IV. "I must finally confess this secret too poorly disguised!"

for their predecessors. The use of the secret entrance by Orlando and Monimia to meet repeatedly for months and fall in love without the knowledge of Mrs Lennard or Mrs Rayland indicates that the ancient estate itself precipitated the relationship of the pair that could unseat its aristocratic lineage. Labbe writes of Smith's aligning of property and Monimia herself to the Gothic that doing so "exposes the inhumanity of laws of property which make Orlando simultaneously the compromiser of Monimia's reputation and the compromised savior of the Hall's reputation."²⁷ It seems as though this complicity of the Hall could suggest an awareness of the need for disruption to the status quo. After all, the discovery of the staircase appears accidental but the staircase itself consists of fourteen stairs, corresponding to Monimia's age at the time of the discovery. The placement and number of the stairs and the location of her bed in relation to the door imply that this passage was created to bring together Monimia and Orlando as though the Hall contained within it something to foster a new future for those bold enough to risk their futures on it, as both Monimia and Orlando do by pursuing a relationship against the wishes of their benefactress.

To situate the disruptive potential of the Orlando-Monimia relationship, the novel opens with a description of the circumstances of Mrs Rayland, focusing, as she herself does, on her lengthy noble lineage. Mrs Rayland is one of three daughters of Sir Hildebrand, none of whom married, and upon whose death Mrs Rayland inherited Rayland Hall outright. Elderly with no children herself at the time of the plot's action in 1776, Mrs Rayland is in control of the property's future, having the ability to remove the property from line of succession to next rightful heir and will it to whomever she pleases. As such, the novel follows the progress of Orlando as he moves into the Hall to romance both the affections of Mrs Rayland (to gain property himself as a youngest son unable to inherit from his father) and Monimia. The fate of the inhabitants of the Hall as well as the estate itself are not only

²⁷ Jacqueline M. Labbe, "Metaphoricity and the Romance of Property in 'The Old Manor House,'" *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 227.

inextricably linked, but rest in the hands of Mrs Rayland. As Jacqueline Labbe puts it, “the Rayland estate is simultaneously still available to the Rayland family and held by the most vulnerable member of that family, a daughter. By giving Mrs Rayland sole control over her property, Smith grants her much the same autonomy and freedom of choice that money and power would bring a man.”²⁸ The means through which Mrs Rayland chooses to exercise this control are, however, significant. She has largely cut off the surviving arm of her family tree due to several marriages for love rather than money, which she views as disgraceful. Her entire existence is encompassed by being a Rayland and all that it entails, regularly invoking the names of her titled ancestors and relishing in antiquated customs such as the tenant’s feast which she gives twice yearly. Indeed, it is said that Rayland Hall “had not received the slightest alteration, either in its environs or its furniture, since it was embellished for the marriage of her father Sir Hildebrand, in 1698.”²⁹ Thus, though the Hall under Mrs Rayland was not the dilapidated edifice that Orlando encounters upon his return from America, throughout the novel it is nevertheless a gothic creation that is populated with secret passages and stands still in time as a testament to the Rayland legacy, underscoring its role in the violation of domestic rights. Mrs Rayland even dislikes the idea of hunting on her property, preferring to turn it into a sanctuary and preserving every aspect of it at all costs— she espouses Burkean property ideals in contrast to the state of nature that Orlando will later encounter.

Even before Orlando travels to America and the novel offers perspectives of worlds outside of the South of England, the reader is aware of the encroachment of a different sort of property ownership embodied by the sale of a neighboring plot once owned by a family respected by Mrs Rayland. The land passes out of the hands of the storied lineage and into the possession of a wealthy but crass man called Stockton. He proves his unworthiness by

²⁸ Labbe, “Metaphoricity,” 220.

²⁹ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 40.

hunting on the Rayland estate, violating the very land Mrs Rayland that seeks to preserve with his greed. Labbe writes that “Smith dramatizes the emergence of a new money-based economy that is literally contiguous to the land-based economy represented by Rayland Hall. The novel’s emphasis on the immorality of inheritance and its acknowledgement of the inexorability of the new economy makes Orlando seem inadequate and the hall itself weak.”³⁰ Though Mrs Rayland’s feudal approach to the management of Rayland Hall is figured as outdated and sad, Orlando and Monimia clearly represent the best potential holders of the estate’s future; yet, the weakness of Orlando as hero in the property romance repeatedly re-emerges to question the significance of changes to inheritance law at all.

Though *The Old Manor House* equally concerns Orlando’s romancing of Rayland Hall and Monimia herself, the two spend much of the novel at odds. It often seems that when Orlando possesses one, he loses the other, as is evinced by the fact that he keeps his relationship with Monimia secret so as to not lose favor with Mrs Rayland and find himself disinherited. So too his eventual marriage to Monimia after he returns to Rayland Hall occurs because he finds the property has been willed away in his absence. It is in the restoration of the second son Orlando and orphan Monimia to Rayland Hall that Charlotte Smith turns to a quotation from *Paradise Lost*. Smith uses *Paradise Lost* in *Celestina* to present a hopeful future for revolution, one that acknowledges the fallibility of humankind but is ultimately focused on the nature of free will and the prelapsarian standard of equality. When Smith quotes *Paradise Lost* again in *The Old Manor House*, she is no longer foregrounding the relationship of Adam and Eve and its implications for equality, but rather the problematic nature of Satan’s leadership. Whereas Smith had previously embraced the story revolving “around free choice in the matter of the apple, an issue equally resonant for modern republican revolutions and independence movements,” she emphasizes here the story that

³⁰ Labbe, “Metaphoricity,” 217.

“encapsulates the problem of corruptibility, suggesting (through the figures of Satan and, to a lesser degree, postlapsarian humanity) the new forms of tyranny that threaten individuals and society when a popular majority throws off old forms of bondage only to submit to the bondage of private interests and passions.”³¹

Describing the lawyer who appears to thwart Orlando out of his rightful inheritance of Rayland Hall, Smith quotes Book II of *Paradise Lost*, in which Death “grinned horrible a ghastly smile.” These lines are finished in the original Milton with “to hear/His famine should be fill’d, and blest his maw.”³² Satan has just promised Sin and Death a bounty upon his success in luring Eve to the Fall. Death is perhaps best described as a representation of gluttony, so innately insatiable that his mother, Sin, recognizes that he would devour her “but that he knows his end with mine involved”—that is, that ending Sin would end Death. Death is also shadowy, indistinguishable, “miscreated” so when Smith portrays the lawyer Roker, working to thwart Orlando of his rightful inheritance, as Death, she casts lawyers as greed personified, a shadowy profession concerned with self-preservation over morality. Yet, Smith’s physical characterization of Roker is not what might be expected of a character she repeatedly references for his villainy:

If a painter had occasion to put upon his canvas a figure that should give an horrible idea of the worst, meanest, and most obnoxious passions—and to represent the most detestable character in Pandaemonium, where, on the brow, villainy sits enjoying the misery it occasions—where every rascal vice, concealed by cowardice and cunning, are mingled with arrogance, malice, and cruelty—where a nose, the rival of Bardolph’s, depends over a mouth “grinning horribly a ghastly smile,”—and scornful eyes, askance, seemed to be watching, with inverted looks, the birth of chicanery in the brain—this fiend-like wretch would have been a fine study. His shambling figure appeared to have been repaired with straw and rags, since it had suffered depredations on a well-earned gibbet—A figure more adapted to the purpose of scaring crows, was never exhibited in former days as Guy Vaux, the Pope, or the Pretender.³³

³¹ Lydia Dittler Schulman, *Paradise Lost and the Rise of the American Republic* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 5.

³² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, II. 846-7.

³³ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 439.

By referencing the notion of a painter putting Roker's image to canvas, Smith capitalizes on a tradition of pictorial renderings of the figure of Death. The scene that accompanies Milton's original lines—a confrontation between Satan, his daughter Sin, and their son Death—was a popular one in the period. Though eighteenth-century readers and critics expressed difficulty with the allegory, with Voltaire insisting there is no meaning in the communication between Death and Sin, it was a frequent subject in visual form.³⁴ First appearing in visual form in 1688, itself a significant year politically with the Glorious Revolution, the scene was engaged more contemporaneously by James Gillray in June 1792, just two months prior to Smith beginning work on *The Old Manor House*. In Gillray's caricature, he cast Death as Prime Minister William Pitt, Satan as Lord Chancellor Thurlow, and Sin as Queen Charlotte, representing the incestuous world of high politics through Milton's incestuous trio.³⁵ With the proximal connection to Gillray's work, Smith may have expected her readers to make a connection between the Miltonic figures and political representations that she reinforces through Roker's unusual appearance.

Strangely, over Roker's ghastly smile hangs Bardolph's nose—the comic character of Shakespeare's *Henriad*, his nose the frequent subject of jokes at his expense. Taylor locates in the work of Gillray and others a mock-epic tradition in the graphic satire of *Paradise Lost*. He describes how the physical, identifiable bodies of Gillray's print “frustrate” the Miltonic sublime as understood by Burke in which the words used by Milton to describe Death as shadowy or indistinguishable are valued above the clarity of the image that Milton produced, this conflict forming the basis for the successful and complex political satire that Gillray constructs.³⁶ Smith's reference to the pictorial history of Satan, Sin, and Death, then, along

³⁴ Voltaire's *Essay Upon the Civil Wars of France...And also Upon the Epick Poetry of the European Nations From Homer to Milton* (1727) as found in Miller, *Critical Response to Milton*, 90.

³⁵ Ian Haywood, *Romanticism and Caricature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 12.

³⁶ David Francis Taylor, *The Politics of Parody: A Literary History of Caricature, 1760-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 140-180.

with the graphic description of Roker, suggest that we should consider this passage satirically. Roker's ghastly smile is not the terrifying image of Death that Milton scarcely embodies, but a face of comical exaggeration rather than a representation of horror. This is all the more emphasized by Roker's "shambling figure" and connection to a scarecrow. A scarecrow is not a truly terrifying creation but an inert figure in a field—something even the crows learn to dismiss. We might then link this specific line to Smith's references to three Catholic figures—the Pope, the pretender to the English throne James I, and Guy Fawkes. By likening each of these figures to scarecrows, Smith categorizes them all as mere figureheads, incapable of performing any meaningful action. Though specifically anti-Catholic in keeping with her portrayals in her earlier novels, Smith also questions the legitimacy of those in power or those seeking power. The scarecrow is ineffective in the long run because it cannot do more than it does, it is limited by its very nature. Smith thus suggests that the Pope, James I, and Guy Fawkes are or were ineffective in their leadership because they were not capable of more. In fact, we might say the scarecrow *claims* it has (or it is claimed that the scarecrow has) power over its field, rather than that it does have power. The "shambling" nature of its appearance indicates, though, that that power is an illusion—meaning Smith questions the supposed superiority or right to power of the Pope, the Pretender, and even lawyers like Roker, who assume ascendancy over the people and the laws that they manipulate in society. Of course, this resonates with both Orlando's inheritance issues and Smith's own. The exaggerated rendering of Roker's appearance is in keeping with the satirical Gothic that Smith marshals throughout the novel to expose the violation of rights. Here it is embodied in the lawyer who seeks to remove Rayland Hall from its rightful ownership by means of tyranny and deception in his imprisonment of Lennard and the falsification of legal documents. By deploying her satire here, she not only

takes aim at a profession that has long aggrieved her, but decries the corruption of patriarchal politics and inheritance law.

As is the case in each of her novels, Smith's primary concern is in portraying what her ideal form of liberty should look like. By overthrowing the lawyer's machinations at the novel's close and instating a soldier and younger son and his wife of indeterminate birth as rightful owners of Rayland Hall, Smith shows that for her in 1793, reform is possible and desired, yet the incredibly rapid and convenient restoration of the original will suggests that this kind of reform might only be possible in novelistic convention. Smith emphasizes this concern through the employment of Rousseau's educational theories in her portrayal of Orlando, which qualifies the novel's resolution. In *Emile* (1762), Rousseau insists upon a natural education by which Emile must learn to shelter and feed himself as well as formulate his own weapons for protection. In fact, Emile is even forced to learn what it means to be propertyless when he is given no garden and the experience teaches him "that poverty is morally arbitrary."³⁷ Through this process, Emile becomes equipped to handle the ills of a corrupt society. Given the portrayal of the savage natural world Orlando encounters in America, his experience should have mirrored Emile's but Orlando's journey is, in many ways, a failed one. His quick capture means Orlando neither fights nor is forced to fend for himself and thus, though he has certainly progressed in his liberal beliefs after encountering the natural world, he nevertheless is not fully educated and thus not quite equipped to remain inured to the problems of English society and remains an imperfect heir to Rayland Hall. Yet, Rousseau suggests that a more complete education would no more be the answer to who best inherits; Emile is eventually urged to remove himself from society entirely despite all he has learned. Emile, too, continues to ask Jean-Jacques for guidance, suggesting that perhaps nothing at all has actually been gained. So too, in *The Old Manor House*, Smith suggests

³⁷ Geneviève Rousselière, "Rousseau on Freedom in Commercial Society," *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 2 (April 2016): 358.

that, like Rousseau, she would like to believe reform possible, but current societal modalities suggest otherwise.

The final resolution of the inheritance plot is therefore worth a closer look, as it both clarifies and undermines Smith's radical work throughout the novel. Orlando is twice told upon his return that Mrs Rayland expressed her specific plan to will the estate in his name before her death, yet the Hall was given over to Dr Hollybourn after an earlier will was discovered. Orlando searches for his right to inheritance while he simultaneously searches for Monimia, who has been moved multiple times after threats to her honor. He does find and marry Monimia, after which she quickly becomes pregnant, and the novel's resolution rests on the reinstatement of Orlando to Rayland Hall. Through the assistance of an old veteran, Orlando is reunited with Monimia's former prisoner, Mrs Lennard, now married to the evil lawyer who discovered the incorrect will and perpetuated the transfer of Rayland Hall into outside hands. Mrs Lennard, who has no real reason to help Orlando, confesses to him that she hid the rightful will and instructs him where to find it, after which Orlando and Monimia are free to finally inhabit the estate. The resolution serves to enhance the position of the second son and his low-born, servant wife and confirms their humanity when they provide a home for Orlando's mother and sisters who are in need of money and protection after the death of his father and the inefficacy of his wastrel brother. The rapid resolution and the traditional romance ending, however, seem to detract from Smith's earlier message of a decrepit patriarchy in need of change. Particularly problematic are the reinstatement of the family line of ownership, the continuation of the line in Monimia producing an heir, and Orlando's work to restore the Hall (and his own familial property nearby) to its former glory. Indeed, here we might return to the radical journey through unfamiliar landscapes that represent Orlando's liberal education. In inheriting the Hall he does not *modernize* the home, but restore it—eschewing the wild and unpredictable landscapes of potential for the archaic

but organized landscapes of predictability. Shortly after *The Old Manor House* was published, Uvedale Price criticized the landscaping efforts of Capability Brown for transforming natural wildness into order on manorial estates, for the demands of the wealthy for “smoothing” over potential.³⁸ Here at the novel’s close, it appears as though Orlando reverses all he has learned in his journey to embrace an English system that only values him because he himself is now landed.

Furthermore, the will instructs Orlando to purchase a baronetcy upon inheritance of the Hall, folding the soldier changed by his American experience back into a patriarchal tradition, made especially repugnant by the title’s lack of connection to historic nobility and availability for purchase. Smith then suggests with her rapid conclusion that neat endings and significant change remains relegated to the realm of fairytales. Whatever Orlando grew to stand for in America, he abandons it at the novel’s close. Interestingly, also given a place of prominence at Orlando and Monimia’s Rayland Hall is the old veteran who facilitated Orlando’s connection with Mrs Lennard and thus the reinstatement of the estate. He is given a place on the property and established as a caretaker or guard of Rayland Hall, a daily presence of a martial symbol outside of the grand family estate, seemingly a reminder of some kind to Orlando at what expense he continues the traditions that his military service in America had initially taught him to revile. This marks a change in tone from the excited optimism of *Celestina* and *Desmond* to a more cautious and significantly less hopeful radical mode.

If *The Old Manor House* does not obviously engage with the French Revolution debate in the way of *Desmond*, it is no less political in its content nor its employment of texts with significant political import. However, Smith’s politics themselves have clearly evolved

³⁸ As recorded in Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 120.

in the months after the completion of *Desmond*, her enthusiasm dampened and though her liberalism itself remains unquestioned, her belief in the possibility of successful revolution is worked out over the course of the novel and in the way she chooses to engage with revolutionary thinkers. In this way, *The Old Manor House* is unique among Smith's novels, less hopeful than even the more conservative *Banished Man*, and represents a clear moment in Smith's evolution as a novelist in which the struggle to comprehend the historical present is borne out in her work—radical, but borderline pessimistic; steadfast in her beliefs, yet struggling with their implications.

V. The Banished Man

The epigraph to chapter five of Charlotte Smith's *The Banished Man* reads, "Long were to tell what I have done, what suffer'd, with what pain voyag'd the vast unbounded deep! But I, toil'd out my uncouth passage, forc'd to ride th' untractable abyss."¹ As she did in the three novels previously discussed, Smith evokes Milton's *Paradise Lost* to affirm the politics of her novel. Yet here, rather than a resolutely radical perspective, Smith offers something more measured, more regretful which reflects the sympathetic view of the emigré situation that the novel will portray. At this point in the novel, the party fleeing the castle Rosenheim has just narrowly escaped tragedy after nearly drowning when their coach struggled at a water crossing. Though D'Alonville and the ladies of castle Rosenheim reach safety, they lose contact with their companion, Heurthofen. Chapter five, to which the epigraph applies, sees the safe return of Heurthofen and his remarkable story of how he made his way back to the group. His tale, clearly comprised entirely of lies and exaggerations and designed to enlist pity, is met with skepticism from all, and sarcastic disdain from the young Madame D'Alberg. This moment is mirrored in the passage from *Paradise Lost* that Smith has chosen, which sees Satan return to Hell to his expectant followers to relay the success of his corruption of man. He tells his story and awaits his praise:

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
 Thir universal shout and high applause
 To fill his eare, when contrary he hears
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound
 Of public scorn.²

¹ Charlotte Smith, *The Banished Man*, ed. M.O. Grenby (London: Pickering&Chatto, 2006), 142.

² Milton, *Paradise Lost*, X. 504-9.

As punishment for Satan's role in the Fall, he and the rebel angels have all been transformed into serpents. The praise with which they had formerly adorned Satan's exploits is now a dismal hiss, their outward expressions matching their inward immorality.³ Perhaps foreshadowing Heurthofen's association with the Jacobin party later in the novel, Smith here aligns the rebel Satan with the almoner as they each tell fantastic stories expecting favorable reception only to be met with an unexpected reception. In *Paradise Lost*, the rebel angels are transformed because they, too, played a role in the Fall in that they did nothing to stop Satan's boundless quest for power. In using this epigraph for the chapter, Smith suggests that accepting or encouraging those who do harm is itself harmful and worthy of disdain and punishment. This is a condemnation of Jacobin rhetoric that is distinct from anything found in Smith's earlier works. Here, particular opprobrium is reserved for rhetoric which is a cause for harm to humankind: Heurthofen's words are the lies of a man who will prove complicit in the Reign of Terror by novel's end.

Lucy Newlyn tells us that in the period of the French Revolution, the "very fact of associating one's name with Milton suggested seditious intent or Jacobin principles."⁴ This appears to contradict the overall tone of the novel, which is immensely sympathetic to emigrés and often regrets the actions of the revolutionaries in France; indeed, the novel is often received as Smith's abandonment of her previous radical tendencies.⁵ The nearly two years since the appearance of *The Old Manor House* had certainly seen significant changes in the aftermath of the French Revolution, from the massacre of the Swiss Guards and the September Massacres to the execution of the King and Queen (to which we know Smith to be

³ Wordsworth, too, engaged with this representation of the serpent transformation "rendering sin ugly." See Leonard, *Faithful Labourers*, 413.

⁴ Newlyn, *Paradise Lost*, 36.

⁵ Susan Wolfson wrote that *Banished Man* "marked a retreat" from her earlier work and details the delight of the British press in Smith's supposed conversion. "Emigrants," 543. Grenby refers to it as "a recantation of sorts." *The Anti-Jacobin Novel*, 33.

particularly opposed), the Reign of Terror, and the declaration of war with Smith's England.⁶ Indeed, we might consider Smith's reasoning for setting her novel during this tumultuous time if *The Banished Man* is to be viewed in relationship to her earlier politics. Katherine Astbury records of both opponents and supporters of the Revolution a tendency to set, after the death of Robespierre, narratives during the time of the Revolution in order to process and rewrite the trauma caused by revolution.⁷ Given the record of Smith's disappointment with various violent events of the Revolution in her personal letters, it is unsurprising to consider that she may wish to re-engage her earlier thinking and respond directly to how her politics and the actualities of revolution have thus far coincided. However, though the novel clearly condemns many of the actions taken in the name of revolution, it continues to defend Smith's belief in egalitarianism and reflects a different, milder, version of revolutionary potential seemingly focused on a positive model of nobility and general humanity. In fact, Smith herself notes in the preface that she does not regret her enthusiastic support of the French Revolution, writing:

If I had been convinced I was in an error in regard to what I formerly wrote on the politics of France, I should without hesitation avow it. I still think, however, that no native of England could help *then* rejoicing at the probability there was that the French nation would obtain, with very little bloodshed, that degree of freedom which we have been taught to value so highly. But I think also, that Englishmen must execrate the abuse of the name of Liberty which has followed; they must feel it to be injurious to the *real* existence of that first of blessings, and must contemplate with mingled horror and pity, a people driven by terror to commit enormities which, in the course of a few months, have been more destructive than the despotism of ages: a people who, in place of a mild and well-meaning monarch, have given themselves up to the tyranny of monsters; compared with whom, Nero and Caligula are hardly objects of abhorrence.⁸

⁶ In a letter dated 3 November 1792, Smith writes "I not only wish than an amnesty was pass'd for these ill advisd Men, but that their wretched victim Louis Capet was to be dismiss'd with his family and an ample settlement made upon him...to punish him for the past seems as needless [as] to make him an example for the future..." As found in Smith, *Collected Letters*, 49-50.

⁷ Astbury, 11.

⁸ Smith, *Banished Man*, 109.

Her criticisms of the revolutionaries are impassioned and her reflection softened on the monarchy they had deposed, but her declaration is not a confirmation of still-valued radical ideals but rather a defense of those beliefs held when the world was full of possibility.

What, then, to return to Newlyn, should one make of Smith continuing to associate herself with Milton's radicalism? Later in the same study, Newlyn notes that "Romantic writers turn back to Milton with added interest at moments when they are perplexed by the relation between politics and morality."⁹ Similarly, Robert Hole notes that by the end of 1793—in keeping with the timeline of Smith's publication of the novel—arguments against the French Revolution moved away from the overtly political toward individual morality.¹⁰ Smith's Miltonic quotation, too, focuses on morality—the emphasis is on the punishment received by Satan and his followers for their immoral actions. Indeed, *The Banished Man* is overtly concerned with morality, from the proximity of the plight of Charlotte Denzil to that of her author to the grave immorality of the emigré condition. This is reflected in the circumstances of chapter five which features the quotation as its epigraph. Heurthofen has done nothing particularly wrong at this point, his actions are not censurable, yet his lies sour his companions' perception of him and see him condemned by Smith, the *immorality* of it the reason to link him to Satan, who caused the Fall, and to the Jacobins, who violated the ideals of the Revolution through the Terror.

The conclusion that the violence of the Reign of Terror was an impetus for Smith's shift in political tone from *The Old Manor House* to *The Banished Man* is borne out when we look closely at how the plot of this novel unfolds. The execution of King Louis XVI is woven into the story and—much as Smith expressed in her private letters—D'Alonville and the other emigrés of *The Banished Man* experience great sorrow at his death and despair of

⁹ Newlyn, *Paradise Lost*, 92.

¹⁰ Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 102.

any future hope for their country in the wake of such extreme action.¹¹ Interestingly, the French clergyman, good friend and fellow emigré of D'Alonville, St Remi, quotes Voltaire in this moment. Though qualifying that he is an “author I do not love,” he recites the lines from *L'Orpheline de la Chine*:

Quand le ciel en colere
De ceux qu'il persecute a comble la misere
If les soutient souvent dans le sein des douleurs
Et leur donne un courage egal a leur malheurs.¹²

To associate with Voltaire suggested radical sympathies, and indeed Voltaire's reputation suffered in England because of his connection to the French Revolution as late as 1892.¹³ Though, as discussed previously, Voltaire's personal politics and even the politics of his literary works did not neatly align with the Revolutionary cause, their adoption of him as philosophical hero and foundational figure of the Revolution cemented his legacy. For this particular play, a rewriting of a much older Chinese tale, Voltaire's *The Orphan of China* involves “the confrontation of two non-Christian cultures, but still dealing with moral issues, [and demonstrates] the existence of a natural morality in the world beyond Christian influence. In this sense, the play was much closer to Voltaire's own philosophy of the natural connection between reason and morality, and in fact much more subversive of a conservative ecclesiastical position.”¹⁴ As she did with Satan's speech in *Paradise Lost*, Smith pays particular attention to choosing a passage with moral significance and appears to be focusing on defining a moral imperative for her text, though still through the lens of more broadly

¹¹ “It will avail nothing to shew the ill consequence of being a bad [king] by personal punishment inflicted on the unfortunate Man who could not help being born the Grandson of Louis 15th ... I am persuaded there are on all sides much stronger reasons for dismissing than for destroying him. On this occasion, the Republic should perhaps imitate the magnanimity of Uncle Toby, ‘Go poor devil! Why should we hurt thee? There is surely room enough in the World for Us and thee!’” 3 November, 1792 as appears in Smith, *Collected Letters*, 50.

¹² Smith, *Banished Man*, 239. There are several issues with the French here, both in inconsistencies with Voltaire's play and in the lack of accent marks and clear misuse of “if” rather than “il.” Translation of these lines is discussed in the coming pages.

¹³ Schilling, *Conservative England*, 220.

¹⁴ Carlson, *Voltaire and Theatre*, 99.

radical thought. To continue to emphasize the use of Milton and Voltaire radicalizes her novel even when she is calling into question the actions taken in the name of revolutionary progress. It implies that though Smith has altered aspects of her beliefs, she remains a believer in the foundations that supported the movement in the first place.

The plot of *Orphan of China* aligns closely to the moment in which St Remi learns of the King's execution. In Voltaire's play, a tyrant has taken over the kingdom and seeks to destroy the entire royal family. The King and Queen are executed, but their infant son survives. Zamti orders that his son, the same age, replace the heir and the heir be kept safely in hiding and the conflict of the story lies largely in his wife, Idame, and her reluctance to sacrifice her son for the good of the kingdom. Strangely, the recollection of the Queen's abduction bears similarity to Burke's description of the plight of Marie-Antoinette which Smith herself mocked, and may well have figured into her choice to use this particular play in this moment in *The Banished Man*, knowing as she did that the Queen's own execution would soon follow.¹⁵ The conflict between Idame and Zamti consists of Zamti insisting that she must give up her child because "thou wert a subject ere thou wert a mother" while Idame's impassioned rebuttal rejects "[revering] as gods your sleeping kings, that moulder in the tomb...the rich and poor, the monarch and the slave, are equal all by nature."¹⁶ Echoing some of Smith's most radical passages from her earlier novels, especially those that condemn the Burkean veneration of aristocratic history in favor of the belief that there is no

¹⁵ "Ils pénètrent en foule à la demeure auguste, où de tous les humains le plus grand, le plus juste, d'un front majestueux attendait le trépas. La reine évanouie était entre ses bras." *Orphelin*, Act I, scene ii. All French quotations are as they appear in Voltaire, *Oeuvres Complètes de M. Voltaire* (Aux Deux-Ponts: Sanson et compagnie, 1791-2). Translated as "At length they seized the palace, where the best of sovereigns and of men, with calm composure and resignation yielded to his fate: the wretched queen lay fainting in his arms" in Voltaire, *The Works of Voltaire. A Contemporary Version*, trans. William F. Fleming (New York: E.R. DuMont, 1901), 165. English translations of Voltaire's dramatic works throughout this chapter arise from Fleming.

¹⁶ Voltaire, *Orphelin*, II.iii. The French reads: "Ces rois ensevelis, disparus dans la poudre, sont-ils pour toi des dieux dont tu craignes la foudre? A ces dieux impuissants, dans la tombe endormis, as-tu fait le serment d'assassiner ton fils? Hélas! Grands et petits, et sujets et monarques, distingués un moment par de frivoles marques, égaux par la nature..."

fundamental difference between classes, the selection of these quotations from *Orphan* accentuate the play's radical potential and suggest its synergy with her politics and ethics.

A later English translation of the lines cited by Smith is:

When heaven hath poured out all its wrath upon us,
 And filled up the sad measure of our woes,
 It gives us courage to support our griefs,
 And suits our strength to our calamities¹⁷

Taken in the context of the news of Louis XVI's execution, this could be interpreted as a call for the French to understand their own strength, even in the face of such tragedy and nationwide despair, and to believe that, in that modern cliché, the world only gives us as much as we can handle. As spoken by St Remi, though, these lines appear after the clergyman laments the atrocities of the King's imprisonment and execution as the "villany of a hired banditti," unjustly borne by an ill-advised, but well-intentioned, leader who did not deserve the title of tyrant. He speaks of hope that the execution "will produce a favourable change in our affairs" which will see the masses awaken to the excesses of the Terror and acknowledge the abuses of power undertaken in the name of revolution.¹⁸ It is noteworthy that the passage in Voltaire ends with: "I feel new force, new vigor in my heart, 'midst all my sorrows; henceforth I defy the tyrant, and am mistress of my fate."¹⁹ As in contemporary France, the monarch in *Orphan of China* had been deposed only to have a violent tyranny installed in its place. To leave out this section of Idame's speech rejects an outright defiance of those in power, suggesting perhaps that St Remi—or even Smith—had seen what war was doing to the state of France already and preferred to keep the focus on morality rather than prescribe further action when the last several years had seen such extreme instances of

¹⁷ Voltaire, *Orphan*, V.i (as translated by Fleming).

¹⁸ Smith, *Banished Man*, 239.

¹⁹ Voltaire, *Orphan*, V.i.

violence. However, we must also consider that St Remi cites Voltaire ostensibly in reference to the King, but then qualifies that the quotation “should serve as preparation” for D’Alonville, who is about to receive news that his brother has taken a new name and now serves as a leader of a Jacobin faction in Paris. This transition, then, serves to align the suffering of Idame with the suffering of D’Alonville. Yet, by not including the rest of the passage regarding rising against tyranny, St Remi does not validate D’Alonville’s right to resist his persecution. By emphasizing the need to withstand suffering nobly but refusing to cast the emigré condition as one truly oppressed, St Remi acknowledges that he and the other emigrés did not suffer equally with the masses under the former régime. The passage instead stresses the need for change in the form of the public embracing compassion and reason over pursuit of revolution at any human cost.

Matthew Grenby has argued that in *The Banished Man*, Smith recants her earlier beliefs but with no retrospective evaluation of her previous conviction.²⁰ However, I believe that Smith’s engagement with this Voltaire quotation reveals otherwise; she has softened on some of her earlier positions, certainly, but in refusing to justify the Revolution’s very real human cost, she specifically counteracts her words from her most recent novel. In *The Old Manor House*, Smith appended a passage from Orlando’s military service with the assertion that former exploits of the British military “exceed any thing that happened on the 10th of August, the 2d of September, or at any one period of the execrated Revolution in France—and own, that there are savages of all countries—even of our own!”²¹ Clearly referencing the 1792 storming of the Tuileries, responsible for the deaths of several hundred, and the September Massacres, responsible for the deaths of another thousand or so, Smith in *The Old Manor House* acknowledges the horror of these events of the Revolution yet defends them as part of the necessary struggle for liberty. Smith’s representation of the execution of the King

²⁰ Grenby, *Anti-Jacobin*, 33.

²¹ Smith, *Old Manor House*, 365.

and the plight of the emigrés, though, emphasizes the reality of a human cost to Revolution at the level of singular individuals and declares it in the wrong. As she will throughout the novel, Smith reaffirms her new approach to the morality of reform.

Voltaire's preface to *The Orphan of China* insists that the play is "an extraordinary instance of the natural superiority which reason and genius have over blind force and barbarism" and it does seem as though Smith in *The Banished Man* returns to these foundational principles of the *philosophes* and of the revolution of nature and reason over unnatural power structures, only now she is evaluating these principles with a greater understanding of the human stakes.²² She drives this home in the novel with the description of the state of France under the tyrannical control of the Jacobins when D'Alonville arrives at Vaudrecour:

In every part of France there were formerly great numbers of those animals which in England are called game; for the preservation of which those forest laws were made, which though not enforced, remain as records of our subjection; and from whence have sprung the subsequent game laws, the continual source of oppression and dispute. These animals appeared to be extirpated in France; and not only the wild boar, deer, and fox, of whose depredations the farmers had so justly complained, were destroyed, but every bird or beast that had formerly been appropriated to the pleasure of the great. . . Even the woodlark, the robin, or the thrush, which at this season are usually heard among the woods, chaunting faint preludes to the more general music of advancing spring, were scared away.²³

Here Smith specifically blames the Jacobins for the destructiveness of their actions. Though previous monarchical reigns had been marked as tyrannical, their laws as oppressive or subjugating, game abounded—signaling that the natural world still had space to flourish. The total devastation of the current regime, the complete absence of animals, even those not regulated or predatory but purely innocent and natural creatures such as songbirds, instead marks the Jacobins and the Reign of Terror as the true destroyers of France.

²² "Voilà un grand exemple de la supériorité naturelle que donnent la raison et le génie sur la force aveugle et barbare," Voltaire, preface to *Orphelin*.

²³ Smith, *Banished Man*, 319.

Smith's negative portrayal of Jacobin-controlled France is contrasted throughout the novel with a positive portrayal of emigrés, particularly the novel's hero, D'Alonville. We first meet him in distress, with a gravely injured father and pursued by the Jacobin army. He is rescued and then cared for by the women of Rosenheim castle, Madame de Rosenheim and her daughter, Madame D'Alberg. As a group with the almoner Heurthofen, they then attempt to make their way to Coblenz for safety, then on to Vienna where the Baron Rosenheim has connections. Smith interrupts their journey with news from Madame Rosenheim in which she informs D'Alonville that she has left important papers hidden at Castle Rosenheim, which is under imminent attack from the approaching army. Without them, the Rosenheims will have no future claim to their property, even if the current regime is eventually deposed. D'Alonville hears this and immediately resolves to retrieve these papers for his rescuers, with no regard for his own safety. Smith prefaces this chapter with another epigraph from Voltaire, "il n'est point de peril que je n'ose affronter, je hazarderai tout."²⁴ Here, Smith's choice of Voltaire not only affirms the heroism of the emigré D'Alonville, but also clearly comments on the state of the French people. Voltaire's play *Amélie* sees the heroine caught between two brothers, one whom she loves, Vamir, who fights on behalf of the King, and the other the Prince who rescued her from captivity but now confines her to jail while he demands she marry him despite her affections that lie elsewhere. She demands to know if "because he saved me once, has he a right now to oppress me?"²⁵ Here, Smith acknowledges that while the French people were saved in many ways from monarchical oppression, this has given the radical regime in power the impression that they are free to act and demand as they wish, even if it means further subjugating those they once sought to free. Amélie's desire to escape jail, whatever harm it may cause her, and restore her freedom of choice is mirrored in D'Alonville's journey to retrieve the property papers that though they do not guarantee safety

²⁴ Smith, *Banished Man*, 149. As found in Voltaire, *Amélie*, I.ii. "There is no danger I do not dare to face, I will risk everything."

²⁵ Voltaire, *Amélie*, I.ii "Quoi, pour m'avoir sauvée, il faudra qu'il m'opprime!"

or freedom, at least give the Rosenheims a chance at returning to their own home in the distant future.

The papers themselves align the Rosenheims with a distinctly liberal form of aristocratic government. Madame D'Alberg lets slip that the papers give special dispensation to permit a woman to inherit even though they specify that the property should be inherited through a direct line. In contrast to the turbulent, violent, and immoral portrayal of the French radicals, Smith takes care to present a positive hierarchical ideal, and one in stark contrast to the portrayal of English hierarchy in the *Aberdore*s of Rock-March. In comparison to the Rosenheims, who are pitiable and charitable, she describes Lord Aberdore as “one of those ambitious men who, without talents, aspire to the first places of power and patronage...as meanly humble to their superiors, as insolent and overbearing towards whoever they consider as their inferiors...He considered his children no otherwise, than as beings who were to perpetuate or aggrandize his family.”²⁶ Of Lady Aberdore, D'Alonville recounts “that if the real character of Lady Aberdore was to be guessed at from her countenance, it would be pronounced totally unlike what it really was; for neither her features or her manner intimated that rage for admiration, or that resolution to govern, which her conduct clearly evinced.”²⁷ Lady Aberdore is as far from possessing the moral character of Madames Rosenheim and D'Alberg as can be, and she is specially marked, as is her husband, because she desires only power over others and the enhancement of family fortune. In this way, Smith moves away from more idealistic representations of what a “revolution” can offer to either France or Britain in order to suggest that though class difference is unlikely to be eradicated, those who govern must retain certain characteristics to govern well and to wield their power wisely. The Rosenheim women, in their treatment of D'Alonville, come to

²⁶ Smith, *Banished Man*, 416.

²⁷ Smith, *Banished Man*, 426.

represent Smith's more positive and aspirational leadership based on the foundational principles of equality, reason, and humanity.

Unfortunately for D'Alonville, the charity of the Rosenheim women is still vulnerable to the caprices of their husbands. In fact, when D'Alonville is informed that he must be separated from Madame Rosenheim due to the ill feelings held by the Baron and Count D'Alberg, Charlotte Smith returns to that well-known phrase from *Paradise Lost* that she used in *Celestina*: she tells us "the world was all before him where to chuse." But here, rather than leave it at this hopeful stopping point, Smith follows it with "but no part of it offered to him a place of rest."²⁸ These lines from *Paradise Lost* concern Adam leaving Eden with Eve after the Fall. Lucy Newlyn writes:

Milton's conception of Eden provided the focus for sustained attempts to rebuild Paradise in the fallen world—as a political actuality, a linguistic possibility, or a millenarian ideal. The eighteenth century was indeed nostalgically haunted by Eden as pastoral metaphor—a metaphor which seemed in *Paradise Lost* itself to establish the state of perfection both as an absolute that had been lost and as a recoverable possibility.²⁹

It is the possibility that stands out in *Celestina* but in this moment in *The Banished Man*—D'Alonville friendless, persecuted by his own country, and without a respite in sight—it is the "absolute loss" that is most clearly felt. If Eden is a utopia on earth, an attempt to figure paradise as political ideal, it can be read as an oversimplified vision of revolutionary possibility with Adam and Eve unencumbered by social demands and living as relative equals. As we saw earlier, Smith utilizes this particular phrase from Milton in *Celestina* in such a way as to suggest that the Fall and the vast expanse before Adam are good things, possibilities to be explored and Eden a "recoverable possibility." Here, Smith specifically revisits her earlier political beliefs. In 1791, the quotation gestured to a hope that France could rebuild a society more closely representing a political ideal, perhaps one that could

²⁸ Smith, *Banished Man*, 182.

²⁹ Newlyn, *Paradise Lost*, 20.

carry over to England. In *Celestina*, Smith acknowledges the Revolution might have costs, as did original sin, but that the paradise awaiting would be “happier far.” In *The Banished Man*, though, she reevaluates the possibility of a “paradise within” after the Terror. D’Alonville, the virtuous hero, is despondent, resolving to leave the only friends he has with no aim in sight. Like Adam, he cannot go home, but the emphasis is on him having nowhere to turn; the world before him is not full of possibility, it is only cruel. As an emigré, he is wanted neither by his own country nor by those from whom he seeks sanctuary. By leaving the world open to him, Smith suggests there is a plausibility for a revolutionary future but by combining it with D’Alonville’s constant itineracy, she emphasizes that this may be a seemingly endless quest. As she has done throughout the novel, Smith focuses on the morality of political action and here manages to condemn not only those in power in France, but England as well for its inhumanity and failure to see an equal in a suffering man.

Upon departing Vienna, D’Alonville resolves to seek asylum in England, where his friend Ellesmere has a place for him. Smith makes the interesting move to quote Voltaire again here, placing the lines prominently at the close of the chapter which sees D’Alonville leave the immediate threat of French persecution. The next chapter begins with his arrival in England and the clarity of the separation between these two settings and prominence of Voltaire’s name in the text itself (rather than relegated to footnote) only emphasizes the quotation further. Smith again utilizes *The Orphan of China*, writing, “dans des fleuves de sang, tant d’innocens plangés le fei de tous côtés dévastant cet empire tous ces champs de carnage.”³⁰ The editor, Matthew Grenby, identifies the lines as from Act II scene iii of *Orphan* and translates them as “in rivers of blood so many innocent people are submerged the sword falls from all sides destroying this empire, all these fields of carnage.” Though it is typical for Smith to misquote slightly, her citation here is quite a bit more egregious. In fact,

³⁰ Smith, *Banished Man*, 225.

nothing particularly resembles the ferocity of Smith's own violent verbiage directed at the empire itself. The only passage that mentions "rivers of blood" actually occurs in Act I, scene ii: "par des fleuves de sang, se frayant une entrée sur les corps entassés de nos frères mourants, portant par-tout le glaive et les feux dévorants."³¹ Though it does speak to the revolutionary rhetoric of fraternity, there is no mention of empire in the vicinity. However, Grenby does not believe this was Smith's intended reference and identifies her quotation as lines from Act II, scene iii. The most similar passage there is, in fact, the same one which I quoted earlier, regarding the reverence of dead kings and insisting on the equality of humankind. In this passage is the play's only reference related to the loss of empire: "J'ai vu nos murs en cendre, et ce trône abattu, j'ai pleuré de nos rois les disgraces affreuses; mais par quelle fureurs[...] veux-tu [...] livrer le sang d'un fils qu'on n'on ne demande pas?"³² Idame's words are not focused on the oppression of her country's people as are those given in Smith; they focus rather on the fate of one person—her son. Whether Smith transposed the two quotations or purposefully reapplied Idame's despondency at the loss of her son to the loss of innocent lives in the formation of the Republic, Smith's citation accompanies D'Alonville's assertion that "I had learned to be proud of my country. I now blush to be called a Frenchman." The violence of the Terror has haunted his very existence. It is crucial, too, that the emphasis here is on action. Thus far, her quotations have emphasized the philosophical but the violence and agency in Smith's vocabulary ("submerged," "destroying," "the sword falls") expressly condemn the actions rather than the principles of the French.

If the portrayal of France has a clear positive in Castle Rosenheim and a clear negative in the Reign of Terror, Smith's portrayal of England is significantly more complex

³¹ Voltaire, *Orphelin*, I.ii. "through rivers of blood, they cleared a path through the piled-up bodies of our dying brothers, carrying everywhere the sword and ravaging fires"

³² Voltaire, *Orphelin*, II.iii. "I have seen our walls in ash, and this throne cut down, I have wept over our king and the terrible disgraces ... but by what rage do you wish to pour forth an infant's guiltless blood, yet undemanded?"

and this is clear from D'Alonville's first steps on English shores. Though "he saw numbers of his countrymen thrown from every comfort of life, on the bounty of a nation, which, by an effort of generosity, conquered, or at least concealed, their ancient enmity, to lend them assistance," he was also spat on and hissed at and finds an entire nation hostile to him simply because of his place of birth.³³ Smith is happy to condemn the turn that the Revolution has taken in France, but she is less willing to declare a moral victory for the English. Instead, she presents a multitude of positions on the privileged classes, those who continue to lead England and likely will for the foreseeable future given the reaction to the events in France. Though the young Ellesmere, friend of D'Alonville, is portrayed as a progressive and moral man who provides for his siblings and fights for the "correct" side, his father and the family seat of Eddisbury-hall are represented as an outdated form of English hierarchy. A new neighbor of the elder Ellesmere had the audacity to build a better (bigger) house than Eddisbury-hall, where he "placed a bust of Franklin in his vestibule (a vestibule in the house of a mechanic!), had Ludlow among his books, quoted Milton to his companions, and drank to the rights of man."³⁴ This new kind of landowner earned his money (he was a button maker) rather than inherited it, and his republican sympathies are emphasized by his admiration of Franklin and Milton. Such a man is a disruption to the status quo and is hated by the family, and they are relieved when he is replaced by someone new—a Mr Darnly who has a great deal of wealth and recently returned from thirty years in India. Smith writes that "Franklin and his round-heads were swept away for ever. Instead of pictures of Price and Priestley, the aspiring Pagoda was represented on the painted satin that covered the walls, and around them josses and mandarins of gold and ivory, nodded on brackets of or moulu."³⁵ Rather than believe in the "rights of man" as did his predecessor, Darnly's wealth arises out of the colonial enterprise. He removes the odes to pro-French Revolution figures Richard

³³ Smith, *Banished Man*, 227.

³⁴ Smith, *Banished Man*, 372.

³⁵ Smith, *Banished Man*, 372.

Price and Joseph Priestley and instead ostentatiously decorates his estate with the spoils of Britain's foreign holdings—gold, ivory, silks. Both Darnly and the button maker found their wealth in “new money” distinct from the inherited holdings of the elder Ellesmere, but the elder Ellesmere's appreciation of the former clearly aligns the colonialists most closely with traditional hierarchies. Smith condemns them both through the marriage that unites the two families. Darnly is presented with the option to marry Ellesmere's eldest daughter, and despite his fifty years of age, chooses not the eldest but the youngest, Theodora, whose “childish manners and innocent simplicity made [her], at the first interview, a slave of the Nabob of Darnly Park.”³⁶ Smith spares no pity for Theodora, who “when she looked in the face of her lover, was almost ready to cry; but when she tried on the jewels he gave her, and contemplated the carriages, the servants, the houses, she was to be mistress of, she could not help shewing her childish joy, together with a degree of triumph over her eldest sister.”³⁷ The focus on negative depictions of the established social hierarchy and condemnation of colonial wealth, particularly when we find them placed in direct contradiction to a republican philosophical ideal, indicate that—for this author—the current state of England's politics is not much above that of the French. While she admits that the Revolution itself has gone poorly, her positive portrayals of the Rosenheims and the multitude of emigrés indicate that she, unlike the many who attempt to persecute D'Alonville, is not blindly nationalistic in the wake of the war between England and France but desires to find a political model that acknowledges the good in the foundations of both systems.

Nowhere is it more evident that Smith still believes in 1794 that a change, if not a revolution, is necessary for a fair and moral society than in her personalization of the plight of her heroine, Charlotte Denzil. Remarkably similar to Smith herself, Denzil authors books to support herself and her family and has been cruelly abused by the legal system. She is also

³⁶ Smith, *Banished Man*, 375.

³⁷ Smith, *Banished Man*, 375.

particularly a victim of issues of inheritance and the rights of women that were major concerns of the Revolution. As she mentioned in her preface to *The Banished Man*, Smith had long been accused of putting too much of her own life in her novels. Not only does she then defiantly place her most realized and accurate self-portrait into this novel, but she also explicitly calls attention to its political implications by again foregrounding Milton. The epigraph to chapter nine of the third volume comes from Milton's closet drama *Samson Agonistes* and reads:

I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,
 How counterfeit a coin they are, who friends
 Bear in their superscription: (of the most
 I would be understood) in prosperous days
 They swarm; but in adverse, withdraw their beams,
 Not to be found though sought.³⁸

Samson is a political prisoner, blinded and thus a prisoner to his body as well. Though Smith through Denzil condemns those who offer their friendship in good times but offer nothing in the times in which she struggles to support her very existence, it is the parallel of Samson's imprisonment with that of Denzil that is most significant in this chapter. Mrs Denzil has been expelled from her home with no recourse, the money her children have legal right to is inaccessible because of the machinations of a man and the legal system, making her both a prisoner of politics but also her body. At the crux of her legal woes is her status as a woman. Thus, it is particularly interesting that Smith aligns Denzil with a male political prisoner. Though the French Revolution did not initiate questions of gender, it certainly made issues of women's rights and, particularly, the right to political participation, a more urgent concern. In Revolutionary France, women had become increasingly politically active and thus,

³⁸ Smith, *Banished Man*, 341.

legislation was enacted to curb this increased engagement including the October 1793 abolishment of women's political clubs, a law which was passed while Smith was finishing the composition of *The Banished Man*.³⁹ Smith herself had experienced the poor reception for women who engaged in public political activity in England, in which women who dared to speak of politics and philosophy were deemed manly and just a few years later would be called "unsex'd females" in Richard Polwhele's famous invective.⁴⁰ To align Denzil (and herself) with the recognized, specifically political, plight of a male prisoner forces acknowledgment of the political implications of female disenfranchisement while still allowing Smith to appear not to engage in overt polemics. Yet, it reinforces that continuing to participate in politics is precisely Smith's intention and that she does not perceive it as a purely masculine realm. Indeed, we can tie this back to Smith's earlier quotation of Idame from *The Orphan of China*. By suppressing the maternal aspects of Idame's speech, Smith rejects the role expected of her and focuses on her ability to participate politically—to form her own opinions and actively resist tyranny—entirely outside of the domestic space.⁴¹ Though Idame's speech focused on her own personal tyranny, Smith turns this outward to demonstrate the potential for women to comprehend and engage in mass political conversations.

The entirety of chapter nine is dedicated to the dilemma of Mrs Denzil's situation, and though it has little bearing on the plot of the novel itself, it had obvious importance for Smith. Denzil's impassioned letter to Ellesmere is clear about the relationship between her family's

³⁹ For more on women and political participation in Revolutionary France, see Sara E. Melzer and Leslie W. Rabine, *Rebel Daughters: Women and the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁴⁰ There is a wealth of information on the political participation of women writers and their perceived masculinity in Adriana Craciun, *British Women Writers and the French Revolution: Citizens of the World* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

⁴¹ Maternity in Rousseau and expectations of motherhood have been discussed earlier in relation to *Desmond*. It is also notable here that even authors such as Mary Wollstonecraft, who argued passionately for women's rights and against the slavery of the institution of marriage, still believed that involved motherhood was an essential role for women. Smith herself was a loving mother of many children, so I do not contend that she disagreed with the importance of motherhood, only that here she chooses to emphasize the political potential for women outside of the domestic sphere.

struggles and the French Revolution. I will include it at length here because it so accurately encapsulates Smith's thinly veiled emotions.

*I, who am, in my own country, reduced to a situation as distressing as that which they are thrown into by being driven from theirs—I, who am deprived, by fraud and perfidy, of my whole income, and compelled to procure a precarious subsistence, by my pen, for my children and myself—I have, perhaps, felt more for those unfortunate victims of political fury, than those who have not known by experience what it is to fall from affluence to indigence...It naturally awakens all one's sympathies [...] but, in every species of humiliation and mortification, none of the unhappy exiled French have suffered, perhaps, more than I have done; inasmuch as however hard it may be to be thrown, by the convulsions of an empire, on the mercy of strangers, it is still worse to say, in one's own, "I became a reproof among mine enemies, but especially among my neighbours."*⁴²

In this passage, Smith makes clear that aside from her own personal pain, the mistreatment of women such as Denzil is a political issue—they are being abused by their own country, and not for the sake of establishing a new form of idealistic empire, but as a matter of course. For Smith, there are foundational inequalities in the English system that demand address. She bookends this portrayal of Mrs Denzil, politicizing it further by returning to Voltaire. In chapter two of the fourth volume, we learn that Mrs Denzil has grown ill and weak from the effects of poverty and mistreatment and is dying. For the epigraph to this chapter, Smith turns to Voltaire's *Olympie*: "Je sens, que de mes jours, usés dans l'amertume le flambeau pâissant s'éteint et se consume/ *I feel that the torch of my sad days grows pale and dim.*"⁴³ The speaker of these lines, Statira, is the wife of the slain Alexander and has spent fifteen years in hiding because "public robberies [are] called great exploits."⁴⁴ Beaten down by the effects of her ill-treatment and the daily struggle to merely survive, Mrs Denzil will sacrifice her body to the public robberies of the legal system.

This portrayal of Smith's conception of the exploitative English system as it currently stands is underlined in the caricature that is the castle of Rock-March. Filled with velvet

⁴² Smith, *Banished Man*, 344.

⁴³ Smith, *Banished Man*, 394.

⁴⁴ "Et larcins publics appelés grands exploits" Voltaire, *Olympie*, II.ii.

beds, marble tables, Raphaels and Rembrandts, the castle, home of the Aberdore, is particularly notable in that D'Alonville seeks a cottage in which to install his lover and finds that "no such little rural building diversified the landscape."⁴⁵ From within the walls of Rock-March, one cannot visibly locate a single rural building, one that would belong to those in the lower classes. This mirrors the lack of concern for the lower classes shown by the castle's inhabitants, marked earlier in the description of Lady Aberdore, but particularly shown on the night of a horrific fire, in which D'Alonville was presumed to be inside the flaming portion of the building and yet numerous members of the household all but leave him to die until the young heir Aurevalle rushes to save him. D'Alonville is proved safe and is, in fact, fighting back the fire with the help of other servants. Aurevalle again leaps to assist, but Lord Aberdore himself is relieved when D'Alonville insists that he retire to his own quarters. Meanwhile, Lady Aberdore wistfully imagines a world in which the castle had been destroyed completely so that she would not be forced to endure returning to the rural home she detests. Fletcher writes that the scene is made more complex due to Rock-March's near incineration occurring as it did as a result of the exhaustion of the maids, worked tirelessly by Lady Aberdore. She calls it "emblematic...[of] a threat of possible insurrection through the exploitation of the lowest class."⁴⁶ Smith's parodic portrayal of Rock-March combined with the possibility of its destruction emphasize the inhumanity of this English hierarchy, who exist entirely within a framework of fundamental difference between classes, extending even to D'Alonville who until recently was their equal in wealth and status. Only Aurevalle stands as a hopeful possibility for the future of the Aberdore—heroic, moral, rational—and tellingly, he is the only one of the family in communion with the peasant class. Though Smith seems to hold little regard for the English ruling class, her portrayal of Aurevalle displays a hopeful future. As in her portrayal of the Rosenheims, this future is not predicated

⁴⁵ Smith, *Banished Man*, 422.

⁴⁶ Fletcher, *Critical Biography*, 220.

on sweeping reform but on mild concessions to the broad principles of equality, morality, and reason.

While Aurevalle is the youthful model of possibility for the Aberdores, Smith also presents two more realized figures of ideal reform in the post-Terror world, figures that she will unite in a revision of Rousseau's *Clarens* at the novel's end. The first is Carlowitz, a Polish revolutionary who meets D'Alonville and Ellesmere and relays his story and his hopes for Poland in the wake of the war between his country and Russia. In using Carlowitz, Smith sets up a standard for positive and negative revolution. Increased agitation for reform in Poland had been linked to the early stages of the French Revolution and Poland's Great Sejm in 1788-1792 had produced a Constitution declaring equality between classes, something Smith would have admired. However, Russia's unhappiness with the changes in Poland and fears of Polish unity with the French occasioned an invasion that resulted in war and the partition of Poland and acquiescence of territory to the Russians. Carlowitz is an impassioned advocate of freedom and revolutionary beliefs, yet he travels to Paris and recounts,

I thought I should have found in the new land of freedom, persons in whom I should meet congenial sentiments, and be admitted to serve the cause in which my whole soul was engaged; but how cruelly I was disappointed, you may imagine, when I tell you that I quitted almost immediately a place where I saw and heard actions and language more inimical to the cause of the real liberty and happiness of mankind, than could have proceeded from the united efforts of every despot that had ever insulted the patience of the world.⁴⁷

Carlowitz is portrayed as a caring father, kind to his fellow man, blind to national difference, and a fervent supporter of revolution, yet he is disgusted and ashamed by the conditions in Jacobin France. Though Russia's invasion and annexation of Poland is clearly figured as wrong, so too is the French Revolution founded on the same principles as those he himself holds. For Smith, it is wrong to take what does not belong to you, but it is worse (*more*

⁴⁷ Smith, *Banished Man*, 380.

inimical to liberty than all despots combined) to do so in the name of freedom. Yet, even after prolonged time in exile and his experience in France, “his zeal in the cause of his country was still indefatigable, and he now proposed to try what could be done in London to interest the humanity, and awaken the spirit of freedom in a nation celebrated for both; and should he be fortunate enough to receive any encouragement, he intended to return into Poland, and once more attempt to rouse the dormant or timid virtue of his country.”⁴⁸ Not only is Carlowitz still hopeful for reform, but also Smith takes care explicitly to link this potential to action on the part of Britain. Practically, Poland requires the assistance of the British Army to take on future challenges from Russia, but Smith calls on English pride by referencing their humanity and innate desire for freedom to remind the English that these broader principles of revolution are not tainted by the failures of the French Revolution and still worthy of pursuit. Carlowitz’s hope for a Polish future of reform is Charlotte Smith’s hope for an English future of the same.

A companion to Carlowitz, Edward Ellesmere is Smith’s most significant portrayal of an optimistic English future. Ellesmere’s character is ultimately a compromise. He is of the established social hierarchy by birth and respectful of his father’s wishes even when they conflict with his own and of the Revolution, “so disgusted by the folly, the wickedness, and unmanly cruelty of the persons into whose hands the government of [France] had fallen, wished nothing so ardently, as that the combined armies might put a final end to the war.”⁴⁹ Yet, Ellesmere is clearly progressive and repeatedly withstands social pressures to continue his friendships with the emigrés. Though he ultimately inherits his father’s fortune and Eddisbury-hall upon the untimely death of his elder brother, he has no desire to reside in the family seat or marry among his class as is expected and resolves to quit the home, and England if need be, with his love Alexina, daughter of Carlowitz. In uniting Ellesmere

⁴⁸ Smith, *Banished Man*, 387.

⁴⁹ Smith, *Banished Man*, 341.

through an unequal marriage with the poor daughter of the Polish revolutionary, Smith again explicitly links the future of England with a country in support of principles of equality and one still capable of practical reform. In contrast to the revolutionary sentiments in her earlier novels, it appears that by the time of *The Banished Man*, Smith has decided that such practical reform begins with a constitutional monarchy. Though it is suggested that the liberally minded Ellesmere was, like Smith, initially in favor of the French Revolution and now horrified by the events of the Terror, he expresses that if reforms had been “carried on by reason and justice, [they] would have rendered France, under a limited monarchy, the most flourishing and happy nation of Europe.” Despite her damning portrayals of French radicals and positive depictions of the English hierarchy, Smith’s radical sympathies have not disappeared but moderated. In *Ellesmere*, she shows us that small concessions are still progress and that reform does not necessitate total revolution.

Charlotte Smith ends her novel by returning to a favorite work, Rousseau’s *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Ellesmere and Alexina have married and live without fortune in London and D’Alonville replies to his most recent letter to inform him that he, his wife Angelina, and her mother Mrs Denzil are now in Northern Italy, near the Swiss border. He recounts sublime scenes of mountains until Mrs Denzil takes the pen, and after detailed description of the natural flora, quotes on D’Alonville’s bidding:

Ajouter à tout cela les illusions de l’optique les pointes des monts differemment éclairés, le clair obscur du soleil et des ombres, et tous les accidens de lumière qui en résultoient le matin et le soir; vous aurez quelque idée des scènes continuelles qui ne cessent d’attirer mon admiration, et qui sembloient m’être offerts en un vrai théâtre: car la perspective des monts étant verticale, frappe les yeux tout a la fois, et bien plus puissamment que celle des plaines qui ne se voit qu’obliquement en fuyant et dont chaque objet vous en cache un autre.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Smith, *Banished Man*, 477-478. Grenby translates this passage as: “Add to all that the optical illusions, the differently lit peaks of the mountains, some obscure, some in sun and shade, and all the tricks of the lights which happen in the morning and the evening; you will have some idea of the continually changing scenes which never ceased to attract my admiration, and which seemed to offer me true theatre: the mountains appear so vertical that

Merely a description of the Swiss countryside, the Rousseau passage adds no spectacular meaning to D'Alonville's letter, but it does politicize it. As she does earlier in volume four, Smith utilizes here an early letter from *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, suggesting a privileging of Julie and St Preux's idealistic relationship rather than the realities of the influence of society at large.⁵¹ To situate this within the larger context of an escape from England and residence among the spectacular natural world further separates D'Alonville, Angelina, and her aggrieved mother from the wrongs that the English and French have afflicted. Cranston writes that for Rousseau, "in the civilized world, men are enslaved; in the state of nature no one can enslave anyone else" and for these three figures, such a freedom is a true utopia.⁵² No longer will D'Alonville be unjustly persecuted, no longer will Mrs Denzil struggle against unfair laws. The end of *La Nouvelle Héloïse* sees a community established in which success is defined by the community itself, a paradise in that it was Rousseau's moral freedom for man on a social scale. Yet, Dart argues that the novel's end is ambiguous in that it "it is possible to read either in terms of the return of repressed 'revolutionary' desire, or as the final stage in the domestication and sublimation of St Preux's passion."⁵³ By focusing on the earlier volumes, Smith avoids this political ambiguity and clearly aligns herself with Rousseau's argument for a state of nature. Smith articulates her view through the words of Charlotte Denzil, embracing a philosophy that "rejects the idea that the family is natural or that males and females are naturally different; in his state of nature, males and females are equal and almost identical in their powers and their independence."⁵⁴ In this way, too, Smith

they strike the eyes all at the same time and more strongly than that of the plains, which one sees only obliquely in passing, so that each object gives way to another."

⁵¹ Smith, *Banished Man*, 431. The epigraph to chapter six reads "O chere et precieuse moitiéde mon ame! Hâtons-nous d'ajouter à ces ornemens du printemps, la presence de deux amans fideles." The quotation is from *La Nouvelle Héloïse* part I, letter 38 and aligns St Preux and Julie with D'Alonville and Angelina, for whom he has just secured a house in the countryside near Rock-March. Grenby translates thusly: "Oh dear and precious half of my soul, let us hurry to add the presence of two faithful lovers to these ornaments of spring."

⁵² Maurice Cranston, "Rousseau's Theory of Liberty," in *Rousseau and Liberty*, ed. Robert Wokler (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 231.

⁵³ Gregory Dart, *Rousseau*, 124.

⁵⁴ Cranston, "Rousseau's Liberty," 234.

returns to the problem of D'Alonville having the world all before him but nowhere to rest. The political realities of both France and England render them insupportable to D'Alonville or his liberal companions but the place of rest that eventually offers itself to the group is republican Switzerland and Rousseauian depictions of the natural world for which Smith had shown a preference in *The Old Manor House*. Smith, then, shows that for her, the French Revolution has abandoned its ideals but that those ideals are still at the core of her political beliefs.

In contrast to the societal construction of family which in France saw D'Alonville punished for his birthright and abused by a brother and in England saw the Denzils left destitute and at the mercy of legal recourse, Smith's natural Rousseauian world sees the formation of an international union adhering to moral code rather than civil one. Here she suggests that Eden lies not in Clarens, but in the virtue of Julie herself, and morality, equality, humanity, and reason are at the heart of a truly utopian society. That she chooses to make this argument through Rousseau and his association with the founding ideas of the Revolution yet again suggests that Smith closes her novel by reasserting what she demonstrates throughout: that her radicalism may have waned, but her revolutionary sensibilities and support of the necessity of reform remain steadfast.

VI. Conclusions

This study has charted Charlotte Smith's political evolution through her frequent engagement with Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire. *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, published in 1788 and 1789 respectively, provide a starting point for how we might understand Smith's developing radicalism. In these novels, Smith reveals her concerns for the inequalities systemically wrought by English society and navigates issues of women's vulnerability. However, in these earliest novels her allusive relationship with the three authors discussed here is infrequent and minimal in comparison to the shift we see in Smith's work post-Revolution. We have seen that *Celestina* (1791), her most optimistic and utopian work, features a setting in 1789 France and uses repeated references to Milton's Eden and the idealized relationship between Rousseau's St Preux and Julie to code her work as hopeful for a Revolutionary future. *Desmond* (1792) takes place entirely in the context of Revolutionary France and in her frequent quotations from the letters and pamphlets of Rousseau and Voltaire alongside references to the political actions taken by Voltaire to free victims of old regime tyranny, Smith moves from excited optimism to outright exhortation for political action. *The Old Manor House* (1793) sees the action move from France to 1770s America, and Smith utilizes allusion to Rousseau's beliefs on education and nature to codify America as a potential model for English reform. Here Smith appears to abandon some of her radical intensity and indeed, she begins to question the viability of the French Revolution but in using Rousseau's principles for the foundation of ideal society in conjunction with the American Revolution, she demonstrates that she remains open to the potential for reform. With *The Banished Man*, Smith returns to a backdrop of the French Revolution, but in contrast to her utopian model in *Celestina* or her polemical rhetoric in *Desmond*, the novel of 1794 sees Smith turn primarily to the dramatic works of Voltaire. Through quotations from dramatic and philosophic works, Smith in *The Banished Man* displays an allegiance to the

foundational principles of the *philosophes*—those based on equality, pity, and tolerance—that often seem to belie the regret she espouses in describing the various abuses of the Revolution through her émigré characters. *The Banished Man* is not the withdrawal from liberalism many might expect it to be, nor is it as bleak as it could be given its attention to the execution of the royal family and plot centered on the displaced and dispossessed.

We have seen how Smith's earliest novels, *Emmeline* and *Ethelinde*, begin to reveal her proto-feminist sympathies and general liberalism. However, they minimally engage with either national political issues or these three authors linked to revolutionary thought. *Emmeline* focuses largely on the personal plight of the heroine, and accordingly provides just one short quotation of Milton's and a brief, vague allusion to Rousseau. *Ethelinde* in 1789 sees Smith more concerned with national issues, in this case colonial exploitation, but again she provides just two brief allusions. It is the onset of the French Revolution which provokes a marked change in Smith's allusive engagement with Milton, Voltaire, and Rousseau. Her next four novels all take place against a backdrop of revolution—be it French or American. In these Revolutionary-era novels, as her engagement with real historical and political events increases so, too, does Smith's use of direct quotation from these favored authors. Her novels most overtly engaged with specific events of the French Revolution, *Desmond* and *The Banished Man*, are not coincidentally the novels in which she is most allusive.¹ What is particularly interesting is that these two novels, and all of Smith's others, espouse entirely distinct political philosophies. Though the French Revolution inaugurates Smith's particular method of allusive engagement with these writers, directed reading of each instance of quotation reveals the nuance with which she treats each reference. Through her novels, we can trace Smith's immediate response to historical and political events as she cited these

¹ Refer again to figures 1.1 and 1.2

authors and developed extended allusions within the context of references to political concerns of both small and large scale.

Smith's allusive technique and devotion to liberal ideals did not abruptly cease in the years following the Terror. Let us then observe how her political evolution is borne out in Smith's later novels. The years 1795-1801 saw the publication of three more novels, of which I discuss two here.² I do not consider *Montalbert* (1795) since it contains one sole quotation from the three authors with which this thesis is concerned.³ Tellingly, *Montalbert* is also completely devoid of a national political context for its plot. Fletcher's biography of Smith covers well the sexual politics of the novel but even she comments on the strangeness for Smith of a novel "without national political content altogether."⁴ Indeed, we might observe the coincidence of a novel marked by its lack of specific political engagement and Smith's decision to refrain from allusion to these three favored authors, particularly given the first novel which I cover here—*Marchmont* (1796). Unlike *Montalbert*, *Marchmont* is very deliberately set in a national political framework focusing on the history of the title family against the backdrop of the English Civil War. Smith directly cites or alludes to Milton, Voltaire, or Rousseau seventeen times in this novel. The majority of these occur in volumes three and four, which see fifteen such allusions, and in which Marchmont records his journey through France in July through December of 1793. With so much authorial engagement in the novel, I focus my reading here on a few instances in which Smith utilizes multiple quotations in a single chapter and on the novel's repeated references to *Candide*.

² Though *The Letters of a Solitary Wanderer* (1801) is often listed among Smith's novels, Fletcher and others say it is better categorized as a series of novellas. Though certainly engaged in political commentary, because of this generic difference with the other texts analyzed in this thesis, I have refrained from comparing this work to Smith's other efforts in fiction.

³ Charlotte Smith, *Montalbert*, eds. Stuart Curran and Adriana Craciun (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 198. Smith provides the brief citation "darkness visible" from *Paradise Lost*, I. 63.

⁴ Fletcher, *Critical Biography*, 241.

Marchmont

The novel situates the history of the titular family against the history of England, particularly that of the Civil War, during which time a Marchmont heiress—and royalist—fell in love with her Parliamentary lover. The heroine, Althea Dacres, has been raised amongst books and gardens but is sent to the old and decaying Marchmont estate, Eastwoodleigh, when she refuses her parental doctrine to marry. Althea’s botanically-focused childhood figures her as a disciple of Rousseau and testifies to the regenerative power of nature. Smith emphasizes the attachment between Althea and Rousseau when the heroine is moved to give her money to a hungry family “meditating [...] on the strange inequalities of fortune,” her mind all the more affected by the sight due to her recent reading of Rousseau.⁵ Althea’s position in the Marchmont family home necessitates her resolution of the Marchmont hierarchical past with her liberal, philosophic sensibility, suggesting Smith still searches for a compromise in 1796. In this case, Althea’s experience at Eastwoodleigh and what she learns of the Marchmont family history demonstrate that despite political difference, laws in English society allow for the abuse of anyone without power.

The law is a regular, threatening presence to Althea at Eastwoodleigh. One chapter where this is particularly resonant is the second chapter of volume three, which begins with an epigraph:

Far less abhorr’d than these
 Vex’d Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
 Calabria from the hoarse Trinaorian shore.⁶

⁵ Charlotte Smith, *Marchmont*, eds. Kate Davies and Harriet Guest (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 209.

⁶ Smith, *Marchmont*, 197. Quotation from Milton, *Riverside Milton*, 400. II. 659-661.

This quotation from *Paradise Lost*'s second book marks Satan's journey to the gates of Hell and describes the deformed body of Sin guarding the gates. Below the waist, Sin possesses a mass of scaly folds, having been transformed by her rape at the hands of her son Death. She is trapped in a cycle of constant reproduction, giving birth to their monstrous hellhound offspring who seek shelter in her womb—now continuously open—and gnaw upon her bowels. The interchange between Sin and Satan at the gates is one of transition, with the passage just prior covering the debate in Pandemonium which sees the abuse of reason and political rhetoric to enact evil. Just after these lines, Satan will travel to Eden in his attempt to destroy mankind. Sin opens the gates for Satan, allowing he who seeks power at the expense of others to actually enact that evil upon man. Here, Smith links this action to the machinations of lawyers. In the novel, the chapter for which this quotation serves as epigraph marks the intrusion into Althea's home by a man who poses as a beggar then forces his way inside Eastwoodleigh, accompanied by a band of men, to violate the premises in search of young Marchmont. The "beggar" turns out to be a vicious lawyer named Vampyre, whose particular brand of evil is made clear by the inhuman creature his name recalls. Upon his intrusion, Althea remarks that "little did she *then* know the extent to which laws of this country (by some breach surely in their construction, or some negligence in their administration) permit such wretches to carry the most ruinous injustice, the most fatal oppression!"⁷ Smith here makes clear that Vampyre and lawyers like him, and indeed the laws of England more generally, are the gates and gatekeepers of Hell—those that allow for the many abuses that are inflicted upon the people of England, whether they be liberal daughters under patriarchal tyranny like Althea or royalist families driven from their homes like the Marchmonts. Smith suggests that the legal system, as Sin does, allows for the sort of abuses wrought such as Satan would bring upon Eden and indeed, refers to Vampyre as the

⁷ Smith, *Marchmont*, 200.

“Satanic agent of abused law.”⁸ However, though Sin opens the gates for Satan, manipulating power given to her as a lawyer might manipulate the legal system, it is also notable that Sin lacks the power to close the gates again. Thus, Smith seems to imply that systemic change is necessary (in *Paradise Lost*, only God has the power to close the gates once they have been opened), indicating that she remains invested in political reform even when she is most pessimistic about the realities of England’s likelihood to change.

Smith concludes this chapter with Althea confronting Vampyre, who is confounded by the audaciousness of one so “severe in youthful beauty” to oppose him.⁹ This second reference to *Paradise Lost* in the encounter recalls the fourth book of Milton’s epic, which sees Satan assume the form of a toad to attempt to corrupt Eve. He is found by angels, who rebuke him. The angel is described this way because she possesses an eternal youth and beauty in contrast to Satan, who is described as “grieslie” and as dimming in brightness since his fall from Heaven. Milton describes the angel as having “vertue in her shape,” her morality determines her beauty, which in turn occasions Satan to consider his own ugliness and lack of virtue.¹⁰ However, this consideration seems short-lived—Milton writes that Satan yet “seemd undaunted” and, of course, Satan goes on to attempt (and succeed) at seducing Eve yet again.¹¹ So, too, does Vampyre appear temporarily chastised. Smith writes that he “checked his daring presumption”—the assault on Althea’s body—yet, he does not question the validity of his legal actions and continues to pursue the search for Marchmont until physically dragged away.¹² Althea here is not paralleled with Eve, as were several of Smith’s earlier heroines, but rather with the intervening angel attempting to protect humankind. Vampyre here becomes not Sin but Satan, corrupting mankind. By referencing a scene in

⁸ Smith, *Marchmont*, 202.

⁹ Smith, *Marchmont*, 202 as found in Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 845.

¹⁰ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 821 and 848.

¹¹ Milton, *Paradise Lost*, IV. 850-1.

¹² Smith, *Marchmont*, 202.

which Satan gives pause to consider the immorality of his actions yet continues to pursue power at any cost through the rest of the text, Smith implies a relentless predation within the English legal system. If Vampyre is Satan, using the law to corrupt, the virtuous angel Althea who seeks to preserve Eden suggests a desire for a society based on morality and social benevolence rather than laws formulated for and enacted by abusers of power.

Though this is a novel which deals explicitly with politics, Smith attempts to clarify that a liberal spirit does not necessarily need to align with a specific party. The hero, Marchmont, is figured as the ideal philosophic partner for Althea, but even he is referred to as “a Jacobine or Jacobite,” as though there were no point in party politics. However, an enlightened spirit remains a necessity for Smith, and she emphasizes Marchmont’s through his relationship with the *philosophes*. Marchmont, like Althea, reflects frequently on the general misery of mankind, which Marchmont himself defends against accusations of being inspired by “too much” reading of Voltaire and Rousseau.¹³ Yet, it is clear that these are precisely the thinkers who have inspired him. His account of his journey through the French countryside in the third chapter of volume four is prefaced by an epigraph from Rousseau’s *Emile*: “La mauvaise fortune avoit déjà flétri son coeur; l’adversité et le mépris avoient abattu son courage; et sa fierté, changée en dépit amer, ne lui montrait que l’injustice et la dureté des hommes.”¹⁴ This, book four of *Emile*, sees Emile as an adolescent. Until now, he has been the innocent child who represents the pure and natural amour-soi, or self-love, embodied by his love for his providing mother and rejection of those who seek to harm him. The project of *Emile* is to avoid amour-soi from becoming *amour-propre*, or corrupted self-love, and this necessitates removal from the city and the imposition of social institutions in favor of the countryside and the purity of nature. However, Smith’s chapter speaks to the

¹³ Smith, *Marchmont*, 290.

¹⁴ “Misfortune had already seared his heart; scorn and distress had overcome his courage; and his pride, changed into bitterness and resentment, let him see nothing but the injustice and harshness of men.” Translation provided by Davies and Guest. Smith, *Marchmont*, 294.

insufficiency of Rousseau's proposed solution. Marchmont's travels through the French country see him encounter many who record no real change since the Revolution. The peasant speaks to the supposed downfall of religion, but his religion is the day to day provision for his family. The tradesman insists that the depreciation of the new monetary system means that, for him, the new system is even less favorable than the old, despite increased "equality." Althea and Marchmont, too, testify to the far-reaching powers of social institutions. *Emile* insists that it is through interaction with society that one develops amour-propre, but it, and Smith, claim that to remove oneself entirely from society is insupportable. *Emile* is still withdrawn and incapable at the novel's close, relying on his tutor to continue the project, suggesting that there is no utopia in this option. Smith, too, portrays in *Marchmont* that despite the fact that arguably no "country has less to boast of as to their genuine liberality and enlargement of mind than England," the Revolution was not the answer, even for those in France it was most intended to improve.¹⁵

Smith's project in *Marchmont* is ostensibly to propose a more private alternative to the very public and widespread political action of the Revolution, but in doing so she focuses heavily on the current bleakness offered up equally by London, the countryside, and across the political spectrum. The novel's resolution is advanced by the appearance of Althea's uncle Desborough, a republican with a complicated history with the Marchmont family. He denounces the idea that "all is for the best," assists Althea in her dealings with the law in claiming an inheritance, and despite his history with the Marchmonts, releases the hero's debt so that he and Althea can leave King's Bench prison.¹⁶ Here, Desborough references the optimism of *Candide*'s Pangloss and rejects the maxim that insists one must accept the current composition of society as the best of all possible options. Rather, in providing for Marchmont, he demonstrates the necessity of improvement—of "cultivating one's garden."

¹⁵ Smith, *Marchmont*, 301.

¹⁶ Smith, *Marchmont*, 409.

Smith regularly references this notion of cultivating gardens throughout *Marchmont*. Contrasted with the withering of Mrs Marchmont earlier in the novel, Smith writes that even in poverty, the love of nature prevails “which points out what man ought to be, and marks his place in the creation as a cultivator of that earth.”¹⁷ Smith continues to refute that individual suffering is a price paid by an efficient and good society. Yet, we also believe Althea might speak for Smith when she says, “I have heard that all ideas of equality are visionary—that they can never be realized—and I believe it.”¹⁸ Though the developments undergone by the Revolution have occasioned a bleaker outlook for Smith in 1796 than she had even in the immediate aftermath of the Terror, she continues to criticize those who do not attempt to resist evil. Her rebuking angel in Althea, she who was raised cultivating a garden, insists in the need to continue to resist societal oppression. Smith’s vitriol is largely directed at laws and lawmakers in 1796, perhaps in part in reference to the passage of the Two Acts in December 1795, which saw increased political opposition in England and inaugurated the so-called Pitt Reign of Terror. Like *Candide* and *Emile*, *Marchmont* is not optimistic and not pro-Revolution, but it does advocate for Voltaire’s resistance to oppression and Rousseau’s social benevolence and the primacy he placed on pity. In 1796, Smith’s outlook on England is bleak, and it is on this basis that she will two years later formulate the world of *The Young Philosopher*.

The Young Philosopher

Charlotte Smith published *The Young Philosopher* in the summer of 1798 and, in many ways, it builds upon the bleakness of the world she created in *Marchmont*. Here, too, she alludes to Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire frequently with fourteen references across all

¹⁷ Smith, *Marchmont*, 386.

¹⁸ Smith, *Marchmont*, 210.

three authors. As in *Marchmont*, given the frequency of her engagement with these authors, I focus here on a few quotations that best embody Smith's politicization of her novel. Again, these are primarily instances in which Smith uses multiple allusions within a single scene or chapter to mark them as particularly significant within the novel's political context. For *The Young Philosopher*, this entails a world that remains convinced in the necessity of pity and personal benevolence, but in which England is figured as beyond all hope for the generation of an ideal society based on philosophic principles.

George Delmont is the novel's titular philosopher and his enlightened spirit is regularly reinforced by his associations with the French *philosophes*. He is particularly marked by his relationship with the ideals of Rousseau. Indeed, the novel records that in contrast to his elder brother, who toured France and Switzerland with no appreciation for what he encountered there, a young George envied his brother the experience of looking upon the places where "Rousseau destroyed the hydra of false opinion and fettering prejudice."¹⁹ A more mature Delmont only grew more into the role of Rousseauian *philosophe*, desiring to abandon the city for a life as a farmer and embracing, in particular, the concept of pity. Rousseau's vision of pity was that it moderates self-love, thus contributing to the mutual preservation of humankind. R.S. White argues that this Rousseauian ideal naturally lent itself to the literary idea of benevolent sensibility in preparation for real political change.²⁰ Smith engages her hero in a direct insistence on much-needed reform, occasioned by his experience with pity. She writes that Delmont was regularly moved to charity by stories of homelessness, disasters, or the sight of a wounded soldier "and he was led to enquire if the complicated misery he every day saw (a very very small part of so wide an evil) could be the fruits of the very best laws that could be framed in a state of society said to be the most perfect among

¹⁹ Charlotte Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, ed. A.A. Markley (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006), 26.

²⁰ R.S. White, *Natural Rights and the Birth of Romanticism in the 1790s*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 79.

what are called the civilized nations of the world.”²¹ Smith here also re-engages the Burkean allusion she made in *The Old Manor House* as she parodied Burke’s portrayal of Marie-Antoinette. Smith argued, as did Paine, that Burke utilized the language of sympathy on the wrong people, ignoring the real victims of the *ancien régime*. Delmont, on the other hand, correctly attributes real suffering to the victims of inequality (the homeless) and abuse of power (wounded soldiers). As she did in *Marchmont*, Smith continues to criticize the basis of the English laws that contribute to the oppression of its people and emphasizes the need for pity for societal regeneration.

In one particular chapter, Delmont is forced to defend his philosophic nature and uses both Voltaire and Milton to do so. The epigraph to this, chapter seven of the first volume, reads: “entre nous, dites moi, si jamais un philosophe a causé le moindre trouble dans la société? Ne sont ils pas pour la plus part des solitaires? Ne sont ils pas pauvres? Sans protections, sans apui?”²² These lines by Voltaire are a defence of philosophy by Ariste in response to Acrotal, who condemns the concept of reason for conferring upon people the power to make their own judgments. This chapter of *The Young Philosopher* sees Delmont argue the merits of philosophy against Dr Winslow, who challenges the hero after he witnesses him in possession of the works of philosophers, whom he “held in the greatest abhorrence from report only, for he had never read a line in them.”²³ Dr Winslow ironically embodies the figure of Acrotal, for he did not use reason to make his judgments on the evils of the *philosophes* but vehemently opposes them. Delmont then offers an opinion often linked with the ostensibly anti-religious *philosophes*: “the religious and civil government [are] so interwoven, that whoever dissents from the first, as established by arbitrary laws, is

²¹ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 24.

²² “Between us, tell me, if a philosopher has ever caused the least trouble to society? Are they not people who prefer to be alone? Are they not poor? Without protection, without support?” The lines appear in Voltaire, *Entretien d’Ariste et d’Acrotal* (1761), as translated by A.A. Markley and cited in Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 50.

²³ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 53.

immediately considered the enemy of the other.”²⁴ Though Smith appeared to shy away from her usual opposition to religion in *Marchmont*, here she uses Delmont to assert again the relationship between religion and oppression.²⁵ Dr Winslow attempts to argue for the infallibility of the Church which justifies divine right, but Delmont refuses to engage in a dispute over which so much blood has already spilled. He instead quotes again from *Entretien d’Ariste et d’Acrotal*.²⁶ In the Voltaire dialogue, when Acrotal argues too vehemently, Ariste attempts to shut down the discussion and impose the philosophic ideal of tolerance. Here, Delmont attempts the same in avoiding denouncing his companion’s tightly held belief in divine right and advocating instead for the peaceful intent of his philosophic brethren. His question, though, “have you ever seen philosophers bring war, famine, or disease to a country?” is predictably met with Dr Winslow’s insistence that the likes of Rousseau and Voltaire occasioned the French Revolution and thus, the resulting atrocities. Delmont’s response is a reference to Milton:

the truth is, that the gloomy and absurd structures, raised on the basis of prejudice and superstition, have toppled down headlong; many are crushed in their fall; even some of those Sampsons, who themselves shook the pillars, have been overwhelmed; but the bastilles of falsehood, in which men’s minds were imprisoned, are levelled with the earth, never, never to rise again!²⁷

The reference is, of course, biblical, but also alludes to Milton’s representation in *Samson Agonistes*, which Smith cited in *Celestina*. Samson brought down the pillars to free himself from tyranny so here, Delmont’s logic suggests that were the *philosophes* responsible for the French Revolution, it was in good intention and in resistance to oppression. He insists that

²⁴ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 53.

²⁵ In *Marchmont*, the hero’s trip through France sees him encounter abandoned churches. He laments their condition, though not for the fall of religion but because he recognizes that for many, religion offered a comfort and he feels pity for those who have suffered the loss of something which was once a comfort.

²⁶ “Avez vous jamais vû des philosophes apporter dans un país la guerre, la famine, ou la peste? Bayle, par exemple, a t’il jamais voulu crever les digues de la Hollande, pour noyer les habitans, comme le voulait, dit on un grand ministre, qui n’etoit pas philosophe.” Translated by Markley as “have you ever seen philosophers bring war, famine, or disease to a country? Bayle, for example, did he ever wish to burst the dikes of Holland in order to drown the inhabitants, as it is said one of the great ministers, who was not a philosophe, wished to do?” Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 54.

²⁷ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 54.

even they would be crushed by the turn of events but that, acknowledging mistakes made in pursuit of freedom, much was accomplished. It is evident, then, that Delmont is a more optimistic liberal hero than was Marchmont. Though both embodied characteristics of the *philosophes*, Marchmont did so by embracing some of the cynicism frequently ascribed to both Voltaire and Rousseau, whereas Delmont attempts to find solace in the positive ideals these men espoused rather than their practical outcomes.

As were most of Smith's novels, *The Young Philosopher* is preoccupied with the plight of women and the ways in which women are vulnerable within a predatory society. In *The Young Philosopher*, these victimized women are embodied by the mother and daughter pairing of Laura Glenmorris and her American-raised daughter, Medora. Medora's abuses primarily stem from her abduction by Darnell, who attempts to trick her into marriage to steal her fortune. Even when she escapes, Medora is endangered again in the place she finds refuge—the home of Sir Harry wherein women are kept, used by men, then turned into domestic servants. The trials of her mother a generation before were no less awful. Laura Glenmorris eloped with her lover only to see him abducted and potentially killed. The newly vulnerable Laura is abducted and imprisoned by a relative of her husband, the Laird of Kilbrodie, so that her son will inherit Glenmorris' estate. Her imprisonment and abuse affects Laura so greatly that she gives birth prematurely and the child dies. Laura is only able to escape after narrowly avoiding rape by the Laird of Kilbrodie. Later, when Medora is abducted, Laura is disconsolate at the thought of losing another child. She finds herself in the home of her uncaring mother and reflects on a quotation from Milton: “the worst of evils, and excessive, overturns all patience.”²⁸ This, book six of *Paradise Lost*, sees the rebel angels disagree as they consider whether to continue battling against Heaven's army of angels. Nisroc's argument here is that the battle is unequal because Heaven's angels cannot feel pain

²⁸ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 271 and Milton, *Paradise Lost*, VI. 462-4.

while Satan's rebel army can. Though they are quickly healed, to fight with the constant reality of pain is not bearable; he argues that a life without pleasure is possible but a life in perpetual pain is not. In other words, it is impossible to truly acclimate to pain. Laura here reflects on the abuses wrought upon herself and her daughter to foreground the generational aspect of female pain—that is, that the realities of English society force women to live in a system of perpetual pain, something to which they cannot be expected to become accustomed.

In *Marchmont*, Smith suggests that mere removal to the countryside is insufficient for living the philosophic ideal of a benevolent society. Instead, she suggests a smaller sphere, focusing on private benevolence and with a pessimistic view of what England has to offer. In *The Young Philosopher*, she goes further—implying that a good society is insupportable in England altogether, though strangely, this novel is less pessimistic than her last. In large part, this is because here she provides an alternative; as she did in *The Old Manor House*, Smith represents America as a possible foundation for good social institutions and she epitomizes this ideal through allusions to Rousseau. The first suggestion of the incompatibility of England and Rousseau's natural ideal is in the representation of Sandthwaite when it is inherited by Laura Glenmorris' mother, Lady Mary. It is an old, aristocratic house of Smith's usual type, and it has been partially modernized but continues to venerate the family's ancestors. Tellingly, plants refuse to grow on the property, signaling just how opposed this supposedly new model for privileged society remains to the ideals of natural equality.²⁹ Laura, too, later references the impossibility of merely withdrawing from society for a private utopia, insisting "there is hardly a case wherein it is possible for a man, however determined he may be, to shake off the fetters which are for the most part wantonly imposed, so entirely

²⁹ Fletcher writes that "Sandthwaite represents the triumph of reaction, a show of adapting to the modern world while remaining more rigidly authoritarian than ever." *Critical Biography*, 267.

to emancipate himself, as not to be dragged back in some stance to the forms of society.”³⁰ Rousseau’s philosophy held that society was the ruin of individuals and advocated a return to nature. If private benevolence is not sufficient to create good social institutions far from the overt corruption of the city—if even the countryside and Scotland are figured as corrupt—where then could someone achieve harmony with the natural state? In the novel’s final chapter, Smith reveals that America is again, for her, a place of hopeful prospect.

At the conclusion of the novel’s plot, Medora has been returned to Delmont and Laura Glenmorris recovered. The epigraph to the concluding chapter of the final volume reads:

Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call chance, this I hold firm,
Virtue may be assail’d but never hurt,
Surprised by unjust force but not enthrall’d

But evil on itself shall back recoil.³¹

These lines from *Comus* occur within a debate between the two brothers over whether their sister, the Lady, is in danger. The younger brother is concerned about his sister and believes her in imminent danger of an attack on her virtue. The elder brother responds as stated, believing her virtue so strong that she cannot be in danger of anything. The Lady is, in fact, somewhere in between—her body bound to a chair but still avowing her virtue when she argues that Comus “canst not touch the freedom of my minde.”³² Diane Purkiss argues that chastity here becomes an expression of female power and resistance against the injustice of

³⁰ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 83.

³¹ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 423. Milton, *Comus*, 586-90 and 593.

³² Milton, *Comus*, 663.

being woman.³³ That is, if chastity is seen as mental, it is owned by the female regardless of the position of her body on Comus's seat. However, it is also true that the Lady's freedom in *Comus* does not appear to rest solely on her avowal of it—she is not considered free until her body is free. Thus, despite whatever her elder brother wishes to argue about virtue in the quotation provided by Smith, the Lady's liberty still matters. She can choose to “rise above” her situation, but she is not *free* until liberated. Returning to the specifics of the quotation, Smith leaves out two lines from Milton's original passage: “yea even that which mischief meant most harm/ Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.”³⁴ The elder brother here permits for a litany of offenses against the Lady which she must bravely endure, achieving glory through the test of the strength of her virtue. But Smith specifically omits these lines, suggesting that, for her, the reality of women being subject to offenses at the hands of men is never a “happy trial.” Instead, Smith questions whether Medora should have had to endure all that she did in the course of the novel and affirms the validity of her flight to America, where the promise of a land built on ideals of equality might offer better prospects.

The end of the novel sees Medora and Delmont off to America, where Medora was raised. Delmont resolves to accompany her back to its shores, claiming “the great book of nature is open before me, and poor must be his taste who cannot find in it a more noble study than that of sophisticated minds, which we call society here.”³⁵ By referring to a desire to study nature in America, Smith alludes to a central concept of *Emile*—the need to study human nature unaffected by the prejudices of inhuman society. Already celebrated in *The Old Manor House* for its natural savagery and abundance in accordance with Rousseau's ideals, Smith here also presents America as the only place which comes close to providing the opportunity to start fresh and create a new social order based on equality and freedom.

³³ Diane Purkiss, *Literature, Gender and Politics During the English Civil War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

³⁴ Milton, *Comus*, 591-2.

³⁵ Smith, *The Young Philosopher*, 431.

However, in 1793 Smith represented America as a possible model for English reform. From her portrayal of Sandthwaite and the experiences of her central characters, it is clear Smith believes reforming England to this standard an impossibility in 1798. *The Young Philosopher* provides a rather bleak outlook on the prospect of English progress but does direct some of the optimism of her earlier novels toward the possibility of the creation of an idealized society in America.

Next Directions

Detailed analysis of quotation and allusion to elucidate one writer's political evolution, such as that undertaken in this thesis, invites us to rethink how we study allusion—and particularly direct quotation—in the eighteenth century. In *Regaining Paradise*, Dustin Griffin concludes that a good writer entered the thoughts of his source and, rather than simply reproducing what he found, added something of his own.³⁶ Though allusion receives considerable scholarly attention, direct quotation has been frequently overlooked as textual embellishment or as merely parroting the words of the source without consideration as to how an author such as Smith might be “adding something of her own” in its context. This thesis demonstrates how Smith frequently used direct quotations to represent her political beliefs, often far from the context with which they were originally used or from the viewpoints with which the sourced author would have identified, thus arguing the need for increased attention to this method of allusion.

Charlotte Smith was not only subject to influence of earlier writers: her own work had widespread influence and her attitudes to Milton, Rousseau and Voltaire were diffused through the work of others. Several scholars have written on Smith's influence on Jane

³⁶ Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 236.

Austen, but connections between her work and novelists such as Amelia Opie, Walter Scott, and Ann Radcliffe have also been suggested.^{37, 38} The pervasiveness of her allusions and how they were navigated—particularly by more conservative writers—in adaptation and sourcing to later texts demands attention.

Perhaps most obviously, further scholarship on Charlotte Smith will benefit from increased attention to the nuance of her allusiveness. It is so frequently mentioned in discussion of her work that Smith was particularly generous with quotations and indeed, it was an issue for her in her lifetime that she was at times accused of plagiarism. The care with which Smith utilized quotations from Milton, Rousseau, and Voltaire suggests that she may have engaged Shakespeare or Pope with similar specificity. Smith's innovative endeavors in the novel have been only infrequently explored by scholars and more attention to her careful allusiveness is likely to provide a more complete understanding of the politics of her less popular works.

³⁷ For example, see Jacqueline Labbe, "Narrating Seduction: Charlotte Smith and Jane Austen," in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 113-128; Anne Henry Ehrenpreis, "Northanger Abbey: Jane Austen and Charlotte Smith," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 25, no. 3 (Dec 1970): 343-348; Jillian Heydt-Stevenson, "Northanger Abbey, Desmond, and History," *Wordsworth Circle* 44, no. 2-3 (Spring-Summer 2013): 140-148; and William H. Magee, "The Happy Marriage: The Influence of Charlotte Smith on Jane Austen," *Studies in the Novel* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1975): 120-132 in which even the abstract asserts that "all of Jane Austen's fiction shows the repeated influence of Charlotte Smith's nine novels."

³⁸ Stephen C. Behrendt, "Charlotte Smith, Women Poets, and the Culture of Celebrity," in *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), 189-202.

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