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A Romantic *Bildung*:
The Development of Coming-of-Age Novels in the Romantic
Period (1782-1817)

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Résumé

A Romantic Bildung: The Development of Coming-of-Age Novels in the Romantic Period (1782-1817) explore la naissance et le développement du roman de formation en Europe à l'époque romantique. Celle-ci est le témoin de nombreuses discussions sur les Droits de l'homme et de la montée du nationalisme en Europe. Au même moment, la littérature se transforme pour laisser plus de place à la subjectivité du personnage. Tout cela donne naissance à un nouveau genre littéraire : le Bildungsroman, ou roman de formation et d'éducation. Contrairement à la définition actuelle du genre, le Bildungsroman est transnational, c'est-à-dire qu'il ne provient pas exclusivement d'Allemagne, mais de partout en Europe. *A Romantic Bildung* se penche donc sur le sujet en analysant de façon thématique la trame narrative de *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), *Emma* (1815), ainsi que d'*Ormond, a Tale* (1817) et sur leur appartenance au roman de l'époque romantique. En comparant les étapes d'éducation, d'indépendance, et de retour à la société des protagonistes, ces romans font ressortir les similitudes qui caractérisent le Bildungsroman.

Mots-clés : Romantisme britannique, Bildungsroman, Roman de l'époque romantique, Subjectivité, Éducation, Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott, Charlotte Smith

Abstract

A Romantic Bildung: The Development of Coming-of-Age Novels in the Romantic Period (1782-1817) explores the birth and development of the Bildungsroman during the Romantic period. The latter is characterized by the numerous discourses on the Rights of men as well as the rise of nationalism. At the same time, Romantic writers transform literature by increasing the protagonist's subjectivity and in turns, create a new genre of narrative: the Bildungsroman, in which the protagonist's development and growth is the main focus. Contrary to current definition of the genre, the Bildungsroman—or coming-of-age novel—is a transnational product: it is obviously found in Germany, but also in France, England, Ireland, and Scotland, to name a few, during the Romantic period. Through a thematic analysis of *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), *Emmeline, the Orphan of the Castle* (1788), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Ormond, A Tale* (1815), *A Romantic Bildung* traces the narrative structure of the genre and it locates its essence in the Romantic novel. By comparing the narrative's steps of education, independence, and return to society, the characteristics of the genre are revealed.

Keywords : British Romanticism, Bildungsroman, Romantic Novel, Subjectivity, Education, Jane Austen, Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott, Charlotte Smith

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Abbreviations

<i>C</i>	<i>Cecilia</i>
<i>E</i>	<i>Emma</i>
<i>EOC</i>	<i>Emmeline</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Mansfield Park</i>
<i>O</i>	<i>Ormond</i>
<i>W</i>	<i>Waverley</i>

For my parents

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Introduction

*I once was happy, when while yet a child,
I learn'd to love these upland solitudes,
And, when elastic as the mountain air,
To my light spirit, care was yet unknown
And evil unforeseen*
...
*Haunts of my youth!
Scenes of fond day-dreams, I behold ye yet!*
Charlotte Smith, *Beachy Head*

The Romantic period saw the novel flourish into a mainstream form of fiction. Works by Frances Burney, Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, Sir Walter Scott, and Charlotte Smith, to name a few, were best-sellers: for instance, 1,500 copies of *Emmeline* (1788) were printed and they quickly sold-out (Fletcher 9) and the 1,000 copies of the first edition of *Waverley* (1814) were sold in a little over a month, with an astonishing second edition at 2,000 copies and a third edition 1,000 copies all in the same year (Howard 14).¹ Yet, the epitome of the Romantic novel writer is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. With his first novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), he captivated a nation and created a wave of melancholia throughout Europe. His second novel, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795-1796), is said to have inspired the term Bildungsroman. The term was “first coined by Karl Morgenstern in lectures in the early 1820s, with specific reference to *Wilhelm Meister*” (Jeffers 49). This genre “describes the processes by which maturity is achieved through the various ups and downs of life”

¹ William St. Clair states that books were produced in “a range of 250 to 2,000 copies per edition” (21).

(“Bildungsroman”). It is definitely associated with the development of education and self-realization, which are concepts highly popular following the Enlightenment age.²

Yet, the Bildungsroman as a genre has three main problems.³ The first is the inadequate definition which stems in part by the fact that no word in English can truly translate the essence of *Bildung*. The term refers to the idea of education, of coming of age, and of the act of shaping or molding of oneself. Since it encompasses all these terms, it can be too easy to simply define any character’s development as being characteristic of the Bildungsroman. Moreover, the term suffers from an imprecise creation. If the genre was defined quite rapidly after its birth—Morgenstern’s own definition of the genre in the 1820s asserts that “it portrays the *Bildung* of the hero in its beginning and growth to a certain stage of completeness” (qtd. in Swales 14)—it took roughly a century before the term gained some traction. It was in 1870 that Wilhelm Dilthey, who used *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship* retrospectively as a canvas for the definition of the genre, really created the categorization of the genre. This led to a challenging definition: by following too closely Goethe’s novel, the term becomes synonymous with it at best and confined to it at worst. Some critics find its

² “During the last decades of the eighteenth century several prominent German writers began to redefine *Bildung*: the formerly religious term now became a secular humanistic concept” (Kontje 1).

³ As pointed out by Marc Redfield, “Monographs on the *Bildungsroman* appear regularly; without exception they possess introductory chapters in which the genre is characterized as a problem, but as one that the critic, for one reason or another, plans either to solve or ignore; and despite the variety of solutions proffered, the definition of the *Bildungsroman* that emerges in study after study usually repeats... the self-referential structure of the aesthetic synthesis” (*Phantom Formations* 41–42). *A Romantic Bildung* cannot escape the cliché of presenting the inherent problems of the genre.

customary definition and characteristics too limiting to actually fit Goethe's novel⁴ and thus, there is no consensus about the actual boundaries of the genre or if it exists in its own right.⁵

The second problem of the normative definition of the Bildungsroman is that it excludes many experiences of coming-of-age. In the accepted definition, usually the protagonist—or *bildungsheld*—undergoes an education in the form of a professional apprenticeship before moving on in society. The consequence of this definition is that the different female experience of education is not taken into account.⁶ The normative definition leads to a fragmentation of the genre as some critics, not recognizing the female experience in the Bildungsroman, create a sub-genre to accommodate the female experience. Annis Pratt in *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction* (1981) contends that the female Bildungsroman is not about growing up—which would be the normative male experience—but “growing down” and illustrates “an atrophy of the personality” (14). This has led to the creation of a sub-genre known as the female Bildungsroman. Yet, critics are not satisfied with this sub-genre. Susan Fraiman argues in *Unbecoming Women: British Women Writers and the Novel of Development* (1993) that while the female development process is perceived as being at odds with the standard and normative Bildungsroman, it is futile to impose another stranglehold on the genre. She states that the female experience cannot be uniform due to class, country, race and other sociological variants (*Unbecoming Women* 12). It would thus be impossible to define

⁴ Even as *Wilhelm Meister* is considered the prototype of the genre, “Specialists of German literature, on the other hand, have shown an almost masochistic glee in decimating their own canon, on occasion disqualifying even such seemingly incontestable examples as Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* from its ranks” (Boes, “Modernist Studies and the Bildungsroman” 230).

⁵ See for instance, Marc Redfield's *Phantom Formation* and his entry on the Bildungsroman in the *Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (“The Bildungsroman” 191) and Jeffrey L. Sammons's “The Mystery of the Missing Bildungsroman, or: What Happened to Wilhelm Meister's Legacy.”

⁶ Todd Kontje suggests that one of the aims of the definition provided by Morgenstern was to “relegate fiction by or about women to second-rate status” (17). The criticism on the Bildungsroman has since taken for granted that it is a narrative about male development.

one female Bildungsroman to unite them all. Following Fraiman's work, Lorna Ellis aims at reuniting the Bildung in the female Bildungsroman in *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman* (1999) as she argues that what is considered "growing down" in the female experience is an aspect of the "regular" Bildungsroman: reintegrating society means adjusting one's personality to the expectations of society disregarding the gender of the protagonist. In other words, growing down is a feature of the genre, not an exception.

The third problem with the vague definition of the genre is the fact that it overlaps with other sub-genres of the novel: the Bildungsroman is (too) closely associated with the novel of education, of formation, and of manners. All these sub-genres of the novel conflate the experience of becoming responsible and emancipated in society through a process of learning the codes ruling society.⁷ While being different enough to exist on their own, these sub-genres, when discussed in light of the Bildungsroman, may simply be different facets of the same larger type of novel.⁸ Philippe Chardin, editor of *Roman de formation, roman d'éducation dans la littérature française et dans les littératures étrangères* (2007), uses this all-encompassing approach to examine the subject. All the similar sub-genres are studied together, thus creating a sense of common ancestry and of belonging which is emphasized by the study of Ancient Greek literature. Instead of separating the genre into further individual distinctions, Chardin unites them under one banner. Furthermore, the selection of essays also

⁷ Even more, these sub-genres are not in and of themselves stable: for instance, *Ormond* is both a historical novel (Anne K. Mellor in "What's Different about 'Regency' Women Writers?") and a national tale (Amit Yahav's "Is There a Bull in This Nation? On Maria Edgeworth's Nationalism").

⁸ "Such generic analysis thus tends to prolong its operations to the point at which the generic categories themselves...are once more dissolved into the historical contradictions or the sedimented ideologemes in terms of which alone they are comprehensible... Such classification in fact prove rewarding only as long as they are felt to be relatively arbitrary critical acts, and lose their vitality when, as with the category of the *Bildungsroman*, they come to be thought of as 'natural' form" (Jameson 144–45).

brings forward the question of national literature and transnationality since it covers European literature at large: Chardin is not restricting the study to Germany, France and England, but he expands it also to Russia and Scandinavia, to name a few. With his collection of essays, the transnationality of the genre shines through the assumption of the German nationality of the genre.

The main objective of this dissertation is to trace the organic development of the genre during the Romantic period. That being said, it must be emphasized that the object of this dissertation is not to find the first sample of the Bildungsroman: even if such a Holy Grail existed, it would simply confine the genre to whatever characteristics the work possess. *A Romantic Bildung's* goal is in part to locate the possible sources of the genre through its the historical context. For this purpose, Morgenstern's definition⁹ is applied, as it is both contemporary to the birth of the genre and as it emphasizes the process of *Bildung*, not only its result. It therefore excludes the simple character development common to most narratives in favour of the complex experience of maturity as related in the Bildungsroman. It is also inclusive enough to encompass different experiences based on gender¹⁰ and socioeconomic classes and puts them all on the same footing, avoiding further fragmentation of the genre. I do not pretend that this work will resolve the puzzle of the Bildungsroman, as I am afraid no definitive answer can be provided.

Nonetheless, by repositioning the Bildungsroman within the Romantic period, I offer a new vantage point to further examine the genre. While some scholars research and analyze the Bildungsroman, others are devoted to the exploration of the Romantic Novel and to its

⁹ The genre "portrays the *Bildung* of the hero in its beginning and growth to a certain stage of completeness" (qtd in Swales 14).

¹⁰ Throughout *A Romantic Bildung*, I use protagonist and *bildungsheld* as gender neutral.

essence. In the last decade, many scholars have been rethinking the Romantic novel. Jillian Heydt-Stevenson and Charlotte Sussman edited *Recognizing the Romantic Novel: New Histories of British Fiction, 1780-1830* in 2008. Their research on the Romantic novel is relevant as they acknowledge the “interpenetration among political structures, literary forms and genre, and individual subjectivity” (Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, Preface 1). They suggest that the Romantic novel represents the ever-changing and tumultuous period in which the novel resists classification. For that matter, the Romantic novel is multifaceted in order to make way to the interpenetration and to the various points of view carried through the novel. They add that

Critics have often seen the novel as fracturing into a number of sub-genres during the Romantic era—gothic, historical novel, national tale, Jacobin novel, etc. Building on the essays in this volume, however, we hope to show that the Romantic-era novel can be understood as a field, not simply a heterogeneous mass of fictional forms. (Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, Preface 9–10)

As such, the heterogeneity should not be seen as an obstacle to a definition or to a sort of classification. On the contrary, the diversity compels readers and critics to highlight the boundaries of the genre and to trace the familiar contours of the genre in order to make sense of the mixture of genres. While they do discuss many sub-genres of the Romantic novel, Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman only lightly touch the question of the Bildungsroman.

While Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman focus on the form of the novel, Fiona Price articulates a theory on the content of the Romantic novel based on gender studies. *Revolutions in Taste, 1773-1818: Women Writers and the Aesthetics of Romanticism* (2008) explores the social and political mechanisms behind taste and how the latter became a central point in the rise of the middle class in the early nineteenth century, focusing on the works of women

writers, known and little-known. Her research explores new avenues to understand the voice of women writers in the Romantic period.

In terms of Romantic aesthetics, women's writing is invariably positioned in relation to the sublime and the beautiful.... but female commentary on taste had a more complex influence on Romantic aesthetics and dealt with a far wider range of concerns than modern scholarship acknowledges. (3)

This new vantage point on the Romantic novel, and on women writers, although not specifically on the Bildungsroman, still opens up a space for discussion about gender and the Romantic novel.

In the same vein that works on the Romantic novel are ignoring the Bildungsroman, recent criticism on the Bildungsroman almost never discuss the Romantic period in their exploration of the genre. *The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development* (1983), edited by Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland, is a seminal work on the female Bildungsroman. Their thematic approach to the subject connects novels from different periods. However, after analyzing Goethe's influence on the genre, they move to George Eliot and other Victorian, modern, and contemporary authors to discuss fictions of female development. Highlighting the malleability of the genre, Thomas L. Jeffers' *Apprenticeships: The Bildungsroman from Goethe to Santayana* (2005) is a critical work on the history of the Bildungsroman but also how it evolves from Goethe's work and transforms itself to address Victorian and modern issues. Jeffers takes time to survey the roots of the Bildungsroman and its history throughout the years. Yet, Jeffers' book makes the same jump from Goethe to the Victorian period, this time to Dickens, and Jeffers completely ignores the Romantic era and its context to instead focus on the narrative structure of the Bildungsroman.

New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman (2012) by Giovanna Summerfield and Lisa Downward almost unites the Romantic novel, the Bildungsroman and gender studies. The first section of the book is devoted to spirituality as an essential component of the Bildungsroman. Summerfield reveals the Freemasonic ties between several authors of Bildungsroman and her analysis covers the different interpretation of the Masonic order in Europe and how those differences affect the narratives. The second part of the book, by Downward, examines the question of gender in the Bildungsroman, as she deconstructs gender issues in *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, coming to the conclusion that the narrative is not only about a young man, but instead opens the discussion on gender per se and gender roles with the use of the Beautiful Soul as a contrast to Wilhelm's own *Bildung*. Even though the two authors discuss the Romantic roots of Goethe's work, they completely overlook the Romantic period: Summerfield jumps from Defoe to Dickens while Downward's analysis of gender in Bildungsroman—besides *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*—begins with Eliot and Brontë.

Along the recent critical work on both the Bildungsroman and the Romantic novel, *A Romantic Bildung* resituates the Bildungsroman in the Romantic period, hence exposing its Romantic essence. In other words, it claims that the socio-political context of the Romantic period allows for the creation of the Bildungsroman as a new genre. Furthermore, it argues that the genre is not necessarily German nor nationalistic in origin but is instead a cultural product transcending borders and languages. To my knowledge, this is a new approach to the genre.¹¹ To prove this point, examples of this process and the underlying social norms are

¹¹ Although Philippe Chardin's work attempts to democratize the birth of the Bildungsroman, it nevertheless places its birth under Rousseau's French dominion and other formative novels of the period in France.

taken from England, Scotland, and Ireland in order to reveal the transnationality of the Bildungsroman. These novels are Frances Burney's *Cecilia, or Memoirs of an Heiress* (1782), Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline, The Orphan of the Castle*, Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1815), as well as Maria Edgeworth's *Ormond, a Tale* (1817). Moreover, I consider these authors as being representative of the Romantic novelists prior to the English translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* in 1824 in order to exclude a possible contamination by the German work as it is considered the quintessence of the Bildungsroman.¹²

While the Bildungsroman is highly associated with male authors,¹³ the majority of the novels chosen in this work are written by women. This is a deliberate choice: they stand for a different kind of formation or education that should be included in the scope of the Bildungsroman, not separated from it. In order to question the relevance of gender in the process of self-realization, Edgeworth's *Ormond* and Scott's *Waverley* are contrasted with the other female heroines. Taking the recent criticism on the subject, it appears counter-intuitive and counter-productive to study the Bildungsroman *only* in light of gender.¹⁴ In contrast to this

¹² It is difficult to exclude all possible sources of contamination. While it is reductive to consider the authors as immune to other literary works coming from outside the British Isles, it seems probable that Goethe's work was little known in Great Britain prior to Carlyle's translation in 1824 (Jeffers 43–44). There is a review of *Wilhelm Meister* in the *Monthly Review* in 1798: "For the rest, we ought to observe that the style of the romance before us is classical, and that the colouring is chaste. The writer discovers none of that attachment to the extravagant and the monstrous, which has so extensively infected the modern literature of his country" ("Review of Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre" 551). The fact that *The Sorrows of Young Werther* are mentioned in *Emmeline* should not be an indication of how widespread *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* was. "Throughout the period under consideration here [the nineteenth century], as in the late eighteenth century, the literary traffic was generally heavier in the direction from England to Germany, Richardson, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray being the most popular both for reading and for imitating and their success equalled only by Goethe's *Werther* and the novellas of E.T.A. Hoffman in Germany" (Argyle 6).

¹³ An exception would be George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and the Brontë sisters with *Wuthering Heights*, *Agnes Grey*, and *Shirley*.

¹⁴ On the inherent difference between works from men and women, Jane Spencer states that "Feminist critics have countered such arguments by reference to the 'specificity' of women's writing, that is, the claim that women's writing is significantly different from men's because of the authors' gender. We need to be careful here.

critical position, *A Romantic Bildung* focuses on the socio-economical and historical context that produces the Bildungsroman. It should be noted that education at the Romantic age is still both for boys and girls a matter of social rank and income as well as being subjugated to the law of primogeniture. Furthermore, segregating the narratives into two distinct genres—the Bildungsroman and the female Bildungsroman—creates false differences, as noted by Lorna Ellis. The female protagonist falsely seems to be “growing down” while abiding to the narrative structure of the Bildungsroman.

Fragmentation is another concern raised by sub-genres: by continually creating sub-genres to accommodate the different experiences, the commonality is sacrificed in the name of differentiation. Instead, an attentive analysis of the narratives and morals produced by the discourse around *Bildung* reveals the very essence and articulations of the Romantic Bildungsroman. Franco Moretti’s *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture* (1987) serves as a key reference as his thematic approach to the subject allows for a wider discourse on the subject. Moreover, it is easier to unite the novels under themes rather than specific criteria, as the themes are more or less left to interpretation. Since the novels are analyzed using the context of the Romantic period to resituate the values and interrogations about the self in regards to society, it reclaims at the same time the Romantic essence of the coming-of-age novel. Moreover, it closes a gap in recent criticism by uniting the Romantic novel and the Bildungsroman as they are often ignored in each other’s criticism. My analysis also promotes the dialogue on our needs to categorize genre, to transform differences into subgenres and to treat the latter as mutually exclusive. Furthermore, it pursues the discourse

I do not claim that in any respect, thematic or stylistic, women’s writing is *essentially* different from men’s: indeed the most crucial insight afforded by feminism is in my opinion the deconstruction of the opposition masculine-feminine as essential categories” (ix).

outside the nationalistic boundaries to look at the genre as an ensemble, leaving a space to debate the differences and similarities between works.

Novels, especially the Bildungsroman, are products of their environment and they need to be studied in relation to this context. To achieve this, a multi-disciplinary approach—using mainly history, cultural and gender studies, as well as educational theory—gives the best result as it resituates the works within their social, historical, economical, and political contexts. By looking at the different aspects of society in the Romantic age, I want to deconstruct the idea of the Bildungsroman as a national genre and instead present it in terms of a transnational cultural product.¹⁵ It lets the texts speak for the spirit of the Romantic age. As the chosen novels are not necessarily recognized as being Bildungsroman, their analyses underline the cultural importance of the rise of the individual's experience in Romantic literature. This, in turn, reveals the key characteristics of the genre. In order to highlight the Romantic context while following the elements of the narrative structure pertaining to the Bildungsroman, *A Romantic Bildung* is divided according to a thematic approach.

The key elements of the Romantic period—such as the revolutions in France and America and their political consequences—are examined in “Enlightened Romantics.” This first chapter highlights the discourses around the Rights of men since these are related to the rise of awareness of the individual's experience. Then, the education system in the Romantic period and the different in vogue pedagogical and philosophical approaches are studied. Since the child ceases to be perceived as a miniature adult after the Enlightenment, education becomes a matter of importance. Rousseau's philosophies on the child as expressed in *Émile*

¹⁵ This approach is also used by Tobias Boes in *Normative Fictions: Nationalism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Bildungsroman*, especially “to the ways in which individual novels repeatedly run into difficulties when they attempt to fulfill Morgenstern's dictum and link national experience to the life of their hero” (*Formative Fictions* 3) although his aims is limited to German novels.

ou de l'Éducation (1762) influence contemporary authors in and outside of France. Since many authors from Europe use and appropriate his theory—whether they approve it or not—it is safe to assume that Bildungsroman's roots could be located in this transnationality of ideas and theories. Moreover, literature dedicated to the education of children was flourishing. For instance, Maria Edgeworth's literary career rests partly on her didactic works that catered directly to children. Finally, as the consciousness of the public—namely of the rising middle class—affect the way novels are written, the changes in literary movements and aesthetics, for instance Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*, are also explored.

After establishing the framework, the dissertation is divided into three chapters following the narrative structure of the Bildungsroman: education, independence, and return to the community.¹⁶ I have chosen a thematic approach to the genre to maintain order and focus throughout the dissertation. With the aim of truly representing the essence of the Romantic novel, it must be analyzed as a spectrum and not as fragments. All novels are analyzed side by side according to these narrative elements. As I follow the narrative structure of the Bildungsroman, similarities between the chosen novels are revealed. This method enables to address the discrepancies and differences related to *Bildung* in between the works.

First, “A Romantic Education” explores the elements related to education and the learning experience in the six novels. The learning experience here is treated as inclusive of different processes and is not exclusively about the traditional apprenticeship. It obviously revolves around education as portrayed in the novels: either a formal education or a natural education according to the protagonist's economic and social class. It includes experiments on

¹⁶ John Killham in “The Idea of Community in the English Novel,” defines community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*) as the “two types of social living” (381) based on natural or rational will. In contrast, *A Romantic Bildung* uses the term “community” to refer to the actual people, while “society” is used as the abstract concept.

the principle of nature against nurture as depicted in Edgeworth's *Ormond*. Fanny Price's education in *Mansfield Park* both reveals the discrepancies between her cousins' status and hers, as well as the different social expectations of women's education. In *Emmeline*, the trope of instruction through literature and imitation is examined. As well, education encompasses social skills since learning social skills is part of the apprenticeship experience. Austen's novels are often categorized as novels of manners—which is a genre that is related to the Bildungsroman—since manners and social skills are of a major importance to efficiently interact with others. Emma's education is not necessarily confined to her formal education guided by her governess, Miss Taylor, but it is also influenced by how she learns to interact with the community of Highbury. Similarly, Burney's *Cecilia* illustrates the need for a social education as Cecilia must learn the London's etiquette, which is to her quite like a new language. As for *Waverley*, the protagonist must learn to adapt to a new culture with its own social code in order to relate to his new environment.

Then, “A Quest for Self-Determination” is about the individual's emancipation from society. It discusses the protagonist's agency to act according to their own conscience. One key component is the need for economic freedom as it is crucial in the Bildungsroman in order to achieve social independence. It is at the core of *Cecilia* and *Emmeline*: in both novels, the heroine has to gain control of her fortune in order to claim her independence from her guardians. Yet, refusing money and the comforts it allows can be a means to assert one's agency as it is illustrated in *Ormond*. In *Emma*, money becomes an instrument to disrupt the social order as Emma refuses at first to acknowledge social mobility in Highbury, leaving her almost isolated among her friends. Here lies the danger of emancipation: alienation from society. *Mansfield Park* represents a sophisticated version of the White Man's burden with its

discourse around slavery and charity: it portrays education as social elevation and self-realization as self-emancipation. Fanny Price's stay in Portsmouth reminds her that her own emancipation from the Bertrams has cast her away from them and, in a way, that she has lost all her previous agency. Waverley chooses a path that alienates him from his friends and his former community as it leads him directly to insurrection and treason. While the emancipation is a milestone in the *bildungsheld's* development, it does come with a price when crossing the boundaries of society. It is by exploring the limits of agency that the protagonist can come to closure with society and can (hopefully) return from his/her own will.

Finally, "A Restoration in the Community" is about the individual's return to the society. The protagonist realizes that it is impossible to leave completely shut out from society. The homecoming has an aspect of negotiation: it is possible only after achieving a balance between the self and the others. This is why in *Emma*, the least problematic novel, the object is not so much her integration into society—since Emma's social position and education make her the center of interest in her community—but her reintegration into society: her fancy alienates her from society, but she manages to adjust her nature so as to rejoin Highbury's society. Often it is achieved through a social event, like a wedding. Fanny's union to Edmund is the occasion for Sir Thomas to reconsider his opinion of Fanny. Or, in *Waverley*, the marriage between Rose and Waverley signals the union between Britain and Scotland. *Ormond* is different from the other novels even though it concludes with the prospect of his union to Miss Annaly. Instead, the return to society is marked by Ormond choosing to become Prince Harry in the Black Islands over buying Castle Hermitage. Ormond's integrity and sense of duty lead him back to accept King Corny's legacy and to continue in his footsteps the improvements of the Black Islands. Legacy is a change in continuity for the community and is

an important aspect of the return: that the disturbing element finds a way back into society so that the latter can continue to thrive. In *Cecilia*, despite her marriage to Mortimer, the family is still divided: it is her fever and the possibility of her death that mend the relation between father and son. Similarly, Emmeline can only achieve happiness once Delamere dies, as it frees her to marry the man she truly loves.

In conclusion, with *A Romantic Bildung* I want to highlight the most important aspect of the Bildungsroman: the experience of the individual. It is this ability to give a voice to many different perspectives that really highlights the diversity of the Romantic age. With the multiplication of newspapers, journals, and reviews, the Romantic Age gave a voice to a variety of opinions and experiences. It is a print culture based on experimentation: the novel is not yet stable and genres are invented, amalgamated, and perfected. The six novels that are analyzed here in this dissertation may come from different parts of the British Isles and may be of different genres but they share a common foundation: these are Romantic novels narrating the education, the independence, and the return to society of protagonists.

Chapter 1: The Enlightened Romantics

He showed himself so intimately acquainted with all the tenderest songs of the one poet, and all the impassioned descriptions of hopeless agony of the other; he repeated, with such tremulous feeling, the various lines which imaged a broken heart, or a mind destroyed by wretchedness, and looked so entirely as if he meant to be understood, that she ventured to hope he did not always read only poetry.
Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

At first sight, Romanticism as a movement seems to be in reaction to the Enlightenment. As Marshall Brown states, “It is a truism, on the one hand, that the Romantics rebelled against their predecessors” (“Romanticism and Enlightenment” 35). A quick look at Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (1751-1772) and Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) will convince anyone of the marked distinction between the two works: the first maps and orders the knowledge of its time, while the second is the account of a cursed sailor where mysticism and the unknown are the main foundation. If the Enlightenment is synonymous of order, it appears that the Romantic period is analogous to a disorganized organization. Yet, Brown concedes that the matter is more complicated than this simple fact. It turns out that the Romantics are not *that* opposed or reacting against the Enlightenment. In fact, they are quite aligned with the tenets of the Enlightenment: social structures, like monarchy, are being questioned, in England, France and America; the Church, while it continues to order people’s lives, is in competition with the rise of mysticism and dissenting sects.¹⁷

¹⁷ For instance, see the birth and rise of the Gothic novel in England, with its emphasis on the supernatural. For more on the relation between the pleasure of *unknowing*, superstitions and the Gothic, see Deidre Shauna Lynch’s “Gothic Fiction” and E. J. Clery’s *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800*.

Moreover, mankind is now at the center of the universe since the social structures—which are used to order society—are shaking and crumbling. If anything, the Romantics appear to be an exaggerated continuation of the Enlightenment,¹⁸ an exacerbation of a focus on the human as the simplest expression of truth and life. In other words, it is not a reaction or opposition to the main characteristic of the Enlightenment but its applied principles. This is highlighted by the sheer difficulty to trace the line between the Enlightenment and the Romantic period and by the proliferation of theories on both the post-Enlightenment and pre-Romanticism.¹⁹

1.1 The Enlightenment Legacy

With the Enlightenment and its dedication to knowledge came major technical and scientific advances such as the steam engine. These advances restructured the way life is organized: population moved towards cities and urban centers in search of better jobs while some workers were replaced by machines.²⁰ The middle class was continuing its rise and sat uneasy in-between the nobility and the working class. Unable to identify with either class, the bourgeois and merchants opened new markets and new demands: they wanted to rise above the working classes, but at the same time, they resented the power and political importance reserved to the nobility. The social mobility and the advances of mechanical and engineered

¹⁸ For instance, in *Romanticism*, Aidan Day states that the “*Lyrical Ballads* and Blake’s early works (not to mention the writings of Helen Maria Williams, Robert Burns, Charlotte Smith, and others) can be seen less as part of a Romantic rebellion against the Enlightenment than as late Enlightenment productions” (78).

¹⁹ On the subject, Marshall Brown writes that “To be sure, few scholars still use the term pre-Romanticism in the old way... ‘Pre-Romanticism,’ though widely diffused, turns out to be an unwitting and accidental by-product of other impulses, and hence radically different from the consciously worked out aims of the various Romantic writers, richly elaborated in a coherent body of works”(“Romanticism and Enlightenment” 37–8). Even though he seems to deny the point, he then concedes that there is value to see the two movements as influencing one another. See also Michael J. Tolley’s “Preromanticism” for more on the subject.

²⁰ For instance, Luddites protested against and damaged the machinery that has replaced workers in factories and mills.

machines reveal the contention points that will shake the Romantic period: the place of the individual in society. Many of these issues derive from the Enlightenment's beliefs in the individual—and not the structure—as the basis of social organization.

We often forget that events that have supposedly shaped the Romantic period, such as the French Revolution, are not reflections of the tumultuous period but are rather direct consequences of the Enlightenment. What was theorized during the Enlightenment is executed during the Romantic period. Philosophers like Hobbes and Voltaire questioned the state as a structure and some of their theories supported the French Revolution. With his *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes imagined a new structure of government that is not depending on the divine right of king, but on the masses. His social contract influenced other philosophers, like Rousseau, to imagine different forms of government. Thus, the monarchy, at least in France, was no longer seen in 1789 as a suitable structure by the French people; the revolutionary movement, fuelled by the idealism of *liberté, égalité et fraternité*, was determined to shake up the structure in place and form a new social order. They replaced the old order with a Republic in hopes that it would resolve the social and economic crisis in France. The middle class was at the forefront of the political battle, backed by the working class and the *sans-culottes*, as they all felt abused by the clergy and the nobility. The consequences in France were devastating: the French Revolution failed to deliver its promises as the society was simply as unequal as it was before and it became a mere justification for Robespierre's Reign of Terror and for the subsequent dictatorship by Bonaparte. The French nation may have been born out

of the French Revolution, but it was bathed in blood.²¹ While many Frenchmen and women fled the country, England cut off its link to France fearing the social unrest.²²

The consequences of the French Revolution were not limited to the Continent.²³ In England, many philosophers, thinkers, and writers took position on the revolutionary movement.²⁴ They questioned the concepts of liberty and human rights as well as what should be the ideal form of government. Those who were pro-revolution took the side of the individuals born with unalienable rights while the conservatives considered the French monarchy as the bulwark against chaos. Among the first to publish on the subject is Richard Price, who wrote *A Discourse on the Love of Our Country* in 1789. His *Discourse*, while never openly criticizing England, discusses the nature of good forms of government.

When the representation is fair and equal, and at the same time vested with such powers as our House of Commons possesses, a kingdom may be said to govern itself, and consequently to possess true liberty... But if not only extremely partial, but corruptly chosen, and under corrupt influence after being chose, it becomes a *nuisance*, and produces the worst of all forms of government: a government by corruption. (“Representation” 4)

His discourse, despite calling for reform, is not about the abolition of the monarchy: it is about better representation. Representation becomes increasingly an issue in governance as the

²¹ For a more detailed analysis of the Revolution and its relation to the literature of the period, see Gregory Dart’s *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism 1789-1832* as well as Seamus Deane’s *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England* for a detailed analysis of the reception of the French Revolution in England and why it could not be replicated in England.

²² See for instance Charlotte Smith’s poem *The Emigrants* on the conditions of the French immigrants.

²³ “Shortly thereafter, in 1789, the explosion in the New World [the Declaration of Independence in 1776] was *paralleled* in the Old by the volcanic outbreak of the French Revolution” (Anderson 192). In a footnote, Anderson adds that “The French Revolution was in turn *paralleled* in the New World by the outbreak of Toussaint L’Ouverture’s insurrection in 1791, which by 1806 had resulted in Haiti’s former slaves creating the second independent republic of the Western hemisphere” (192–93).

²⁴ See Adriana Craciun’s *British Women Writers and the French Revolution: Citizens of the World* for more on the input made by authors like Mary Robinson, Helen Maria Williams, and Charlotte Smith on the French Revolution and the Jacobite movement.

people ceased to see themselves as subjects, but as citizens of a same nation.²⁵ As Price warns the “supporters of slavish governments” that they “cannot now hold the world in darkness” (“Prospects” 5), Edmund Burke, on the other hand, condemns the events in France and cautions against the desire for change. With his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), Burke argues that society relies on order and only a strong monarchy can achieve, like in the glory of medieval days, an honour-based chivalry. It is this code of law that, according to Burke, will restore the social peace. “An essential element in Burke’s defence of the English system was the claim that the English had remained and would remain loyal to their ancient traditions because these were in conformity with the requirements of human nature” (Deane, *French Revolution* 12). Burke argues that the social contract that unites the people should come from the examples of the member of the upper-class. Speaking of a hypothetical France moulded on the British monarchy, he writes:

You would have had a free constitution; a potent monarchy; a disciplined army; a reformed and venerated clergy; a mitigated but spirited nobility, to lead your virtue, not to overlay it; you would have had a liberal order of commons, to emulate and to recruit that nobility; you would have had a protected, satisfied, laborious, and obedient people, taught to seek and to recognize the happiness that is to be found by virtue in all conditions; in which consists the true moral equality of mankind. (188–89)

The current state of affairs in France could not, according to him, restore the social peace and could not produce leaders to manage the people and run the kingdom of France. The social order could only happen through a detailed hierarchy, which betrayed his enlightened school of thought and his beliefs in social structures based on the principles of property.

²⁵ We should not forget that the United States fought for their independence on the principle of “No taxation without representation.”

Moreover, in his *Reflections*, Burke argues against the principle of liberty as a blessing,²⁶ comparing the National Assembly to “a madman, who has escaped from the protecting restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell” and “an highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison” (151). He insists on relying on the laws and structures of the past as the only true and tried principles as he writes “The very idea of the fabrication of a new government, is enough to fill us with disgust and horror” (181). The wind of change does not bring good prospects in Burke’s *Reflections*, as it is associated with depravity and inconsistency:

Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government (for she then had a government) without enquiry what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered? Can I now congratulate the same nation upon its freedom? (151)

Burke’s assessment of the situation in France is just: as the National Assembly had yet to prove its validity and diligence, it was impossible to attest the outcome of the Revolution yet.

It is in reaction to Burke’s *Reflections* that Wollstonecraft wrote her *Vindications of the Rights of Men* (1790). In them, she details all the reasons why men are born equal and how society would be improved had everyone received the aforementioned rights. She emphasizes that it is the individual man that has rights, not men as a group. She states that “The birthright of man, to give you, Sir, a short definition of this disputed right, is such a degree of liberty, civil and religious, as is compatible with the liberty of every other individual with whom he is united in a social compact, and the continued existence of that compact” (*Rights of Men* 7). In her *Rights of Men*, she attacks the weakness in Burke’s *Reflections*: a social contract based on

²⁶ On the subject, he writes “I must be tolerably sure, before I venture publicly to congratulate men upon a blessing, that they have really received one” (152).

a potent monarch, a strong nobility, and a vigorous commerce just sounds too good to be true. Hypothetically speaking, it is an ideal social order, but the reality was otherwise. Using Burke's career in the House of Commons, she declares

Then you must have seen the clogged wheels of corruption continually oiled by the sweat of the laborious poor, squeezed out of them by unceasing taxation. You must have discovered that the majority in the House of Commons was often purchased by the crown, and that the people were oppressed by the influence of their own money, extorted by the venal voice of a packed representation. (*Rights of Men* 20)

Her arguments are not based on theory and ideals as Burke's are: she uses common knowledge of everyday vices, corruption, and mismanagement by the representatives of Parliament to fight for a more just, more egalitarian society in which property is not "accumulated by the most abominable violation of every sentiment of justice and piety" (*Rights of Men* 49). Nevertheless, while Wollstonecraft offers counterpoints for every argument used by Burke, she reverts to *ad hominem* and personal attack against Burke and thus loses focus in her *Rights of Men*.

While Price, Burke, and Wollstonecraft were cautious to distance their arguments from the British crown²⁷—Burke went to great lengths to analyze the legal aspect of the Glorious Revolution; Wollstonecraft never targeted the Crown, but the House of Commons and the House of Lords—some were more radical and called for a global revolution, including in Great Britain. For example, the Anglo-American Thomas Paine advocated for reform with *The Rights of Man* (1791) on the basis that mankind has natural rights that cannot be removed by law.

²⁷ Although had Price published his *Discourse* two or three years later, he probably would have been charged with either libel or treason (Wu 4).

The romantic and barbarous distinction of men into Kings and subjects, though it may suit the condition of courtiers, cannot that of citizens—and is exploded by the principle upon which Governments are now funded. Every citizen is a member of the Sovereignty, and, as such, can acknowledge no personal subjection, and his obedience can be only to the laws. (175)

His *Rights* is not simply aimed at England, but at all monarchies. He argues that the only valid model of governments is the nation-state. Furthermore, he asserts that the cause of wars in Europe is monarchies. Having nations would eliminate conflict and this would instead promote peace and the improvement of the condition of mankind. The French Revolution becomes a test for Romantics: can the principles of equality, fraternity, and freedom be really applied or are they only a theory? Moreover, they question how and why these rights can be applied. Even in the same “camp,” there were a plurality of voices and arguments: some used legislation; others used sentiments, rationality, and history.

In his *Reflections*, Burke warns those who would try to replicate the Revolution in England:

Those who cultivate the memory of our revolution, and those who are attached to the constitution of this kingdom, will take good care how they are involved with persons who, under the pretext of zeal towards the Revolution and constitution, too frequently wander from their true principles; and are ready on every occasion to depart from the firm but cautious and deliberate spirit which produced the one, and which presides in the other. (145–46)

As predicted by Burke, the French Revolution never fulfilled its promise: the living conditions were radically deteriorating and the population was repressed. The inability of the Directory to manage the state of France based on the principles of the Revolution²⁸ paved the way for Napoleon Bonaparte to seize power in 1799. Wollstonecraft and Paine also suffered a decline

²⁸ “In the eyes of many writers and thinkers of the ‘Thermidorean’ period, the Terror was to be interpreted as a misguided attempt to legislate virtue into existence: hence the prime historical lesson to be learnt from its ultimate failure was that it was disastrous to attempt the general dissemination of republican values through the medium of pure politics” (Dart 101).

in popular opinion. Wollstonecraft became a figure too reactionary and controversial for the masses and Paine, although a representative in France, was tried for libel in England.²⁹ Moreover, the United Kingdom of Great Britain was far from being united in peace: there was still resentment over the Jacobite rising of 1745³⁰ and in 1798 there was a rising opposition in Ireland to the British rule in Ireland. The British Crown lost no speed to prosecute libels and treason charges against the King as the events in France recalled the regicide of Charles 1st.³¹ For instance, John Thelwall, close friend of Coleridge and Wordsworth, faced imprisonment charges for treason because he had published tracts promoting a new republic in the United Kingdom based on the notion of equality among men.³²

On the home front, the rise of the middle class and the numerous wars, either against the United States or France, put a strain on the political sphere. As the reign of George III is interrupted by the Regency, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland faced political unrest: the war against Bonaparte had led to numerous war-time measures and the population was extenuated by the war efforts demanded. When Corn Laws were first passed in 1815 in a disguised effort to support the landlords to the detriment of the working class and the poor, it was clear that the burden of the war was not balanced equally between the social classes. Therefore, the population massively demonstrated on August 16th, 1819 at St. Peter's Field, in Manchester. Their aggravation and the use of blunt force to repress it culminated into what is now known as the Peterloo Massacre. These perturbations took roots in the Enlightenment

²⁹ See Glynis Ridley's "Injustice in the Works of Godwin and Wollstonecraft" for more on the Paine's prosecution, and the impact it has on William Godwin and Mary Wollstonecraft's literary works.

³⁰ As portrayed in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley*.

³¹ When discussing the execution of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, every author agrees that it would be impossible to replicate in England and cover the cases of Charles 1st and of James II with great care in order to avoid being charged for treason.

³² For more on his opinion on the freedom of speech and the judicial system at the time in Great Britain, see his writings "Dangerous Tendency of the Attempt to Suppress Political Discussion" and "Stanzas on Hearing for Certainty That We Were to Be Tried for High Treason."

discourse on the individual as the center of the political structure and continued to grow and expand during the Romantic period, way beyond the specter of the French Revolution: “Corsica, Montenegro, Bohemia, Geneva, Denmark, and Sweden, each in turn seeming to provide another view of a confusing new world in revolt against old forms of social order” (Maxwell and Trumpener, Introduction 1). The revolutionary and nationalistic movement was thus widespread and transnational.

Parallel to the discussions on representation and the rights of men, there were debates on the slave trade. For many, the rights of man should be extended to everyone, including slaves. The abolitionists worked to convince the masses that the slave trade was an aberration in that day and age. In 1772, a trial was about to make history: the Somerset case. James Somerset, a slave, had escaped from his master while in England, was recaptured, then held prisoner, and bound for Jamaica. As many have pointed out,³³ the case was not concerned with slavery per se: it was only to decide whether his captivity aboard the ship was lawful or not. In his judgement, Lord Mansfield states that “The state of slavery is of such a nature that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political... It is so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law” (qtd. in Cotter 35). While Lord Mansfield has generally been considered as pro-abolition, there are since the late 1980s new and numerous accounts of his doubts on the subject. In “New Light on Mansfield and Slavery,” James Oldham writes that Lord Mansfield “was genuinely ambivalent about the subject of slavery. He accepted and endorsed the widely assumed mercantile importance of the slave trade, yet he doubted the validity of theoretical justifications of slavery, and he sought to redress instances

³³ See for instance, George van Cleve’s “‘Somerset’s Case’ and Its Antecedents in Imperial Perspective,” and Ruth Paley’s “Imperial Politics and English Law: The Many Contexts of ‘Somerset.’”

of individual cruelty to slaves” (45). While it was a major stepping stone for the abolitionist movement, the Somerset case did not prohibit slavery: it only stipulated that there was no law in England that supported slavery. In her *Rights of Men*, Wollstonecraft argues against slavery on the basis of reason and morality when she writes

But on what principle Mr Burke could defend American independence, I cannot conceive; for the whole tenor of his plausible arguments settles slavery on an everlasting foundation. Allowing his servile reverence for antiquity, and prudent attention to self-interest, to have the force which he insists on, the slave trade ought never to be abolished; and, because our ignorant forefathers, not understanding the native dignity of man, sanctioned a traffic that outrages every suggestion of reason and religion, we are to submit to the inhuman custom, and term an atrocious insult to humanity the love of our country, and a proper submission to the laws by which our property is secured. (*Rights of Men* 13)

Whether laws permit or restrict slavery is meaningless: Wollstonecraft argues that the institution of slavery as a whole is immoral and only exists because those who sanction it are not enlightened.

At the front of the abolitionist movement was William Wilberforce.³⁴ As a representative in the House of Commons for the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, he worked at unveiling to the British public and legal instances the true living conditions and punishments suffered by the slaves. In 1791, he proposed a Bill that would abolish the slave trade. Despite the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade’s campaign, “the Abolition Bill was defeated in the House of Commons by a vote of 163 to 88, a massive blow to the antislavery campaign” (Ferguson 86). Anna Laetitia Barbauld, in June 1791, wrote her “Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq., on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave

³⁴ David Monaghan notes that Wilberforce, as an Evangelical and political figure did not use the usual stratagems to fight for his causes. “Wilberforce and his followers employed more impersonal tactics based on the methods of the business world and directed their efforts at a different audience, the urban middle class; they set up committees, held mass meetings, started propagandist magazines, and organized petitions, all with the intention of bringing to bear the pressure of public opinion on a Parliament which had not previously recognized that such a thing existed” (225).

Trade” in which she asks him to “Cease, Wilberforce, to urge thy generous aim — / Thy country knows the sin and stands the shame!” (“Epistle to William Wilberforce” 1–2). She asks him to stop not because the fight for the abolition of slavery was not worth it, but because his work was in vain. As long as the opinion of the masses and of the House of Commons remained pro-slavery, Wilberforce would never be able to gain the required momentum to overrule slavery. She used a technique that she will repeat in “Eighteen Hundred and Eleven” in which the persona acts as a seer as she projects a future to denounce what is happening—or not happening—in the future. In the “Epistle to William Wilberforce,” it is a future in which slavery will be outlawed and in which Wilberforce’s name will be remembered exactly because he opposed slavery in a time when no one else did. She uses the prospect of future shame to convey the proponents of slavery that they stand on the wrong side of history:

Your merit stands, no greater and no less,
Without or with the varnish of success;
But seek no more to break a nation’s fall,
For ye have saved yourselves, and that is all.
Succeeding times your struggles, and their fate,
With mingled shame and triumph shall relate,
While faithful history in her various page,
Marking the features of this motley age,
To shed a glory, and to fix a stain,
Tells how you strove, and that you strove in vain.

(“Epistle to William Wilberforce,” 108–23)

In other words, according to Barbauld, slavery will definitely be abolished and those who opposed its abolition will forever be associated with shame.

In her poem, she recognizes that the immorality of the trade was a weaker argument than the revenues they provided: “Where seasoned tolls of avarice prevail, / A nation’s eloquence, combined, must fail” (“Epistle to William Wilberforce” 25–26). Many plantation owners, like the fictional Sir Thomas in *Mansfield Park*, derived their income from the “free” labour of slaves, and some merchants benefited directly from the slave trade, especially in Bristol and Liverpool.³⁵ In *Emma*, the narrator/Emma describes Mr. Elton’s wife, Augusta, as “the youngest of the two daughters of a Bristol—merchant, of course, he must be called; but as the whole of the profits of his mercantile life appeared so very moderate, it was not unfair to guess the dignity of his line of trade had been very moderate also” (*E* 144). The narrator/Emma hesitates to call the father a merchant, not because of snobbery, but because of the particular object of the trade: human flesh. It is revealed by two facts: the first is that he was based in Bristol and the second is that he left Augusta 10,000£,³⁶ which is a hefty sum for a merchant’s second daughter.³⁷ Austen’s use of irony suggests that as his profits were far from being moderate, so was the respectability of his trade.³⁸ Mr. Hawkins is a fictional depiction of merchants involved in the slave trade, but the reality was that a large segment of England’s economy depended on the Triangular Trade: naval construction and port authorities, manufactured goods to be sold in Africa, and industries dependent on the primary resources from the Americas are a few of the economic sectors profiting from the slave trade. The

³⁵ See Alan Richardson’s “Darkness visible? Race and Representation in Bristol Abolitionist Poetry, 1770-1810” for more on the city’s complicated relation with slavery at the turn of the nineteenth century.

³⁶ Around 1 to 1,4 million dollars in today’s currency.

³⁷ For comparison, in Burney’s *Cecilia*, Cecilia’s father bequeaths her—his only child—the same sum and that sum alone is considered a substantive portion. Mrs. Elton’s father would have gathered at least twice the sum to provide for both his daughters. Also, according to Leith McGrandle’s *The Cost of Living in Britain* a “leading merchant or banker” would earn 2,000£ a year (73), making the dowry for his daughters at least ten times the average yearly earnings of a leading merchant.

³⁸ Mrs. Elton is also quite outraged when Jane compares the offices for governesses as being a form of trade of human intellect. She overcompensates for what she believes is in attack to her reputation as the daughter of a slave trader.

economies of Bristol and Liverpool as a whole would suffer from an abrupt end of the slave trade.

Progress on the abolition was made in 1807 with the Slave Trade Act. It did not outlaw slavery but only the trade of slaves. It was then ironically legitimate to live on revenues produced by the slave-operated plantations but it became immoral to live on the profits of selling another human being. While it did not end slavery, the ban on the slave trade was an effective manner to slowly but surely eliminate slavery: cutting the supply ultimately cut the demands. It was also an incentive for the plantation owners to give better working conditions to their slaves: since they could not buy new slaves to replace those who either died—from exhaustion, malnutrition, illness, or natural causes—or those who escaped, they had to limit their losses. Furthermore, prospects of rebellion, like in Saint-Domingue³⁹ (now Haiti) in 1791 led by Toussaint L'Ouverture (Chaplin and Faflak 38) created tension on the plantations: too much repression, and the slaves would openly rebel, not enough and the profits would dwindle. It is only toward the end of the Romantic period, precisely in 1833, that Wilberforce's hard work and the numerous publications against slavery⁴⁰ pay off and that Parliament abolishes slavery in most of the British Empire.⁴¹

The popularity of the printing press as well as the improved methods of paper-making increased the flow of political tracts in circulation during the Romantic period, furthering the

³⁹ A French colony at the time.

⁴⁰ One of the noteworthy texts is Thomas Clarkson's *An Essay on the Slavery and the Commerce of the Human Species, particularly the African; translated from a Latin Dissertation*, which the second edition was published in 1788. For more on the impact of Clarkson's *Essay*, see Peter J. Kitson's "Romanticism and Colonialism: Races, Places, People, 1785-1800" in *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780-1830*.

⁴¹ It takes another decade before it is abolished on all British territories.

political instability of the Georgian period.⁴² The dissemination of tracts, for example Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts* (1795-1797), aimed at the general education of the masses, while others were designed to give a political education on the evil of monarchy and the lack of universal suffrage. For instance, William Hone's "The Political House that Jack Built" (1819) uses a well-known nursery rhyme, "This Is the House that Jack Built," to denounce the corruption and the censorship of the presses. Tracts were not the only political or educational printed items coming off the presses: others, like Hogarth, Gillray, and Cruikshank, mocked political persona or events with engravings of caricature. Using symbolism and repetitive figures, to the point of being normative,⁴³ these engravings were easily readable, even by the illiterate population. The small boom in print production led to a rise of plurality of voices: almost anyone could then publish a cheap tract to voice and circulate his opinions to the public. The rampant chaos brought by the political instability, whether in France following the Revolution or in England with the threat of a regency, could only be contained by the reformation of the educational practices.

During the Enlightenment, many philosophers devoted their attention to the education of children. John Locke, with *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693) had tremendous success. "Locke's system was fundamentally one of character formation, to which health, knowledge, and habits of mind that rational, moral and just, all contributed" (Demers 142). His treatise details with minutiae the curriculum and the manner in which a child should learn. Immanuel Kant, with his *Lectures on Ethics* "seems to take it as self-evident that moral education is both obligatory and possible, and the only question about it is one of proper

⁴² For more on the role of print-culture and political instability, see Anderson's *Imagined Communities*.

⁴³ See for instance the legend of Napoleon Bonaparte's small height, behind the Napoleon Complex, when in reality he was a tall man.

practice” (Beck 22). Influenced by Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau in *Émile, ou de l'éducation* tells how he raises the fictional young boy Émile. The boy is kept away from books until he reaches the age of twelve and only interacts with his tutor. Rousseau views children as blank canvas, not tainted by the original sin: it is society that corrupts mankind. He based his theory on the ideal of the noble savage, suggesting that the only remedy was to go to “primitive” ways of living. While many were enthused by the new theory, Wollstonecraft attacked Rousseau on the idea of the division of labour based on gender. His depictions of the education of girls which portrayed them as submissive and ornamental in *Julie, ou, la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761) and in *Émile* infuriated her.⁴⁴ It was to counter these doctrines that she took time in *A Vindication for the Rights of Woman* (1792) to depict the evils of such an education as well as her own principles on which to educate young women.⁴⁵

Both Locke’s and Rousseau’s theories were aimed at the elite and the middle class: they both required the devoted attention of a tutor or a parental figure, which the working class and the poor could barely afford. Yet, the need for a public instruction in order to shape civilized and morally superior citizens was acutely felt. In France, Nicolas de Condorcet believed that the improvement of France comes through a population that is educated. In his treatise *Premier mémoire sur l’instruction publique*⁴⁶ (1791), he promotes vocational training as a utilitarian compromise on public instruction. His detractors accused him of willing to transform man into a simple cog in the machine by supporting commerce and capitalism (Dart 104–5). For some, the reformation of educational practices also became a means to an end. In England, the utilitarian movement also wanted to educate according to the expected social

⁴⁴ For more on Wollstonecraft, Rousseau, and aesthetic education, see Gregory Dart’s *Rousseau, Robespierre and English Romanticism*, 99-138.

⁴⁵ These are covered in more details in “A Romantic Education.”

⁴⁶ Known in England at the time as *On Public Instruction*.

roles and created new institutions for the poor and the middle class to provide basic literacy skills aiming that “the poor to work intelligently and the middle classes to govern intelligently” (Lawson and Silver 231). This interest in conjunction with the Romantic desire to educate the masses is illustrated by the creation of Sunday schools for the poor and debates about the establishment of a mandatory public system of education, and the level of involvement of the government in the dispensed education.⁴⁷

The English radicals of the 1790s saw education as one of the objectives in their search for a just and sensible social order. Embedded in Tom Paine’s *The Rights of Man* or Mary Wollstoncraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* are assumptions about education in the context of the pursuit of human rights. (Lawson and Silver 229)

Without a proper education, they believed that it was impossible for the people to participate adequately in society.

Applying the empirical method, some attempted to replicate Rousseau’s theories, both in fiction and in real life.⁴⁸ Among them, Thomas Day is famous for applying Rousseau’s methods twice to raise for himself a suitable wife. Unfortunately for Day, both attempts failed to live up to the expectations as none of the women turn out as expected. Day’s friend, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, also seduced by Rousseau’s theory, attempted in 1767 to raise his own son according to Rousseau’s principles. Recording the experience in his memoirs, he writes: “He had all the virtues of a child bred in the hut of a savage, and all the knowledge of *things* which could well be acquired at an early age by a boy bred in civilised society” (qtd. in Paterson 20–21). However, the experiment was not all positive as the lack of socialization had affected his

⁴⁷ For a contemporary account of the debate on mandatory public education, see George Ensor’s *On National Education*.

⁴⁸ For examples of fiction, see Thomas Day’s *The History of Sandford and Merton* (1783-1789), Jacques-Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre’s *Paul et Virginie* (1789), and Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801) to name a few.

son's character. "He had too little deference for others" his father writes, "and he showed an invincible dislike to control. With me he was always what I wished; with others, he was never anything but what he wished to be himself" (qtd. in Paterson 21). The failure of these experiments led Richard Lovell Edgeworth to write his own theory of education in collaboration with his daughter. In *Practical Education* (1798),⁴⁹ they insist that education should be based on empirical experiment, Lockean discipline and Rousseauian individualism.⁵⁰ Parallel to her didactic works, Edgeworth extended her work as an educational theorist in prose fiction by publishing novels with moralistic elements within the narratives.

Fiction gradually became a tool to teach how to be in society. Chap books were no longer used solely to entertain the readers but some were then crafted to teach and instruct morals and good behaviours. Many writers "were keen believers in the power of carefully designed narratives and of positive as well as negative examples to shape children's understanding" (Demers 143). Maria Edgeworth used fiction as an educational tool for children with her book *The Parent's Assistant* (1796) in which good and naughty children learn the principles of good behaviour and selflessness: they learn as well as that choices have consequences. For instance, in "The Purple Jar," Rosamond, a young girl, learns not to value beauty and ornaments over needs and utility when she gives up a new pair of shoes for a beautiful purple jar. When she asks to return the jar for a pair of shoes, her mother tells her: "No, Rosamond, you must abide by your own choice, and now the best thing you can possibly

⁴⁹ J. Rendall also notes that "it is a synthesis of family observation and educational practice with philosophical and scientific ideas drawn eclectically from writers including Bacon, Locke, Priestley, Reid and Condillac, cited sometimes approvingly, sometimes critically" (620).

⁵⁰ For more on the Edgeworth's education theories as applied by Rachel Mordecai Lazarus in the United States, see Edgar MacDonald's *The Education of the Heart: The Correspondence of Rachel Mordecai Lazarus and Maria Edgeworth* and Jean E. Friedman's *Ways of Wisdom: Moral Education in the Early National Period*.

do is to bear our disappointment with good humour” (“The Purple Jar” 180). The narrative is built in a manner to emphasize the critical mistake in the child’s behaviour and its consequences.⁵¹ Rosamond expresses regrets over her poor choice twice in the short story. “O mamma... how I wish that I had chosen the shoes! They would have been of so much more use to me than that jar: however, I am sure—no not quite sure, but I hope I shall be wiser another time” (“The Purple Jar” 181). Even when Edgeworth moved to a more mature readership when she wrote novels, the educational purpose was not removed from her novels: rather her style remains didactic as she emphasizes the good values one must possess and nurture while denouncing the traits that lead to vice and corruption. According to Davidson, one of the didactic forms used by Edgeworth is the art of conversation:

Indeed, the role of conversation in maintaining a civilized and moral society, a central tenet of prominent moral philosophers, was embraced by various writers of novels throughout the eighteenth century. Writers like Maria Edgeworth and Hannah More, for examples, used conversational interchanges in their novels as ‘well-scripted tutorials’ so that readers, even children could learn the ‘interdependence of subjectivity and society’.⁵² (281)

For the Romantics, education, subjectivity, and society were all intertwined and these three concepts were the root of the Romantic aesthetic and gave birth to a new genre: the Bildungsroman.

1.2 Romantic Aesthetic and the Bildungsroman

The changes occurring in the social and political spheres during and around the French Revolution affected the arts as well. “In fact,” writes Saree Makdisi, “this change reminds us

⁵¹ See Andrew J. Smyth’s “That This Here Box Be in the Natur of a Trap: Maria Edgeworth’s Pedagogical Gardens, Ireland, and the Education of the Poor” for a more detailed analysis of Edgeworth’s didactic work in relation with her essay on the education of the poor.

⁵² (Sutherland 410).

of the extent to which discourse—and culture—are material processes. Modernization must be understood from the very beginning as an overall cultural development” (*Romantic Imperialism* 5). And at the heart of this major cultural development lies the Romantic aesthetic. In order to uncover its root, McKeon’s theory on social change and the rise of the novel can be applied to the development of a new and Romantic aesthetic towards the end of the eighteenth century:

What is required, then, is an understanding of how conceptual categories, whether ‘literary’ or ‘social,’ exist at moments of historical change: how new forms first coalesce as tenable categories by being known in terms of, and against, more traditional forms that have thus far been taken to define the field of possibility. (383)

As the concept of “social” was drastically changing at the junction of the Enlightenment and the Romantic era, so did the category of “literary.” From what was known as stable and unified emerged a plurality of voices and forms. Genre, topic, tone: the Romantics played with the conventions, whether it is in poetry or in prose. Romantic writers willingly used and misused the conventions to form new reading experiences. The literary scene was both rejuvenated and shattered at the same time. It was this maelstrom of voices, opinions, and authorial style in fiction that created the Romantic aesthetic. Older forms, such as the epistolary and the picaresque, were slowly dropped in favour of new forms. Yet, in “Generic Transformation and Social Change,” McKeon contrasts the early novels of the eighteenth century with its later iteration in the nineteenth century. In conformity to the theory of the Rise of the Novel,⁵³ McKeon argues that the novels by Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding are inherently innovative and that those of the nineteenth century are by contrast only building on those innovations. He states that “By the end of the eighteenth century, the conceptual

⁵³ See Ian Watt’s *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*.

categories of ‘the novel’ and ‘the middle-class’ will be sufficiently stable to enjoy the stability of that nomenclature” (383).

However, the middle class was not a stable concept during the Romantic period, nor was the novel. On the *bourgeoisie*, Benedict Anderson writes that “Here we have a class which, figuratively speaking, came into being as a class only in so many replications...But they did come to visualize in a general way the existence of thousands and thousands like themselves through print-language” (77). With the influx of prose fiction, the rising middle class had a new model to emulate; the two forms were deeply intertwined and were responsible for the changes and evolutions in the other. In *Cecilia*, Belfield, the eldest son of a merchant and hence representative of the middle class, does not know who he is or where he stands in society: he tries to emulate his upper class friends’ lifestyle but he cannot keep up with the expenses of that life. He then tries to live according to various philosophies, but none seems to give him the peace of mind or the feeling of a purpose in life. Belfield appears to be in a social no-man’s land until the very end of the novel when he enters the army: it is inside a new social order, a meritocracy contingent on connections, that he finally finds his place in life. His journey illustrates the challenges of the middle class: to balance the aspirations of the nobility and the mutability of the markets. The novel during the Romantic period faced similar challenges: it was a luxury item on the verge of being a commodity; it was dependent on the ups and downs of the markets; its value was caught in between poetry and the cheap tracts. It was only through the Romantic period that both the middle class and the novel will solidify their claims in their respective realms.

When discussing Romanticism, the novel, generally speaking, has been overlooked.⁵⁴ It has been judged incompatible with the movement and described as evolving independently from the “true” Romantic poets’ vision and poetry. “However, recent academic research has addressed and debunked this myth, integrating the novel into the Romantic canon. Still, the Romantic movement remained distinctive in the way it welcomed the merging of romance and real life” (M. Brown, “Poetry and the Novel” 111). As Brown places the Romantic novel on the same frame than poetry, he explains further the relation between the two genres. “Indeed, despite the tendency still found in some criticism to regard the ‘Romantic novel’ as a mongrel, prose seeps into the poetry of the Romantic period just as poetry barges into the prose” (“Poetry and the Novel” 111). It is almost impossible to study either poetry or prose on their own during the Romantic period.

Streamlined narratives describing the ‘rise of the novel’ or the ‘ascendancy of the lyric’ cannot adequately account for the vigorous mixing and jostling of genres in these years, and we have increasingly realized the need for literary histories that describe how the formal and social categories of Romantic literary genre took shape through persistent acts of both differentiation and appropriation. (Rowland 118)

This is seen in the literary careers of Sir Walter Scott and Charlotte Smith, for instance: Scott moved from poetry to historical novels and Smith published poetry at the same time as she works on novels. Moreover, their respective novels, *Waverley* and *Emmeline*, feature their poetry as organic addition within the novel. They are two clear and literal examples of the “vigorous mixing” of the two art forms.

As poetry and prose are highly connected, they both influenced the development of the Romantic aesthetic. The events leading to the movements of revolutions—in the New world or

⁵⁴ See, for instance, Robert Miles’ “What Is a Romantic Novel?”

in France—took their origins in what Benedict Anderson calls “an imagined community” based on the understanding of a sense of belonging that is no longer tied by religion⁵⁵ but the shared sense of belonging to the same community, be it based on language or geography. The rising British imperial power, depleted by the loss of the American colonies but fueled by Cook’s journeys to the Pacific, became one of the imagined communities and utilized this collective ideal in order to strengthen its colonial power at home and abroad: because it held power over colonies in, for example India, it could expend and annex Ireland with the Act of Union in 1800 and vice-versa. This self-sustaining system, however, created tension as well as anti-colonial and anti-imperial sentiments:

Rather than a simple opposition between colonizing Britain and its Oriental empire, a more complex geo-political imaginary was crucial to the formation of Romanticism. This imaginary, shaped and reshaped in the varied texts of the Romantic period, influenced, and continues to influence, the cultural imperialism and nationalism of Britain and America, movements in which Romantic literature and aesthetics were awarded key places. (Fulford, “Romanticism and Colonialism 1800-30” 47)

The spread of nationalism, empires, and their counter-ideologies deeply influenced the poets who are about to alter poetry. For instance, Byron’s work is deeply influenced by the East, with *The Giaour*, being his first Oriental romance (Franklin 223) and Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan* derives its imagery from the alluring and exotic fantasy of the “Oriental” East. Yet, not all Orientalized poetry was necessarily buying the imperialist tropes as many poets layered their poetry in such a way that it could be read as a critique and not a praise of the system in place.

⁵⁵ Anderson writes that “in Western Europe the eighteenth century marks not only the dawn of the age of nationalism but the dusk of religious modes of thought. The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. With the ebbing of religious belief, the suffering which belief in part composed did not disappear” (11). New or rejuvenated forms of social structures must emerge during the Romantic period to fill the void created by the Enlightenment’s radical abolition of social structures as essential components of the human experience. The same can be applied to literature: with new social structures come new genres or new modes of expression.

“Amongst the variety of voices within British representations of the East, Byron’s distinctiveness consisted in the rhetoric of a sceptical critique of imperialism, alternating with the discourse of a sentimental nationalism” (Franklin 223). Part of the anti-imperialism criticism found in the Romantic poetry was connected to the slave trade. Tim Fulford argues that “The poetry that we today call Romantic originated not in celebration of but in opposition to the results, at home, of profits made abroad” (“Poetry, Peripheries and Empire” 178). According to Fulford, it is for this very reason that Wordsworth retreated to the countryside: there, he could be removed from the corruption of the city, a corruption that was both physical and psychological.

When defining the spirit of the Romantic poetry, one must reference the lasting impact of William Wordsworth’s and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s project of the *Lyrical Ballads*. Published in 1798, the *Ballads* announced a new mode of poetry which was in sharp contradiction with the poetry of Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Pope. Not only was the poetic diction quite different than those of the previous decades, but so were the subjects of the poems.⁵⁶ Wordsworth and Coleridge directed their attention to the rural peasants and the vagrants without sounding pastoral.⁵⁷ In the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* published in 1800, Wordsworth explains the rationale behind the chosen subjects of the poems: “The principal object, then, which I proposed to myself in these Poems, was to make the incidents of common life interesting by tracing in them... the primary laws of our nature, chiefly as far as regards the manner in which we associate ideas in a state of excitement” (Preface (1800) 497). Instead of

⁵⁶ Kitson argues that the inspiration of the *Lyrical Ballads* is located in Cowper’s “The Negro’s Complaint,” suggesting at the same time that “the poems challenged, in form and diction as well as subject-matter, the values by which the governing classes legitimized their power” (26).

⁵⁷ For more on Wordsworth’s relation to peasant poetry, see Scott McEathron’s “Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads*, and the Problem of Peasant Poetry.”

searching for elevated subjects, Wordsworth found in the everyday incidents all the material he needed to create. He then adds on the topic of common life that

Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings coexist in a state of greater simplicity, and consequently may be more accurately contemplated and more forcibly communicated. (Preface (1800) 497)

This is the first step toward a poetics of interiority⁵⁸ as he wants to extract the emotions from the whirlwind of senses like the gem cutter cuts the stone to reveal its natural beauty. Once it is purified from interferences, it is admired and then, shared with others: the movement is first inward and then outwards.

For the reader, the process entails that one must be ready, or educated, to receive the poetry before interiorizing its emotional significance, and to complete the circle by sharing with others who are ready to receive the poetry.⁵⁹ Peter de Bolla in “What Is a Lyrical Ballad?” states that each poem has a purpose: “Wordsworth’s aim is, in fact, targeted not at the poems but at the reader whom he hopes to place ‘in the way of receiving from ordinary moral sensation another and more salutary impression than we are accustomed to receive from them’⁶⁰”(47). The poems, then, should impress on the reader both an instruction and a delight. Poems like “The Female Vagrant,” “The Last of the Flock,” and Coleridge’s “The Dungeon” denounce particular political and social issues that call for reforms, while “Simon Lee,” The

⁵⁸ Interiority is not relevant only to poetry: it is also the new focus of sciences like geography and cartography. In *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, Mary Louise Pratt writes that “By the last years of the eighteenth century, interior exploration had become the major object of expansionist energies and imaginings. This shift had significant consequences for travel writing, demanding and giving rise to new forms of European knowledge and self-knowledge, new models for European contact beyond its borders, new ways of encoding Europe’s imperial ambitions” (23–4).

⁵⁹ See Nikki Hessel’s “The Opposite of News: Rethinking the 1800 *Lyrical Ballads* and the Mass Media” for more on the impact newspaper readership has on the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*.

⁶⁰ (Wordsworth, *The Prose Works* 124, 128).

Thorn,” and “The Complaint of a Forsaken Indian Woman” aim to educate the reader about empathy and charity to others. In order to reach the common man through their poems, Wordsworth and Coleridge must speak the language of the common man: with an overflow of feeling and in simplicity. Moreover, simplicity can effectively lead to a better communication of feelings due to the clarity of language used. One example of this is Robert Burns’ “To A Mouse” (1785). It features a humble subject, delivered in honest and simple, although Scottish, diction.

I’m truly sorry man’s dominion
Has broken nature’s social union,
An’ justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion
An’ fellow mortal! (268)

Here, Burns’ poetic diction does not divert from the object of his poem: that a mouse is startled by him. And yet, he is able to convey the kinship between the mouse and the persona as they are both united by their mortal condition. The strength of Burns’ poetry is the absence of elaborate and flowery language which matches the deceptive minimalism of his subject.

With the third edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1802), Wordsworth attempts to complete his new perspective on what poetry can represent.⁶¹ In the Preface, he perfects his theory on good poetry which he describes as “the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings” (Preface (1802) 273). Reading the *Ballads* should act like a wave, slowly gathering momentum until it

⁶¹ Thomas Pfau, on the subject of Wordsworth’s theory writes that “For notwithstanding its own, high-profile investment in a pedagogy concerned with reshaping the sensibility underlying both the production and reception of poetry, Wordsworth’s text has almost universally been regarded as marked by internal tensions, inconsistencies, discontinuous argument, and a confused sense of purpose” (125).

crashes on the shore. Accordingly, he describes the method to put on paper these feelings as such:

it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquility gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. (Preface (1802) 273)

Its style was controversial for the time: the poetry featured in *Lyrical Ballads* is about the common man, written in language of common people.⁶² If, at first, the common man seemed to be unfit for poetry, it was in line with the spirit of the age where the common man was the subject of political and social discourse.⁶³

Whether or not Wordsworth's poetry achieves the aim he himself sets is debatable.⁶⁴ Even though Wordsworth was invested in reimagining what poetry could achieve, he seemed to put too much emphasis on the philosophical aspect of the craft and thus confused the emotion felt by the author with the emotion felt by the reader. The end result is that Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* often fails to deliver to the reader the same surge of emotion that he himself experienced.⁶⁵ The presence and the interaction of a narrator often remove the reader from the scene, which in turn create an emotional detachment from the reader. It is a manifestation of egotistical sublime, a term coined by Keats to describe "the self-regarding stance of contemporary poetry" (Stillinger 34). The egotistical sublime is in direct opposition

⁶² For instance, Francis Jeffrey attacks Wordsworth's poetic style in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802 (McEathron 2).

⁶³ For more on Wordsworth, masculinity, and the *Lyrical Ballads*, see Gillen D'arcy Wood's "Crying Game: Operatic Strains in Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*."

⁶⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the *Lyrical Ballads* and its poetic diction, see Don Bialostosky's "Genres from Life in Wordsworth's Art: *Lyrical Ballads* 1798."

⁶⁵ In his critique of Wordsworth's Preface, Pfau states that Wordsworth places the Poet into the awkward position of mediator: "As 'translator,' then, the poet is charged with the unenviable, indeed paradoxical task of mediating an unattainable referent (the 'passion' of the 'rustic') and an unattainable language (that elusive 'real language') for the benefit of an urban audience incapable of discriminating between the authoritative, figurative translation of 'passion' and the deluge of cognate sensations effected by rhetorical counterfeit" (139).

to what Keats wants to achieve through poetry. In Keat's words, "A Poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existence; because he has no Identity—he is continually... filling some other Body" (386–87). In other words, instead of providing the readers with a blank "I" in which they can insert themselves, Wordsworth centers his poetry on himself. Wordsworth's poetry left, according to Keats, no space for the subject or the reader. Others, for instance the peasant poets Robert Burns⁶⁶ and John Clare, achieved it without difficulty.

While poetry was in the midst of transformation, both in form and content, the same phenomenon was happening to the novel as a genre. In *Women, Revolution, and the Novels of 1790s*, Linda Lang-Peralta argues that in the 1790s, there was a shift in the novel. "Where the novel had been viewed primarily as a single genre, there occurred a 'fall into Division,' to use William Blake's words" (x). As the Romantic period was defined by the plurality of voices and discourses, so did the Romantic novel. "The Romantic-era novel was engaged on the level of both form and content with re-imagining community, as the nature of sociality changed in a newly mobile, urban world" (Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, Preface 1). This new world was explored in prose fiction in a variety of genres: among them, the Gothic,⁶⁷ the philosophical novel,⁶⁸ the historical novel,⁶⁹ the national tale,⁷⁰ and the novel of manners⁷¹ to name the most recognized genres. Most scholars prefer to focus on the novel through its fragmentation, and

⁶⁶ On the relation between Burns' and Wordsworth's poetry, Tim Fulford asserts that "Wordsworth effectively anglicized Burns' position, speaking for an English rural fringe against the spreading culture of capitalism as Burns did for Scottish culture" ("Poetry, Peripheries and Empire" 180).

⁶⁷ Examples include Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and *The Italian* (1797) and Matthew Lewis' *The Monk* (1796).

⁶⁸ Examples include William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) and Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman: Or, Maria* (1798).

⁶⁹ Examples include Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) and *Ivanhoe* (1820).

⁷⁰ Examples include Lady Morgan's *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) and Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee* (1812).

⁷¹ Examples include Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811).

ignore the larger socio-political discourse originating from the Romantic novel as a whole. The danger with this approach is to forego unifying traits in the name of categorizing each sub-genre as independent from the larger spectrum of the Romantic novel.

As a whole, the novel became increasingly widespread due to the technical advances of the printing press. More than 3,600 numbers of “novels” were published between 1770 and 1829, with an astounding 2256 from 1800 to 1829 (Garside et al. 1: 27; 2: 38).⁷² With the popularity of the circulating library and the decreasing cost of books, the novel was no longer considered the luxury item that it used to be. In fact, Gary Kelly argues that

prose fiction was one of the most widely consumed forms of print during the period, equalled or surpassed only by newspaper, closely associated with a social and cultural phenomenon known as ‘the rise of the reading public,’ and recognized as a major form of ideological communication, for better or worse, central to cultural politics. (188)

As a consequence of the rising popularity of the novel, the latter is attacked by moralists who see moral depravation in fiction. For instance, Edgeworth, in her preface to *Belinda* preferred to call it a “moral tale” instead of a novel in order to avoid the so-called taint of the improper genre as well as fending off criticism that her own tale could be interpreted as lacking the proper morals. She thus set it apart from the reputation of the genre by insisting on its moral qualities, even though in form *and* content, it is after all a novel. Like in Plato’s *Republic*, prose fiction was accused of corrupting the youth’s “feeble” minds, especially when it came to middle-class young ladies. The shocking and sensational Gothic novels thrived during the period: in 1800, 33% of novels were either described as Gothic or as a parody of the genre (Garside et al. 2: 56). The Gothic novel became so synonymous with the Romantic period that some Romantic novelists could not but mention this tendency in their writings. For instance,

⁷² These numbers include translations of works from France, Germany, and other European nations.

Austen uses Catherine Morland's and Harriet's reading habits⁷³ in respectively *Northanger Abbey* and in *Emma* as an indicator of a too fertile imagination and a lack of common sense. Indeed, Robert Martin's lack of knowledge of the popular novel *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) by Ann Radcliffe and *The Children of the Abbey* (1796) by Regina Maria Roche as well as his preference for the Agricultural Report illustrate his practical nature.

Yet, authors like Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, and Hannah More used fiction and the genre of the novel to imbue lessons and social commentaries.⁷⁴ On the writings of More and Edgeworth, Patricia Comitini claims that they are part of a movement of "self-help" and this "enables us to see their writing as an earnest attempt to 'improve' humankind, a sympathetic outreach to those in need of guidance, but also as a way to politically mediate, through the practice of reading, the contentious oppositions arising in the society at large" (68). While Burney's writings are not considered as didactic in purpose as those of More and Edgeworth, they have a similar effect. Burney "was quick to note discrepancies between conduct and manners, as outlined on paper, and the behavior of the authors, or the sons, daughters, or nieces to whom the advice was directed. She was not a theorist. 'Morals in action' was the touchstone for morals" (Hemlow 753). Her novels could be read as conduct books for young girls entering the world as Burney detailed the inner workings and the social traps awaiting them. Burney's melodramatic novels also depict the various strata of society, from the upper class and the nobility, to the indigents and the down-on-their-luck.

⁷³ For a more detailed account of Harriet Smith's reading habits, see Stephen Derry's "Harriet Smith's Reading."

⁷⁴ In *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*, Nancy Armstrong argues that the domestic fiction is deeply entrenched in political discourse. "Domestic fiction mapped out a new domain of discourse as it invested common forms of social behavior with the emotional values of women. Consequently, these stories of courtship and marriage offered their readers a way of indulging, with a kind of impunity, in fantasies of political power that were the more acceptable because they were played out within a domestic framework where legitimate monogamy—and thus the subordination of female to male—would ultimately be affirmed" (29).

In a similar vein, but on a smaller scale,⁷⁵ Austen writes novels in which society's idiosyncrasies are criticized and ridiculed. Some critics—as D.W. Harding asserts in his seminal article “Regulated Hatred: An Aspect of the Work of Jane Austen”—that through her works, Austen waged a war on her social world with her acerbic pen.⁷⁶ Without giving credence to the resulting image of a bitter spinster,⁷⁷ Austen, either from her works or her letters, did take pleasure in pointing out society's shortcomings; an undertaking which she did with great acumen. On the subject of *Mansfield Park*, Joseph M. Duffy, Jr. asserts that

the foundation of ideas in *Mansfield Park* was laid in the eighteenth century, and the novel is one of the last works of conservative eighteenth-century social criticism written at a time when the social horrors which were to occupy later nineteenth-century novelists were already portending. (73)

Contrary to More, and Edgeworth—and to a certain extent Burney as well—Austen did not look for the improvement of society: she instead advocated for self-discovery and improvements on an individual basis. For these reasons, Burney's and Austen's novels, despite being characterized as conduct book and novel of manners, also overlaps with the philosophical novel like William Godwin's *Caleb Williams; Or Things as They Are* (1794) or *The Wrongs of Woman: Or, Maria* (1798) by Mary Wollstonecraft in which a protagonist is put in an absurd situation because of the way things are.

The philosophical novel calls to attention problems in the way society is shaped and appeals to the reader's empathy to demand social or political reforms. In the case of Godwin's novel, the novel has a first person narrative, which sabotages the impartial interpretation of the

⁷⁵ Austen herself compares the scale of her writings to a “little bit (two Inches wide) of Ivory” (“Letter - 16 December 1816” 468–69).

⁷⁶ See Wendy Anne Lee's “Resituating ‘Regulated Hatred’: D.W. Harding's Jane Austen” for a comprehensive reading of the context of the production of the presentation and essay.

⁷⁷ After all, this would contradict one of the most significant mottos of Mr. Bennet: “For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbours, and laugh at them in our turn” (*Pride and Prejudice* 364).

political world: the reader has the option to believe or discredit Caleb's actions, thus condemning the political and judicial system or condoning them; after all, Caleb clearly disobeys Mr. Falkland's orders, libels him, and refuses all form of judicial power by constantly escaping from prison. "One could argue that, as a novelist, William Godwin did not try to create a revolutionary, realistic novel, but that he strove instead to bring about a revolution in the feelings of his readers by depicting the corruption of 'things as they are'" (Mandell 50). These are not the only overlapping genres during the Romantic period: the historical and the national tales are also at times too intertwined to be clearly separated. For instance, Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* is both a historical novel *and* a national tale and so in a manner is *Ormond*. Both novels are set in the past in Ireland and the narrative uses the othering perspective of displaced time and space to comment on the present situation in Ireland. While the sub-genres in and of themselves are clearly defined, the novels resist their classifications.

The absence of a clear classification is problematic: without a defined taxonomy,⁷⁸ the Romantic novel is bound to be fragmented into too many various but specialized sub-genres—such as "historical-and-national" and "philosophical-and-of manners"—to be even considered as a coherent genre.⁷⁹ Instead of trying to define the Romantic novel by what it is not, in this case by mapping its lack of coherence, it should be defined by what it is: its fluidity, its multiplicity of voices, and adaptability to the market's demands, these should be the point of reference. After all, if it is quite impossible to define the beginning and the end of the

⁷⁸ "This sense that the Romantic novel needs a taxonomist rather than a literary critic has made it particularly vulnerable to debates about what constitutes a good novel in both its own day and ours—debates in which the word 'good' refers to both aesthetic and moral success" (Heydt-Stevenson and Sussman, "Ethical Experiments" 14).

⁷⁹ Robert Kiely's *The Romantic Novel in England* compares the Romantic Novel to a monstrous creature while only focusing on the Gothic novel by Radcliffe and Lewis.

Romantic period, it makes sense that the same rationale should be applied to its literary production. The literary and social chaos is the catalyst behind the Bildungsroman's creation and its subsequent development in the early nineteenth century: the conjunction of the Enlightenment rationale and the personal experience of the Romantic period generates the new genre. In *The German Bildungsroman: History of a National Genre*, Todd Kontje lists three contributing factors to the rise of the Bildungsroman. Namely, "the changing reception of the old literature, the production of the new, and the effort to situate the new literature in the context of the growing literary tradition" (13). All these characteristics happen during the Romantic period: the novel abandoned forms and content that were regarded as rigid like the romance; it embraced new form and content; and finally there was a new subjectivity which focuses on a single evolving individual. It is a genre that is born out of the French Revolution, and of the rise of nationalism all across Europe.⁸⁰ Thus, the Bildungsroman is not exclusively German, nor does it originate with *Wilhelm Meister*. For many decades, Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* has served as a reference to define the genre. About the novel, Gisela Argyle emphasizes its "chaotic nature" as she writes that "The action is set in an unspecified period not long before the French Revolution, when the feudal order is losing legitimacy, and art, or culture, has replaced religion as a source of ideals" (13). Much like many critics of the Bildungsroman, Argyle insists on analyzing English novels *after* Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister*. It seems impossible, according to her, to find an example in English before 1824. Yet, "Wilhelminian critics merely adopted a new name for a discourse that was already in place" (Kontje xi). Indeed, the Bildungsroman is the result of a perfect storm, as pointed out

⁸⁰ See for instance Lisa Steiner's recent work on the Russian Bildungsroman in *For Humanity's Sake: The Bildungsroman in Russian Culture* and Giovanna Summerfield's and Lisa Donward's *New Perspectives on the European Bildungsroman*.

earlier. It combines discourses on education, self-determination, and citizenship in ways that did not exist before.

At the time, there was great interest in theories of education and how to articulate the notion of a citizen in an ongoing struggle for nationalism. Thomas L. Jeffers notes that “The development of the *Bildungsroman* coincided with that of a particular educational ideal, articulated in France by Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Émile* and in Germany by Friedrich Schiller’s *Aesthetic Education*” (2). While precursors of the Eighteenth-Century novel, like Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, already used protagonists to impart a lesson often in the form of an allegory, the *Bildungsroman* is more straightforward and actually depicts the protagonist’s journey towards education and a better understanding of how the world works. Moreover, what distinguishes the *Bildungsroman* from being an allegorical treaty on education is that the learned principles must be applied in order for it to be considered a proper *Bildung*. To achieve *Bildung*, the genre relies on some didactic aspects⁸¹ in order to highlight the aspects of formation and apprenticeship of the narrative while exploring the uncharted terrain of the individual’s psyche. On the subject, Minden suggests that the apprenticeship is based on the very mistakes and misunderstandings of the protagonist (5). It is through the *bildungsheld*’s mistakes and the misunderstanding that the reader can learn with the protagonist how to, for instance, conduct oneself in society if we use Burney’s novels as prototype. While a large portion of the narrative is dedicated to the education of the hero, the *Bildungsroman* is not concerned about education for education’s sake: it is only the gateway for a better future, a better society. Therefore, the education must propel the *bildungsheld* into an active role as member of the community and of society. Using Goethe as a reference,

⁸¹ As pointed out by Marc Redfield in *Phantom Formation* 55.

Argyle contends that he “added to the responsiveness and reflectiveness of the Wertherian sensitive soul a conscious striving for self-development accompanied by a quest for a suitable vocation and role in the community” (13). The Bildungsroman’s aim is to unite the self to the community in a productive manner.

By applying the lessons learned, the protagonist can become a leader in his/her community, inspiring others to follow in his/her footsteps.

The active hero’s central and essential role for every aspect of the work therefore cannot be overemphasised. All other figures either derive their significance from Wilhelm’s experiences, his sufferings, thinking, and creative processes, or they represent—much more comprehensively than he—universal phenomena. (Ammerlahn 29)

While many have posited that the rise of realism in fiction came from a surge in subjectivity that resulted from the end of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, Deidre Shauna Lynch states that, in fact, it was the reverse:

We have seen fictional characters seem to become more like their readers. By contrast... I...claim that at the turn of the nineteenth century characters become the imaginative resources on which readers drew to make themselves into individuals, to expand their own interior resources of sensibility. (*Economy of Character* 126)

The novel, and more specifically the Bildungsroman, became a tool in which readers could learn how to become subjects. By narrating the life of ordinary individuals,⁸² the novel has opened up to readers a multitude of social worlds and of experiences, and in some cases, has even prepared the reader for future events, like a first ball for a young lady. “Whatever its origins or the sex of its hero, the novel of education emerges at the time that the individual is no longer conceived of as static, a time when process and the inner life become valued over

⁸² Ordinary in the sense that these protagonists are not allegories or representations of divine or religious figures, nor do they have a particular historical significance.

prescribed social roles” (Baruch 338). Here, Baruch points out to the main characteristic of the Bildungsroman according to Bakhtin: that a new form of novels is created once authors are able to narrate the world as it is turning.

In “The Bildungsroman and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Towards a Historical Typology of the Novel),” Bakhtin classifies the types of novels encountered so far: the travel novel, the novel of ordeal, the biographical novel, and finally the novel of emergence, in which category the Bildungsroman belongs (10; 11; 16; 19). He considers the first four forms as static, while he describes the last one as “man in the process of becoming” (19). Nevertheless, this category is still problematic according to him: novels that are considered as such are still too diverse and must be broken down into sub-categories. Bakhtin then describes in more details what separates the Bildungsroman from other types of novel of emergence and he insists on the confluence of personal and national-historical time: of the Bildungsroman hero, he says “He emerges *along with the world*...He is no longer within an epoch, but on the border between two epochs...This transition is accomplished in him and through him” (23). The transition between the Enlightenment and the Romantic period proved to be a fertile environment for the creation of the Bildungsroman. While Goethe’s masterpiece is often considered as the only Romantic Bildungsroman, it is important to revisit the Romantic novel and its contribution to the development of the genre. Even though the Bildungsroman thrives and becomes a staple of Victorian literature, its origin remains in the social turmoil of the Romantic period: it is the unification of knowledge and feelings, of the language of the people and poetic aspirations, of fiction and reality, of self and community; in other words it is the expression of the Romantic aesthetic.

Chapter 2: A Romantic Education

*You must not, Madam, expect too much from my pupil.
She is quite a little rustic, and knows nothing of the world,
and though her education has been the best I could bestow
in this retired place... I shall not be surprised if you
should discover in her a thousand deficiencies of which I
have never dreamed.*

Frances Burney, *Evelina*

The primary characteristic of the Bildungsroman is that it follows the *bildungsheld's* life from the early onset of education to maturity attained later in life. The first step in the Bildungsroman is the formative years and it centers usually around the apprenticeship of a trade which leads to a larger social world in commerce, industry, and success. In Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, Wilhelm escapes his bourgeois family to be part of an itinerant theatre and uses this occupation to travel around Germany and to socialize with different castes of people, and, ultimately, to reach maturity within the Tower. His education, albeit a different kind of apprenticeship, becomes a means to his independence and then reinsertion in the social world. However, to build the genre around industry and commerce limits the possible protagonists and experiences: only a certain class relied on manual labour and industry as an occupation. For the landed gentry and the nobility, trade was not considered a decent occupation. Other venues, like the law, the army or the church,⁸³ were favoured instead of trade for younger sons.

⁸³ Following the inflation at the turn of the nineteenth century, the fixed income of parishes made the clergy less attractive as a profession for younger sons as it was becoming difficult to live on only the fixed income the profession provided. For more on the clergy as profession, see Alice Drum's "Pride and Prestige: Jane Austen and the Professions."

Yet, even Wilhelm's path is subjected to the changing economy of the late eighteenth century:

Already in Meister's case, 'apprenticeship' is no longer the slow and predictable progress towards one's father's work, but rather an uncertain exploration of social space, which in the nineteenth century—through travel and adventure, wandering and getting lost, 'Bohême' and 'parvenir'—will underline countless times. (Moretti 4)

As Moretti points out in *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, the industrial revolution changed the manners in which people learnt their trade. The sudden industrialization led to a migration from the country to major cities and factories in the North of England. Mechanization and mills also required a different kind of workers, as expertise from trade was becoming slowly obsolete. Moreover, the Romantic ideal deconstructed the rigorous education of the Enlightenment and favoured the "school of life."⁸⁴ As apprenticeship—even in its loose form—is a form of education, I use the term "education" to simplify the first step in the Bildungsroman and to open the category to other protagonists who, normally, would have been excluded from the genre. This includes the destitute—who never would have the chance to learn a trade—and women. These unlikely protagonists prove that education in its broadest construction during the Romantic period could be more than about male characters from a middle-class or wealthy family.

2.1 The Noble Poor

As mentioned in "The Enlightened Romantics," education of the poor—whether it was addressed with the Sunday school, the Penny school, and the *Cheap Repository Tracts*—was a

⁸⁴ One example would be De Quincey's departure from the Manchester Grammar School as depicted in his *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. One could contrast Charles Lamb's experience at Christ's Hospital in "Christ's Hospital: Five-and-Thirty Years Ago" for a different model of Upper Grammar School.

social issue that was not easily negotiated during the Romantic period. The means to education are still class-based and proponents of utilitarian principles do not condone too much education in the hands of the poor. Edgeworth's *Ormond*, Smith's *Emmeline*, and Austen's *Mansfield Park* have at the core of their narrative protagonists from the lower classes. The main issue with their education is their integration into or their cohabitation with the more wealthy people in their entourage. With that, these authors play with Rousseauian ideals: these stipulate that man is inherently free of sin, and it is society that corrupts man's nature. Therefore, they portray the poor protagonists as more noble than their rich counterpart. To accomplish this, they contrast Ormond's, Emmeline's, and Fanny's inner values with the more corrupted values respectively of Sir Ulick, Lord Montreville, and the Bertrams. By exposing the discrepancy of values, it is clear that the authors condemn the utilitarian principles of Bentham, Smith, and, to a certain extent, the Evangelical movement.⁸⁵ One's fate should not be limited by one's education, but by one's inner values and worth; society should be working towards a meritocracy, or at least to a reevaluation of the notion of inner worth.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Maria Edgeworth and her father were greatly interested in pedagogy and in finding the best way a parent could educate his or her children. In her novel, she criticizes Rousseau and the failure to form a true—and not fictional—Émile. After proving time after time the invalidity of the archetype of the noble savage in her didactic stories and in her novel *Belinda*, Edgeworth puts Rousseau's ideal of the noble savage to the test once again with *Ormond*. Claire Connolly in her introduction to *Ormond* states that it “seeks to avoid the knotty genealogical detail, offering instead a simple story of a young man

⁸⁵ For more on Bentham, Smith, and the Evangelical movement and education, see Lawson and Silver's *A Social History of Education in England* 231–32.

who is largely without family making his way in the world” (xi). Therefore, Harry Ormond is presented as an orphan:

Young Ormond was the son of the friend of sir Ulick O’Shane’s youthful and warm-hearted days—the son of an officer who had served in the same regiment with him in his first campaign... he was soon in debt, and in great distress. He was obliged to leave his wife, and go to India. She had then one child at nurse in an Irish cabin. She died soon afterwards. (*O* 10)

And so, the young Harry Ormond is raised by Sir Ulick of Castle Hermitage from the age of four without a proper education: he roams free of constraints, supervised only by the gamekeeper and the huntsman (*O* 10). The first chapters compare and contrast Ormond’s natural education with Marcus, sir Ulick’s son, who is sent to school and then to college. The difference in treatment is the result of class-consciousness and utilitarianism on the part of the father: Ormond, a captain’s son, is not called to become a gentleman and thus, he does not need the same kind of education as his own son. “In the progress of the two boys towards manhood sir Ulick had shown a strange sort of double and inconsistent vanity in his son’s [Marcus] acquirements, and in the orphan Harry’s natural genius” (*O* 11). Ormond is therefore raised with a natural education, and bears all the shortcomings of this type of education: he is described as a rash, expressive, over-indulgent, and almost wild young man. “Harry grew up with all the faults that were incident to his natural violence of passions, and that might necessarily be expected from his neglected and deficient education” (*O* 11). As introduced to readers, Ormond is cast as the failed *Émile*: unruly and bound to alienate himself from good society.

On the other hand, Marcus, with his formal education, hides and represses his true feelings and appears to be a polished young aristocrat. When describing the relationship of the two boys towards Sir Ulick’s new wife, the narrator writes that “lady O’Shane... had become

their aversion: this aversion Marcus felt more than he expressed, and Ormond expressed more strongly than he felt” (*O* 10). Marcus, with his formal education, learns to hide and repress his true sentiments in sign of politeness while Ormond’s raw emotions get the best of him. According to Peter Cosgrove in “History and Utopia in Ormond,” they become one of the many pairs of contrasting characters which populate the novel (62). Marcus becomes a foil to Ormond, as we learn in one of the many retelling of the Moriarty Carroll incident that Marcus “urged Ormond to chastise Moriarty” and that “it was not the first time that Ormond had screened him from blame, by taking the whole upon himself” (both *O* 28). The novel operates on many doublings and forces the reader to compare and contrast characters and situations in order to better sort the wheat from the chaff.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, it is an effect that soon becomes too didactic and repetitive.

Moreover, Cosgrove draws similitudes between Ormond’s quest and the Bildungsroman, stating that “The bildungsroman... is the novel of the struggle of an interior subject against the meaningless patterns of the world around it” (68). Therefore, every secondary character encountered becomes a vantage point to compare Ormond’s progress or relapses, whether they straighten him up or enables his passions. However, Marcus’ fate becomes marginal to Ormond’s inward quest to find his own place in a world where he struggles to fit in. It is only near the dénouement that the reader is able to compare the fate of the two men: the social descent of one is directly related with the general corruption of Castle Hermitage and the rise of the other is correlated with discipline and strong moral values.

⁸⁶ On the doubling effect, Ina Ferris states that Edgeworth works with a double set of readers, the insiders or the Irish, and the outsiders, the foreigners. “Edgeworth’s Irish novels as a whole exploit the doubleness of reference such a divided readership makes possible, so that in their own way they are quite as slippery as the famously slippery language of the Irish peasant” (“The Irish Novel 1800-1829” 237).

Sir Ulick O'Shane and his cousin Cornelius O'Shane—known as King Corny—act as the second pair of polarized characters and they hold, each in their manner, a determining place in Ormond's growth.⁸⁷ As authority figures to the young orphan, they are the only people Ormond initially listens to. Sir Ulick is a corrupted man involved in politics, who embraced the Anglo-Irish political world to the detriment of his Gaelic heritage; and King Corny is a drunk living on the literal margins of society in the Black Islands, which social structure is modelled on the Irish clan system. Neither of them offers a balanced or positive influence to the young Ormond. At Castle Hermitage, Ormond is immersed in the polite society of the Anglo-Irish elite. The narrator hints at Sir Ulick O'Shane's duplicitous but pleasing nature when in company and which is described as such:

At five minutes after sight, a good judge of men and manners would have discovered in him the power of assuming whatever manner he chose, from the audacity of the callous profligate to the deference of the accomplished courtier—the capability of adapting his conversation to his company and his views. (O 5)

On the other hand, King Corny reigns over his subjects like the king of France,⁸⁸ as his court is compared to that of Versailles: after witnessing the meal, the people of the Black Isles “blest both king and prince [Harry Ormond], ‘wishing them health and happiness long to *reign* over them;’ and bowing suitably to his majesty the king, and to his reverence the priest, without standing upon the order of their going, departed” (O 36).

⁸⁷ According to Anne Clune, Edgeworth based the characters of Sir Ulick and King Corny on actual people (29–30).

⁸⁸ In “Cosmopolitical Economy: Exchangeable Value and National Development in Adam Smith and Maria Edgeworth,” Fraser Easton discusses Smith's comparison of the African King to European peasants in *Wealth of Nations*, highlighting the prejudices about the “association of despotism... and poverty” (107). This is reminiscent of the contrasts between Sir Ulick and his cousin. For a more detailed portrait of King Corny using Smith's rhetoric, see Easton's 122–3.

With such bad mentors, Ormond's fate seems sealed when he enters Castle Hermitage "pale as death, and stained with blood" (*O* 14) after shooting Moriarty Carroll in a fit of passion. The incident is crucial to Ormond's reformation and future endeavours: he finds himself banished from Castle Hermitage⁸⁹ and must reconsider his life and his temperament after Lady and Miss Annaly demonstrate true concerns for him—Lady Annaly considers him a worthy individual—and for his future. Compared to the Irish drunk and the Anglo-Irish "jobber," Lady Annaly appears to be the ideal figure to attain: she is an aristocrat but she is kind to all; she has a discerning eye but without pride or prejudice. After his shocking entrance at Castle Hermitage, the mother and daughter

were also struck with regret at the idea that a young man, in whom they had seen many instances of a generous, good disposition, of natural qualities and talents, which might have made him a useful, amiable, and admirable member of society, should be, thus early, a victim to his own undisciplined passion. (*O* 26)

Lady Annaly's concerns and her intervention to set Ormond on a more positive path of life lead the latter to write a set of rules to discipline him and to finally rule his passions, a theme dear to the Edgeworths and at the core of their pedagogy. His resolutions are based on a study of his faults and reads as such:

Harry Ormond's Good Resolutions

Resolved 1st – That I will never drink more than (*blank number of*) glasses.

Resolved 2dly – That I will cure myself of being passionate.

Resolved 3dly – That I will never keep low company.

⁸⁹ It must be said that Ormond's banishment is not due to his action, but because Sir Ulick is scared Miss Annaly, who appears quite concerned over Ormond, will no longer consider Marcus as a potential husband. Ironically, the banishment sets in motion a chain of events which ultimately ends with Miss Annaly engaged to Ormond.

Resolved. – That I am too fond of flattery – women’s, especially, I like most.
To cure myself of that. (*O* 33)

With those four resolutions, Ormond intends to self-regulate with Lockean principles his passion, in all occasions, which he fails miserably at the first trial at King Corny’s table. His rules are not a façade of propriety, but rather a means for him to remain authentic and to be able to navigate different social settings and different classes without using or being used by flattery and deceit: from the Black Islands drunkards, to the vapid French court of Louis XV; and different religions from King Corny’s Catholic court, to Dr. Cambray’s protestant salon. From his travels through Ireland, England and France, Ormond has only his resolutions as a compass to guide him and keep him from falling back into old and bad patterns. For instance, when he is staying in Paris and pressured by friends to gamble—Dora, who is King Corny’s daughter, insists he should “invest in the faro bank⁹⁰”—Ormond is able to resist the temptations and he leaves the table after losing “the sum he had resolved to lose” (*O* 268) as he was always warned against gambling by King Corny.⁹¹ Despite his lack of refinement and his propensity to rule his “court” like a king, King Corny teaches by example the values of benevolence, affection, and honesty setting a moral example that guides Ormond’s actions throughout the tale. King Corny might enjoy his wine and the adulation of his people too much, but these are overshadowed by his hospitality and his desire to be self-sufficient.⁹²

⁹⁰ With her aunt, Dora controls the Faro bank, implying that even though Ormond loses money to the bank, she will be able to repay him, as long as he brings other players to the table.

⁹¹ Gambling is seen as a true vice in Edgeworth’s novels. For instance, Belinda ends her relationship with Mr. Vincent once she learns he gambles at billiard, stating “Your unfortunate propensity to a dangerous amusement, which is now, for the first time, made known to me, puts an end to these hopes [of enjoying domestic happiness] for ever” (*Belinda* 448).

⁹² For instance, King Corny takes care of Moriarty Carroll during his convalescence and dresses the wound. Katie Trumper in *Bardic Nationalism* states that “If Ormond regretfully comes to see Corny’s economic self-reliance as superseded and somewhat ridiculous, Edgeworth views it as naïve and utterly impractical, yet touching and laudable as well” (63–64).

In the beginning, Ormond, when left to his own devices, cannot control his passions. His education therefore is about how to self-control and to regulate his passions, even though the narrator foreshadows some relapses to his own bad habits:

For the advantage of those who may wish to institute the comparison, his biographer, in writing the life of Ormond, deemed it a point of honour to extenuate nothing; but to trace, with an impartial hand, not only every improvement and advance, but every deviation or retrograde movement. (*O* 32)

More than once, he jeopardizes his prospects by acting impulsively. With hindsight, he is able to rectify the situation and make amends. Cosgrove argues that “the educational ideals Edgeworth and her father had been developing for the previous quarter century come in for serious reconsideration: innate moral strength and autodidacticism now appear to take pride of place over a proper education” (62). It is true that formal education comes under heavy criticism in *Ormond*, but it is clear that it is due to a lack of discipline and a tendency to favour deceit and appearances over authenticity and truthfulness. A formal education without a proper attention to morals cannot, in light of the novel, correct deviant behaviours or replace the example of bad mentors.

In the case of Marcus, no one tries to rid him of his prejudices or of his vices like Lady Annaly does with Ormond. Therefore, his education remains superficial and morally unsuccessful. Moreover, Cosgrove fails to take into consideration that Ormond learns the virtue of discipline, which is part of their educational ideals as well as the fact that he is advised by various mentors throughout the tale. The narrator didactically uses Ormond to point out the feasibility of his educational process: “The habit of self-control can be acquired by any individual, in any situation. Ormond had practised and strengthen it even in the retirement of the Black Islands” (*O* 171). His tutelage under Lady Annaly’s care and the

moral, albeit limited, education he receives from King Corny are what allows him to circumvent the pitfalls of the social world.

If *Ormond* demonstrates the importance of good mentors when it comes to instill discipline and self-control, *Emmeline* illustrates that sometimes mentors and guardians do not have their ward's best interests in mind and can be quite detrimental in fact to the ward's future. In this case, the *bildungsheld's* education is centered on acquiring the required knowledge to gain autonomy in a world designed to deny it. Smith's novel briefly depicts the upbringing of Emmeline and focuses on the complicated relationship she has with her uncle once she comes of age. *Emmeline's* premise hinges on melodramatic and sentimental conventions: Emmeline's father, Mr. Mowbray, died in Italy before he could legitimize her lineage; hence at his death, the estate—as well as Mowbray Castle—went to his brother, Lord Montreville. Having already another estate to run through his marriage with Lady Eleonore Delamere, he leaves the young orphan at Mowbray Castle to be raised by the housekeeper and the steward who maintains in order the habitable wing of the abandoned castle. To add to the mixture of genres of sentimental and melodramatic fiction, Smith paints Mowbray Castle using Gothic tropes: the castle is in ruins, with wings exposed to the elements and “the stillness of the night” is “interrupted only by the cries of the owls who haunted the ruins” (*EOC* 50).

Mowbray Castle⁹³ is not the only instance of Gothic devices in the novel as, for example, she relies frequently on descriptions of the scenery in terms that recall Burkean sublime, whether it is the Isle of Wight or Lake Geneva. In *Gothic Feminism*, Diane Long

⁹³ In “Defiant Damsels: Gothic Space and Female Agency in *Emmeline*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Secresy*,” Elle Ledoux sees the castle as a “protective fortress or a symbol of matrilineal bonds” (334).

Hoeveler regards *Emmeline* as emblematic of the female gothic genre. The genre, Hoeveler explains, rests on the position of the female protagonist as a victim in order to subvert the order and to reverse the power dynamics. The female gothic, she explains is “the fantasy that the weak have power through carefully cultivating the appearance of their very powerlessness” (7). One of the manners that separate the female gothic novel from other masculine forms is the portrayal of patriarchy:

But then the female gothic world was being constructed as an alternate female domain standing in contradistinction to the industrial and ‘realistic’ world that male authors were codifying at the same time. If the male bildungsroman was a masculinist ideological project intended to depict the ‘patriarchy’ as a benign force, the female gothic novel positioned the ‘patriarchy’ as a duplicitous, inscrutable, good daddy/bad daddy. (36)

In *Emmeline*, the duplicitous patriarchy is initially represented by Mr. Mowbray and his brother, Lord Montreville. While the former’s untimely death leaves Emmeline in a precarious situation that borders on abandonment, the latter is guilty of actually neglecting his duties to his brother’s estate. Contrary to his late brother, Lord Montreville is neglectful when it comes the management of the estate as well as the manners in which he interacts with people: he takes little care about the actual castle, but also of his niece. As an orphan, Emmeline is entirely dependent on her father’s family for her subsistence and yet, she is only an afterthought to Lord Montreville. She is therefore deprived of the comfort that her rank and situation would afford her had her father been able to assert his paternity before his death. In this case, patriarchy as a system, which in an ideal world would protect her, fails her. Instead, it makes her a powerless victim and a prey for unscrupulous individuals.

Instead of being an heiress with a fortune of her own, Emmeline is literally abandoned by her family for a large portion of her life. For her upbringing, she depends on her caretakers:

Mrs. Carey the housekeeper and Mr. Williamson the steward. The poor servants stand in for Emmeline's family and they prove to be the "good daddy"⁹⁴ of patriarchy: they raise her in a positive environment and shelter her from the miseries of her situation. They cultivate in her a sense of responsibilities towards others without teaching her to look down at the peasants around Mowbray Castle. They provide her the best "natural" education: she is free to roam the country around Mowbray Castle and she remains untainted by the evils of society. On top of this moral education, they also, each in their own way, give her a rudimentary formal education: Mrs. Carey teaches her how to read while Mr. Williamson teaches her how to write. "Both were anxious to give their little charge all the instruction they could; but without the quickness and attention she shewed to whatever they attempted to teach, such preceptors could have done little" (*EOC* 46). Under their tutelage, Emmeline proves to be a formidable student:

With no other notice from her father's family, Emmeline had attained her twelfth year; an age at which she would have been left in the most profound ignorance, if her uncommon understanding, and unwearied application, had not supplied the deficiency of her instructors, and conquered the disadvantages of her situation. (*EOC* 46)

Oblivious to her own situation—as it is the only one she has ever known—she follows the examples provided by Mrs. Carey and Mr. Williamson and she is able to overcome the hurdles set in her way.

From this basic education, she is able to expand her knowledge through her encounter with works of literature. She finds inside Mowbray Castle an old library where she discovers copies of "Spencer and Milton, two or three volumes of the *Spectator*, an old edition of Shakespeare, and an odd volume or two of Pope" (*EOC* 47). Literature provides her with knowledge that Mrs. Carey and Mr. Williamson could not teach her, while at the same time

⁹⁴ Emmeline actually calls Mr. Williamson "father" (*EOC* 46).

mimicking a more formal education.⁹⁵ “Emmeline augments her perfectly Rousseauian natural goodness with a cultivation of mind that is entirely self-administered” (K. F. Ellis 85). The readings, instead of corrupting her mind with folly and vice as argued by Rousseau and others, fortify her good nature. The wide variety of texts in prose and verse mixes educational purposes with entertainment. Therefore, she is able to open up to different experiences and learn more about how society works without having to physically experience it. As such, Emmeline remains innocent and virtuous. Reading, especially the ornamental poetry she prefers, shapes her sensibility and her virtuous nature: Emmeline, through her education and her readings, has a tendency to see the good in people and empathize with them. Emmeline’s virtue is directly linked with her lack of a formal education: her lack of knowledge is the reason she can be so pure and without artifices.

Furthermore, throughout the novel, Emmeline demonstrates an easiness to learn from observing others, whether it is from her caretakers’ conduct, to Mrs. Ashwood’s harp lessons, or even with languages as she is described as fluent in French as a native. Indeed, her stay in France

afforded her time and opportunity to render herself perfectly mistress of the language of the country; of which she had before only a slight knowledge. To the study of languages, her mind so successfully applied itself, that she very soon spoke and wrote French with the correctness not only of a native, but of a native well educated. (EOC 320)

⁹⁵ In the notes to *Emmeline*, the editor Loraine Fletcher points out that the readings were diverse enough to cover many aspects of a good education: with *The Spectator* Emmeline is introduced to “fashion, manners, morals and literature,” while adding that “Shakespeare’s plays was by now becoming the mark of the educated person” (EOC 47, note 2).

Emmeline's aptitude towards education is "magical" and rather fits with the melodramatic nature of the novel. As pointed out by Loraine Fletcher, Anna Seward once commented in her letters to the necessary suspension of disbelief when it comes to Emmeline's prowess:

No intuitive strength of understanding, no possible degree of native sensibility, could have enabled her to acquire the 'do me the honor' language of high-life, and all the punctilious etiquette of its proprieties, with which she receives the old and the young lord at the castle. (qtd. in *EOC* 59, note 3)

Yet, through *Emmeline*, Smith rather advocates that aptitude for education is not a question of sex or class, but of talent and curiosity. The only real obstacle between Emmeline and a proper education is not that as a woman she has less intellect than a man, but rather that she is never given the proper opportunity to learn. Because of her class and gender, she is not considered worthy of a proper education.

The deaths of her caretakers—first of Mr. Williamson and then of Mrs. Carey—are the catalysts that disturb Emmeline's quiet life at Mowbray Castle. As the castle requires a steward; since it would be improper for Emmeline to remain alone with the steward, a new steward and a new housekeeper are hired. Emmeline's parental figures are both replaced with cruder versions: Mr. Maloney, the new steward is extremely forward in his behaviour with Emmeline and actually wants to use her illegitimacy as a bargaining chip against his limited means, and Mrs. Garnet, the new housekeeper, is a vulgar woman who regards her coming from London as an excuse to look down on the estate and on Emmeline. When compared to Mr. Maloney and Mrs. Garnet, it is clear that Emmeline's first caretakers were much better people: despite their low status, they were excellent mentors to Emmeline and were chosen with more attention to their character by Emmeline's father than their replacements are by Lord Montreville. While Mrs. Carey and Mr. Williamson had been closed to Mr. Mowbray

and were loyal to his values, Mr. Maloney and Mrs. Garnet do not have the same consideration for Emmeline: to them, she is a simple illegitimate child without any real protectors. Contrary to the previous steward and housekeeper, they do not nurture Emmeline. Instead, she prefers to avoid their presence at all cost and thus, she spends all her time locked in her room, which is now also physically removed from the more common areas of Mowbray Castle. Without mentors to guide her, she must suffer in silence and accept her fate since she has nowhere to go and no one to shelter her.

To make matters worse, the arrival at Mowbray Castle of Lord Montreville and his son Frederic Delamere for the hunting season only emphasizes Emmeline's lack of agency and naivety when it comes to her uncle's guardianship. Emmeline comes to the realization that whatever she does, whether it is to walk in the forest by herself, or to remain in her room, Delamere embeds himself to her in a threatening manner. Furthermore, no matter how she acts or reacts to Delamere's behaviours, Lord Montreville scolds her for enticing his son in a manner that is not appropriate. He blames her and her lack of proper and formal education⁹⁶—a point he fails to realize is his own doing—when Delamere begins to aggressively court her:

Your having been brought up in retirement, Miss Mowbray, has, perhaps, prevented your being acquainted with the decorums of the world, and the reserve which a young woman should ever strictly maintain. You have done a very improper thing in meeting my son; and I must desire that while you are at the castle, no such appointments may take place in future. (*EOC 65*)

⁹⁶ In *The Contested Castle*, Kate Ferguson Ellis states that innocence was a central quality for women and that reading, fiction or non-fiction, was seen as dangerous to women's innocence. Yet, Emmeline's readings which do not include scandalous or Gothic fiction have not prepared her for the type of predatory behaviours exhibited by Maloney and Delamere, nor to expect Lord Montreville's mercenary views. "But innocence that is an ignorance of evil, however defined, was by its very definition defenseless against what it did not know" (15). By protecting Emmeline's virtue, her readings in fact fail to prepare her for the harsh reality of the world beyond Mowbray Castle.

Despite reminding his son of his duty towards Emmeline, he is unable to have him behave in a proper manner around Emmeline. Again, her only option remains to avoid being in her predator's company. In "Seeking Shelter in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline*," Kathleen M. Oliver notes that "within the confines of the castle, Emmeline exists as a prisoner, not free to enjoy the interior spaces of the castle precisely because they exist as masculine spaces over which she holds no authority or control" (199). Lord Montreville, despite being her guardian, has no wish to actively shield her from unwanted male attention.

She must learn to circumvent the patriarchy that holds her down, without upsetting it. Emmeline comes to the realization that she has no voice over her own destiny: Lord Montreville refuses to listen to her or even acknowledge her wishes when he brings the subject of Maloney's desire to marry Emmeline. Moreover, the narrator is clear on Lord Montreville's intentions when it comes to Emmeline: "He thought that as the existence of Emmeline was hardly known beyond the walls of the castle, he should incur no censure from the world if he consigned her to that obscurity to which the disadvantages of her birth seemed originally to have condemned her" (*EOC* 63). Despite her denial, he can only consider the steward's point of view as it is aligned with his own agenda: to release himself of his duties to her before his son gets too much infatuated, as if the legal veneer of a union between Emmeline and Mr. Maloney would deter his son's pursuits. As she begins to fathom the ramifications of the patriarchy holding her down, she insists to leave Mowbray Castle in order to escape both Mr. Maloney and Delamere. She settles at Swansea where she lodges with Mrs. Carey's sister. There, she hopes to be able to take control of her life without having to yield to Lord Montreville or Delamere's demands. It is there that she meets Mrs. Stafford, another victim of patriarchy: her husband continually mismanages the estate they have. Emmeline finds in Mrs.

Stafford a confidante and a new form of mentor: although she seems to bow down to the patriarchy, she stands for herself and leads her life in spite of her husband's foolishness. Through Mrs. Stafford, Emmeline finds the missing maternal figure that she has longed for ever since Mrs. Carey passed away.

Knowledge and education, which are thought to be dangerous to women's purity is in fact weakening them. As Emmeline is innocent in the Blakean sense of the term, she can only rely on her intuition before gauging Mr. Maloney or Delamere's intentions. Yet, despite her feelings, she is unable to put an end to Mr. Maloney's or Delamere's inappropriate behaviours towards her. Her purity makes the hardships detailed in the novel seem crueler as they are systematic and hurtful personal attacks against the powerless orphan. Smith's novel indicates, even though its execution is hyperbolic, that the current limitations to education are absurd and actually detrimental to a large portion of the population.⁹⁷ Emmeline and, more significantly, Mrs. Stafford are knowledgeable and competent when it comes to legal and financial endeavours, yet they must rely on men to have their voices heard. The legal system, while in place to protect them, does nothing but hinders their agency. Lord Montreville can act as he wants towards Emmeline as she has no other protector and no one to stand up for her but herself. Despite her lack of education and her illegitimacy, Emmeline is portrayed as a more compassionate person and she is more worthy of Mowbray Castle than her uncle.

On a similar note, Austen addresses the theme of education and the relationship between wealth, manners, and inner values with *Mansfield Park*. Here, however, the myth of the noble savage is reinterpreted as Fanny is extracted from her family in the sole goal to give

⁹⁷ A similar discourse will, several years later, be used in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, where the creature is educated through literature, in this case Milton's *Paradise Lost*, *Plutarch's Life*, and Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and through a proxy, when Félix teaches French to Safie at the cabin.

her a better education and, ultimately, better chances in life.⁹⁸ It is Sir Thomas' and Mrs Norris' initial plan to raise Fanny and to provide for her what her own family hardly can: "Give a girl an education, and introduce her properly into the world, and ten to one but she has the means of settling well, without farther expense to any body" (*MP* 38). The benevolent enterprise is not without recalling the amelioration trope that is associated with slavery and with what Rudyard Kipling will coin later in the century "The White Man's Burden." Because Sir Thomas—and to a certain extent Mrs Norris—feels guilty about his station in life compared to Mrs Price, they feel the need to relieve her of one of her charges and to provide for that charge what—they deem—is the best education and the best connections. They expect the worst from her, while they overestimate at the same time Fanny's positive reaction and deference to them. On the possible state of Fanny, Sir Thomas says: "We shall probably see much to wish altered in her, and must prepare ourselves for gross ignorance, some meanness of opinions, and very distressing vulgarity of manner; but these are not incurable faults" (*MP* 41). When the ten-year-old child arrives at Mansfield Park, she "was small for her age... her air, though awkward, was not vulgar, her voice was sweet, and when she spoke, her countenance was pretty" (*MP* 43). Her education, though basic—she is able to read, to write,⁹⁹ and to sew (*MP* 48)—indicates that the Prices' situation is not as desperate as the Bertrams and Mrs Norris assume it is: Fanny's parents were able to either send their daughter to school or teach her themselves probably all that she would need to know in a pure utilitarian way. In the larger scale of society, the Prices are akin to the budding middle class and can claim some respectability.

⁹⁸ For more on the reasons why Fanny must be an adoptee, see Tess O'Toole's "Becoming Fanny Bertram: Adoption in *Mansfield Park*."

⁹⁹ Most schools set up for the poor only taught children how to read as being able to read the Bible was considered essential while writing was not.

Yet, compared to her cousins, she appears uneducated and they are quickly calling her “stupid” for her ignorance of Asia Minor or the proper way to Ireland (*MP* 48). Her lack of a formal education defines her as an inferior at Mansfield Park as even the maids considers her senseless and beneath them.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, it can be argued that such knowledge is useless to Julia and Maria as the novel never refers again to Asia Minor, or to the rivers in Russia and these pieces of knowledge of geography do not prove their intellectual superiority; rather it demonstrates their capability to remember “irrelevant” informations, a feat that, in the context of the theatrical endeavour, sets them apart of Fanny once more. The denunciation of the triviality of Asia Minor as a separation between knowledge and ignorance is in the same vein as Wollstonecraft’s attack on the failure and the uselessness of the female education. On the subject Anne Mellor writes: “Since they received no rational or useful education but were trained only in the ‘female accomplishments’ (penmanship, fine sewing, dancing, a smattering of foreign languages, singing, sketching), women were kept, Wollstonecraft insisted, ‘in a state of perpetual childhood’¹⁰¹” (“Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication*” 3). Moreover, contrary to her cousins, Fanny refuses to partake in the superficial education that is proposed to her.¹⁰² She rather reads poetry by herself, secluded in the east room¹⁰³ and collects images derived from romantic landscapes. Her reluctance to learn music or drawing in addition to her extreme shyness conceals her improvements to the undiscerning eye. Before leaving for Antigua, Sir Thomas has harsh parting words with her on what he considers a lack of improvement:

¹⁰⁰ For more on the relation between Fanny’s poor memory, geography, and the rise of a new form of imperialism, see Miranda Burgess’ “Fanny Price’s British Museum: Empire, Genre, and Memory in *Mansfield Park*.”

¹⁰¹ (Wollstonecraft, “Rights of Woman” 73).

¹⁰² “Fanny’s Gaze and the Construction of the Feminine Space in *Mansfield Park*” by Anna Despotopoulou also uses Wollstonecraft’s opinion on female education and Adam Smith’s *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* to prove and reveal the inherent differences in Fanny’s and her cousins’ education.

¹⁰³ For more on the symbolism of the East in contemporary literature and Romantic imperialism, see Tim Fulford’s “Romanticism and Colonialism: Races, Places, Peoples, 1800-30.”

If William does come to Mansfield, I hope you may be able to convince him that the many years which have passed since you parted, have not been spent on your side entirely without improvement—though I fear he must find his sister at sixteen in some respects too much like his sister at ten. (*MP* 62)

Sir Thomas misreads Fanny and interprets her disinterest to become an accomplished young lady as his daughters are as an indication that she failed to improve. He is unable to recognize her strengths: her high morals and sense of duty and loyalty to her new family. Yet, compared to the Bertrams, Fanny has a better judgement and follows a higher moral code than them. She is also the only one to see past the Crawfords' masks and to perceive their moral faults. With Fanny, Austen demonstrates the limits of the doctrine of amelioration which stipulates that "proponents of this position held that slavery and colonialism were morally redeemable and potentially even heroic pursuits for such men as Sir Thomas Bertram" (Boulukos 362). Fanny seems to benefit more from a privileged and quiet environment at Mansfield¹⁰⁴ than from the examples set by her female cousins.

Blinded by her own education and bias towards Maria and Julia, Mrs Norris truly believes that Fanny will benefit from the company of her cousins. To Lady Bertram, she says that "It will be an education for the child... only being with her cousins; if Miss Lee taught her nothing, she would learn to be good and clever from *them*" (*MP* 41). Not only is she casting doubt on Miss Lee's expertise and methods as a governess, she perpetuates the notion that education for young girls ought to shape them into conceited, superficial, and judgemental beings. In the introduction to her *Vindications of the Rights of Woman*, Wollstonecraft argues that the weakened state of woman is directly linked with the education given to women. She writes:

¹⁰⁴ To use Deidre Shauna Lynch's metaphor of the greenhouses and botany from "'Young Ladies are delicate plants': Jane Austen and Greenhouse Romanticism," it could be said that Fanny needs more the glasshouse than the gardener's care in order to bloom.

One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on the subject by men... have been more anxious to make them [women] alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers; and this understanding of the sex has been so bubbled by this specious homage, that the civilized women of the present century, with a few exceptions, are only anxious to inspire love, when they ought to cherish a nobler ambition, and by their abilities and virtues exact respect. (*Rights of Woman* 71)

Because of their education, Maria and Julia—and by association Mary Crawford—are the embodiment of the alluring mistresses that Wollstonecraft abhors while Fanny appears to be the ideal woman who has “the most perfect education” which consists of “such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart. Or, in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent” (*Rights of Woman* 86).¹⁰⁵ Through *Mansfield Park*, Austen therefore advocates for a better education for women which is not centered on the notions of accomplishments but rather on the basis of intellect and virtue.¹⁰⁶

Even though Fanny’s is on the path to independence, her life changes without her—or even her parents—having any agency in the transaction.¹⁰⁷ She is taken care of by the Bertrams but is not made part of the family: despite the initial generosity to raise Fanny at Mansfield Park, Sir Thomas establishes a hierarchy within the household as he examines before her arrival “how to preserve in the minds of my *daughters* the consciousness of what they are, without making them think too lowly of their cousin; and how without depressing her spirits too far, to make her remember that she is not a *Miss Bertram*” (*MP* 41–42). Her

¹⁰⁵ One can argue, however that Fanny’s weak and fragile constitution disqualifies her from having the most perfect education as outlined by Wollstonecraft.

¹⁰⁶ This is not in contradiction with Mr. Darcy’s ideal of the accomplished lady: the accomplished lady does not merely perform her accomplishments but instead she uses her intellect and puts her skills in practice. In other words, that she is accomplished rather than appears to be.

¹⁰⁷ Initially, Mrs Price asked if Sir Thomas could find employment for one of her boys. When he requested a girl, she complied, although she was puzzled by his choice.

problematic position within the family is echoed in the discussion on Fanny's physical space¹⁰⁸ within the house as Mrs Norris asks her sister—only to impose her suggestion—about Fanny's room:

I suppose, sister, you will put the child in the little white attic, near the old nurseries. It will be much the best place for her, so near Miss Lee, and not far from the girls, and close by the housemaids, who could either of them help to dress her, you know, and take care of her clothes, for I suppose you would not think it fair to expect Ellis to wait on her as well as the others. (*MP* 41)

Fanny's room—and status—is thus situated in-between masters and servants. In other words, she occupies a grey area in the social pyramid at Mansfield Park as she is constantly compared to her cousins without having any of the perks of being a Miss Bertram. Fanny understands her peculiar position as dependent and the moral obligation she has to the Bertrams. Although she longs for her home in Portsmouth and fears Sir Thomas, she considers herself grateful for her situation at Mansfield Park.

During her stay at Mansfield Park, everyone—especially Mrs Norris—constantly reminds her of that duty: to be grateful of the chance she has to be brought up at Mansfield Park instead of at Portsmouth. Here, Austen borrows from the trope of the happy slave or, what Anne K. Mellor and Alex L. Milsom call the Grateful Negro in a reference to Edgeworth's novella on the very subject (222). It should be noted that Mrs Norris and Fanny have a different understanding of the term grateful: Mrs Norris uses it in the sense that Fanny is indebted to the Bertrams and must obey them,¹⁰⁹ while Fanny sees it as a form of loyalty to the higher morals they stand for. Therefore, Fanny's own sense of duty forbids her to

¹⁰⁸ For more on the relation between spatiality and *Mansfield Park*, see Emily Rhorbach's "Austen's Later Subjects" 738–43.

¹⁰⁹ For more on slavery, property, and Mrs Norris, see Helena Kelly's "*Mansfield Park* Reconsidered: Pheasants, Game Laws, and the Hidden Critique of Slavery."

challenge her aunt's authority and must relinquish her agency to others. And this is why she dares not to contradict Mrs Norris or Lady Bertram when she suffers from a violent headache after working under the sun and running errands for Mrs Norris.¹¹⁰ Edmund is the only one who notices her wretched state and the only one to take her defence, calling it "a very ill-managed business" (*MP* 99). She must endure her condition in the hope that the values and principles the Bertrams have taught her are respected by them.

Her state of dependency and her sense of duty therefore explain why Mrs Norris can abuse her, especially when Sir Thomas is in Antigua. As Mansfield Park's overseer, she can deny Fanny what would be given to servants. When Fanny is granted the old school-room called the east room, Mrs Norris "stipulated for there never being a fire in it on Fanny's account" (*MP* 171). This order deprives Fanny not of unnecessary luxury but of basic comfort and necessity—especially in winter—before being reversed by Sir Thomas once he returns in England. In and of itself, it is not an act out of character for Mrs Norris as she always tries to reduce her expenses and increase her own profit. Yet, when it comes to Sir Thomas' expenses, she turns a blind eye.

Mrs Norris had not the least intention of being at any expense whatever in her [Fanny's] maintenance. As far as walking, talking, and contriving reached, she was thoroughly benevolent, and nobody knew better how to dictate liberality to others: but her love of money was equal to her love of directing, and she knew quite well how to save her own as to spend that of her friends. (*MP* 39)

Other than cruelty and a refusal to see Fanny as part of the family,¹¹¹ no theory seems to fully justify her actions on this subject. Nevertheless, Sir Thomas tries to explain or justify Mrs

¹¹⁰ For more on Fanny's education through suffering, see Jane McDonnell's "'A Little Spirit of Independence': Sexual Politics and the Bildungsroman in *Mansfield Park*" 205–07.

¹¹¹ Mrs Norris, in convincing Sir Thomas to raise Fanny at Mansfield Park, plays on this notion: "A niece of our's, Sir Thomas, I may say, or at least of *your's*, would not grow in this neighbourhood without many advantages" (*MP* 38).

Norris' conduct in an exchange with Fanny on his return from Antigua. This exchange, although one sided, is crucial to the understanding of the trope of the Grateful Negro. In the first part, he condemns her actions toward Fanny, which he bases on the principles of education.

Your aunt Norris has always been an advocate, and very judiciously, for young people's being brought up without unnecessary indulgences; but there should be moderation in everything.—She is also very hardy herself, which of course will influence her in her opinion of the wants of others. (*MP* 318)

While explaining the rationale behind Mrs Norris' behaviour, his assessment overlooks that she only subjects Fanny to her harsh treatments and general disregard. She never exposes her favourite nieces to the same physical hardships; instead she cajoles them and reinforces, especially in Maria, their sense of superiority, which in turns spoils them. Sir Thomas does in part recognize the discrepancy and addresses it as such:

I know what her sentiments have always been. The principle was good in itself, but it may have been, and I believe *has been*, carried too far in your case.—I am aware that there has been sometimes, in some points, a misplaced distinction; but I think too well of you, Fanny, to suppose you will ever harbour resentment on that account. (*MP* 318)

The problem with the trope of the Grateful Negro is that, in comparison, the slave is held up to a higher moral code than his owner. It is the owner who must elevate himself to the moral standing of the slave. This is exactly what Sir Thomas is suggesting through his conversation with Fanny. Because he deems her of a moral superiority, Fanny is not allowed to bear a grudge or even to criticize her aunt's conduct. She must instead be grateful that the mischief

was not of bigger proportions and that her education as a sensible object¹¹² was always behind such conduct.

You have an understanding which will prevent you from receiving things only in part, and judging partially by the event.—You will take in the whole of the past, you will consider times, persons, and probabilities, and you will feel that they were not least your friends who *were educating and preparing you for that mediocrity of condition which seemed to be your lot*.—Though their caution may prove eventually unnecessary, it was kindly meant; and of this you may be assured, that every advantage of affluence will be doubled by the little privations and restrictions that may have been imposed. I am sure you will not disappoint my opinion of you, by failing at any time to treat your aunt Norris with the respect and attention that are due to her. (*MP* 318–319, my emphasis)

His speech thus ends with a fusion of compliments on her discernment, allusions to her sense of duty and derogatory comments on the discrepancy of social status between her and her benefactors. It is therefore quite difficult to establish exactly how Sir Thomas perceives Fanny: based on his observations on her judgment he seems to finally consider her improved—which is translated by the ball he organizes for her—yet he feels the need to remind her of her past lowly station as if to mediate the tensions and avoid a new riot at his own estate. If we are to argue that *Mansfield Park* proves to be a narrative complicit with the trope of amelioration, we must consider how much Fanny improves at Mansfield Park. It is true that she does receive a more formal education than what her parents could have provided for her and that she has more refined manners than her sisters at Portsmouth. Nevertheless, her education is achieved in spite of Sir Thomas' or Mrs Norris' efforts to mold her into a happy subordinate.

¹¹² The discourses around Fanny by the Bertram household in general suggest that she is very rarely considered as a subject: she is disposed of at will, sent and fetched away according to fancy, and treated as a commodity of comfort by Lady Bertram.

2.2 Social Life and Etiquette

In the introduction to *The Voyage in: Fictions of Female Development*, Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland compare the male development to the female one and state that the former is portrayed in literature as more complete:

Even the repressing schooling portrayed by Dickens, for example, provides a context in which social rules and values can be acquired, internalized, and evaluated. Nineteenth-Century heroines rarely benefit from formal education, such as Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe, do not significantly expand their options, but learn instead to consolidate their female nurturing roles rather than to take a more active part in the shaping of society. (7)

Notwithstanding the fact that they completely exclude in their analysis the Romantic novel when discussing narratives of female development, Abel, Hirsch, and Langland fail to contextualize the ways in which female characters internalize social rules.¹¹³ For instance, Burney, Austen, and even Edgeworth with *Belinda*, co-opt the rules from conduct books into their narratives. Social rules and decorum are at the heart of the novels and the heroines, through their social encounters in their day-to-day experiences can reinforce or condemn practices in the same manner as Abel, Hirsch, and Langland argue it works for men. In a reversal of gender, *Waverley* illustrates the education of a young man to a different culture, where the social cues and markers are not necessarily the same as the ones he has learnt in his native culture.

Moreover, formal education is not necessarily the best provided as demonstrated by *Ormond* and *Mansfield Park*: in *Cecilia*, *Emma*, and *Waverley*, the knowledge of social rules and etiquette is quite essential. Moreover, they underestimate the effects of consolidating what

¹¹³ As pointed out by Barbara Zonitch, “for women, ‘learning manners’ was fraught with contradictions. It was only in the public world that a young woman could acquire manners, yet it was also in this realm that she was most susceptible to criticism and assault” (30).

they call the “female nurturing roles.” Changes come to *Ormond*, *Mansfield Park*, *Cecilia*, *Emma*, and *Waverley* through female nurturing figures: either from exterior figures like Lady and Miss Annaly in *Ormond* or Flora in *Waverley*, or through the heroines themselves: Fanny, Cecilia, and Emma become agent of changes once they internalize and evaluate social rules and etiquette. Moreover, most of the education of young heroines revolves around the importance of social and interpersonal relations and how to navigate the private and public spheres.

In her first novel *Evelina*,¹¹⁴ Frances Burney casts a young and naïve a woman as the protagonist who is completely clueless about social etiquette. Raised in the countryside by her late mother’s friend—a vicar nonetheless—she is almost completely protected from external influences as her benefactor screens her entourage.¹¹⁵ Therefore, the novel traces her social education, which serves two purposes: the first is to create situations for the plot,¹¹⁶ and the second is to provide readers with a guide of what to do in society, or rather in her specific case, what *not* to do in the fashionable world. The novel becomes a didactic tool for young women as it demystifies, for instance, the proper etiquette of refusing a dance without offending the suitor.¹¹⁷ The line between novel and conduct book is easily crossed with the use of the socially uneducated young lady. “Taking Burney’s educative purposes to their logical conclusion suggests that sensibility could be acquired and developed. In the process of reading Burney’s novels, the discerning reader could learn from the fictional experience depicted:

¹¹⁴ For more on *Evelina* as a Bildungsroman, see Laure Blanchemain-Faucon’s *Lifting the Veil: Disruption and Order in Frances Burney’s Evelina*, 44-53.

¹¹⁵ As the unrecognized daughter of man of fortune, the vicar fears for her life.

¹¹⁶ The plot includes both dramatic action as well as comic reliefs. *Evelina*’s adventures include a potential rape; strolling in a park with prostitutes; her grand-mother receiving a beating from a monkey; saving her lost brother from suicide, and the sudden discovery of her father in a ballroom in France.

¹¹⁷ For more on the relations between conduct books and Frances Burney’s novel, see “Fanny Burney and the Courtesy Books” by Joyce Hemlow.

from social contact by proxy” (Davidson 298). While Davidson claims the didactic purpose of Burney’s novels, it is a process that is highly criticized by Wollstonecraft. In her *Vindications of the Rights of Woman*, she condemns the artificiality and superficiality of novels.

Novels, music, poetry, and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation... This overstretched sensibility naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining that sovereignty which it ought to attain to render a rational creature useful to others, and content with its own station; for the exercise of the understanding, as life advances, is the only method pointed out by nature to calm the passions. (*Rights of Woman* 131)

Through her works, Burney condemns the artificiality and the pursuits of pleasure, portraying her heroines as uneducated but easily mortified by misconduct and broken protocol. They appear authentic while the other female characters are considered vapid, senseless, and dissolute. Burney uses a variation of the approach for her second novel *Cecilia*. “The preoccupation with propriety in Fanny Burney’s novels was balanced by another sort of development—a growing rebellion against the restrictions imposed upon women” (Cutting 519–20). Propriety in Burney is not aligned with the conservative writers of her time¹¹⁸ but instead advocates for sincerity and self-reliance rather than artifices and appearances, which is analogous to Wollstonecraft’s intentions in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. While *Evelina* remains superficial in the illustrations of dangers of sensibility and superficiality, as most of the misfortunes are due to imbroglios and incur mortifications on the protagonist, *Cecilia* depicts the ramification of the dark side of the pleasure society. This time, Cecilia is fully prepared for her life of affluence as the Dean of —’s niece. At his death, she becomes the heiress of a large fortune: 10,000£ from her parents—“her ancestors had been rich farmers in

¹¹⁸ Cutting refers to Hannah More, Elizabeth Hamilton, and Mary Brunton (519).

the county of Suffolk” (C 5)—and 3,000£ per annum from her uncle the Dean.¹¹⁹ This sets up her apart as a potential prey of a mercenary husband.¹²⁰

The novel begins when the heiress must leave her familiar environment to live with Mrs. Harrel—her friend from school and her first guardian’s wife—until her majority. Her stay with the Harrels leads her to a foreign world: London. As in *Evelina*, Cecilia is ill-equipped to navigate the social world of London. She has some knowledge of good manners adapted for the countryside. “The little knowledge of fashionable manners and of the characters of the time of which Cecilia was yet mistress, she had gathered at the house of this gentleman [Mr. Monckton]” (C 8). Therefore, living with Mrs. Harrel proves to be a difficult adjustment for Cecilia, especially as her friend has completely changed her behaviour and disposition. Moreover, Mrs. Harrel never considers that Cecilia might need time adjusting to the sparkle of the large city. Instead, Mrs. Harrel hops on the bandwagon of the consumer and pleasure society and takes for granted her new way of life. On Cecilia’s surprise and questioning of the idea that a party of twenty should be considered small, Mrs. Harrel questions her prior ignorance: “O you mean when I lived in the country... but what in the world could I know of parties or company then?” (C 29). There, she is exposed to a dissipated lifestyle and the pitfalls of relentless consumer society.¹²¹ “Several days passed on nearly in the same manner; the mornings were all spent in gossiping, shopping and dressing, and the

¹¹⁹ The money is not without strings attached. She must comply with certain restrictions or else, she loses the annuity.

¹²⁰ According to Julia Epstein, “Burney’s focus on money as a medium of exchange for her plot and for her materialist social critique is relentless in *Cecilia*... Cecilia’s economic position is clearly endangered from the outset: the question of where honorably to bestow money (and, behind that question, of how honorably to acquire it) underlies the plot” (159).

¹²¹ For more on the consumer society in Frances Burney’s fiction, see Deidre Shauna Lynch’s *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning* 168–70.

evenings were regularly appropriated to public places, or larger parties of company” (C 52). In and of itself, this lifestyle is vacuous and only morally dangerous.

In a short time Cecilia, who every day had hoped that the next would afford her greater satisfaction, but who every day found the present no better than the former, began to grow weary of eternally running the same round, and to sicken at the irksome repetition of unremitting yet uninteresting dissipation. (C 53)

Cecilia has the lucidity to fight the dissipation with her plan of reform, preferring purchasing books and limiting her social outings. Instead of following her friend’s example, Mrs. Harrel refuses to see the extent of the financial—and moral—disaster. When told about Mr. Harrel’s debt, she answers: “I am sure we only live like the rest of the world, and I don’t see why a man of Mr. Harrel’s fortune should live any worse. As to his having now and then a little debt or two, it is nothing but what every body else has. You only think it so odd, because you a’n’t used to it” (C 195). For Mrs. Harrel, the public and social world is the norm and she is oblivious to Cecilia’s desire for a more intimate and gratifying setting, as she experiences with Mrs. Delvile, her second guardian’s wife.

To help her adapt to London fashion circles, she receives some help from Miss Larolles, who takes her under her wing, and from Mr. Gosport, who educates Cecilia on the different coteries of the London social scene. ““Are you, then, yet to learn,’ cried he, ‘that there are certain young ladies who make it a rule never to speak but to their own cronies? ... The TON misses, as they are called, who now infest the town, are in two divisions, the SUPERCILIOUS, and the VOLUBLE”” (C 40). Mr. Gosport points rather rapidly the artificiality of these ladies as the SUPERCILIOUS refuses to talk at all while the VOLUBLES never ceases to chat. Far from being a movement reserved to women, some men participate in this celebrity culture: for instance, Captain Aresby is called a JARGONIST by Mr. Gosport as

he constantly tries to impress with his words but ends up misusing clichés and foreign expression when talking. The TON members try to distinguish themselves from the rest of the crowd with their quirks and social persona in an escalation of mannerism. Mr. Gosport tells Cecilia that Mr. Meadows, leader of the INSENSIBLISTS,¹²² gained his affluence

By nothing but a happy art in catching the reigning foibles of the times, and carrying them to an extreme yet more absurd than any one had done before him. Ceremony, he found, was already exploded for ease, he, therefore, exploded ease for indolence; devotion to the fair sex, had given way to a more equal and rational intercourse, which, to push still farther, he presently exchanged for rudeness; joviality, too, was already banished for philosophical indifference, and that, therefore, he discarded, for weariness and disgust. (C 278)

However, now that he is at the top of the social world, Mr. Meadows can no longer retreat to his real self as the pursuit of exceptionality leads to a glass prison of some sorts: he must forever play the part of the *ennuye*, indifferent to women and he will never be able to sustain a real conversation with anyone. Mr. Gosport states that Mr. Meadows

must never... confess the least pleasure from any thing, a total apathy being the chief ingredient of his character: he must, upon no account, sustain a conversation with any spirit, lest he should appear, to his utter disgrace, interested in what is said: and when he is quite tired of his existence, from a total vacuity of ideas, he must affect a look of absence, and pretend, on the sudden, to be wholly lost in thought. (C 279)

The TON's artificiality clashes with Cecilia's authenticity as she never picks on the mannerism of the fashionable but instead she exercises her intellect and moral strength following the example of Mrs. Delvile and of Mr. Albany.

Miss Larolles, part of the VOLUBLES, is too happy to entertain and explain the quirks of fashion and the latest gossip with Cecilia.¹²³ From Miss Larolles, she learns the social

¹²² Also called by Miss Larolles an *ennuye*.

¹²³ Cecilia's social *faux pas* are, to Jane Spencer, part of the genre of women's writings at the end of the eighteenth century. "It was as a teacher that the 'respectable' woman novelist found an acknowledged place in

language: from the auctions of bankrupt estates to the importance of always returning calls, as well as the etiquette of the invitations and of the calling card. Yet, as Cecilia is completely unaware of the many faux-pas she makes, she has to slight Miss Larolles by not returning her visit on the third day to learn from Mrs. Harrel the protocol: “O that’s nothing at all to the purposes; you should have waited upon her, or sent her a ticket, just the same as if you had not seen her” (C 64) retorts Mrs. Harrel. For that reason, Miss Larolles and Mrs. Harrel are poor mentors for Cecilia and the only positive model she can follow is the one of Mrs. Delvile, a woman of great discernment who, however, suffers from a bad reputation in London in the superficial social circles. By visiting her frequently, Cecilia can allow intervals between the many social calls and parties of Mrs. Harrel. There, despite Mr. Delvile’s condescension and haughtiness, she finds in meeting Mrs. Delvile

the dignity to which high birth and conscious superiority gave rise, was so judiciously regulated by good sense, and so happily blended with politeness, that though the world at large envied or hated her, the few for whom she had herself any regard, she was infallibly certain to captivate. (C 155)

Mrs. Delvile’s reputation is similar to Mr. Darcy in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*: as she knows the importance of her rank and of her own superiority—a superiority that according to Cecilia is well-deserved—she discourages the fashionable sycophants and the members of the TON, as their conversation is empty and meaningless and they cannot shine in her presence. “Mrs. Delvile is not only a strong, intelligent, and talented woman; in spite of her generally decorous behavior, she is committed to an ideal of self-reliance that was highly unorthodox for

literary discourse. Ideally, from the moralist’s point of view, the novel could serve as a kind of dramatized conduct book for young women. Such a novel could be written by drawing an exemplary heroine for the reader to imitate; but less flattering to the young female’s proverbial vanity was the erring heroine. Her errors could not be too grave, and must not include the great error, unchastity, especially considering the tendency to identify a woman writer’s heroine with her creator” (142).

her sex” (Cutting 523). She becomes for Cecilia an ideal to attain as the heiress strives to achieve her own independence from her inept guardians.¹²⁴

Of all the six protagonists, Emma Woodhouse is the character whose education is the most established but whose *Bildung*—in the transformative sense—is the less obvious. As Cecilia—and contrary to Ormond and Fanny Price—Emma is part of the privileged society and received what is considered to be the best education available. Likewise, she boasts—on paper—all the qualities of an accomplished young lady.¹²⁵ The novel opens with her now famous description: “Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence” (*E* 5). Her remarkable intelligence and cleverness are constantly praised by the other characters in the novel. While it would seem to be a positive attribute, it becomes evident that in Emma’s case, too much praise, even when well deserved, leads to hubris. “The real evils indeed of Emma’s situation were the power of having too much her own way, and a disposition to think a little too well of herself” (*E* 5). Since she has always been cleverer than her sister and that she could outwit and manipulate at will her governess, Emma has the conviction of always being right and she refuses to listen to other people’s advice. Following her mother’s death and her sister’s marriage, she becomes the mistress of Heartfield and this furthers the main problem of her education: she rules her world without consideration for or response from others. She egoistically refrains from doing her duty to Highbury, preferring to shop for ribbons at Ford’s with Harriet than bringing food to Miss Bates. Her reputation is saved by the addition of Mrs. Elton, as Juliet McMaster argues in “The Continuity of Jane Austen”:

¹²⁴ Cecilia’s emancipation of her guardians will be discussed in more details in “A Quest for Self-Determination.”

¹²⁵ See also “Emma: Jane Austen’s Errant Heroine” by Eugene Goodheart.

Within each novel this complex system of balance and qualification is maintained by various means. A subtle use of character contrast is perhaps the most effective: Emma's egoism might bulk so large as to alienate our sympathy completely, but for the presence of a Mrs. Elton, who helps to define its limits. (723–24)

Mrs. Elton becomes a foil¹²⁶ to Emma's behaviour, especially in regards to the latter's conduct towards Harriet, while the former highlights the problems with Emma's social education.¹²⁷

Only Mr. Knightley can, at times, step in to correct her and point her her mistakes. He then becomes a sort of mentor to her,¹²⁸ even when she refuses to see and acknowledge that he is right on certain issues. Together, they form a powerful team and know how to take charge of their entourage. For instance, when the Christmas celebrations are about to be ruined by the prospect of being snowed-in at Randalls, Mr. Knightley goes outside to acknowledge the road conditions while Emma stays inside and comfort the guests. Once Mr. Knightley comes back, they do not need much to act as one mind.

He [Mr. Woodhouse] was satisfied of there being no present danger in returning home, but no assurances could convince him that it was safe to stay; and while the others were variously urging and recommending, Mr. Knightley and Emma settled it in a few brief sentences: thus—

‘Your father will not be easy; why do not you go?’

‘I am ready, if the others are.’

‘Shall I ring the bell?’

‘Yes, do.’

And the bell was rung, and the carriages spoken for. (*E* 102)

¹²⁶ The motif of foil or double is repeated throughout the novels. In *The German Bildungsroman: Incest and Inheritance*, Michael Minden suggests that the concept of rivalry is a fundamental part of the Bildungsroman (2).

¹²⁷ The relationship between Emma and Mrs. Elton will be discussed in further details in “A Quest for Self-Determination.”

¹²⁸ “The heroine's education also departs from convention in that her mentor practices what he preaches rather than dictating feminine rules of conduct from a masculine position of privilege and authority, as does a character such as Sir Charles Grandison” (Jones 330).

Their perfect plan is ruined only by John Knightley: he takes Emma's place in the carriage and forces her to leave Randalls with Mr. Elton.¹²⁹ On the other hand, when paired with Frank Churchill, she indulges in the attention he gives her and forgets about the etiquette and her duty to her friends. In Austen's novels, repetition of events serves to highlight changes or the stagnation of characters.¹³⁰ The Christmas visit at Randalls—resolved by Emma and Mr. Knightley—is repeated in the summer with the Box Hill expedition, but this time Emma and Frank Churchill are in charge of it. There, Emma's carelessness and Frank's little schemes end up hurting the company. Emma first hurts Miss Bates¹³¹ with her infamous reply to Miss Bates' on the "three dull things": "Ah! ma'am, but there may be a difficulty. Pardon me—but you will be limited as to number—only three at once" (*E* 291). What follows the good-humoured comment made by Miss Bates is a cold attack by Emma. Then, Jane Fairfax is hurt by the constant denial of their attachment by Frank Churchill and the constant allusions to Emma as the intended one by Mr. Weston's conundrum.¹³² All members of the company depart from Box Hill irritated and discontented. The Box Hill incident, like the Moriarty incident for Ormond, remains a turning point for Emma, as she realizes that the social fabric of Highbury is more fragile than what she expected. She might have had the best education, but Emma remains ignorant of certain social rules.

Like Maria and Julia Bertram, Emma has the privilege of a private formal education with a governess—though Miss Taylor, her governess, was more a friend than a teacher—and

¹²⁹ The scene is a direct reference to Burney's *Evelina*, albeit Emma's physical integrity is not in jeopardy this time.

¹³⁰ See Cheryl Ann Weissman's "Doubleness and Refrain in Jane Austen's *Persuasion*" for more details on the mechanics of repetition in Austen's novels and Edgar F. Shannon Jr.'s "*Emma*: Character and Construction" for an in-depth analysis of the repetition of social events in *Emma*.

¹³¹ For more on Miss Bates and her importance in *Emma* in relation to the novel realism, see Mary Hong's "A Great Talker upon Little Matters': Trivializing the Everyday in *Emma*."

¹³² The answer to his conundrum—"what two letters of the alphabet are there, that express perfection"—is M and A: Emma (*E* 292).

she even surpassed expectations. Mr. Knightley admires the fine results of her education: “I have seen a great many lists of her drawing up at various times of books that she meant to read regularly through—and very good lists they were—very well chosen, and very neatly arranged—sometimes alphabetically, and sometimes by some other rule” (*E* 29–30). Yet after praising her, he points out that she never puts in practice what she knows: “She will never submit to any thing requiring industry and patience, and a subjection of the fancy to the understanding” (*E* 30). She may be able to make lists of books to prove her knowledge and her refined taste; however Emma does not pursue the task and does not actually read a single book from her numerous lists. She is satisfied as long as the only thing asked of her is to demonstrate the feasibility of the accomplishment. Here rests the crux of her rivalry with Jane Fairfax: the latter heralds the marks of a true accomplished lady and reflects back to Emma her lack of discipline and commitment.¹³³ While Harriet admires Emma’s talent at the pianoforte, the latter dismisses what she considers a false praise from her friend. “Don’t class us together, Harriet. My playing is no more like her’s, than a lamp is like sunshine... The truth is, Harriet, that my playing is just good enough to be praised, but Jane Fairfax is much beyond it” (*E* 182). Jane Fairfax proves time and time again that her education is not only a performance, but a set of skills she can exercise to earn a living.

Emma’s education therefore becomes a performance, emphasized by her friendship with Harriet. Having performed the role of the docile pupil, she undertakes the role of educator for her new friend. In “The Education of Emma Woodhouse,” R. E. Hughes argues that “The underlying theme of this novel is the education of Emma Woodhouse; and the recurrent irony

¹³³ For more on Jane Fairfax as the heroine of the novel and her relationship with Emma, see Barbara Z. Thaden’s “Figure and Ground: The Receding Heroine in Jane Austen’s *Emma*” and Wendy Moffat’s “Identifying with *Emma*: Some Problems for the Feminist Reader.”

is that Emma, who must become pupil, insists on acting as teacher” (70). She insists on raising Harriet’s social status and on making the young girl her new confidante. Emma is fond of the idea that she can shape a better Harriet:

Altogether she was quite convinced of Harriet Smith’s being exactly the young friend she wanted—exactly the something which her home required... Harriet would be loved as one to whom she could be useful. For Mrs. Weston there was nothing to be done; for Harriet every thing. (*E* 21)

Contrary to Mr. Knightley’s advice, Emma continues to perform the role of teacher with Harriet, instilling false desires into her pupil’s mind, such as an attachment to Mr. Elton. Through Harriet, Emma bends reality so that it fits her fancy:¹³⁴ when painting Harriet’s picture, she improves her on the canvas, rendering her taller than she is really among other things. All commend Emma for her talent: for instance, Mrs. Weston observes that “Miss Woodhouse has given her friend the only beauty she wanted...The expression of the eye is most correct, but Miss Smith has not those eye-brows and eye-lashes. It is the fault of her face that she has them not” (*E* 38). To which Mr. Elton replies: “I cannot agree with you. It appears to me a most perfect resemblance in every feature. I never saw such a likeness in my life. We must allow for the effect of shade, you know” (*E* 38). While Mrs. Weston and Mr. Elton praise Emma and contribute to her false sense of perfection,¹³⁵ the only opposing voice heard on the subject is Mr. Knightley: ““You have made her too tall, Emma,” said Mr. Knightley” (*E* 38). His comment is not about diminishing Emma’s talent with brushes; it is rather a

¹³⁴ For more on the role of fancy, see ““Decided and Open: Structure in *Emma*” by J. S. Lawry.

¹³⁵ The painting and the different reactions to it could also represent each character’s relation between style and substance: only Mr. Knightley—and to a certain point Emma—is able to put the style of the painting aside in order to actually appraise the actual rendering of the portrait. This variation is also felt linguistically, as Janine Barchas demonstrates in her study of the use of the word “very” in *Emma* in “Very Austen: Accounting for the Language of *Emma*” that “In fact, the book’s many and emphatic *verys* have the ironic effect of cumulatively calling into question the veracity that the word’s etymology would wish to extend” (313). “Very” becomes a stylistic red herring used by the characters and the narrator to hide the true content of the information being transmitted.

counterbalance to all the empty compliments she received from Mrs. Weston, Mr. Elton, and her father: Mrs. Weston blames Harriet that she is not “beautiful enough,” while Mr. Elton, enamoured with Emma, refuses to see anything wrong with the picture. Only Mr. Knightley can tell her what she needs to hear, in the hope of correcting her fancy. However, “Emma knew that she had [made her too tall], but would not own it” (*E* 38). She substitutes her vision of what Harriet really is for what she could be. Instead of accepting her as she is, Emma, through the painting, signals that she is ready to bend reality to match Harriet with someone higher than her on the social ladder.

From her misguided attempt to elevate Harriet in a social rank where she does not belong to her insulting Miss Bates, Emma learns to account for others instead of ordering people according to her own fancy. She needs to learn her own strengths, but most importantly her own limits. She may be smarter than her entourage; but she is clueless when it comes to life outside of Heartfield. This is further illustrated by her constant misreading of people: if real life is a charade, then Emma is a Harriet, unable to decipher it on her own. Until she recognizes that she needs guidance and must reconsider the ties that bind Highbury’s social network, her education remains incomplete. Hughes notes that by the end of the novel, “Emma’s education has finally been completed. What she has had to learn is to admit the outside into her experience, and the outside lies beyond the confined geographical boundaries of her existence” (74). Her education, contrary to the other characters of the Bildungsroman, is mostly achieved through experience of self-determination and coincides with her return to the spirit of community. In her case, it is not so much that she needs to be educated as Ormond or Fanny should to be, or that she has to adapt to a new set of social rules governed by a strange

clique as in *Cecilia*, but rather that she has to be re-educated and cleansed of the errors of her first education.

Re-education, or more accurately the process of acquiring a second education, is also at the core of *Waverley*. Scott takes the time to detail the circumstances of Edward Waverley's childhood. Political differences between Waverley's father and uncle are among the reasons why Waverley's education, which ought to be a perfect example of the finest formal education, is rather flawed and incomplete by the time he leaves for Scotland.¹³⁶ His father, Richard, has chosen a political career tied to the Whigs, while his uncle, Sir Everard, has remained loyal to the old pretender, James Stuart, and to his son Charles. Because of Waverley's alleged weak constitution, the brothers come to an arrangement regarding his residence whenever Richard must be in London: Waverley stays at Waverley-Honour with his uncle. "Little Edward was permitted to pass the greater part of the year at the Hall, and appeared to stand in the same intimate relation to both families...The education of the youth was regulated alternately by the taste and opinions of his uncle and of his father" (*W* 66). Because of their different political allegiances, a single tutor would be unsuitable and the lesser of the two evils is to let the young Waverley with two rather distinct styles of education. This agreement has its upsides as well as its downsides: while it prepares the young man for a plurality of opinions and beliefs, his education is not consistent nor is it all-encompassing. Richard "prevailed upon his private secretary... to bestow an hour or two on Edward's

¹³⁶ In "Wavering on Europe: Walter Scott and the Equilibrium of the Empires," Michael Simpson draws parallels between Scotland and the Continent. "Since the Continent is off, Edward is sent to Scotland, and an equation is thus implied between Scotland and mainland Europe. This alternative itinerary is crucial because it registers the contemporary historical reality that prevails long after the events depicted in the novel: the Continental Blockade imposed by Napoleon indeed prevented young Englishmen from observing the touchstones of European culture and correspondingly generated an interest in matters British, especially when located in exotic Celtic peripheries" (129).

education while at Brerewood Lodge, and left his uncle answerable for his improvement in literature while an inmate at the Hall” (*W* 67). Without the guidance of a proper tutor, Waverley is mostly left to his own designs when it comes to the trajectory of his education.

On this subject, the narrator recounts that Waverley “was permitted, in a great measure, to learn as he pleased, what he pleased, and when he pleased” (*W* 67). While this process is similar to the education prescribed by Rousseau, Waverley does not become the sensible man *Émile* becomes, nor does he turn into an arrogant and unruly man like Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s son. Instead, his fondness for literature¹³⁷—which ought to be closely regulated by the tutor according to Rousseau—feeds his fancy instead of teaching him the principles of self-discipline:

With a desire of amusement, therefore, which better discipline might soon have converted into a thirst for knowledge, young Waverley drove through the sea of books, like a vessel without a pilot or a rudder. Nothing perhaps increases by indulgence more than a desultory habit of reading, especially under such opportunities of gratifying it. (*W* 69)

Waverley, through his readings, becomes the epitome of the romantic hero: he longs for the knightly deeds and for the chivalric code of loyalty and honour of the days long past.¹³⁸ In the hopes of reforming his son’s ways, Richard registers Waverley to a regiment of dragoons settled in Scotland. Despite the attention to discipline, the military training does very little to change Waverley’s character or nature. “The truth was, that the vague and unsatisfactory course of reading which he had pursued, working upon a temper naturally retired and

¹³⁷ For more on Scott’s antiquarianism, and books, such as the contents of Sir Everard’s and Bradwardine’s libraries, see Peter Garside’s “The Baron’s Books: Scott’s *Waverley* as a Bibliomaniacal Romance.”

¹³⁸ Waverley’s longings for a more chivalric or “historical” time is also a representation of “history as anxiety about a diminished present” (Ferris, “Melancholy, Memory and History” 79). As *Waverley* is a view into the past, it represents to contemporary readers the paradoxical nature of the Romantic period: they live in a diminished present that cannot compare with the heroism of the past, yet they witness history in the making. See also Andrew Lincoln’s *Walter Scott and Modernity* 48-51 on what he call “a memory crisis” (48).

abstracted, had given him that wavering and unsettled habit of mind, which is most averse to study and riveted attention” (*W* 92). It is with great pleasure that Waverley answers to Bradwardine’s invitation to visit Tully-Veolan.

With his travels to Scotland, Waverley is immersed in a radically different culture than the one he had lived all his life before.

But he [Bradwardine] went on to state so many curious particulars concerning the manners, customs, and habits of this patriarchal race, that Edward’s curiosity became highly interested, and he inquired whether it was possible to make with safety an excursion into the neighbouring Highlands, whose dusky barrier of mountains had already excited his wish to penetrate beyond them. (*W* 143)

Whereas the new scenery enchants him, once he steps outside of the regiment’s familiar space, he finds himself in an unfamiliar environment, with rules, language, and habits different to his. Scotland is a true *terra incognita* for Waverley.¹³⁹ After being told of the merciless system of law and the legal retributions, the narrator states that

It seemed like a dream to Waverley that these deeds of violence should be familiar to men’s minds, and currently talked of, as falling within the common order of things, and happening daily in the immediate vicinity, without his having crossed the seas, and while he was yet in the otherwise well-ordered island of Great Britain. (*W* 142)

Scotland is thus both known and foreign, geographically close but culturally distant from Waverley’s native England. Yet, in Waverley’s eyes, this is exactly what makes it so enchanting: the land and the seemingly barbarian practices are the closest thing to the realization of the romance of yore. Obviously, for the reader, the descriptions are layered: as *Waverley* is set already in the past, Waverley’s experience cannot be replicated as it is already

¹³⁹ Scotland is also a *terra incognita* for the metropolitan reader. On the rise of the panorama and Romantic exoticism, Nigel Leask explains that “the absorptive strangeness of the exotic image or allusion... called for footnoting, which at once guaranteed the authenticity of the allusions, whilst at the same time reassuring the metropolitan reader that it was both culturally legible and translatable” (175–6).

part of the exotic and romantic past. The temporal distance allows Scott to really bring the reader to the landscapes of Scotland as it was sixty years since. Richard J. Hill in *Picturing Scotland through the Waverley Novels* affirms that “As much as Scott wanted to entertain his readership, he also had a pedagogical agenda; his historical novels collapse the Romantic with the antiquarian, and he required any illustration of his fiction to attempt to achieve the same objective” (1). Hill then notes that Scott worked closely with James Skene, a painter. “Skene acted as a kind of research assistant to Scott, recording idiosyncrasies of landscapes and architecture to help Scott render scenes with the greatest possible plausibility” (28).

Furthermore, part of the appeal rests in Scott’s powerful description of the scenery as well of the customs. Detailed and vivid descriptions of exotic locale are primarily associated with the Gothic novel.¹⁴⁰ On the subject, Ina Ferris states that

The extraordinary impact of Scott’s novels lay above all in a vivacity that depended on an unprecedented mobilization of reading’s powers of visualization, powers now taken for granted and often overlooked but not yet fully naturalized or fully exploited at the time of the publication of *Waverley*. (“Before Our Eyes” 61)

What *Waverley* sees with his own eyes, the reader sees it vividly too. *Waverley* acts as a proxy for the reader; he becomes a temporal, cultural, and geographical mediator through which the long gone Scotland can be experienced. Ferris argues that this narrative mode is “underwriting the realist impulse of nineteenth-century novels as a whole” and that therefore “Scott’s historical novel (in contrast to the *bildungsroman*) encodes a novelistic reading practice marked by exteriority and a particular kind of temporal suspension” (Ferris, “Before Our Eyes” 61). However, this interpretation does not take into account that despite the fact that

¹⁴⁰ For more on the relation between Radcliffe and Scott, see Dekker’s *The Fictions of Romantic Tourism* 127-31.

Waverley is a mediator, his interiority is essential to the development of the narrative. The temporal suspension, as Ferris calls it, enables the duality in *Waverley*: treated as purely an historical novel, the novel hinges on the exteriority to translate the past but when it is considered a bildungsroman, the narrative is centered on Waverley's trajectory from an overtly sentimental and inexperienced man to a confident and enlightened version of himself. Presenting the past as Scott does in *Waverley*—that is, as both incredibly close and definitively over—allows for both readings of the narrative: it encompasses both the interiority of a bildungsroman and the exteriority of the historical novel.

To achieve the aforementioned transformation, Waverley depends on mediators and mentors. To guide him through learning the mores of his hosts, Rose Bradwardine at first, and then Flora Mac-Ivor,¹⁴¹ act as translators: they convey relevant information to Waverley, and at the same time to the reader who are probably also unaccustomed to the ways of the Scots. For instance, Rose instructs him how to properly address Fergus Mac-Ivor:

No, that is not his name; and he would consider *master* as a sort of affront, only that you are an Englishman, and know no better. But the Lowlanders call him, like other gentlemen, by the name of his estate, Glennaquoich; and the Highlanders call him Vich Ian Vohr, that is, the son of John the Great; and we upon the braes here call him by both names indifferently. (*W* 140)

Rose's answer emphasizes the fact that Waverley is still considered a stranger to their culture as well as the fact that his mastery or fluency of the Scottish manners is not expected of him. With this, she demonstrates the understanding of Scotland's relationship to England on Rose's part: it is necessary for those either from the Lowlands or the Highlands to "translate," to

¹⁴¹ For a comparison of the two women and their political involvement, see Cathrine Frank's "Wandering Narratives and Wavering Conclusions: Irreconciliation in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer* and Walter Scott's *Waverley*."

accommodate and to engage the English on the latter's terms while keeping their own singularity for themselves.

Scott's rhetorical aim being to persuade readers on both sides of the border of the 'sisterly' relationship of their respective countries, the novels typically involve both readers and characters in a process of familiarization and dis-estrangement, the reconciliation typically being ratified fictionally by a cross-border marriage. (Dekker 130)

Waverley's process of familiarization depends on Rose and Flora to guide him in all sphere of the Scottish culture in order to avoid the obligatory faux pas that comes with the cultural immersion. Whenever Waverley needs further information, for instance about Davie Gellatley's story,¹⁴² he turns to them. Furthermore, the presence of Rose and Flora balances the rough and often violent environment as if they domesticate it. "By rendering these virtuous and sociable Highlanders familiar and admirable to the supposedly refined sensibilities of a Lowland and English reading public, national tales advocated a second kind of domestication: Highlanders' integration into a commercial British nation-state" (Shields 922). The feminine company they provide highlight the more noble values embodied by Bradwardine and Mac-Ivor: loyalty, and first and foremost, family as a tight unit.

Rose and Flora also act as cultural spreader through the songs and poems they recite at banquets or in private.¹⁴³ While this is an occasion for Scott to incorporate lyrical poetry in his novel, the women take on the role of the bard to the young Englishman, linking the past with

¹⁴² Lincoln argues that Gellatley is one of those "figures whose eccentricity or grotesqueness is a means of managing the response to dispossession or displacement, figure through whom the deficiency of the triumphant narrative of the modern nation can be registered and contained...They illustrate the narrative desire for reconciliation with a brutal past, the desire to remember and forget, out of which all national narratives must be constructed" (63).

¹⁴³ See Susan Manning's "Antiquarianism, the Scottish Science of Man, and the Emergence of Modern Disciplinarity" for more the movement that leads to antiquarianism and its relation to modes of literary production.

the present when they teach the Scottish lore to Waverley. As Rose tells of a fight that she witnessed when a child

Waverley could not help starting at a story which bore so much resemblance to one of his own day-dreams. Here was a girl scarce seventeen, the gentlest of her sex, both in temper and appearance, who had witnessed with her own eyes such a scene as he had used to conjure up in his imagination, as only occurring in ancient times, and spoke of it coolly, as one very likely to recur. (*W* 141)

Yet, Rose's and Flora's utilization of bardic traditions does very little to shed or dispel Waverley's romantic notions. In fact, they enable his sentimentality by feeding him tales of heroic feats as quite the norm in the North. Because of them, he sees the new territory as a magical land and not for what it is really. As long as Waverley engages with his new environment as only an observer, he fails to look at the political system behind the clans that unites the chieftains with the peasants and see that this very mode of living is under threat by the Union and the reform to modernize the lands. As such, his English consciousness limits the depth of his immersion. It is as if Waverley wants to become part of the brotherhood as advertised by Bradwardine and Mac-Ivor without relinquishing his own very English identity.¹⁴⁴

Through the exposure to the culture via Rose and Flora, and to the political system via Bradwardine and Mac-Ivor, Waverley can make his own mind and choose for himself the path that he wants to pursue. In other words, he no longer considers himself bound to blindly follow his commission's orders. While his education at Waverley-Honour failed to prepare him to face the real world and actually made him an introvert and sentimental man, Rose, Flora, Bradwardine, and Mac-Ivor provide him with a sensible but practical education. They

¹⁴⁴ See James Watt's "Scott, the Scottish Enlightenment, and Romantic Orientalism" for more on the association made by Sir Walter Scott between the Highlander and Afghan and Persian cultures, setting the Highlanders as intrinsically foreign from the English culture and society.

reveal to him the ramifications of the political system and the interdependencies between the classes to secure a stable community. While he learns about the customs and the local jargon, Waverley is able to separate the truth from the fantasy, cracking the romantic veneer of the scenery to truly experience the new territory. While Waverley cannot dismiss entirely his romantic stride, he can however discipline his passions and moderate his temper.

While the narratives analyzed here suggest the necessity of education, good mentors, and values grounded in principles of sincerity in order to face the looming disorganization and corruption of society, they also question the efficiency of these methods. The formal education, for instance received by Emma and Marcus, does not prepare them for their role as leader in their community: Emma lacks the tact to keep the social fabric intact and nurtures the best elements of the community. Contrary to Marcus, Ormond did not receive a formal education and has the chance to change the course of his life and to escape the patterns of violence, drunkenness, and deceit set by King Corny and Sir Ulick. In the same spirit, Waverley is not fully prepared to live in Scotland without romanticizing it and othering it at the same time. Besides, through the formal education she receives at Mansfield Park, Fanny internalizes the slavery and amelioration discourses, while Cecilia and Emmeline are made powerless in social situation; the first by the rules of etiquette acquired in London and the second by the patriarchal rule of her guardian, Lord Montreville. Moreover, because formal education focuses on the utilitarian principles, it proves to be useless to instill moral values. “The fact is, that men expect from education, what education cannot give. A sagacious parent or tutor may strengthen the body and sharpen the instruments by which the child is to gather knowledge; but the honey must be the reward of the individual's own industry” (Wollstonecraft, *Rights of Woman* 189). The education received by the protagonist fails to

both nurture the virtuous nature of the child and to correct the erroneous prejudices the child might have.

If the *bildungsheld* is able to learn from their mistakes, it is greatly because of good mentors. The best mentors as portrayed in the six novels are the ones who inspire the protagonists to reform and improve their life. Although sometimes from a distance, Lady Annaly, Mrs. Delvile, and Mrs. Stafford guide respectively Ormond, Cecilia, and Emmeline, and they serve as a model of virtue as well as a reminder that such virtue and understanding are achievable through self-discipline and education. Edmund, Mr. Knightley, and Fergus advise as well as criticize Fanny, Emma, and Waverley, guiding them throughout their journey towards independence. Yet, the narratives prove with *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Waverley* that even the most considerate person can fail as a mentor, encouraging vice and creating chaos instead of order. Sir Thomas neglects the moral education of his daughter and misjudges Fanny's character. As such, much harm can come from bad mentors: Cecilia's growth as an individual is stifled by her guardians while Dora and her husband attempt to corrupt Ormond while in France. In other words, the novels points out the much needed balance needed in life: the balance between self-expression and self-control as pointed out in *Ormond*, *Emmeline*, and *Mansfield Park* and the balance between individuality and society as portrayed in *Waverley*, *Emma* and *Cecilia*. This balance cannot however be merely taught by mentors; as Wollstonecraft argues "it is almost as absurd to attempt to make a youth wise by the experience of another, as to expect the body to grow strong by the exercise which is only talked of, or seen" (*Rights of Woman* 189). The protagonist of a Bildungsroman must therefore complete their education through the experience of independence and, in some form, of alienation.

Chapter 3: A Quest for Self-Determination

I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

In the structure of the Bildungsroman, the education of the *bildungsheld* is followed by the experience of autonomy. The protagonist, now equipped with knowledge, parts with society in pursuit of total affirmation. Mentors, who used to make a large part of the protagonists' world often find their influence diminished. The protagonists put the education they received to the test of reality and experience the results: this allows them to grow, but it generally also leads them to isolation and alienation. While it is a crucial step in the character's development, many critics only view this step as a means to an end. For them, it is the necessary link between the education or apprenticeship and the complete and fulfilling maturity of the story's resolution. While the second step is sandwiched in between the beginning and the end, it does not serve as a justification for them: instead, it is a trajectory built on the first step which is crucial to the novel's resolution. This stage affects the manners in which the character can ultimately return to the community. For Wilhelm Meister, he must experience freedom and isolation in order to become the successful citizen that he is at the end. Moretti alludes to the significance of this step, stating that while "beginning and end are, certainly decisive moments of any narration... the fascination... seems instead to lie 'in the middle' (28). Yet, despite his fascination for this part of the narrative, his attention is mostly centered on the conflicts and resolution of the tension between traditions and modernity, the crux of the Bildungsroman according to him. This leaves no actual place for the experience

and the narrative built around the desire for autonomy: the beginning and the end are only reviewed and analyzed.

This is the same process that leads many critics to argue that the female Bildungsroman is about “growing down.”

At each phase [of the female Bildungsroman], however, the orderly pattern of development is disrupted by social norms dictating powerlessness for women: young girls grow down rather than up, the socially festive denouements appropriate to courtship and marriage fiction are often subverted by madness and death, Eros and celibacy alike are punished with tragic denouements, and when a rebirth journey is attempted, the reward of personal power makes the conquering hero a cultural deviant. (A. Pratt 168)

For instance, when analyzing the progress of Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, we should come to the conclusion that since she appears more controlled and more aware of the social repercussions of her and her sisters' behaviour, Elizabeth is necessarily growing down to satisfy society—and by extent, Darcy's expectations—while Lydia is punished for acting out. This was refuted in Ellis's *Appearing to Diminish* as she asserts that “growing up” and “growing down” are akin the glass half full and half empty (18). Yet, her analysis is still very focused on the denouement as the measure of the protagonist's development. By locating tensions between the *bildungsheld* and society this part can reveal both the protagonist's evolution as a being as well as society's safeguards.

3.1 A Question of Control

Some of the tensions between self and society are about autonomy and control. The turbulences in the social world lead certain characters to fetch a life that is not predetermined for them. The aspiration for upward mobility questions the status quo and can weaken the social fabric. The protagonist in the Bildungsroman therefore stands alone against society. The

very essence of community and society is thus endangered by the protagonist's quest to self-discovery. The Bildungsroman's protagonists, by exerting autonomy, also exert control over their destiny and by extent, impact their social relations. *Waverley*, *Emma*, and *Ormond* explore the topic of control as a form of autonomy in two different manners. Too much control and rigidity can head one character to the brink of alienation, as the world around changes and adapts; with too little control a character can lose himself in the maelstrom of life. On the one hand, Emma appears to apply too much control over the community of Highbury, dictating her own fancy to the people around her. On the other hand, Edgeworth's and Scott's narratives highlight the merits of control, especially self-control, as the only way to avoid falling prey to corruption and dissolution of character. Consequently, for *Waverley*, *Ormond*, and *Emma*, the success of the quest for autonomy and self-discovery will therefore only happen if they can achieve a balance between absolute control over their environment and a complete laissez-faire attitude.

At first glance, the inclusion of *Waverley* in the Bildungsroman category might appear as a peculiar choice: because of Scott's use of temporal suspension, there are layers of mediation between the protagonist and the readers. Therefore, the feeling of the Bildungsroman—described by Bakhtin as the protagonist in the process of becoming in a world also in transformation—seems non-existent: *Waverley* does not appear to be in the process of becoming as the outcome of the rebellion of 1745 are known and set in stone: as such, his destiny or fate is also definitive. Furthermore, the world is not in the midst of transformation: the narrator often breaks the flow of the narrative to point out the discrepancies between the contemporary times and those of sixty years since. Thus, any action undertaken by *Waverley* lacks the immediacy that is generally associated with the

Bildungsroman. However, Scott's novel captures a moment in time where the world and society was in transformation: in Scottish society, there is a before-the-rebellion-of-1745 and an after-the-rebellion. The temporal separation is similar to other beacons like the French Revolution. In *Walter Scott and Modernity*, Andrew Lincoln draws parallels between the rebellion and the French Revolution:

As a response to the contemporary turmoils of Europe, the implicit message of *Waverley* is relatively simple: Britain, more advanced in the cultivation of liberty than the rest of Europe, has already (more than 'sixty years since') passed through this violent phase of history. The European conflicts between absolutist *anciens régimes* and peoples no longer bound by feudal loyalties are foreshadowed in the '45 rebellion. (50)

The conflict is also illustrated between Sir Everard and Richard: Sir Everard pledges his allegiance to a deposed king, while his brother breaks ties with his family and his Church in order to advance in Parliament. Waverley, due to his upbringing, is already caught between the old system of feudal loyalty and the new order of parliamentary politics.¹⁴⁵

It is not surprising that after the lax education he received, Waverley lacks self-discipline and focus or that he blindly follows directions without taking any initiative. His behaviour appears to be a perfect example of laissez-faire attitude: from the moment that his father secures a commission to the regiments of dragoons at Dundee to the end of the novel, he seems to follow orders and obey the intimations of his friends. For instance, when asked to remain a fortnight more at Glennaquoich by Fergus Mac-Ivor, "the charms of melody and beauty were too strongly impressed in Edward's breast to permit his declining an invitation so pleasing" (*W* 186). The passive construction of the sentence highlights Waverley's own

¹⁴⁵ The novel as a whole does not favour either political systems: "Thus figural description and authoritative narration together give cogency to the *Waverley* Novels' critique of both court government and fanatical opposition to it" (G. Kelly 206).

passivity: it is not that he expresses the desire to extend his stay or that he is convinced by Mac-Ivor to stay; it is that he is not given the chance to say no and that he is not allowed to turn down the offer. On passivity, Alexander Welsh states that “the hero of the Waverley Novels is seldom a leader of men. He is always a potential leader, because of his rank as a gentleman” (35). Welsh then adds that the hero’s “nearly complete passivity is a function of his morality—the public and accepted morality of rational self-restraint” (36). Although his nonparticipation or reluctance when it comes to following Bradwardine’s steps to inebriety is laudable and can be seen as self-restraint, he still partakes in the ritual of the Blessed Bear in order not to insult his host.

While his inaction can be interpreted as a good trait compared to the revolutionary spirit embodied by Mac-Ivor, Waverley’s passivity is not simply the desire for the status quo: it is as much the nonchalance of the outsider as it is of the middle class. As a visitor to the Lowlands and Highlands, Waverley does not and cannot exert any control over his environment. He must learn the ways of the land before he can make his own enlightened decisions. Therefore, after covering in extensive details Waverley’s education and re-education in Scotland, the novel describes Waverley’s intimate thoughts. With this, we can follow the process behind his decision-making. As his stay in Scotland deepens and exposes him to many stories and accounts of the life as it really is, Waverley begins to act on his own accord and not from the political pressure of his father or his uncle. Nevertheless, every action and decision that Waverley makes has a very political consequence. For instance, when Waverley stays at Tully-Veolan, he receives a letter from his camp at Dundee:

But the letter of his commanding-officer contained a friendly recommendation to him, not to spend his time exclusively with persons, who, estimable as they might be in a general sense, could not be supposed well affected to a

government, which they declined to acknowledge by taking the oath of allegiance. (*W* 135)

Despite the fact that Bradwardine has not outwardly tried to influence Waverley on a political front, his allegiance makes him an enemy of the Crown. Waverley, being in a Crown's regiment, is in a predicament: he cannot at the same time be loyal to the King and associate himself with rebels. By choosing to remain in Bradwardine's company, Waverley's character is judged by all parties. The political situation in Scotland being so tense, he can no longer hide behind the status quo, as he did growing up between Brerewood Lodge and Waverley-Honour, and he is forced to pick a side: everyone—from Waverley's commanding-officer in the dragoons to Fergus Mac-Ivor—construes Waverley's actions as political acts.

That being said, Waverley is not as passive or innocent as it appears. Circumstances, such as being discharged from the regiment or his father's demotion at Parliament might be sufficient conditions to justify his all-open rebellion against the established order but Waverley, long before he was pushed into this political corner, decides to support Mac-Ivor's endeavours. Waverley actively chooses to stay at Tully-Veolan, to visit Glennaquoich, to go to the "hunting party." These are all decisions and choices he makes in an attempt to experience by himself Scotland's "true nature."¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, he does contemplate the effects of accepting to follow Fergus Mac-Ivor: "Reason asked, was it worth while to disturb a government so long settled and established, and to plunge a kingdom into all the miseries of civil war, for the purpose of replacing upon the throne the descendants of a monarch by whom it had been willfully forfeited?" (*W* 219). While at the moment, he is ambivalent on the

¹⁴⁶ The novel participates and undermines at the same time the notion of Scotland as the exotic Other. On the one hand, Waverley's experiences and quest for authenticity supports the idea of the Other, while the duplicitous nature of some events and characters reinforces instead that Scotland is not purer or more magical than England: it is just as corrupt and fallible as England can be.

subject, pressure from both sides forces him to decide and take a stand. Waverley is instrumentalized by both sides during the rebellion of 1745. Fergus Mac-Ivor and Bradwardine invite him under false pretense to the assembly of chieftains, knowing that his presence has political repercussions. It is for the same reasons that Waverley is framed for exaggerated offences: Fergus warns Waverley not to go to Edinburgh for fear he will be arrested saying “first, you are an Englishman; secondly, a gentleman; thirdly, a prelatist abjured; and, fourthly, they have not had an opportunity to exercise their talents on such a subject this long while” (*W* 220). While Fergus pleads with him to “take the plaid” as a means to protect him from the Scottish government, Waverley decides to leave Glennaquoich to clear his name.

By spending time first at Bradwardine’s and then at Mac-Ivor’s place, Waverley makes the choice of following the rebels. Because the subject of the novel is the 1745 rebellion, and therefore features an array of acts of treason,¹⁴⁷ it would be highly reprehensible if Waverley would eagerly partake in the insurrection. As such, he cannot be entirely guilty of treason. To paint him as a willing rebel would defeat the purpose of Scott’s novelistic endeavour: it would bring to the forefront the fears of another rebellion in the north. Therefore, Waverley can only be guilty by association even if he actively partakes in the rebellion. On the subject of treason, Lincoln affirms that

The plot contrivances... are typically used to preserve the heroes’s moral integrity—to relieve them of responsibility at difficult times, to move them into and out of danger without requiring them to compromise themselves too much, to prevent them from accomplishing intended acts of violence of which we could not approve, to allow them to be disinterested winners rather than calculating ones. (17)

¹⁴⁷ On the subject of treason and the rise of nationalism, Murray Pittock in *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* states that “The central paradox of Scott, his ‘would-be treason’, is transparent, not through the over-reading of twenty-first criticism, but in the very moment of his first reception, when Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Norwegians, and Catalans saw in him the invocation of a national opportunity and a national language” (190).

Waverley's innocence must be preserved in order for the rebellion to be contained in the past. Otherwise, the spectre of another rebellion—either in Scotland or Ireland—is too close for comfort for contemporary readers. As pointed out by Lincoln, the manners in which the plot unravels must depict Waverley as being thrown in the midst of the rebellion without his active consent. This way, he can claim that he is a victim of the circumstances and therefore, he does not upset the status quo. After learning from Rose that he is officially suspected of treason, he leaves Glennaquoich against the advice of Fergus and is arrested shortly afterwards.

The astonishment which Waverley expressed at this communication was imputed by Major Melville to conscious guilt, while Mr Morton was rather disposed to construe it into the surprise of innocence unjustly suspected. There was something true in both conjectures; for although Edward's mind acquitted him of the crime with which he was charged, yet a hasty review of his own conduct convinced him he might have great difficulty in establishing his innocence to the satisfaction of others. (*W* 241)

Because he is thrown in situations that are debatable from his point of view, the reader can side with Waverley while being able to question both sides of the insurrection: especially since some of the charges against him, such as “spreading mutiny and rebellion among the men [Waverley] commanded” (*W* 241) are known to the reader to be fabrications.

If Waverley remains by Bradwardine's and Mac-Ivor's side it is because they feed into his need for romantic notions like loyalty and brotherhood. This is exactly why Waverley finally follows Fergus in his rebellion. He could have chosen to remain at Dundee with his regiment, but he makes the choice to visit and see the country for what it is really and not from the insulation of his regiment. Therefore, he deliberately chooses to pursue the Romantic ideals of the chivalric code of honour instead of following his father's footsteps with

Parliamentary stratagems.¹⁴⁸ He opts for the old order based on loyalty and brotherhood, which were relics of the past when he grew up in England but which he finds still alive in Scotland. His choices are not “non-choices” because he is manipulated into reacting in a certain way: had he been really passive, he would have stayed at Dundee and would have followed his commanding-officer’s orders.¹⁴⁹ Instead, Fergus Mac-Ivor and Bradwardine teach him how to rely on himself and how to lead others. Being arrested for crimes he did not commit allows Waverley to ponder on his conduct and on the mistakes he made along the way: “Had I yielded to the first generous impulse of indignation, when I learned that my honour was practiced upon, how different had been my present situation! I had then been free and in arms, fighting, like my forefathers, for love, for loyalty, and for fame” (*W* 253). His incarceration solidifies his views and following his escape from the convoy to Stirling Castle, he joins the rebellion and assists Charles Edward Stewart in his march towards the throne. The journey to Lancashire becomes the turning point for Waverley: there, among the Highlanders falling on the battlefield Waverley becomes alienated and separated from his friends. By taking his own destiny in his hands, Waverley can find a way to return to his community.

Emma, because she has precedence in Highbury,¹⁵⁰ considers herself in control of her destiny. The monotony of the small country village and her father who demands her constant attention dull her senses. He is described as “a nervous man, easily depressed; fond of every body that he was used to, and hating to part with them; hating change of every kind.

¹⁴⁸ Even though it appears that Waverley is choosing his uncle’s path instead of his father’s path, he seems unaware that his uncle is no Sir Nigel either. Sir Everard lives with Aunt Rachel as shut-ins and thus, he does not perform the duty that is demanded by his station. He is not the benevolent and involved squire of yore.

¹⁴⁹ Even though he does not have the temperament to stay in the army as he can be quite impulsive and stubborn.

¹⁵⁰ Austen’s novels, according to Nancy Armstrong, “deal with a closed community of polite country people who tend to be undistinguished by either great fortune or title. In such a community, social relations appear to be virtually the same thing as domestic relations” (135).

Matrimony, as the origin of change, was always disagreeable” to him (*E* 7). This habit of controlling the exterior world to protect her father affects Emma as she herself becomes averse to most forms of change. For her, Highbury does not need the hustle and bustle of London which she has never experienced since she never left Highbury in order to take care of her father. When shopping for ribbons at Ford’s, she goes “to the door for amusement.—Much could not be hoped from the traffic of even the busiest part of Highbury” (*E* 183). When the scenery turns out to be less than what she expected, Emma knows that “she had no reason to complain, and was amused enough; quite enough still to stand at the door” (*E* 183). In a sense, she is reassured by the tranquillity and consistency of Highbury: she has her whole life planned and knows exactly how it will turn out for her. For instance, on the subject of marriage, she tells Harriet that she is reluctant to let go of some of her prerogatives. “I am not only, not going to be married, at present, but have very little intention of ever marrying at all” (*E* 68). To Harriet’s disbelief, she adds “I must see somebody very superior to any one I have seen yet, to be tempted... and I do not wish to see any such person. I would rather not be tempted. *I cannot really change for the better*. If I were to marry, I must expect to repent it” (*E* 68, my emphasis). According to Emma, to marry would mean to relinquish some of her autonomy and consequence to her husband.¹⁵¹ Moreover, it would upset the arrangements she has with her father. Matrimony, as it stands, cannot be an option for Emma: it is not that she does not want to leave her father’s house but that she does want to *be tempted*. This stance becomes a coping mechanism as—as far as she knows it—it can never happen. There is an underlying fear in her speech to Harriet about the prospective changes were she to get married.

¹⁵¹ Mary Poovey, with “The True English Style” and Wendy Moffat with “Identifying with *Emma*: Some Problems for the Feminist Reader” challenge the perception of Emma as an autonomous character when it comes to her rationale against marriage.

Her reluctance to adopt change recalls Burke's *Reflections*: in order to be happy with the "revolution" in her community, she must be able to decide whether it is a blessing or not. In the case of Miss Taylor's marriage to Mr. Weston, Emma has decided that it is a blessing for Miss Taylor: "The event had every promise of happiness for her friend" (E 6). Yet, the language used to describe Emma's feelings expresses the contrary: the narrator describes her "grief" and "mournful thoughts" (E 5) at the thought of losing her friend. The fact that she boasts to be the reason behind Miss Taylor's marriage to Mr. Weston emphasizes that she needs to be in control when facing change. "I made the match, you know, four years ago; and to have it take place, and be proved in the right, when so many people said Mr. Weston would never marry again, may comfort me for any thing" (E 10). When Emma claims that she is responsible for the match, it means that the separation she must endure from her governess was indeed wanted and planned. Therefore, it is not so much a change which she must suffer, but instead, an event that, in this case, she put in motion four years ago.

In order to fill the void created by Miss Taylor's departure, Emma reproduces the relation she had with Miss Taylor by befriending Harriet Smith. When Emma chooses Harriet as her companion, it is with the intention to improve her and to "introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manners. It would be an interesting, and certainly a very kind undertaking" (E 19–20). The language used here is similar to Sir Thomas in *Mansfield Park* because it stems from the same ideal tale of the grateful slave and the heroic master. Harriet becomes a docile pet to Emma, responding and emulating the mistress of Highbury. As stated in the previous chapter, only Mr. Knightley tries to warn her of the inadequacy of the friendship and of the dangers of elevating Harriet into a station where she does not belong. Mr. Knightley quarrels with Emma on the subject when he tells her that

Harriet “desired nothing better herself. Till you chose to turn her into a friend, her mind had no distaste for her own set, nor any ambition beyond it... She had no sense of superiority then. If she has it now, you have given it” (*E* 50). As Emma plots to match Harriet with Mr. Elton, she remains oblivious to Mr. Knightley’s claims: Harriet can and *should* be elevated enough to become Mr. Elton’s wife.

Furthermore, Emma shapes and dominates her friend as she dictates Harriet’s love interests through skillful manipulation. She details the outcomes if Harriet were to marry Robert Martin, grossly exaggerating to instill fear in her young friend: “*You* banished to Abbey-Mill Farm!—*You* confined to the society of the illiterate and vulgar all your life! I wonder how the young man could have the assurance to ask it. He must have a pretty good opinion of himself” (*E* 43). Harriet is thus easily convinced of the inappropriateness of the match and puts an end to the relation with Robert Martin and his family altogether. As long as Harriet emulates Emma in reactions and keeps her opinions consistent with Emma’s, the latter is more than happy to continue the friendship. However, Harriet becomes a threat when she begins to act as an autonomous being: she becomes a rival when she admits to be in love with Mr. Knightley instead of Frank Churchill, whom Emma believes is the object of Harriet’s admiration. Not only does this revelation drive Emma to consider her own feelings towards Mr. Knightley, but it also exposes the dangers of her friendship with Harriet, who is not on the same social scale as her, when Emma realizes she lost control over her “creation.”¹⁵²

Despite her best efforts to restrain and control change in her environment—either by being the driving force behind change or by manipulating people—Emma cannot stop

¹⁵² Interestingly, McKee does associate Emma’s relationship with Harriet to Frankenstein’s relation with the creature in her chapter “Productions of Knowledge: *Emma* and *Frankenstein*.” Harriet then becomes an unruly and dangerous as the creature becomes to Victor Frankenstein.

Highbury from evolving: the community, despite being isolated from the hustle and bustle of London, is affected by the race to upward social mobility.¹⁵³ For instance, the Coles, “of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel” (*E* 162), are breaking into the upper strata of Highbury when they invite the “regular and best families” (*E* 163) of Highbury for a party; Perry the apothecary is considering buying a carriage to improve his mobility and at the same time, his revenues (*E* 270–71). These instances of upwards social mobility do irritate Emma, but as she is the only one refusing to adapt, she is compelled to accept the changing times. She does accept the Coles’ invitation as Mr. Knightley and the Westons had already accepted and besides, the Coles show deference to Emma and her father: “The Coles expressed themselves so properly—there was so much real attention in the manner of it—so much consideration for her father” (*E* 164). The only insult to Emma’s social class and rank in Highbury comes from Mr. Elton: he proposes to her in the carriage they share, as they leave Randalls on Christmas. “She thought nothing of his attachment, and was insulted by his hopes” (*E* 107). Mr. Elton’s proposal is offensive on many levels: the first is that Emma believes him to be courting Harriet, the second is that he believes himself to be on the same social plane as she is.

Although the passage is again narrated as free indirect discourse, and we are therefore being allowed access to her innermost thoughts, it is clear that what irks Emma the most is that, in aspiring to the hand of a Miss Woodhouse, Mr. Elton has unaccountably allowed all considerations of hierarchy to be suspended. (Downie 74)

Moreover, Emma is forced to recognize for the first time that she has misread Mr. Elton’s character. She is convinced that

She need not trouble herself to pity him. He only wanted to aggrandize and enrich himself; and if Miss Woodhouse of Hartfield, the heiress of thirty

¹⁵³ For more on the increased rigidity of social classes during the years 1815-1820 and *Emma*, see Mark Parker’s “The End of Emma: Drawing the Boundaries of Class in Austen,” 346-47.

thousand pounds, were not quite so easily obtained as he had fancied, he would soon try for Miss Somebody else with twenty, or with ten. (*E* 107)

His conduct toward her was never more than a cluster of fine words, and riddles¹⁵⁴ without any sentiment. His views are purely mercenary and Emma realizes that the Mr. Elton she thought she knew is a fiction.

Furthermore, the village welcomes three newcomers who directly impact Emma: Jane Fairfax, Frank Churchill and Mrs. Elton. In *Public and Private: Gender, Class, and the British Novel (1764-1878)*, Patricia McKee describes the doubling or mirroring effect created by the new members of Highbury: “But the various exchanges of roles in the novel also resemble the experience of the ‘mirroring body’ of consumer behavior. It is as if Emma is ‘trying on’ different parts, different identities, as she confuses herself with others and about others” (62). Emma then develops a complicated relationship with Mr. Elton’s wife, whom he met in Bath.

She had a quarter of an hour of the lady’s conversation to herself.... and the quarter of an hour quite convinced her that Mrs. Elton was a vain woman, extremely well satisfied with herself, and thinking much of her own importance; that she meant to shine and be very superior, but with manners which had been formed in a bad school, pert and familiar; that all her notions were drawn from one set of people, and one style of living; that if not foolish she was ignorant, and that her society would certainly do Mr. Elton no good. (*E* 212)

While she mocks and criticizes Mrs. Elton, we need to remember that she is a foil to Emma. Emma’s character sketch of Mrs. Elton is not without recalling Emma’s own description: Emma is vain and loves to shine; her manners, especially towards those of a lower order, are not those of a true lady and despite her cleverness and education, she is quite ignorant of the real world. Moreover, Mrs. Elton’s attitude towards Jane Fairfax is not without recalling

¹⁵⁴ For more on the trope of puzzles and riddles and literacy, see Joseph Litvak’s “Reading Characters: Self, Society, and Text in *Emma*.”

Emma's relationship with Harriet. Mrs. Elton tries to control Jane's mobility by constantly providing potential employers to her, praising their wealth or their situations without realizing that these are not entirely suitable for Jane or even desired by her. On the subject, Jane tells Mrs. Elton "but to all that, I am very indifferent; it would be no object to me to be with the rich; my mortifications, I think, would only be the greater; I should suffer more from comparison. A gentleman's family is all that I should condition for" (*E* 236).¹⁵⁵ In the end, both Jane and Harriet resist and find emancipation from their "master" through marriage.

The main difference between Emma and Mrs. Elton resides in the former's ability to reflect on her conduit.

Like all of Austen's characters, she [Mrs. Elton] is dependent on others for her sense of self...She finds in others' lacks or needs proof of her own superiority. Emma, on the other hand, learns to see in others' needs a reflection of her own needs and then to locate her superiority in discrimination among reflected identities. Emma includes where Mrs. Elton excludes. (McKee 64)

Prior to her epiphany, she remains quite similar to Mrs. Elton.¹⁵⁶ After the dinner at the Coles, she realizes that she can no longer adopt a firm stance on social immobility and on excluding others from her worldview though she is reluctant to let go of her control. While the "incident" with the Coles is soon forgiven and forgotten, Emma does not embrace right away her new appreciation for social diversity. She is still a fierce advocate for proper social barriers between members of the village of Highbury. This is further emphasized by her attitude towards Miss Bates at the Box Hill expedition. As everyone in the expedition grow

¹⁵⁵ Mrs. Elton's insistence to match Jane Fairfax with upper-class families is mirrored to Emma's attempts at matching Harriet with Mr. Elton or Frank. The main difference here is that Jane Fairfax has better sense than Harriet because she recognizes the limits to her social mobility.

¹⁵⁶ Moreover, "The principle of difference between the two women and their rules is not finally reducible to class. What makes Mrs. Elton intolerable is not that she is new money and Emma is old, and that Mrs. Elton thus only pretends to prerogatives of status Emma comes by honestly. Mrs. Elton's exertion of leadership set our teeth on edge because of their insistent publicity, not because of their intrinsic fraudulence" (Johnson 129).

displeased—either of Emma’s or Franck Churchill’s behaviours—Emma finds herself alone as the party crumbles.

Contrary to Emma, Ormond does not need to learn to *laissez-faire*, as his education, or absence thereof, already puts emphasis on spontaneity. Moreover, he lacks the discipline to self-control and to rationalize events. After all, he appears in the first chapter of *Ormond* as a man who shot Moriarty because he was pushed by his friend Marcus. Throughout his *Bildung*, Ormond must control his impulse that so often derails his path to self-discovery. One of the reasons that Ormond’s quest to self-discovery is so difficult to attain is his hybridity: he is an Irishman but his father is an Englishman who left for India.¹⁵⁷ His mentors, King Corny and Sir Ulick—as highlighted in the previous chapter—stand opposite in terms of religion and morals. To these conflicting figures, Edgeworth adds Lady Annaly, a mother-like figure for Ormond, who represents an ideal to achieve.¹⁵⁸ In the introduction to *Ormond*, Connolly draws comparison between Edgeworth’s novel and Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley*.

There are important similarities between Edgeworth’s and Scott’s novel, particularly the use of a middling kind of hero whose behaviour might go in several different directions: back to reclaim native traditions, forwards towards the commercially oriented and politically cynical future, or in the case of Edward Waverley and Harry Ormond, moving along both trajectories in order to incorporate elements of the past into an enlightened future. (xiv)

¹⁵⁷ Ormond’s dual identity is a central trope in Edgeworth’s works. “So effective was she in making these oppositional elements [the ballast of English national character and the volatility of the Irish] appear ultimately harmonious with one another that her fiction produces the illusion of having performed an analysis of the Irish situation when its real achievement was to have produced an analgesic version of the question of English-Irish relations” (Deane, *Strange Country* 30).

¹⁵⁸ Here, I do not consider Sir Herbert Annaly’s as a potent mentor. As pointed out by Cosgrove, Sir Herbert Annaly’s model is doomed to fail as he cannot compete with Sir Ulick’s corruption and bribery (66).

With so many paths available to him,¹⁵⁹ it is no wonder that he feels lost, without clear ties or attachment. Compared to Emma, Fanny, Emmeline, and Cecilia, Ormond's possible trajectories are broader: his trajectories are not limited to marriage and he is at liberty to act as he wants and sees fit when in the public sphere.

Following his banishment from Castle Hermitage, Ormond goes to the only place he knows: the Black Islands. There, he can reminisce about his carefree childhood but even this enchantment is of a short duration: he must live with the guilt of injuring Moriarty. In a surprising manner, this event draws the two men closer and they become friends: Moriarty becomes a companion loyal only to King Corny and to "Prince" Harry. While it is remarkable that Moriarty never bears a grudge against Ormond, the relation is fraught with a complicated master-servant correlation.

It might be expected, therefore, that the native Irish, when they appear in the novels, would do so in the guise of the downtrodden victims of the Anglo-Irish gentry, or as the possessors of basically fine characters, capable of responding positively to justice, encouragement and the benevolent paternalism of an improving landlord like Richard Lovell Edgeworth himself. However, in spite of the presence in the novels of a multitude of such characters, from Moriarty Carroll in *Ormond* to the O'Neils in *The Absentee*, it is precisely in Maria Edgeworth's portrayal of the native Irish that problems of accuracy and attitude arise. (Clune 21)

Despite the fact that Ormond is "genteel" by association only—with his ties to Sir Ulick or Cornelius O'Shane—he acts as he is socially superior to Moriarty. Ormond acts towards him with paternalism. For instance, once Moriarty recovers from his wounds, Harry manages to find him employment on the Black Islands: he becomes King Corny's "wood-ranger and his

¹⁵⁹ The fact that Ormond wanders so much throughout the novel is central to his education as each setting and each set of people encountered are formative for his *Bildung*. "Character and action evolve as a function of surroundings, and each of Ormond's places has a distinct logic and a social economy of its own" (Trumpener 62).

game-keeper—the one a lucrative place, the other a sinecure” (*O* 42). It is a nice gesture towards him, yet, it keeps Moriarty as a subservient figure who owes everything he has to Ormond. In contrast, when Moriarty distrusts White Connal, almost by instinct, the narrator states that “It is astonishing how quickly and how justly the lower class of people of Ireland discover and appreciate the characters of their superiors, especially of the class just above them in rank” (*O* 82).¹⁶⁰

As such, Ormond is also singled out by the narratorial voice. Much like Emma’s consciousness filters Austen’s novels, the narrator, although distinct from Ormond, forays at time into Ormond’s consciousness at times to justify or excuse Ormond’s action. Furthermore, the narrator’s voice, by constantly calling Ormond “the hero,”¹⁶¹ links *Ormond* with a tradition of picaresque novels and other romances. One of them is *Tom Jones* which Ormond finds a copy in Castle Corny. “He believed the story to be true, for it was constructed with unparalleled ingenuity, and developed with consummate art. The character which particularly interested him was that of the hero, the more peculiarly, because he saw, or fancied that he saw. A resemblance to his own” (*O* 62). Edgeworth aligns her narrative with the pervasive effects of literature:¹⁶² Ormond, despite his code to protect him from ever slipping into bad patterns, is inspired by Fielding’s novel and he wants to become an “Irish Tom Jones” (*O* 62). Because he shares traits with Tom Jones, Ormond believes that it is the kind of life that he wants to live: to follow his unruly passions wherever they might take him. All his efforts to

¹⁶⁰ For more on Edgeworth’s use of paternalism in her fiction and essays, as well as Richard Lovell Edgeworth’s own paternalistic relation with his Irish tenants, see Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace’s *Their Fathers’ Daughters: Hannah More, Maria Edgeworth, and Patriarchal Complicity*.

¹⁶¹ Or when the narrator mentions a potential biographer who would record Ormond’s life, foreshadowing his importance, which is yet to be defined, in history.

¹⁶² *Ormond* is not the only instance where Edgeworth uses fiction as a tool of moral corruption. See Jill Campbell’s “Women Writers and the Woman’s Novel: The Trope of Maternal Transmission” for more on Edgeworth’s thoughts on the novel.

improve himself through self-control are wasted as he is determined to not act like the gentleman he was inspired to be by Lady Annaly. Furthermore, King Corny distrusts the influence Lady Annaly has on his protégé. He suggests Ormond should toss his code of conduct into the fire and never think about his faults, demonstrating a laissez-faire attitude. When Ormond tells him that he is relieved that, since injuring Moriarty, he never was in such a passionate state, Corny replies: “But, then, a reasonable passion’s allowable: I wouldn’t give a farthing for a man that couldn’t be in a passion on a proper occasion. I’m passionate myself, reasonably passionate, and I like myself the better for it” (*O* 58). To Corny, it is better to keep or maintain an average passion than to burst out in a short but explosive passion. “Harry Ormond, don’t set about to cure yourself of your natural passions” (*O* 58) is King Corny’s only advice on the subject to Ormond. Despite the lasting impression Lady and Miss Annaly have on Ormond, he chooses to follow the examples of Corny and Tom Jones.

The first target of his new mindset is Peggy Sheridan, the woman Moriarty is in love with. Ormond is struck by her beauty and he completely ignores everything else. Despite the fact that Ormond “could not think of her as a wife” (*O* 63), he continues to flirt with her. This is one among the many relapses he suffers throughout the novel, as he finds himself stretched in too many different directions, with too many mentors to follow. On that particular event, the narrator owes this relapse to many causes:

Whether Tom Jones was still too much, and lady Annaly too little, in his head—whether it was that king Corny’s example and precepts were not always edifying—whether this young man had been prepared by previous errors of example and education—or whether he fell into mischief because he had nothing else to do in these Black Islands; certain it is, that from the operation of some or all of these causes conjointly he deteriorated sadly. (*O* 66)

It is his friendship with Moriarty that stops him from committing a grave error in judgement. At the sight of Peggy's rose in Ormond's hand, Moriarty almost collapses to the ground. "Sooner stab me in the heart *again*" he cries (*O* 65). This is the second time that Ormond lets his passion wound Moriarty. Fortunately, Ormond understands the crux of the matter and amends for his behaviour: "from this instant," he tells Moriarty, "I'll think of her no more—never more will I see her, hear of her, till she be your wife" (*O* 65). As the narrator mentions, it is "a fortunate escape!—yes; but when the escape is owing to good fortune, not to prudence—to good feeling, not to principle—there is no security for the future" (*O* 66). Ormond is able to make up to Moriarty as he oversees the arrangements between Peggy's family and Moriarty.¹⁶³

While Cosgrove argues that "The task of avoiding adultery is not an inner difficulty but one imposed by the conventions of the society and does not arise for the protagonist until nearly the end of the novel; by then, all circumstances conspire to tempt Harry" (71), the narrative is constantly testing Ormond's self-control when it comes to women. For instance, his principles are tried twice with his childhood friend, Dora. She is promised to White Connal, a rich grazier despite the fact that neither King Corny nor Dora approve of the match. Although Ormond tries to consider Dora as a married woman, the latter still flirts with him. When he resolves to remain careful in her presence, Dora feels the pangs of jealousy and she becomes "quite decided in her partiality for Harry Ormond" (*O* 103). While Ormond resists Dora's charms while they are in Ireland, she remains partial to him, even though her marriage

¹⁶³ It is noteworthy that after the incident involving Peggy, *Tom Jones* is replaced by *Sir Charles Grandison* in Ormond's reading list. Despite the fact that the latter is first conceived by Ormond to be too dissimilar to himself, he turns out to be the epitome of the gentleman that Ormond wishes to emulate.

to Black Connal¹⁶⁴ removes her from Ireland, and from Ormond's company. Contrary to the incident involving Moriarty, Peggy, and Ormond, it is debatable how much chance has to do with him doing what is right than from his good principles.

Before touring Ireland, Ormond briefly goes back to the Black Islands. There, he can recollect in tranquility about his past conduct. "Of some scenes he had to be ashamed, but of others he was justly proud" (*O* 181). However, Dr. Cambray warns him that following Ormond's duel to vindicate Sir Ulick's reputation that reports on his past behaviour have reached Lady and Miss Annaly. While the report is entirely made of misconstrued facts and near slanderous items, they are not too far from the truth: "The report was, that he had lately seduced a girl of the name of Peggy Sheridan, a respectable gardener's daughter, who was going to be married to a man of the name of Moriarty Carroll, a man whom Mr Ormond had formerly shot in some unfortunate drunken quarrel" (*O* 187). Fortuitously, neither Lady Annaly nor Miss Annaly give much credence to these reports and they are more than happy to invite Ormond to Annaly.¹⁶⁵ During his stay, Ormond, enamoured of Miss Annaly, witnesses what he believes to be her acceptance of Colonel Albermale's proposal, despite the fact that she appears to be in love with Ormond. "His naturally violent passion of anger, now that it broke again from the control of his reason, seemed the more ungovernable from the sense of past and the dread of future restraint" (*O* 234). In this state of mind that Ormond leaves Ireland

¹⁶⁴ Twin brother of the deceased White Connal. When White Connal dies before marrying Dora, his father insists she must marry White Connal's twin brother, at the time called Black Connal. The latter had previously moved to Paris and is known as M. de Connal, as he fully embraced his new identity as a Frenchman.

¹⁶⁵ In *Maria Edgeworth: Enlightenment, Gender and Nation*, Cliona Ó Gallchoir argues that Edgeworth resented Thomas Day's interference in her literary career, and that is maybe why "we can see a strategic defence of the very things he abhorred. In contrast to Day's ideal of Rousseauvian retreat from the world characterised by a fantasy of gender relations in which men act as the sole educators of and ultimate authority figures with respect to women, Edgeworth envisages the recuperation of this Rousseauvian retirement in order to make it a space that men and women can inhabit equally" (24). Although almost diametrically opposed, King Corny and Lady Annaly remains Ormond's most prominent figures of authority, as Sir Ulick's deception leaves a bitter impression on Ormond.

to visit Dora and M. de Connal. Ormond's main weakness is exploited throughout the novel whether it is with Peggy Sheridan, or in a carriage with lady Milicent.¹⁶⁶ For instance, when Ormond visits Dora in France, it is a locket with a strand of King Corny's hair that prevents Ormond from becoming Dora's lover. Only then can he remember that Florence and Lady Annaly are waiting for him in Ireland.

Cosgrove questions the dual nature of Lady Annaly as she is represented in the text as someone who, at the same time, warns Ormond against patterns or social conventions, and is an example of "pattern of perfection" (*O* 168): "Does the rigidity of convention affect even timeless patterns? Are resolution and independence stifled by even virtuous regulations? It seems that Edgeworth perceives the incomensurability [sic] of individual becoming and social norms, even good ones" (73). Edgeworth does compare and contrast various societies and norms, and while there are no definite norms to abide to, she draws the consequences of many ill-devised ones, such as the way Dora lives in Paris¹⁶⁷ with M. de Connal with the gambling and libertine social mores or with King Corny's drunkenness. Amidst all these norms—self-control, inebriation, libertinism, bookishness, etc.—Ormond must first make a choice as to what he wants to be in life in order to take control and beat the pattern of predetermination that everyone during his childhood prepared him for. The notion of choice comes back when Moriarty and Sheelah discuss the prospects of Ormond marrying Miss Annaly. On one hand,

¹⁶⁶ Once a favourite of Lady Annaly and Dr. Cambray, she did not end her acquaintance with a man who pursued her when her husband was away. As Dr. Cambray divulges the information to Ormond, he mentions that "the death of her husband saved her from farther danger, and opened her eyes to the views of a man, who thought her no longer worthy his pursuit, when he might have her for life" (*O* 180).

¹⁶⁷ On his stay in Ireland, Clíona Ó Gallchoir suggests that "Leaving Ireland... appears to be associated with disappointment and loss. It quickly becomes apparent, however, that this experience represents the final and perhaps the most important stage in Ormond's education as an Irish gentleman" (146). For more on the subject of France as formative place in Ormond's *Bildung*, see Clíona Ó Gallchoir, 132-54.

Sheelah is convinced that soul mates are determined at birth, while Moriarty, ponders on whether it is dependent on choices: he explains that

with regard to Master Harry and Peggy Sheridan: it's my opinion, 'twas laid out from the first, that in the case he did not do that wrong about Peggy—then see, Heaven had this lady, this angel, from that time forward in view for him, by way of compensation for not doing the wrong he might have chose to do. (*O* 220)

Part of Ormond's problem to realize his potential is that he follows everyone's advice. From Sir Ulick to Dr. Cambray, everyone wishes to utilize Ormond in a way or another. Despite the fact that at the beginning of the novel he is poor, Ormond is treated at times like Cecilia and at times like Fanny: for Sir Ulick he is a hindrance that must be removed, until proven otherwise, and for Lady Annaly as a promising future. Very rarely is he portrayed as having any form of control or mastery over his own destiny.

3.2 Breaking Free from the Public and Private Sphere

Following the limited and quite inadequate education received by Fanny, Cecilia, and Emmeline, their interactions in the social world emphasize the difference between men and women when it comes to define autonomy. Austen, Burney, and Smith recognize the gendered danger inherent to the participation in a pleasure society, which is that one must be “out” and social. While not in and of itself a problem for men living in the Romantic era, this means being in a dangerous place for not-yet-married women.¹⁶⁸ Their participation in the public sphere is mandatory and subjugated to public scrutiny. Their own “marketability” is based on that veneer of reputation. An indiscretion, an unfortunate turn of event and the young woman's respectability is gone. To participate in a social and public enjoyment alone—such as

¹⁶⁸ For more on women and the dangerous public space, see Catherine H. Decker's “Women and Public Space in the Novel of the 1790s.”

Vauxhall gardens, Drury Lane theatre, assembly dance, and others—is to subject oneself to the public stigma of being a public woman—a prostitute—or treated as such. This is not the case with men: Tom Bertram is never socially devalued even when he compromises the Parsonage through his gambling and his drinking. The narrative therefore acts as a cautionary tale for young women, detailing the possible pitfalls of entering unprepared the public space. “The first line of prevention is a narrative one—cautionary tales provide both the content and the form of preventionist thinking” (Wright 380). Yet, the line between private and public is often crossed, as the private theater performance in *Mansfield Park* becomes more public as the project grows in proportions. While they are impossible to avoid entirely, these activities must be dealt with tact and care. Refusing altogether to participate in such activities is not a solution as no one can live as a recluse, without any contact with the exterior world: Emmeline will always be pursued by Delamere as long as he breathes. On top of that, it also can backfire as the heroine becomes just as socially exposed, something Cecilia learns at the Harrel’s masquerade: she is the only one not wearing a mask. Therefore, the novels reminds readers of the risks of being perceived as too “loose” and thus, the novel becomes a part of the formative process of attaining autonomy and illustrate how (not) to negotiate the change from the private to the public sphere. It is then worth analyzing the process and the consequences of living in the public sphere for Cecilia, Emmeline, and Fanny.

Cecilia’s education as a Dean’s niece prepared her for some countryside social activities but it did not prepare her for the social life in London. Her resistance to partake in the frenzy seems to posit the public sphere against the private one; yet they are not exclusives and Cecilia cannot simply avoid the public sphere in her daily life. In “Pains and Pleasures of the Automaton: France’s Burney’s Mechanics of Coming Out,” Julie Park explains that

“While depicting her heroines’ experiences in pleasure gardens, masked balls, holiday resorts, and theatres, Burney lays bare the interface between their private sense of self-consciousness in these settings and the uncompromisingly public nature of social life” (23). In fact, the public and the private often overlap as a private event—like the masquerade¹⁶⁹—becomes a public one because of the large party invited by the Harrels. For Cecilia, because she is a young and beautiful heiress, this situation is potentially threatening as she is targeted because of her gender and fortune by mercenary suitors. When she is predatorily pursued by her admirers in a public or semi-public setting, she often has nowhere to go and nobody to protect her without causing more of a scene: everyone tries to read the situation and interpret her sentiments or affections. For instance, Cecilia’s reaction to the confrontation between Sir Robert Floyer and Belfield at the opera sparks speculation on her attachment to either man. To the crowd, her pleas *must* mean that one of them is her suitor, or even lover. Cecilia is thus subjected to the public opinion whether she cares about it or not. She must follow the prescribed etiquette and rules of good behavior inherent to the public sphere, while being denied the protection or possibility of retreat that the private sphere would normally grant her. No other female figure is thus pursued and attacked in the novel: for them, the public space is as safe as the private sphere, and they are able to enjoy the public life without any consequences other than remaining single at the end of the novel.

The masquerade held at the Harrels is beyond a doubt the most telling scene of the novel which demonstrates Cecilia’s precarious social situation.¹⁷⁰ Since she limits her social interactions, she hesitates to participate in the masquerade. As she does not plan on being an

¹⁶⁹ See Terry Castle’s “The Carnivalization of Eighteenth-Century English Narrative” for more on the importance and significance of the masquerade in Eighteenth-Century novels.

¹⁷⁰ For more on the commodification of the female body in ballroom etiquette, see Deidre Shauna Lynch’s *The Economy of Character: Novels, Market Culture, and the Business of Inner Meaning*.

active participant of the masquerade, she decides to not wear a costume. Furthermore, she is told by Mrs. Harrel that it is not compulsory. Despite the fact that she clearly is an outsider, Cecilia is able to participate as a spectator. However, “Cecilia wished she had herself made one of the number, as she was far more conspicuous in being almost the only female in a common dress, than any masquerade habit could have made her” (C 106). Even though she is singled out by her lack of mask, she still enjoys the masquerade, especially as it is a novelty for her. However, after describing Cecilia’s amusement, the tone of the narrator changes from frivolity to predatory: “Cecilia has, as yet, *escaped* any address beyond the customary enquiry of *Do you know me?* and a few passing compliments; but when the rooms filled, and the general crowd gave general courage, she was *attacked* in a manner more pointed and singular” (C 107, my emphasis). Mr. Monckton—who wishes to have Cecilia and her fortune all to himself—is dressed in a black devil costume and he stands menacingly between her and the rest of the assembly. She

felt no great delight in his guardianship, and after a short time, arose, with the intention to walk to another place; but the black gentleman, adroitly moving round her, held out his wand to obstruct her passage, and therefore preferring captivity to resistance, she was again obliged to seat herself. (C 107)

Even though this is a festive night in her guardians’ home, Cecilia has very little choice as to how to get rid of the black devil: she either suffers him or she can actively exert strength to break free from him. In reality, it is a non-choice: because she is not masked, Cecilia cannot act in a manner contrary to the etiquette and her reputation. To resist would be against everything that she has learnt, and thus, she must remain passive. The threat to women’s integrity is a recurrent theme in Burney’s novels. In *The Iron Pen: Frances Burney and the Politics of Women’s Writing*, Julia Epstein asserts that “These moments serve as frameworks

for her analyses of the varieties of female fear and of the forced loss of control that constantly lurk beneath society's polite forms and coerce women into self-suppression" (86). What Cecilia considered an amusement is now a threat to her and as such, the private space—Mr. and Mrs. Harrel's house—opens up and is transformed into a public space in the course of the evening.¹⁷¹

The irony of the situation is that in order to protect Cecilia's interests, her uncle the Dean had appointed three guardians to look after her: Mr. Harrel, Mr. Briggs, and Mr. Delvile. The first was chosen to supply a decent house where she could stay, the second to handle her finances in conjunction with the third, who also supplies a touch of nobility. However, these three guardians are ineffective: Mr. Harrel coerces Cecilia into taking a loan with a Jew to cover his own debt when his attempts to trick her into marrying Sir Robert Floyer fail; Mr. Briggs is a miser who refuses Cecilia any kind of comfort or luxury; finally, Mr. Delvile is too often preoccupied by his own reputation to even support Cecilia in the most mundane aspect of her life. Instead of protecting her interests, her guardians place her in more than one dire situation,¹⁷² in which she has to rely either on herself, with varying degrees of success or she must, like at the masquerade, transfer her agency to anyone who will protect her. At the masquerade, none of her appointed guardians can really and effectively help her escape Mr. Monckton's attacks. Mr. Harrel is the host of the event and the instigator of the masquerade, and as such is too occupied to enjoy the party than to regulate it; Mr. Briggs appears to the masquerade as a chimney sweeper and his appearance scares Cecilia and repulses the guests.

¹⁷¹ For more on the relevance and significance of the domestic space in Burney's novels, see Karen Lipsedge's *Domestic Space in Eighteenth-Century British Novels*.

¹⁷² More or less, it involves Cecilia requesting aid (financial, shelter, etc.) which is denied by her guardians that lead her to desperate measures and social imbroglios. Sometimes, the matter is more outrageous, as when Mr. Harrel commits suicide in a public space, leaving Cecilia to explain the reasons to Mrs. Harrel and care for their safety from the curious mob.

As to Mr. Delvile, he refuses to be associated with the company and does not attend the masquerade. Therefore, she has no official guardian to rescue her from her unfortunate social posture and must transfer her agency to a perfect stranger, hoping that he is trustworthy. This stranger appears to be Mr. Delvile's son, Mortimer Delvile,¹⁷³ who attends the masquerade, and acts as her de facto saviour, foreshadowing the end of the novel. While he does save her at the masquerade, it is however under a disguise. He does so without honestly and openly revealing his identity and filiation. His preference for secrecy and deceit is repeated throughout the novel.

Moreover, the public is conflated with the private as the costumes worn by the principal masqueraders are representative of their true nature.¹⁷⁴ Despite Mortimer's assumption that the costumes are the result of a fancy rather than being well thought out, the characters reveal what Park calls their "private sense of self-consciousness" (23). What is used to mask their identity reveals it instead for everyone to see. Mr. Monckton appears as the black devil tormenting Cecilia and is exposed throughout the novel to be deceitful and scheming to secure Cecilia's fortune for himself; Mr. Belfield is dressed as a Don Quixote and the novel portrays him in numerous occasions tilting at windmills; Mr. Gosport, the man educating Cecilia on the London social life, is dressed as a school-master; Sir Robert Floyer is disguised as a Turk and he embodies the stereotype of the Sultan with his seraglio as he considers marrying Cecilia as payment for Mr. Harrel's debt. If these characters, instead of hiding their sense of self-consciousness, reveal their true nature through their costume, then it can be

¹⁷³ Also called young Delvile in the novel.

¹⁷⁴ Even though the reader can easily recognize who hides behind each costume, Cecilia has difficulties knowing the true identity of the people she talks to. For instance, she believes the devil to be Sir Robert Floyer and the domino to be Mr. Belfield.

argued that Cecilia, too, reveals her true self with her lack of costume.¹⁷⁵ Like Mr. Arnott who is also not masked, Cecilia is a transparent character: her social self is the same as her true and private self. When compared to Miss Larolles, whose social identity as a VOLUBLE is a construct, Cecilia's honesty seems to be the model to emulate.¹⁷⁶ However, Miss Larolles has the opportunity to hide behind her social identity—she dresses as Minerva, goddess of wisdom, at the masquerade—and is able to truly enjoy the evening without being subjugated to the same threats and pursuits as Cecilia is. In the novel, the pleasure of the social life is within reach for men, married women like Mrs. Harrel and young women like Miss Larolles with enough money to participate in the public sphere but who, unlike Cecilia, have not enough to tempt men into marriage.

The masquerade represents Cecilia's desire to escape unnoticed the crowd. She feels that she has been trapped in her social world. "She lives in a claustrophobic world: clothes, balls, conversations, social occasions, and the continuous apprehension [sic] of misconstruction of her actions, plus the rigid monitoring of those men she loves, constitute her prison" (Palomo 446). For Cecilia, the only escape from the social scrutiny is through matrimony. Her process towards autonomy isolates her as she contradicts and upsets the mores of her social environment with her honesty and strict sets of morals. While she is shortly relieved from her torments at the masquerade, the narrative expands on a larger scale the sensations of scrutiny, isolation, and powerlessness. It develops with emphasis her struggles to adapt to a society

¹⁷⁵ Mortimer's domino costume is problematic: in itself, the domino was a simple and common costume. The fact that he attended the masquerade with a costume would normally point to a desire to hide his true self; yet, his costume reveals nothing of his personality. It can be argued that he wears the costume only to abide to social etiquette, much like he will keep his last name instead of taking Cecilia's to keep the name Delville alive.

¹⁷⁶ Miranda J. Burgess in "Courting Ruin: The Economic Romances of Frances Burney" states that in a way, Cecilia wears a mask as she dons the appearance of virtue and writes "The subversive effects Burney feared from this doctrine [the appearance of virtue] appear in *Cecilia* [1782] as a series of escalating disasters that follow the mad moralist Albany's coercion of the heroine into charities she cannot afford" ("Courting Ruin" 135).

which is entirely different than what she expected, and was trained for. Because Cecilia lives in London among spenders and gamblers, her fortune only attracts those who want to utilize it—from Mr. Harrel to Albany¹⁷⁷—even though her financial situation would normally elevate her and place her in an enviable social position as Emma is. Moreover, as Cecilia is still a minor, she has no control over her own money and expenses. The men who are in a position to guide her financially despise her exactly because of her fortune. Mr. Delvile, himself in a precarious financial situation in regards to the refecton and maintenance of Delvile Castle, looks down on Cecilia *because* she has money but without the ancestry or the noble family name. This is why she cannot marry Mortimer:¹⁷⁸ it is because of Mr. Delvile's pride and prejudice¹⁷⁹ that he refuses to shelter Cecilia towards the end of the novel.¹⁸⁰ Succumbing to alarm, exhaustion, and despair over the idea of a duel between Mortimer and Belfield, she falls prey to a delirious fever in the middle of a street, all alone. Despite her money, her guardians, and her good reputation, her quest for independence culminates in her being treated as a delirious and intoxicated public woman, secluded from all her friends and acquaintances.

¹⁷⁷ Even when exerting her to do good, Albany is not interested in Cecilia herself, but always in what she can do with her money. His presence highlights and emphasizes the problems of wealth redistribution and inequalities in London. Compared to *Emma* where Miss Bates' poverty can be alleviated through goods like a basket of apples from Donwell Abbey's orchard, poverty and dependence in *Cecilia* seems to be solved only through input of money.

¹⁷⁸ In "Burney's Conservatism: Masculine Value and 'the Ingenious Cecilia,'" Helen Thompson asserts that Mortimer's value is directly related to the fact that he is the only one *who must* refuse Cecilia's money in order to maintain his aristocratic and masculine value. "For by opposing him to the pretences of every other man in London, Burney sets in motion the paradox that defines her effort to isolate an intransitive form of masculine virtue: rather than divesting Cecilia's love of the taint of money, Cecilia's fortune serves to measure the value of the one man in the novel whose worth her money would lessen" (101).

¹⁷⁹ In a letter to Mrs. Thrale, Burney writes about a conversation she had with Lord De Ferrars on the righteousness of Delvile's choice of his family name over the money. She learns that he himself would do the same: "So here is a Delvilian ancestry with great exactness. I always told my dear daddy that his reasoning against the Delvile prejudice, however unanswerable for truth, by no means disproved the existence of such prejudice, as all those very highborn and long genealogists agree" (*Diary and Letters of Madame D'Arblay* 297).

¹⁸⁰ Mr. Delvile still resents her as he considers the marriage between his son and Cecilia as unfortunate.

Departing from the London scene, *Mansfield Park* is remarkably less flamboyant than *Cecilia*. Both heroines share a similar moral compass, yet Fanny is rarely as socially exposed as Cecilia is. Fanny's situation allows for a different discourse on social life than Austen's other novels. At Mansfield Park, Fanny lives like a recluse with little to stir her from her dull existence. "For dullness is the essence of the book," writes Richard Jenkyns in *A Fine Brush on Ivory: An Appreciation of Jane Austen*. "It is a study of dullness" (111). Mansfield Park lacks the chaotic energy of Longbourn or Uppercross. And it is for that reason that Jenkyns argues that the Crawfords are able to disrupt the peace at Mansfield Park. This dullness stresses the perils of unregulated pleasures with a clear contrast between Fanny's and Maria Bertram's behaviour and self-control. The threat of pleasure and agency here lies partly more in the young Bertrams' unfamiliarity with excitement than with the latter. Instead of preserving them and their virtue, the lack of social enjoyment makes the young Bertrams vulnerable to temptation as they have not learnt of the possible repercussions, whether it is social or personal, of their acts.

Moreover, even though married women could still participate in the public space with less scrutiny, *Mansfield Park* is a reminder that even them could not act in complete impunity. Maria's engagement and then marriage to Mr Rushworth proves to be both a hindrance and the perfect cover once she meets Henry. "Maria's notions on the subject were more confused and indistinct. She did not want to see or understand. 'There could be no harm in her liking an agreeable man—everybody knew her situation'" (*MP* 72). She knowingly uses her situation as an engaged woman to flirt with Henry, as she is no longer considered "on the market." The situation gives her pleasure on two accounts: the first is the occasion to flirt with Henry; the second is the knowledge that she surpasses her sister Julia when it comes to his attentions.

Maria's constancy is tested twice and both times it indicates that she uses her agency not to confront the situation and call the engagement off, but to avoid it altogether. Maria's crossing the ha-ha with Henry is different to her elopement with him only in consequence: those two acts share the same impulse and desire for the forbidden. The prospect of fleeing past the iron gate is explicitly correlated with her desire to escape her marriage to Mr. Rushworth. In both instances, she is the sole bearer of the consequences. Even though Maria's reputation is not endangered at Sotherthon,¹⁸¹ Fanny's worries about the relationship are translated to Maria's safety and the state of her dress.¹⁸² There is a personal gratification in Maria's justifications to Fanny's concerns: "smiling with all the good-humour of success, she said, 'Thank you, my dear Fanny, but I and my gown are alive and well, and so good-bye'" (*MP* 123). If Maria escapes the destruction of her reputation once in a private setting, she cannot elude the public opinion when she leaves her husband's house. The consequence is that

Maria had destroyed her own character, and he [Sir Thomas] would not by a vain attempt to restore what never could be restored, by affording his sanction to vice, or in seeking to lessen its disgrace, be anywise accessory to introducing such misery in another man's family, as he had known himself. (*MP* 460)

Unregulated, what was an inoffensive flirtatious behavior becomes the evidence of a moral fault and what was known in private is exposed for everyone to comment on.

Even if Fanny is not like Cecilia in the sense that her conduct does not spark as much speculation, she has to navigate between the private and the public sphere; whether she is

¹⁸¹ For more on the relation between place, especially Sotherthon, and morality, see Banfield's "The Moral Landscape of *Mansfield Park*." For a detailed analysis of Sotherthon and Mansfield Park and the difference between New Money and Old Money estates, see Sarah Parry's "Mansfield Park vs. Sotherthon Court: Social Status and the Slave Trade."

¹⁸² For more on the double entendres in *Mansfield Park* and in Austen's novels, see Jillian Heydt-Stevenson's "'Slipping into the Ha-Ha': Bawdy Humour and Body Politics in Jane Austen's Novels."

“out” or not is a subject of conversations between characters.¹⁸³ Even though Fanny remains in the private sphere, it does not protect her against pressure when she refuses to participate in a more public setting, such as Tom’s ill-devised plan of setting a private theatre.

Her entreaty had no effect on Tom... and it was not merely Tom, for the requisition was now backed by Maria and Mr Crawford, and Mr Yates, with an urgency which differed from his, but in being more gentle or more ceremonious, and which altogether was quite overpowering to Fanny. (*MP* 166–7)

Even Edmund, concerned about the material of the play¹⁸⁴ and about the absence of Sir Thomas, takes her side *only* when Mrs Norris appeals to Fanny’s sense of duty to her cousins. Ultimately, Fanny yields to the pressure but she is rescued by Sir Thomas’s unexpected return to Mansfield Park which puts an end to the commotion of the preparation and rehearsals.¹⁸⁵ It must be repeated that in the novel, what is inappropriate is not the private theatrical¹⁸⁶ itself, but the subject of the play: “Lovers’ Vows is especially shocking because it portrays inappropriate female passion” (Lott 275). Moreover, “by acting these parts, Maria and Mary are participating in an ‘erotic’ text which effectively destroys independence of judgement and freedom of choice” (McDonnell 211).

Edmund’s discussion with Maria makes it very clear that another play would be preferable and just as enjoyable: “I must now, my dear Maria, tell *you*, that I think it exceedingly unfit for a private representation, and that I hope you will give it up” (*MP* 160).

¹⁸³ For more on the concept of being “out” and Fanny, see Jacqueline Reid-Walsh’s “‘Pray, is she out, or is she not?’—I am puzzled’: Decoding Fanny’s Position at Mansfield Park.”

¹⁸⁴ For more on the relation between the content of *Lovers’s Vows* with the actual plot of *Mansfield Park*, as well as Austen’s own sympathetic views on a play about social mobility, see Susan C. Greenfield’s “Fanny’s Misreading and the Misreading of Fanny: Women, Literature, and Interiority in *Mansfield Park*.”

¹⁸⁵ For more on the relation between the British Empire, the slave trade, and the manners in which Sir Thomas regains control of Mansfield Park, see Saree Makdisi’s “Austen, Empire and Moral Virtue.”

¹⁸⁶ For more on the relationship between the Enlightenment and theatre spectatorship, especially between women and theatre, see Nora Nachumi’s “Seeing Double: Theatrical Spectatorship in *Mansfield Park*.”

The blurred line between private and public is, as in *Cecilia*, a threat to the reputation of the young ladies.¹⁸⁷ The vision of having Charles Maddox invited at Mansfield Park and be Mary's partner is enough to change Edmund's mind on the project: it is as much an act spurred by jealousy as it is to truly protect her from reciting lines to a man she only dined with once. Fanny's refusal to participate in the home theatricals suggests her disdain for artificiality and her preference for honesty.¹⁸⁸

This resistance is mirrored when she is the object of Henry's attentions, first as a form military conquest, but then as what seems to be a sincere admiration of her qualities. This culminates in the preparation of the ball Sir Thomas organizes for Fanny. Anne K. Mellor and Alex L. Milsom state that Fanny "is distraught... because for the first time in her life she has the opportunity to make a choice, to exert agency, to act" (227) because she has to choose between Henry's and Edmund's chains. She omits the fact that Fanny is first tricked into choosing Henry's chain among Mary's collection, as such it is a non-choice. She does however comment on the fact that Fanny, as a character in a novel which internalized slavery, has to choose between two *chains*—symbol of human bondage—which undermines the very idea of emancipation and agency. Moreover, the choice (or non-choice) she makes becomes a signal at the ball, interpreted as an attachment to Henry by the Crawfords.¹⁸⁹ That signal, as well as Fanny's passive resistance throughout the novel does not prepare the Bertrams for her

¹⁸⁷ In a similar fashion to the masquerade in *Cecilia*, which uses costumes to reveal rather than mask the characters' inner nature, *Lovers' Vows*, according to Claudia Johnson in *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, "is actually among the least deceptive instances of acting in the novel, for every major character is acting all the time [. . .]. Mrs Norris plays the self-sacrificing sister and aunt, Maria and Julia the parts of proper young ladies, and Edmund the highminded priest" (100–1).

¹⁸⁸ For more on the relationship between role-play and Fanny's honesty, see C. Knatchbull Bevan's "Personal Identity in *Mansfield Park*: Forms, Fictions, Role-play, and Reality."

¹⁸⁹ Also, Peter W. Graham, in "Falling for the Crawfords: Character, Contingency, and Narrative," suggests that the Crawfords "would have realized that the prettily worked links of the intended gift could not carry the cross" ("Falling for the Crawfords" 881).

refusal of Henry's hand.¹⁹⁰ Sir Thomas's "first feeling was disappointment; he had hoped better things; he had thought that an hour's intreaty from a young man like Crawford could not have worked so little change on a gentle-tempered girl like Fanny" (*MP* 334). When she stays firm on her rejection of Crawford's proposal, Sir Thomas applies more pressure, making sure that Crawford is received at Mansfield Park every night until his departure for Lessingby. When the separation does not produce regrets or changes in Fanny's behaviour, Sir Thomas sends her with her brother William to Portsmouth. This gesture proves to be a slight form of punishment for rebelling against him and his authority.

For his prime motive in sending her away, had very little to do with the propriety of her seeing her parents again, and nothing at all with any idea of making her happy. He certainly wished her to go willingly, but he as certainly wished her to be heartily sick of home before her visit ended; and that a little abstinence from the elegancies and luxuries of Mansfield Park would bring her mind into a sober state of mind, and incline her to a juster estimate of the value of that home of greater permanence, and equal comfort, of which she the offer. (*MP* 371)

By removing Fanny from Mansfield Park, he hopes that she will prefer the material comfort rather than her sense of moral and duty. Although Fanny finds her parents' accommodations rather small, dark, and noisy, she—with the help of her sister Susan—is able to claim her own space, in which the lack of fire reminds her of her east room at Mansfield Park.¹⁹¹

If Fanny achieves emancipation following the ball, it is because she does not yield to Sir Thomas's pressure and emotional blackmail. He, in this business, demonstrates that he is

¹⁹⁰ In "Austen's Powers: Engaging with Adam Smith in Debates about Wealth and Virtue," Elsie B. Michie argues that "By the nineteenth century the split between the rich and the poor woman had become an accepted means, almost a narrative shorthand, for marking the choice between wealth and virtue" (12). By refusing Henry, Fanny would indeed be choosing virtue instead of wealth.

¹⁹¹ The east room, as well as the space Fanny arranges for Susan and herself is essential for Fanny's *Bildung*: it is there that she can ponder on the ethics and morals that she must obey. "For Austen this [authentic] self was a wholeness to be restored by temporary retreat to a space where the person can 'collect' or 'compose' herself, and to be nourished and sustained in the social privacy of a stable domestic company of true intimate" (Hart 310).

not the benevolent and compassionate slave-owner but rather that he considers Fanny as property to be disposed and displaced at convenience. “*Mansfield Park* is a dramatic enactment of the social and cultural pathology that produces extreme dependency in women—making Fanny’s later moment of rebellion against Sir Thomas all the more remarkable” (McDonnell 198). Although it represents a place of dependency, all her attention is directed to Mansfield and its occupants when news from Tom’s illness and Maria’s indiscretion reaches Portsmouth. Even when she is cast away by Sir Thomas, her loyalty to his family comes before her own: “She felt that she must have been of use to all. Too all she must have saved some trouble of head or hand” (*MP* 431). It is only after fixing the public mess his daughters—and to some extent his sons—that he is able to consider her as a relative. Nevertheless, Mrs Norris and Lady Bertram do not cease to consider Fanny as a dependent figure instead of a relative.¹⁹² While Sir Thomas is away from Mansfield Park, Fanny becomes a steady companion to her aunt Lady Bertram to the point where the latter cannot let her go. When Edmund and Fanny start talking about marriage, Lady Bertram does not want to hear it. “Selfishly dear as she had long been to Lady Bertram, she could not be parted with willingly by *her*. No happiness of son or niece could make her wish the marriage. But it was possible to part with her, because Susan remained to supply her place” (*MP* 467). For Fanny, the only way to emancipate herself from Lady Bertram is to secure someone else for the office of companion to her aunt: her own sister Susan who “became the stationary niece—delighted to be so!” (*MP* 467). Sir Thomas’ grand project of improving one niece is pursued with a second

¹⁹² Contrary to Elaine Bander’s assertion that “Fanny may be the least and the last, but she is not a slave. She is not even an unpaid servant. She is, like Anne Elliot, a neglected daughter of the house” (n4), Fanny does not reach, in Mrs Norris or Lady Bertram’s consciousness, the rank of neglected daughter. From the daily remonstrance from one aunt, to the service required by the other, Fanny is denied the same consideration of long-time employees.

one, who proves to be a better candidate for the office. When it comes to Susan's role within the household at Mansfield Park, Fanny's emancipation does not break the cycle of dependency but instead, perpetuates it.

Emmeline also finds herself dependent on her uncle whom she must oppose in order to emancipate herself. Since Delamere has found Emmeline at Swansea, Lord Montreville hides her in London under the supervision of Mrs. Ashwood, a relative of Mrs. Stafford, where her situation remains unknown. He believes that the change of location and social scene is a sufficient protection. Yet, being with people whom she barely knows leaves her unguarded and she must find protectors all by herself. Her beauty and the mystery surrounding her links to Lord Montreville attract suitors to Mrs. Ashwood's salon, among them Mr. Rochely, a bachelor who is "nearer fifty than forty" (*EOC* 110). Due to the age difference, Emmeline is oblivious that Rochely is interested in marrying her. At Drury-Lane, when Emmeline is importuned by Mr. Elkerton, Mr. Rochely is the only one who can assist her: "Elkerton offered to take her hand; which she drew from him without attempting to conceal her dislike; and accepting the arm of Rochely, followed Mrs. Ashwood" (*EOC* 113). Despite the fact that it only encourages him, Emmeline cannot turn to anyone else, as even Mrs. Ashwood cannot openly dismiss Elkerton in public but can only let her displeasure be known.

With Rochely's interest in Emmeline, Lord Montreville sees a solution to his conundrum: Rochely being rich, Emmeline would no longer be his responsibility and would be out of reach of his son. Yet, when Sir Richard Crofts, Lord Montreville's lawyer, exposes to Emmeline the offer, she refuses saying:

I *will not* marry Mr. Rochely, tho' instead of the fortune you describe, he could offer me the world.—Lord Montreville *may* abandon me, but he *shall not* make me wretched. Tell him...that the daughter of his brother, unhappy as she is, yet

boasts that nobleness of mind which her father possessed, and disclaims the mercenary views of becoming, from pecuniary motives, the wife of a man whom she cannot either love or esteem. (*EOC* 135)

Emmeline can only summon her sole guardian—her deceased father—to protect her from her uncle’s mercantile views. Lord Montreville’s insisting on finding an alternate husband to Emmeline as a way to remedy to his son’s infatuation emphasizes his own impotence on the matter, but also the orphan’s lack of legal protection. “Three times in the novel she is told that the only protection she can have against the overtures of one man she does not want is marriage to another, and each time she rejects the idea that an unmarried woman cannot say ‘no’ to a man without risking her safety and her future” (K. F. Ellis 91). In her dealings with her uncle, she always has to negotiate¹⁹³ to save herself as she is constantly caught between a rock and a hard place: Lord Montreville wants her to cease contact with his son even though it is a Sisyphean task. She promises to cease seeing, talking or writing to Delamere even though she knows that she cannot keep that promise. As much as she desires to be free from his presence, she cannot be liable for his actions or his passions. While she can only promise to not engage with him, Lord Montreville considers her responsible for his son’s behaviour.

On the other hand, Delamere wants her to be sentimentally attached to him despite knowing that his whole family is against the union. This, according to him, is not a problem as he is sure to extort consent from them. Even Emmeline’s own rejection, in which she tells him “that having determined never to accept of his hand, situated as she was at present was, nothing should induce her to break through a determination which alone could secure the approbation of her own heart” (*EOC* 98) cannot convince him of leaving her alone. Neither the

¹⁹³ In “The Obligation of Social Form: Social Practice in Charlotte Smith’s *Emmeline*,” Cynthia Klekar compares the negotiation to an asymmetrical but reciprocal gift exchange (272). “In complex ways, the novel’s form underscores Smith’s recognition of how women can maneuver within but never escape from the sense of obligation to a patriarchal ideology that defines their social, and, to a great extent, their personal identities” (277).

father's nor the son's offers satisfy Emmeline and no one actually listens to what she says and wants. They both try to manipulate her emotions to get what they want from her and when she refuses to abide by their wishes, they threaten her. She nevertheless must bow to them as they hold power over her: Lord Montreville has a financial grasp over Emmeline and she is dependent on him to support her lodging and board; Delamere has a more physical grasp on Emmeline. He stalks her and threatens her physical integrity, a fact emphasized when he kidnaps her and holds her captive. She must always forfeit her agency to satisfy their needs to control her in order to survive. For instance, she accepts to be betrothed to Delamere, and to chain herself to his folly despite her lack of desire to be with him. She is torn between the two of them having given the two men her word.

Emmeline resolutely refused to consent to this breach of his engagement to his father. She had lately seen in her friends, Mrs. Stafford and Lady Adelina, two melancholy instances of the frequent unhappiness of very early marriages; and she had no inclination to hazard her own happiness in hopes of proving an exception. (*EOC* 235)

Emmeline is ultimately able to buy herself some time by negotiating a one-year betrothal to Delamere with the possibility of him cutting the engagement at any given time which allows his family to discourage him for marrying her, as well as mitigating his volatile passions.

The arrangement, which no one is truly enthusiastic about, is the only way for Emmeline to maintain a certain degree of agency while submitting herself to the inadequate men who have control over her. These men are portrayed as fallible and unable to protect women as they are expected by society. Almost all men in *Emmeline* are weak, corrupt, lazy, or passive: Lord Montreville has no control over his son, Delamere and Fitz-Edward have no control over their passions; the latter also enables his friend's passions without flinching, and Sir Richard Crofts manipulates and enables Lord Montreville's hatred of Emmeline to further

his own agenda. Contrary to Delamere, Fitz-Edward, and Lord Montreville, Emmeline is not a passive agent: she ponders on the best course of actions and then she proceeds to execute her plan. When the situation at Mowbray Castle is no longer bearable, she is the one who comes to her uncle with the idea of her removal at Swansea. When Lady Adelina is about to give birth, Emmeline and Mrs. Stafford come up with the plan of going to Bath. Meanwhile, the men spend their time reacting to Emmeline's actions and decisions. Even Sir Richard Crofts is a decisively passive character: he waits until he knows which way the wind is blowing before making his mind. He does so that his schemes are always in his favour. Fortunately, some men are willing to help them and support their decision. For instance, Godolphin takes on his sister's illegitimate child as his own. He protects her honour and consequently provides a better future to the child. His brother, Lord Westhaven, is another exception to the rule as he protects Emmeline and acts on her behalf when she learns she is not an illegitimate daughter. Sir Richard's method, however, fails him when he meets Lord Westhaven who, like Emmeline, takes action instead of reacting to events.¹⁹⁴

Yet, despite this latitude of actions, no woman in *Emmeline* is immune against the systematic violence against women. Lady Adelina, Mrs. Stafford, Emmeline, and Augusta—to a certain extent before her union with Lord Westhaven—must restrict their agency and submit to the patriarchal order in place: Emmeline must defer to Lord Montreville even when he fails to protect her against Delamere's advances; Lady Adelina is at the mercy of her husband and his family; and Mrs. Stafford is helpless when it comes to her family financial situation and must watch her husband squander their estate Woodfield away. Their powerlessness is

¹⁹⁴ See Diane E. Boyd's "Professing Drudge: Charlotte Smith's Negotiation of a Mother-Writer-Author Function" for more on the gendered constraints imposed on Charlotte Smith as a writer.

enforced by society, but it is also self-imposed: even if they would like to take matters in their hands, matters of propriety are always a consideration. Emmeline as a single young woman is held to the same standard than Cecilia is: her conduct while at Mrs. Ashwood is under observation all the time. Even though she has no intention to get married, she cannot desist herself from the marriage market. She must endure the company of her suitors all in the name of sociability and propriety. To avoid the importune company of Delamere and Rochely, Emmeline spends her time in her room. When asked about Emmeline's whereabouts by Lord Montreville, Mrs. Ashwood

remembered that Delamere has been there in the morning, and that Emmeline had dined early alone, and had remained by herself all the rest of the day, under the pretense of sickness, and she began to believe that all this was done to give her time to elope with Delamere. (*EOC* 146)

Emmeline, who meanwhile is in her room, is suspected of acting promiscuously and enabling her suitor. Lord Montreville's fear of seeing his son elope with Emmeline contaminates everyone who now questions her morality.

By limiting her social exposure, she gives motives to suspicions. While the incident at Mrs. Ashwood's is quickly resolved—she obviously never left for Scotland with Delamere—her secretive conduct while at Woodfield once again seems dubious to the people around her, including Sir Richard Crofts' son James. Crofts spies on Emmeline as she converses with Fitz-Edwards about Lady Adelina's situation.¹⁹⁵ Crofts reports of her conduct through an anonymous letter to Delamere slandering Emmeline's reputation:

¹⁹⁵ Lady Adelina's story is a cautionary tale on multiple levels: first, it serves as a warning to choose with carefulness a husband as he becomes the main protector a woman has and then it illustrates what not to do when the marriage does not hold up to the expectations. Her affair with Fitz-Edward is an example of a lack of self-restraint and it is contrasted to Mrs. Stafford's situation, which while being similar, is dealt with differently: Mrs. Stafford uses her skills and knowledge to remediate her family's financial situation.

Miss Mowbray—who, without any gratitude for the high honour you intend her, is certainly too partial to another person. She is now gone from Woodfield to escape observation; and none but Mrs. Stafford is let into the secret of where she is. You will judge what end it is to answer; but certainly none that bodes you good. One would have supposed that the Colonel's [Fitz-Edward] being very often her attendant at Woodfield might have made her stay there agreeable enough; but perhaps... the young lady has some particular reasons for wishing to have private lodgings. (*EOC* 254)

Emmeline's agency therefore comes with a price: her reputation is sullied for the sole reason that she has her friend's safety at heart and that it requires secrecy due to its sensitive nature. It also has the unfortunate effect to place her in a position where she becomes alienated from her own desires: after meeting Godolphin, Emmeline falls in love with him but because she gave her word to Delamere, she learns to repress her sentiments.

Contrary to the other novels I study, *Emmeline* differs in its refusal to follow the Bildungsroman's linear form. While it features episodes of education, independence, and community, these are repeated in each of the volumes of the novel: the narrative is therefore circular in nature, always building on the previous learning experiences, acts of self-assertion, and returns to the community. This is why certain of Emmeline's more direct acts of defiance are more striking earlier on, as for instance her trip to Bath with Lady Adelina, than her latest ones, as for example her reluctance to give her hand a second time to Delamere. "Repetitions or the threat of repetitions, the entropic power of history characterize the plot of *Emmeline*... The repetitive structure, however, suggests that there are a limited number of scenarios permitted in this world for women" (Hoeveler 41). The circularity of the plot then hides Emmeline's true progress as she seems to constantly regress after achieving a form of balance in her life. Yet, the cyclical form is closer to how *Bildung* is achieved in real life: the three acts as described by Aristotle's *Poetics* may be narratively appealing but the linear form is a

construct. Life and *Bildung* in general can hardly be separated as clearly in three succinct parts.

Smith's reliance upon repetition as a structuring element of her fiction has frustrated—and almost certainly bored—some readers... The repetitive quality of her novels can point not only to the way in which she understood her life as a copy, but also to the wide-ranging nature of her social critique. (Sodeman 84)

The fact that *Emmeline* stems from Charlotte Smith's autobiography¹⁹⁶ is clearly a representation of a real and not an imagined *Bildung*: life is a succession of educative moments, of disagreement with society and of returns to friends and family. For instance, Smith does not hesitate to introduce major characters well into the third and fourth volumes instead of using a set number of characters illustrating the vagaries of real life.

Autonomy and self-determination are two important steps toward the development of the self as a full-rounded citizen as demonstrated by the protagonists of the Bildungsroman. Without them, the characters are bound to mindlessly follow orders and they in the end would never question the authority nor the society in which they live. Yet, these steps can heighten the sense of the self to the detriment of society as Moretti considers as the conflict between traditions and modernity. Waverley, with his foray in the Highlands must choose between the old order of the clans or the modern political schemes. Yet, the novels studied prove that the struggles are not limited to this dichotomy: Cecilia must conciliate her desire to help others with her desire to be truly independent—financially and socially—; Emmeline must find a way to be her own protector in a world that denies her agency; Fanny learns to reconcile her

¹⁹⁶ Angela Keane addresses Smith's self-referentiality: "Her tendency to represent herself in her texts was vilified by some contemporary reviewers but is equally celebrated by recent readers of Smith's work. Her fiction and, of course, her poetry catalogues her life of debt and her frustration with the legal bureaucracy which tied up the trust fund bequeathed to her children by her father-in-law... Whilst Smith's success in capitalising on her indebtedness, or 'selling her sorrows' is neatly illustrative of the ways in which women writers manipulated the literary marketplace, the acumen and humour of the authorial performance should not blind us to the extent of the critique of British 'public' life" (94–5).

morals with her desires for self-affirmation; Ormond settles his interior struggle between predetermination and self-determination while Emma hesitates to embrace change and chaos as she prefers to halt any form of change in her village. Their actions disrupt society's order, which in turn reject them. Consequently, the protagonists find themselves completely isolated and alienated from their society.

This isolation is usually temporary: it may be short, though Fanny finds her "exile" in Portsmouth longer than expected, or longer as Ormond's banishment from Castle Hermitage. Otherwise, the isolation can be sudden, as Fanny, Ormond, and Waverley experience, but it can also be gradual: Highbury slowly shuns Emma as she enforces social barriers and her insult to Miss Bates during the excursion to Box Hill. In the case of Emmeline, it is also psychological as she becomes withdrawn from the life that she truly wants to pursue. This period of crisis leads the *bildungsheld* to a better introspection: consequently, the education received by the protagonist is compared and contrasted with the new ideals of self-determination gained by independence. The final step of the Bildungsroman depends entirely on this introspection: failing to adjust one's desires and expectations would lead to a failed return to society.

Chapter 4: A Restoration in the Community

*Now, lady Delacour, to show that she is reformed, comes
forward to address the audience with a moral—a
moral!—yes,*

*Our tale contains a moral, and, no doubt,
You all have wit enough to find it out.
Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda**

After achieving freedom from social constraints and suffering from alienation and isolation as consequences of this quest, the Bildungsroman's protagonist learns to value society as much as independence and his/her return celebrates the completion of the *Bildung*, or, in other words, the process of self-formation: the protagonist is educated and has learnt the value of both socialization and self-determination. The *bildungsheld* therefore learns how to interact in society in order to promote society's goal as well as their own too.

When we remember that the Bildungsroman—the symbolic form that more than any other has portrayed and promoted modern socialization—is also the most contradictory of modern symbolic forms, we realize that in our world socialization itself consists first of all in the interiorization of contradictions. The next step being not to 'solve' the contradiction, but rather to learn to live with it, and even transform it into a tool for survival. (Moretti 10)

The final step serves to prove that a balance between society and self is achieved and that the education received in the first place has been truly assimilated by the protagonist. Traditionally, this ultimate step often comes as a realization in old age, but for some Bildungsromane, this marks the passage of a careless teenager to a mature adult, as Emma experiences. Far from being the end of the journey in these cases, the final step celebrates the

beginning of a new era and new experiences.¹⁹⁷ For some, this step might be short—it is a nice conclusion to a tale of identity formation, as it is in *Mansfield Park* or *Northanger Abbey*—or elaborate, emphasizing the consequences of the protagonist’s need for self-determination on the society as it is portrayed in *Cecilia*. The return to society has to be negotiated because in many instances the social fabric is torn. This step marks the reconciliation of the protagonist with the mentors, restoring at the same time order to the community.

4.1 “A union of the highest promise of felicity”¹⁹⁸

The Bildungsroman—like comedies—often reconciles the protagonist with the community through marriage. As a most joyful celebration, it heralds a brighter future and puts to rest the aftermath of the crisis brought by the *bildungsheld*. In *Emma*, the novel does not end with one wedding celebration, but with three, signaling a major reconciliation between the Woodhouses, the Bates, and the Martins as well as restoring order in Highbury. They put a final stop to the duplicitous lovers and shenanigans involved with matchmaking and interferences: the couples are now harmonized and each lady is matched with the right partner. To end on this note, however, Emma must fulfill her re-education and must become part of Highbury’s society in her own right. Waverley has a similar chance to rebuild the community after the failure of Fergus’ rebellion. His marriage to Rose Bradwardine can unite the English modernity with the Scottish society and repair some of the scars left by the insurrection. Through his ordeals, Waverley has learnt how to assert himself and be an effective leader; his *Bildung* is completed once he returns to an authentic Scotland and not the idealized and romanticized version he once held.

¹⁹⁷ “A *Bildung* is truly such only if, at a certain point, it can be seen as *concluded*: only if youth passes into maturity, and comes there to a stop there. And with it, time stops—narrative time at least” (Moretti 26).

¹⁹⁸ (*E* 368).

Marriages also evoke a darker meaning for female protagonists as the specter of dependency to a male figure—usually a father—is sustained and is transferred to a husband. It is questionable if any emancipation is possible for women during the Romantic period or if they are condemned to be—using Wollstonecraft’s words—“convenient slaves” (*Rights of Woman* 67). In some of Austen’s novels—and especially in *Pride and Prejudice*—the protagonist enters marriage on a relatively equal footing: Jane and Elizabeth, though poorer than Bingley and Darcy, are not portrayed as submitting or subservient figures but as equal partners.

All these weddings [in *Northanger Abbey*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*] seem to transmit dark signals beneath their comic reassurances. I think it will help us perceive them in their fullness if we recall the two faces of the Romantic epithalamium, the visionary bond and the unhuman bondage, the hope for liberty through transfiguration and the final reduction of aspiration to demonic cannibalism. (Auerbach 9)

In *Mansfield Park* however, there is no comic reassurances to obfuscate what Auerbach calls “dark signals:” the marriage between Edmund and Fanny cannot entirely wipe out Maria’s affair with Henry Crawford and Julia’s elopement from anyone’s memory at Mansfield. In this case, order is restored *with a difference*: the main agitators, namely Maria, Mary, Henry, and Mrs Norris, are either banished from Mansfield Park or are never heard of again.¹⁹⁹

Before Emma can claim the completion of her *Bildung*, she must first recognize the errors in her not-so-distant-past conduct. Emma’s journey to maturity ends as she makes efforts to mend her mistakes with Miss Bates and Jane Fairfax after the Box Hill incident. She comes to the realization that she does not control Highbury and will never do as her attempt to

¹⁹⁹ It can be argued that besides Mrs Norris, none of them really believe in the marriage as an institution or as a social contract.

take charge of her entourage by herself fails miserably. For the first time, she tries to imagine others' thoughts but resists the need to impose her own view:

How it might be considered by the rest of the party, she could not tell. They, in their different homes, and their different ways, might be looking back on it with pleasure; but in her view it was a morning more completely misspent... and more to be abhorred in recollection, than any she had ever passed. (*E* 296)

While she remains focused on her own sensations and feelings concerning the morning, she has the discernment that others might have diverse experiences of the same event and those experiences may lead to different feelings than hers. Instead of presupposing what those feelings are, she rather admits her own ignorance on the subject. “What then is it that Emma learns?” asks Richard Jenkyns. “What ‘sin’ is rebuked? I think that what she discovers is essentially the autonomy of other people. She has believed that she knows what people are and how their lives should proceed” (166–167). She no longer considers herself as omniscient²⁰⁰ as she believed herself to be when she professed that she made the match between Mr. Weston and Miss Taylor when they “met with him in Broadway-lane” and “when, because it began to mizzle, he darted away with such gallantry, and borrowed two umbrellas” (*E* 11).²⁰¹ She slowly bridges the gap between her and the Highbury community, slowly realizing that her friends and neighbours are not to be ordered around like chess pieces but instead that she exists alongside them.

Emma's attempts at reconciliation, however, are not received as she expected: Miss Bates initially receives her coldly, and Jane Fairfax does not hide her desire to avoid Emma's company. After calling on the Bateses, “there was a bustle on her approach; a good deal of

²⁰⁰ For more on *Emma*, consciousness, and the relation between mind and body, see Antonina Harbus' “Reading Embodied Consciousness in *Emma*.”

²⁰¹ Mr. Knightley is prompt to remind her that, since four years passed between that event and the marriage, she hardly made the match herself (*E* 11).

moving and talking. She heard Miss Bates's voice, something was to be done in a hurry... the aunt and the niece seemed both escaping into the adjoining room" (*E* 297). Emma, contrary to how she would have behaved prior to the incident, understands Jane's feelings and motivations, and respects them so far as she ponders on "the less just and less gentle sensations of the past" and is "obliged to admit that Jane might very naturally resolve on seeing Mrs. Cole or any steady friend, when she might not bear to see herself" (*E* 298). Even through the use of free indirect speech,²⁰² Austen indicates fundamental changes in Emma, using *might* and *seemed* in the previous passages, emphasizing her new uncertainties at reading others' mind or motives.²⁰³

This lesson is further stressed as Emma learns afterward—like in a domino effect—that Frank is engaged to Jane and that Harriet has not fallen in love with Frank as Emma previously believed but instead with Mr. Knightley after he rescued her at the ball at the Crown. All her efforts to mix and match people appropriately—that is, according to her fancy—miss the mark because she was unable to read her world in addition to—essentially—herself. Her epiphany arises as she reveals to Harriet Jane's engagement to Frank Churchill: certain that her friend is in love with Frank, she fears her reaction to the news. To her surprise, Harriet receives it coolly and instead divulges to Emma the true object of her admiration and feelings: Mr. Knightley.

'Harriet!' cried Emma, collecting herself resolutely—'Let us understand each other now, without the possibility of farther mistake. Are you speaking of—Mr. Knightley?'

²⁰² See Daniel P. Gunn's "Free Indirect Discourse and Narrative Authority in *Emma*" for a detailed analysis of Austen's use of free indirect discourse and figural subjectivity.

²⁰³ For a more detailed analysis of this scene, see Edgar F. Shannon, Jr.'s "*Emma*: Character and Construction."

‘To be sure I am. I never could have an idea of anybody else—and so I thought you knew. When we talked about him, it was clear as possible.’ (*E* 319)

It further emphasizes that Emma has learnt from her mistakes: she makes sure that no misunderstanding can happen during the conversation. It is at this moment that Emma is able to discover her true feelings for Harriet and for Mr. Knightley: Harriet is transformed from a pet project to a rival while Mr. Knightley morphs from the annoying mentor that he was to a potential lover. Yet, it is not the first time that Emma has to envision a Mrs. Knightley other than herself. Mrs. Weston, discussing with Emma at the party held by the Coles, exposes her opinion on a potential union involving Mr. Knightley and Jane Fairfax. She mentions to Emma that “For while Miss Bates was speaking, a suspicion darted into my head, and I have never been able to get it out again. The more I think of it, the more probable it appears. In short, I have made a match between Mr. Knightley and Jane Fairfax” (*E* 176). Emma dismisses the whole idea, stating that matrimony would not suit Mr. Knightley and that it would rob her nephew of being the next owner in line of Donwell Abbey.

In “Figure and Ground: The Receding Heroine in Jane Austen’s *Emma*” Barbara Z. Thaden states that Emma “had been horrified at the idea of Knightley’s loving Jane Fairfax” (53) and that her “love of Knightley is based not so much on his qualities as on her fear of no longer being first in Highbury and in a friend’s estimation” (54). Yet, the realization of her love for Knightley does not occur at the Coles, like this statement would suggest, but with Harriet—and not Jane Fairfax—as a prospective Mrs. Knightley. What does change between the Coles’ party and Harriet’s admission is simply that Emma realizes she has been reading people wrong and suddenly she is not confident in her own assumptions: while it was clear that Mr. Knightley would never marry Jane as it was “a very shameful and degrading connection” (*E* 177), she is forced to acknowledge that Mr. Knightley’s opinion of Harriet has

changed since the dance at the Crown. Emma is now concerned that Mr. Knightley *might* consider Harriet as a suitable wife. Furthermore, she worries that her conduct during the Box Hill trip damaged her reputation with Mr. Knightley.

Like a set of Russian nesting dolls, from one admission springs another one, restoring truth to the community after many deceptions and many attempts to bend reality in order to fit fictional scenarios. Though it is a welcomed change of state of affairs, it is for Emma difficult to process adequately.

She was bewildered amidst the confusion of all that had rushed on her within the last few hours. Every moment had brought a fresh surprise; and every surprise must be matter of humiliation to her.—How to understand it all! How to understand the deceptions she had been thus practising on herself, and living under!—The blunders, the blindness of her own head and heart! (*E* 323–4)

It must be noted that in detailing Emma's interiority, Austen uses an abundance of dashes and short independent clauses, mimicking Emma's panic, confusion, and agony. The end of deception, lies, and games allows Emma to access her own truth and attain self-knowledge: she cares for Mr. Knightley more than she used to admit and her claims against matrimony are not the same as she once professed to Harriet. While initially she declares that she feared losing her autonomy, she now believes that "It would be incompatible with what she owed to her father, and with what she felt for him. Nothing should separate her from her father. She would not marry, even if she were asked by Mr. Knightley" (*E* 327). Her duty to her father therefore trumps even her affections, foreshadowing the character of Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park*.

While she has a better understanding of herself, Emma has not yet secured Mr. Knightley's affection, and considering her behaviour throughout the novel, his admiration is

less than certain.²⁰⁴ Not only does she have to reconsider her conduct at Box Hill, but also the ball at the Crown, her interactions with Frank Churchill, her attitude towards the Coles, her friendship with Harriet, basically everything she did that conveyed pride of her status and prejudice against those in the lower order of Highbury, like the Coles, the Bateses, and the Martins. On this introspection, J. S. Lawry states that:

However, not until she is brought to suppose that her fault has cost her the real love of Mr. Knightley can her remorse finally rout the discords thrice set in motion by fancy. Only then can the two misjoinings of Emma herself—the unwanted match with Mr. Elton and the improper alliance with Frank Churchill—evolve into her rational marriage to Mr. Knightley. (3)

The two first “misjoinings” were the results of miscommunication²⁰⁵ and unregulated fancy: Emma believes that Mr. Elton’s attentions are dedicated to Harriet and she lets Frank Churchill flirt with her to divert from his own engagement to Jane Fairfax. As she contemplates her course of action, it is then that she realizes the extent of her errors and misguidance, especially as she stops considering Jane as her nemesis and enjoys her company.²⁰⁶ She laments that “had she tried to know her better; had she done her part towards intimacy; had she endeavoured to find a friend there instead of in Harriet Smith; she must in

²⁰⁴ In “The Closure of *Emma*,” John Hagan argues that the only obstacle between Emma and Mr. Knightley is Emma’s determination to remain unmarried (560–61).

²⁰⁵ Miscommunication and misreadings are also explored in the language of landscape. In “Looking at the Landscape in Jane Austen,” Rosemarie Bodenheimer analyzes the passage of the lime walk at Donwell Abbey and argues that “This indirect and somewhat comic process is a metaphor for the process of mistake, misdirection, and eventual clarification which is the drama of Emma’s mind in the novel. The narrative sequence ingeniously mirrors the stages of Emma’s education: she begins by assuming that Robert Martin is socially invisible, goes on through a series of social fictions which do not take full account of the evidence before her, and finally gets the picture straight, with everyone in his or her appropriate social place” (612).

²⁰⁶ Mark Parker in “The End of Emma: Drawing the Boundaries of Class in Austen” argues that Emma’s newfound self-knowledge is in fact another layer of self-deception and that “Emma considers her own actions to have been motivated, although unconsciously, by a ‘real cause’... Emma’s own actions have a kind of authority, pulling her toward what she later realizes to be the truth of her desire, even while she is not fully conscious of it” (355). He insists that her inability to understand Harriet’s acceptance of Robert Martin is a sign that she is still lacking the capacity to understand others. Yet, compared to who she was in the beginning of the novel, Emma’s lack or reluctance to read or comprehend Harriet’s motivation is a sign of maturity: she relies only on her capacity to read her own conscience instead of imposing her fancy to others.

all probability, have been spared from every pain which pressed on her now” (*E* 331). This train of thought brings her to the conclusion that had she listened to Mr. Knightley, nothing detailed in the novel would have happened.

What separates Emma from her “union of the highest promise of felicity” (*E* 368) with Mr. Knightley is miscommunication, as he is still under the impression that she is emotionally attached to Frank Churchill, while she believes that his affection for Harriet—while being improbable—is still a possibility. Emma has learnt to not only take into account what she believes is true, but also what is possible. Thus when Mr. Knightley returns to Highbury from London and takes a walk with her, she is able to explain the real nature of her feelings for Frank Churchill to him, leading him to confess his love for her.²⁰⁷ As with the secret engagement, one admission or clarification unties all of the previous miscommunication and undoes the damage previously done.

Fittingly, this book is more spacious after Mr. Knightley’s proposal because there is to be more development in Emma between her engagement and her marriage, and we are to learn more about her. The effect of these fifty or so pages is that we see her liberation, her blossoming; and it is beautiful and moving. (Jenkyns 170)

Mr. Knightley’s proposal completes her introspection and Emma is finally able to act based on her new-found wisdom. Her education is complete: she has tasted freedom and thus returns humbled to Highbury. But a question remains: has Emma’s experience of *Bildung* made her progress or regress?

²⁰⁷ Patricia Menon questions, without really giving a definite answer, the troubling age discrepancy between Mr. Knightley and Emma, and his own admission that he has loved her since she was thirteen. For more, see *Austen, Eliot, Charlotte Brontë and the Mentor-Lover*, 35-45.

While many readers applaud the marriage between Emma and Mr. Knightley, some critics interpret it as a regression for Emma.²⁰⁸ For some, she gives Mr. Knightley all of her agency and becomes the shadow of herself.²⁰⁹ While it is true that by law, Emma relinquishes all of her possessions to Mr. Knightley, she does not necessarily submit entirely to him either as her concerns over her father's well-being trumps the social conventions of the bride moving in her husband's home or estate. For other critics,²¹⁰ this is just as problematic as the marriage does not save her from her father since she has to keep on accommodating him despite her new marital state. "Austen often poses the problem of women's independence against their dependence on fathers and husbands, and she most often figures the choice of marriage as a direct answer to inadequacies of a parent, usually a father" (Moffat 52). Contrary to other novels by Austen, Emma's marriage does not, according to them, rescue her from her difficult father.²¹¹ For many, it seems that a married Emma is the biggest loser in this impossible love triangle: caught between a rock and a hard place, she must submit to both her demanding father and her mentor-husband, without any power, agency, or opinion of her own.

All things considered, Emma does not give up her agency at all, nor does she become Mr. Knightley's puppet. She does not need to be saved from a dysfunctional house like Catherine Morland, Elizabeth Bennet, or Anne Elliot, but mainly from her past mistakes and her unrestrained fancy. Knowing how adverse to change Mr. Woodhouse is, Emma's marriage is an act that, paradoxically, showcases her independence: she refuses to have all aspects of

²⁰⁸ This is an argument similar to the regression of female protagonists in Bildungsroman, as expressed by Annis Pratt.

²⁰⁹ See "The Feminine *Bildungsroman*": Education through Marriage" by Elaine Hoffman Baruch as well as Wayne C. Booth's "Emma, *Emma* and the Question of Feminism" and "Point of View and the Control of Distance in *Emma*" for instance.

²¹⁰ See Wendy Moffat's "Identifying with *Emma*: Some Problems for the Feminist Reader" and Eugene Goodheart's "Emma: Jane Austen's Errant Heroine" for instance.

²¹¹ For more on Mr. Woodhouse as a tyrannical figure, see Richard Jenkyns' *A Fine Brush on Ivory*, 157–65.

her life controlled or led according to his many principles. Moreover, according to Auerbach, by marrying Mr. Knightley, she clearly chooses a man who is in no way, shape, or form similar to her father: she chooses “the good Mr. Knightley, the vigorous benevolence of whose power finds its analogue in the clinging, denying nature of Mr. Woodhouse’s, both of whom Emma seems to marry at the end of her novel” (16). What may trouble readers is that, contrary to expectations, Austen does not portray marriage as a magic wand that erases all problems in the later novels.

Even in *Pride and Prejudice*, there are allusions that marriages can fail and some are rather subtle. Mr. Bennet says on the subject of Jane and Bingley’s union: “You are each of you so complying, that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income” (*Pride and Prejudice* 350). Mr. Bennet does not imply that Jane and Bingley’s marriage will fail because of some character incompatibility but instead that their marriage as a financial enterprise might require more attention and decisiveness. Outspending could indeed be a real issue for Bingley and Jane if they are not careful.²¹² Anne’s marriage to Wentworth may rescue her from her loveless family, but she must make with the “tax of quick alarm” (*Persuasion* 258) of being a captain’s wife. Emma’s marriage cannot change her demanding father into something he is not and living at Hartfield with him is the lesser evil. Her experience after the Box Hill debacle also teaches her that agency—or the freedom to act as one wants to—is not desirable if it is at the price of alienation. If she wants to be a leader for her community, she must not think about

²¹² Especially since Bingley is New Money and that he is not yet part of the landed gentry. He could end in the same situation as Mr. Harrel in *Cecilia* if he gives in his sister Caroline’s lifestyle.

what she feels is right or ideal, but what *is* right. For instance, she acknowledges that her attempts to match Harriet are wrong.

The most likely match for Harriet is farmer Robert Martin, and Emma's perspective of Highbury society must also encompass the view that he too is worthy. In demonstrating the unlikely in the convention as opposed to the likely in society, Jane Austen has made the plot a course in the education of Emma as social leader." (Magee, "Instrument of Growth" 203)

In turns, Emma becomes a better leader for her community and "the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union" (*E* 381). So, Emma's *Bildung* is completed as all is well that ends well for Emma and Highbury.²¹³

Far from the allegorical battlefield of Box Hill, Waverley stands with Fergus Mac-Ivor and Charles Edward Stewart as they march and fight their way to Edinburgh to reinstall the latter as the lawful king. Waverley has thus chosen treason over his native country, an act which has alienated him from his family and from the few men whom he went with to Dundee. Near Carberry Hill, Waverley stumbles upon on man badly injured in a hovel. From his regional accent, he recognizes the man to be one of the men from his English county who followed him into the dragoons regiment at Dundee. For the first time in his life, Waverley realizes that he is responsible for this man's fate: he is the reason that Houghton left his native England and ultimately the cause of his pain. Not only is he injured, the rebels also tortured him to try to gain information, which Houghton, loyal to his cause, did not give them. Waverley orders men to take care of him, an act which surprises Fergus: after all, he is only a

²¹³ Mark Parker has a darker reading of *Emma's* end: "Emma can generate two readings of class: a progressive one, which emphasizes the insidious workings of class in Emma's disposal of Harriet; and a reactionary one, which sees and accepts this working as part of the price of social stability" (358). He works on the assumption that Emma's and Harriet's friendship was a true one, and not based on Emma's selfish needs to have control over her community.

nameless man among the many who have died in the fight. When Waverley explains who the man is, Fergus agrees with Waverley's conduct and allows him to be looked after.

Waverley rather gained than lost in the opinion of the Highlanders, by his anxiety about the wounded man. They would not have understood the general philanthropy... but as apprehending that the sufferer was one of the *following*, they unanimously allowed that Waverley's conduct was that of a kind and considerate chieftain, who merited the attachment of his people. (*W* 313–14)

At this moment, Waverley experiences for the first time the leadership role he was asked to do: he makes sure that his men, which include Houghton, are taken care. Even when he was training at Dundee, he did not take with gravity his role and instead, he left his following to pursue his own quest of self-validation. Waverley slowly transforms into the leader he is destined to be.²¹⁴

As Houghton passes away shortly after, the reality hits Waverley: his actions have repercussions outside of his own life. His conduct at Dundee only encouraged the false reports of his mutiny and his men were encouraged to desert. Some of them were so loyal that they were effectively deceived into following orders that were definitely not Waverley's but those of Donald Bean Lean. His own inactivity is the main culprit:

I have indeed acted towards you with thoughtless cruelty. I brought you from your paternal fields, and the protection of a generous and kind landlord, and when I had subjected you to all the rigour of military discipline, I shunned to bear my own share of the burden, and wandered from the duties I had undertaken, leaving alike those whom it was my business to protect, and my own reputation, to suffer the artifices of villainy. O, indolence and indecision of mind! If not in yourselves vices, to how much exquisite misery and mischief do you frequently prepare the way! (*W* 315)

It is then that Waverley understands the real stakes behind the war and that it is more than a chess game with pawns being ordered here and there: there are real repercussions that must be

²¹⁴ As Sir Everard's legal heir, Waverley will one day inherit the feudal duties that come with the estate of Waverley-Honour and perform the role of leader of his community.

dealt with in the aftermath. Furthermore, as he encounters his old regiment, he notices that what should be foreign in the enemy—the dress, the language, and the signals—is instead familiar to him and that what should be familiar is foreign. Slowly, it dawns on him that the Scottish incursion might be a regretful choice. He asks himself “am I then a traitor to my country, a renegade to my standard, and a foe... to my native England” (*W* 317). Nevertheless, Waverley remains loyal to his cause: he is past the point of no-return as he already pledged his allegiance to the Chevalier. To quit would be another kind of treason, this time to his allies in Scotland.

Waverley is caught between two loyalties as continuing in his endeavours creates a wedge between him and the rest of his community back in England but to leave Fergus’ and Bradwardine’s side would definitely alienate him from his community in Scotland.

In an age of revolution it became clear that loyalty to a lost cause could be at once a sign of virtue and of treason, that political obligation required the negation of political obligation, that reconciliation depended on a recognition that sacred oaths and covenants, legal agreements and established precedents could and must be rendered obsolete by political change and the passage of time. (Lincoln 4)

For *Waverley*’s readers, it is clear that it is a lost cause: Scott does not attempt to change or rewrite events: the rebels will eventually fail at the Battle of Culloden, whatever Waverley does or does not do. Yet in *Fiction Against History: Scott as Storyteller*, James Kerr asserts that *Waverley* “is for Scott a fiction which allows him to revise history, to recast things in such a way as to establish a transhistorical perspective in the present” (32). The layers of mediation are a means to shift this perspective and to change the narrative so that Waverley’s actions are still treason, but it is treason with a cause. Kerr adds that “By setting the threat of political subversion in the temporal position of several decades past, Scott accomplishes the softening

and rounding of figures and events, the graceful rendering, the mellowing which he describes as the products of distance” (32). The distance allows him to explore the rationale behind the uprising. Bradwardine’s interest is purely a refusal of modernity: he wants to restore the old traditions and the old order as his conundrum about the proper ceremony of pulling off the boots of the young Chevalier illustrates (*W* 326–8). Fergus, on the other hand, has only political and economic reasons: he wants to receive an earldom. “By manipulating the Prince, and especially by using him as a means to their own monetary advantage, his supporters show they no longer really believe in the ideology of their own cause, and that the values of the bourgeois Lowlands and England have in practice become their values” (D. Brown, *Historical Imagination* 17). As the tension surrounding the march to and the siege of Edinburgh reveals the cracks between the ideology of rebellion and the actual politics involved, Waverley becomes disenchanted with his Scottish company.²¹⁵

The disenchantment is emphasized when Waverley saves the life of an English officer. Instead of killing him on the battlefield, he entreats him to surrender. While the officer does not immediately comply, he eventually surrenders and is made a prisoner. In a twist of fate, the prisoner is Colonel Talbot, a friend of Sir Everard. His meeting with Colonel Talbot further proves that the consequences are not limited to the battlefields in Scotland either. He delivers to Waverley the shocking news that his father and his uncle “had been obliged to find bail to answer a charge of treason, to which they were only admitted by the exertion of the most powerful interest” (*W* 331). Colonel Talbot risks his life to warn and assist Waverley on

²¹⁵ Pittock likens the political support to the Chevalier to a juvenile state: “In making Jacobitism both a synecdoche for old Scottish patriotism and also emasculating its politics through an association with ‘childlike... loyalties, resentment, and violence’ with no rational goal, Scott adopts Jacobite rhetoric as a flavour of old romance while divorcing that rhetoric very firmly from reality. Jacobitism is a childhood story, Britishness is a matter of adult responsibility” (187).

the basis that he owes everything to Sir Everard's honour and chivalric ideals: Sir Everard was once in love with Lady Emily Blandeville and upon learning that her feelings were devoted to Talbot, he not only dropped his courtship, but he procured his rival a commission in the Army and petitioned Lade Emily's father to accept Talbot's demand. With this act, which ultimately resulted in his celibacy and the ancient line of Waverley to pass down to his nephew, Sir Everard made the difficult decision to put the community's needs before his own. Talbot's journey to find Waverley in Scotland proves that unconditional loyalty is not an artefact of the past nor is it only found in the old-fashioned Scotland; instead, it is quite alive in England as well. Waverley's quest for an outdated mode of community might be miscarried, but it is not in vain: he just did not look further when at home.

With Colonel Talbot, Waverley can reassess the qualities and the faults of his Scottish allies.²¹⁶ If at first, Talbot's zeal and devotion to him and his family is off-putting to Waverley to the point that it leaves him "mortified, abashed, and distressed" (*W* 333), Waverley slowly begins to evaluate his conduct and his position towards his duty as an Englishman in this Scottish insurrection. He comes to appreciate the steadfast character of his new companion:

Colonel Talbot was in every point the English soldier. His whole soul was devoted to the service of his king and country, without feeling any pride in knowing the theory of his art with the Baron, or its practical minutiae with the Major, or in applying his science to his own particular plans of ambition, like the Chieftain of Glennaquoich. (*W* 344)

The allure of the exotic setting fades as the siege of Edinburgh goes on. What was once enchanting becomes tedious to Waverley. Even his friendship with Fergus becomes strenuous.

²¹⁶ Saree Makdisi notes that Talbot's "position is solidly reinforced, justified, validated, and relentlessly proved correct by the narrator and the narrative, for Talbot does not just speak for rationality, progress, Englishness, justice...as well, of course, for the unity of the kingdom and nation. He speaks for what is correct and logical for and in the novel's own present: a correctness and logic inevitably validated by *Waverley's* retrospective narration, so that his 'prophecies' are by definition 'self-fulfilling' (*Romantic Imperialism* 86-7).

When Waverley does not demonstrate an appropriate level of pride at their victory, Fergus scolds him. In turns, Waverley reflects on the power dynamics when he is with Fergus. “He had now been more than once shocked at the small degree of sympathy which Fergus exhibited for the feelings even of those who he loved, if they did not correspond with his own mood at the time” (*W* 335). The sight of the men who followed him to Scotland wounded and some deceased on the battlefield remind him that they, too, followed him and were expecting a sensible leader. Instead, Waverley recognizes that he abandoned them, failing his own ideal of a community based on loyalty and camaraderie. From that moment on, Waverley becomes more thoughtful in the executions of his actions and works steadily to mend his reputation and to save his friends and his family from the political nightmare he put them in.

The first step is to clear his name and Waverley needs someone who can advocate on his behalf for leniency at worst or a pardon at best in London. As Talbot still suspects Waverley of treason, the latter confides in him his side of the story and how he was pushed into siding with the rebels. With the help of Talbot,²¹⁷ Waverley can retrace Donald Bean Lean’s deception. It had all the ingredients for a perfect storm: a young idealist raised in a Jacobite family; men who were also rather Jacobites and loyal to their landlord; a rather long stay at Glennaquoich; Waverley’s seal to forge letters were all circumstances that Donald Bean Lean exploited in his trap. All these made the appearance of treason and mutiny easy to fabricate. Moreover, the political situation in the Lowlands adds to Gardiner’s suspicions. Talbot comforts Waverley, saying that his situation “is sadly foolish, to be sure, but not nearly

²¹⁷ While discussing the plot conventions of *Quentin Durward*, Lionel Lackey affirms that Scott “understood the need for, and in his own works employed, pivot characters and plants to explain the coincidences of romantic fiction, which in his novels led to sometimes tragic, more often fortunate, story outcomes” (103). He then explains that a pivot is a character who “usually is privy to the intrigue or cabal threatening the protagonist and is thus able to protect him from its ill effects and mastermind his triumph” (103). In *Waverley*, Talbot acts as a pivot: he is able to guide and protect Waverley from the treasons charges.

so bad as I was led to expect. However, you cannot desert, even from the Pretender, at the present moment,—that seems impossible” (*W* 339). Talbot begins to understand Waverley’s predicament and esteems his loyalty, wrong as it may be. During his incarceration, Talbot receives news that his wife’s life is in jeopardy. Because he feels guilty and responsible for her fate, Waverley convinces the Chevalier to release Talbot. Despite Talbot’s insistence that his release would be against his honour, Waverley acts as a leader and obtain the safe-passage. In a way, his act reproduces his uncle’s honourable act: Waverley puts aside his own needs—here the political support of the Chevalier—to support the needs of his community. The result is similar as Talbot tells Waverley: “My life—phsaw—let Emily thank you for that—this is a favour worth fifty lives. I cannot hesitate on giving my parole in the circumstances” (*W* 361). Waverley understands his political power as an Englishman closely allied with the Chevalier and uses it to assist his friend.

His political views are not the only thing changing in the events leading to the siege of Edinburgh. While Waverley was staying at Glenaquoich he had fallen in love with Flora Mac-Ivor. Despite the fact that she always resisted his courtship, Fergus encourages Waverley to pursue his courtship. He uses his sister to keep Waverley close to him. Marriage in Fergus’ eyes is a political and economic alliance where feelings have little to do. Therefore, Fergus has his eyes on Rose as a way of consolidating his political position in the Highlands. As the daughter of Bradwardine, she represents the Lowlands’ gentry. By marrying Rose, Fergus would unite the Lowlands with the Highlands, which in turn would legitimize his claim for an earldom. Yet, Waverley realizes that Fergus does not care about Rose herself, nor does he care about the traditions of the Bradwardine family such as the Blessed Bear. She is to him only a political asset that would further his own agenda. This, strangely, hurts Waverley: “I

AM the very child of caprice... What is it to me that Fergus Mac-Ivor should wish to marry Rose Bradwardine?—I love her not” (*W* 353). He is confused²¹⁸ by the anger he feels at the thought of her being misused by Fergus. It is only after observing Rose with more attention and after comparing her to the supposed recipient of his love that he discovers in himself feelings he did not know he had.

I will love my Rosalind no more... she has given me a broad enough hint for that... But for a Juliet—would it be handsome to interfere with Fergus’s pretensions? though it is impossible they can ever succeed: and should they miscarry, what then?—Why then *alors comme alors*. (*W* 356)

Waverley has now the maturity to understand that Flora would never accept to marry him and that she is not the right woman for him. Flora is too politically involved and too calculating to be wooed. On the other hand, Rose’s initial shyness comes along as a prudent reserve and coyness; she has charm without artifices.

Even though Waverley abandons his pursuit of Flora, he cannot direct all his attention to Rose: Fergus still has hopes that the Chevalier will convince Bradwardine to name Rose his sole heiress and that he would agree to the wedding between the Chieftain and Rose. Still, by shifting his attentions to Rose, Waverley abandons in fact his naïve and Romantic idealism: he is no longer subjugated by Scotland’s enchanting and magical qualities. “His growing attachment to Rose Bradwardine parallels his disenchantment with Flora and Fergus and the cause for which they stand, his friendship with Colonel Talbot, and the movement toward a realistic perception of his experience” (Kerr 28). After all, he has come to realize that Scotland

²¹⁸ Despite the fact that Waverley’s psychological development may be not as pronounced as Ormond’s is, *Waverley* showcases Waverley’s insight and here confusion at the changing emotions he feels. “Walter Scott occupies a transitional place in the widening psychological scope of the novel. By later standards Scott was hardly a psychological novelist, and even within a generation of his death the lack of inwardness in his characters was becoming a principal point of criticism. But earlier readers reacted differently. They saw Scott as a vivid portraitist whose characters contributed essentially to his unique value as a historian of manners” (Phillips 129).

is not immune against the plight of modernity and social changes. The clans might still be based on allegiances and loyalty, but political schemes and money can go a long way in the manners in which life is organized north of the Hadrien's wall. Heroism, loyalty, and brotherhood are also not exclusive to Scots, as his English fellows, and especially Colonel Talbot, demonstrate the same qualities.

As the Chevalier's army advances towards Lancashire, Fergus urges Waverley to leave the army and to seek refuge on the Continent with Flora and Rose. Contrary to Fergus' wishes, Waverley remains loyal to him and chooses to be by his side when suddenly they are overtaken by the dragoons. In the commotion of the fight, Waverley finds himself between the English cavalry and the Chevalier's army. As it is impossible to escape to Scotland, Waverley resigns to walk towards London, where he hopes to clear his name.

It was in many a winter walk by the shores of Ulswater, that he acquired a more complete mastery of a spirit tamed by adversity, than his former experience had given him; and that he felt himself entitled to say firmly, though perhaps with a sigh, that the romance of his life was ended, and that its real history had now commenced. (*W* 385)

His *Bildung* is not yet completed: even though he is now more experienced than when he left Waverley-Honour, he still has to return to his original community. Here lies the crux of the problem: he is a wanted man. He can only lean on Colonel Talbot, who helps him secure proof to claim his innocence in his legal matters. Yet, Waverley must return to Scotland as he worries about Rose's situation. As he travels back to Scotland under a false identity, he is appalled at the state of the country, and especially of Tully-Veolan. He reconnects with Bradwardine and asks for his permission to marry Rose. "My son, my son! If I had been to search the world, I would have made my choice here" answers Bradwardine (*W* 423). Rose's reaction is also positive, as she was partial to him and assisted him behind the scene.

The marriage between Waverley and Rose is the occasion to finally clear his name. With the confession of Donald Bean Lean, Fergus's testimonial before his execution, and the letters, Colonel Talbot is able to procure a pardon. With the pardon, Waverley comes back to Waverley-Honour, where his uncle and aunt receive him with open arms. His deeds, as told by Talbot, are equalled to those of the heroic line of Waverleys. The whole community rejoice at the news of the wedding between the two families: "All was now in a bustle to prepare for the nuptials of Edward, an event to which the good old Baronet and Mrs Rachel looked forward as if the renewal of their own youth" (*W* 439). In Scotland, the atmosphere is lessened due to the aftermath of the rebellion.²¹⁹ Nevertheless, Bradwardine, who had to sell his estate, is jubilant when he learns that Waverley returns the estate to his rightful owner: "It is difficult to say whether the worthy Baron was most delighted with the restitution of his family property, or with the delicacy and generosity that left him unfettered to pursue his purpose in disposing of it after his death" (*W* 446). Furthermore, he is pleased to notice that Waverley and Talbot took great pains to restore the estate after it was ransacked.²²⁰ Through his journey in Scotland, Waverley has embraced a new culture and his marriage to Rose symbolizes the union of

²¹⁹ *Waverley* ends without really touching the subject of the Clearances. For more on the Clearances and the political situation in the Lowlands and the Highlands as it relates to the national and historical novel, see Juliet Shields' "From Family Roots to the Routes of Empire: National Tales and the Domestication of the Scottish Highlands."

²²⁰ The case of the painting depicting Fergus and Waverley in Highlander's garb is notable: it is a painting made by a London artist based on a sketch made at Edinburgh, of a scene that was never true to begin with. The layers of appropriation—the finer arts of London mastering and improving a "native" sketch—and the depiction of a political fantasy—a non-lived representation of the past in the fictional Highlands of *Waverley*—makes the painting a site of contentions. For more on the symbolic and political significance of the painting, see Makdisi's *Romantic Imperialism* 96-97, Pittock's *Scottish and Irish Romanticism* 190, and Kerr's *Fiction against History* 19-21.

England and Scotland: by choosing Rose over Flora, Waverley embraces the bourgeois and aristocratic values of Scotland and not the more violent and rebellious side of the Highlands.²²¹

In *Mansfield Park*, marriage is also equated with moral choices. Like a repetition of *Lovers' Vows*, the characters of the novel must decide whether or not they desire a marriage based on pecuniary motives like Maria or based on true love like Edmund. Maria, Fanny, and Edmund are all confronted with a choice of partners to make. While marriage has the appearance of renewal in the community, Austen does not portray the event as transformative for the protagonists. Instead, their qualities and their faults remain the same. In order to achieve transformation, change must come from within and not from external sources. For instance, it is Fanny's desire to please her uncle that drives her to improve her moral education. Moreover, the novel exemplifies the shortcomings of the "liberty through transfiguration" (Auerbach 9) as Maria realizes—too late—that she escaped a gilded cage through matrimony only to enter a new one which is as constraining as the previous one.²²² Her escape from this second gilded cage proves to be a futile attempt at freedom as her "indiscretion" with Henry causes chaos and disorder for Sir Thomas and his family.

While Maria leaves her husband's home, Fanny is still away at Portsmouth and she must witness from afar the family being undermined by too much agency and freedom: Maria's affair with Henry but also Tom's serious illness from excessive drinking and Julia's

²²¹ For more on the problematic erasure of the Highlands following the insurrection of 1745 and the role played by Scott's *Waverley* in the spatial, social, and political assimilation, see Saree Makdisi's *Romantic Imperialism*, 70-99.

²²² Even Rushworth compares Sotherton Court to "quite a dismal old prison" early in the novel (*MP* 81), foreshadowing Maria's elopement.

elopement with Mr Yates.²²³ She realizes through the remoteness of Portsmouth that, while she always considered Portsmouth as her home, her heart bleeds for Mansfield and its inhabitants.

Her eagerness, her impatience, her longings to be with them, were such as to bring a line or two of Cowper's *Tirocinium* for ever before her. "With what intense desire she wants her home," was continually on her tongue, as the truest description of a yearning which she could not suppose any school-boy's bosom to feel more keenly. (*MP* 429)

Fanny's feelings for her adoptive home are therefore stronger than the normative one of boarding-school boys, or at least, she presupposes them to be stronger. Her stay at Portsmouth is both formative and liberating for her: she learns the distinction between house and home and she is finally at liberty to decide where she does belong.

When she had been coming to Portsmouth, she had loved to call it her home, had been fond of saying that she was going home; the word had been very dear to her; and so it still was, but it must be applied to Mansfield. *That* was now the home. Portsmouth was Portsmouth; Mansfield was home. (*MP* 430)

This sudden realization suggests she has finally internalized the Grateful Negro trope into what Anne K. Mellor and Alex L. Milsom tie to the Stockholm Syndrome: all her formative years spent in Mansfield changed Fanny and how she perceives herself. Before living in Portsmouth, she always considered herself as being outside, or at the very least at the periphery, of Mansfield Park and ironically, it is when she is at last outside of Mansfield's influence that she identifies herself as a part of Mansfield. Furthermore, although she resists the formal education as received by her cousins, Fanny has internalized the standards of Mansfield and she now judges Portsmouth's industrial bustle to Mansfield's genteel quietness.

²²³ The theme of corrupting freedom is at the heart of the novel: "We might say that marriage provides the plot complications of Mansfield Park and education the thematic development; but the real subject is the corruption of society" (Duffy Jr. 73).

The men appeared to her all coarse, the women all pert, every body under-bred; and she gave as little contentment as she received from introductions either to old or new acquaintance. The young ladies who approached her at first with some respect in consideration of her coming from a Baronet's family, were soon offended by what they termed "airs"—for, as she neither played on the pianoforte nor wore fine pelisses, they could, on farther observation, admit no right of superiority. (*MP* 396–97)

Once mocked for her own lack of refinement, Fanny reproduces the patterns she has now adopted from the Bertrams. Her social situation in Portsmouth is paradoxical: while she considers the social scene beneath here, she has none of her cousin's accomplishments to justify being regarded as superior. Like she did at Mansfield, Fanny occupies a grey area and is trapped in-between two stations.

While the abuse she suffers at Mansfield is well-documented, Portsmouth is not without its faults. There, Fanny grieves in a different manner than she did at Mansfield. The home is smaller, darker, and noisier. It has none of the cheerful boisterous appeal of Uppercross at Christmas in *Persuasion*; Portsmouth is oppressive and overbearing for Fanny's constitution. Moreover, the motherly attention that she craved growing up at Mansfield is denied her for a second time: her mother dotes on her boys and only Betsey can compete with them for her mother's attention. Fanny has become foreign to her family and to their way of living.²²⁴ For instance, she compares the ways the two households are managed and she comes to the conclusion that her mother's household is not managed in an efficient manner: "whatever was wanted, was halloed for, and the servants halloed out their excuses from the kitchen... nothing was done without a clatter, nobody sat still, and nobody could command attention when they spoke" (*MP* 393–94). It is not surprising that she finds shelter and comfort in a room that bears resemblance to her room at Mansfield.

²²⁴ See Paula Marantz Cohen's "Stabilizing the Family System at Mansfield Park" for more on the family dynamics in the Price household as well as in Mansfield.

By sitting together up stairs, they avoided a great deal of the disturbance of the house; Fanny had peace, and Susan learned to think it no misfortune to be quietly employed. They sat without a fire; but *that* was a privation familiar even to Fanny, and she suffered the less because reminded by it of the east-room. It was the only point of resemblance. (*MP* 399)

Unable to reproduce the mother-daughter ideal that she had in mind upon returning to Portsmouth, Fanny reproduces with Susan the one model she knows: the mentor-relative model that she grew up on with Edmund. After internalizing the doctrine of amelioration, Fanny puts it in motion with Susan.

Of all her brothers and sisters, it is Susan who most resembles Fanny. It is through her that Fanny can finally find a less excruciating place within the community. By acting not as the poor relative, but as the rich one to Susan, she can channel Sir Thomas's benevolent plan and fix some of the problems around her, as Sir Thomas did with the fire in the east room. With the money that he left her, Fanny can solve the contention point between Susan and Betsey: a silver knife. She buys a new silver knife to Betsey, so that Susan can keep hers. With that kind act to her sister, Fanny realizes that she can make a difference in the household, especially to Susan who only needs guidance to polish her good but rough manners. "She should have formed such proper opinions of what ought to be—she, who had no cousin Edmund to direct her thoughts or fix her principles" (*MP* 399). Fanny is able to unite the self with society by providing for a better atmosphere in her household and bringing comfort through an active agency which is contrast to her passive agency at Mansfield.

Fanny's passage in Portsmouth is beneficial for her *Bildung* as she grows into the frame of an independent woman by becoming "in *propria persona*... a renter, a chuser of

books” (*MP* 400) and by being a positive model to her sister Susan.²²⁵ “She has formed her own character not according to how others have viewed her, but as she would like to view herself” (Despotopoulou 582). Nevertheless, it is questionable how much it is due to her upbringing in Mansfield, where she is seen more or less as a commodity to be called forth or ordered around. Despite her good heart, Fanny does look down on her own family because they cannot compare to the genteel nobility of the Bertrams. Likewise, she is even mortified when Henry visits Portsmouth, ashamed that her family will without a doubt humiliate her. It is clear that the many years spent at Mansfield left an indelible mark on Fanny.

Yet, her presence in Mansfield Park also affects the Bertrams. According to Auerbach, “The influence Fanny gains over the estate enables her to exclude her enemies, such as Mary Crawford, from it, and to include her allies, such as her sister Susan, within its lush confines. She rises alone from being the prisoner of Mansfield to the status of its principal jailer” (20). While Auerbach asserts that Fanny’s status among the Bertrams changes at the end of the novel, she seems to forget that Fanny is kept powerless throughout the novel, especially towards the end of the novel as she remains passive in Portsmouth²²⁶ and unable to “exclude her enemies.” Had she had this strength or power, it is clear that she would have exercised it quite earlier in the novel, as her assessment of the Crawfords is always unfavourable. Yet, the others around her are quite under their spell and no one listens to her warnings: Maria ignores her warnings where Henry is concerned and Edmund is too infatuated to even realize that her opinion of Mary is diametrically opposed to his. Even Sir Thomas discounts her thoughts on Henry’s proposal. She does win over Sir Thomas with time, but it is in spite of the others,

²²⁵ Samuel C. Burchell in “Jane Austen: The Theme of Isolation” suggests that through isolation the characters learn how live in society. “Apparently, by experience and education, Jane Austen’s main characters learn to find the inner strength necessary for the living of life in mutual understanding with other people” (147).

²²⁶ She cannot actively leave Portsmouth: she must wait for Sir Thomas to call for her.

when they are *already* banished due to their behaviours that he is able to recognize her true worth. As to Fanny being Mansfield Park's "principal jailor," it seems dubious: when she marries Edmund,²²⁷ Austen's use of free indirect speech conflates the narrator with Sir Thomas' voice and the word "acquisition" is used to describe Fanny officially entering the Bertram family (*MP* 467). Moreover, the narrator/Sir Thomas admits that "after settling her at Thornton Lacey with every kind of attention to her comfort, the object of almost every day was to see her there, or to get her away from it" (*MP* 467). This last passage emphasizes Fanny's lack of *positive* or *active* agency when, according to Auerbach, she should be master and jailor of Mansfield.²²⁸

Fanny's return to Mansfield Park is correlated with Mrs Norris' banishment from it, and the two characters, while portrayed as antithetical, are more similar—probably too similar—than they appear. Both women are at one point central to the Bertram household while not being part of the Bertram family per se: throughout the novel, it seems that Sir Thomas only esteems one woman at any given time. There is symmetry in the way he treats them: the more he appreciates one, the more he despises or finds faults in the other. He began to understand and value Fanny for who she is only once he came back from Antigua. As his appreciation of Fanny increases, so does his discontent towards Mrs Norris as he overrules her decision to deny fire in the east room on the account it is now Fanny's room. When he

²²⁷ Llyod W. Brown suggests that "the theme of happiness in *Mansfield Park* represents not the didactic allocation of rewards, but the comic exposure of self-contradictions in the emotional and moral experiences of Edmund and Sir Thomas respectively, and in Fanny's case, the counterbalancing of idealistic piety and 'true merit' against the defects of reality" ("The Comic Conclusion in Jane Austen's Novels" 1585).

²²⁸ Furthermore, Susan Fraiman points out that throughout the novel, "Austen pointedly counters the centrality of Mansfield in Fanny's heart by settling her firmly on its perimeter" ("Jane Austen and Edward Said" 811)

considers one as *officially* part of the family, the other is banished from Mansfield.²²⁹ Moreover, both women are clergyman's wives and portray different aspects of the Church,²³⁰ which are exemplified in their influence over Mansfield Park. Contrary to her aunt, Fanny's influence over Mansfield is definitely more passive than assertive. Her agency is directly linked with her sense of duty: she resists when pushed to stray from her moral ideals²³¹ while Mrs Norris uses her agency to appropriate power in Mansfield, dictating and imposing her own ideals on the others. While Fanny has a weak constitution, a fact highlighted throughout the novel, Mrs Norris has too much energy for the role that she is limited by.

Stretching a husband's modest pension, making a small, crowded, dirty house as comfortable and hygienic as possible, and promoting the advancement of numerous children might have called forth better aspects of her energetic nature: speaking biblically, she'd have been much better as a Martha than as a Mary. (Graham, "Labor of Leisure" 178)

They represent two sides of the same coin: both weak and strong at the same time in opposite manners and both interested in improvement: contrary to Mrs Norris who sees improvement only in a material form, Fanny works toward improvement of the soul and heart. "The nature passages in *Mansfield Park* vividly suggest the growth and deepening of Fanny Price's character, in terms which link her finally to Wordsworthian values" (Bodenheimer 606). For a novel on the evils of the doctrine of improvement or amelioration, it does reward those who seek the improvements of the self: virtuous changes are welcome, as in the case of Edmund, Tom, and Sir Thomas. For those only advocating for the improvement on a material plane,

²²⁹ For more on the dynamics between Fanny and Mrs Norris, see Laura Fairchild Brodie's "Society and the Superfluous Female: Jane Austen's Treatment of Widowhood."

²³⁰ For more on the debate whether *Mansfield Park* is pro-evangelical or not, see David Monaghan's "*Mansfield Park* and Evangelicalism: A Reassessment." He suggests that Edmund—and by extension Fanny—is clearly more orthodox than evangelical in the manner he conceives of his duty.

²³¹ See "Nationalism and Empire" by Warren Roberts for more on the intricate relationship between the British empire, slavery, religion—in particular evangelicalism—and Wilberforce and its ties to *Mansfield Park*.

they are simply banished from the estate if they fail to atone for their mistakes.²³² The estate and its vicinity becomes the locus of “a special relation between setting and character in the novel. In other words, improvement and taste are evaluated through a comparison of places as well as of character” (Banfield 3). While the estate is in peril when Fanny arrives from Portsmouth, it is redressed by excluding the main causes of the corruption.

In *Mansfield Park*, men are the only ones to attain redemption: Tom, Edmund, and—to a certain extent—Henry are all capable of reformation and rejuvenation of their character. For instance, Tom’s reckless pursuit of pleasure influences negatively his younger brother’s career. “But Tom’s extravagance had, previous to that event, been so great as to render a different disposal of the next presentation necessary, and the younger brother must help to pay for the pleasures of the elder” (*MP* 53). Moreover, Tom’s pursuit of pleasure is not only economically crippling as it almost kills him: a fever worsened by drinking leaves him in a precarious state. Yet, his severe illness drives him to reconsider his conduct and behaviour and reforms. “But while Tom’s story reflects a discourse of cure, it does so within a larger framework of prevention; he, like Maria and Julia and Mary, become cautionary tales about the dangers of debauchery and of bad parenting” (Wright 389). He gets through his illness but “the self-reproach arising from the deplorable event in Wimpole Street, to which he felt himself accessory by all the dangerous intimacy of his unjustifiable theatre, made an impression on his mind” (*MP* 458). Tom may feel partly responsible, yet only Maria and Mrs Norris are ultimately blamed for the incident.

²³² Alistair M. Duckworth in “*Mansfield Park* and Estate Improvements: Jane Austen’s Grounds of Being” associates them with Repton and the improvements of the estate while Fanny and Edmund “marry and become effective guardians of the estate” (26). The only caveat to this interpretation is that neither does Fanny nor Edmund inherit the estate, literally or figuratively. They cannot stand in for the landed gentry, but for the clergy, unless Tom has no male heirs to whom he could bequeath Mansfield. Only then can Edmund and Fanny become the guardian of the estate.

Contrary to the men, Maria, Julia²³³ and Mary must, each to a different degree, bear the mark of acting out of the proper female agency. Neither Tom nor Maria can undo the past to erase their deviation from good conduct, but Tom can and does bounce back from his past mistakes while Maria has ruined her chance at morally improving by maintaining her affair with Henry. Her offences deny her the possibility of a social recovery. However, following his indiscretion with Maria, Henry is not as publicly shamed as she is and he still has a chance at a social redemption while Maria is forever shunned. Even though they both partook in the same sin,²³⁴ Austen reveals the gendered difference: “That punishment, the public punishment of disgrace, should in a just measure attend *his* share of the offence is, we know, not one of the barriers which society gives to virtue. In this world, the penalty is less equal than could be wished” (*MP* 463–64). As such, Henry is not so much redeemed, but simply excused by society.²³⁵ Besides, when female characters are not condemned for participating in the masculine public space, their emancipation is never truly complete: Fanny and Julia break free from their situation through marriage, Maria is banished from Mansfield Park²³⁶ and Mary seems to be condemned to become a spinster despite her £20,000. It is then quite ironic that

²³³ While Julia’s fate is often treated conjunctively with Maria’s, it must be noted that hers proves to be an error more “in folly than vice” (*MP* 449) and that Yate’s estate is “rather more, his debt less, than [Sir Thomas] had feared” (*MP* 458). She does atone for her hasty elopement, and thus does not suffer the same plight as her sister.

²³⁴ Both are guilty of the sin of adultery. However, her charge might be more than his: after all, she is married and he is not.

²³⁵ Graham posits that Henry’s punishment is not social, but come from within: “Henry’s is the more poignant and abstract self-punishment a man of sense would feel in his heart and head: ‘[N]o small portion of vexation and regret—vexation that must rise sometimes to self-reproach, and regret to wretchedness—in having so requited hospitality, so injured family peace, so forfeited his best, most estimable, and endeared acquaintance, and so lost the woman whom he had rationally, as well as passionately loved’ (468–69)” (“Falling for the Crawfords” 888). That he bears his cross for losing Fanny is quite possible. Yet, it seems dubious based on his conduct throughout the novel that Henry would be truly vexed over “injur[ing] family peace” or that he is a “man of sense.”

²³⁶ In “Ordination and the Divided House at Mansfield Park,” Joseph W. Donohue compares the marriages of the Ward sisters to those of Fanny, Maria, and Julia: “The three Ward sisters—Miss Ward, Maria, and Frances—correspond loosely, in the younger generation, to Maria and Julia Bertram and Fanny. But in the second generation the society has become rigidly stratified” (172).

they leave one state of dependency for another. “As a semiautobiographical, apprenticeship-to-life story, it deals significantly with the mental history, self-determination, and identity of the protagonist. In other words, it is pre-eminently the fictional form which celebrates subjectivity, autonomy and self-definition” (McDonnell 199).

In the end, Fanny’s sense of duty—toward her family, toward the estate, and toward her own morals—prevails and keeps her from accepting Henry’s proposal, even when he appeared charming at Portsmouth. She becomes an asset in times of crises, while her foil, Mrs Norris, is incapable of leading or comforting anyone at Mansfield. In Portsmouth, she learns that she can make an active contribution to those around her and can provide as well as receive from the community.

Furthermore, as an extended portrait of childhood, education, crisis and identity, *Mansfield Park* really asks to be called an early Bildungsroman. Like those later female Bildungsromane, *Jane Eyre* and *The Mill on the Floss*, Austen’s novel involves a relatively long period of time to trace patterns of ‘growth’ from an abused childhood to an assertion of independence in a crisis that involves both family and cultural ideals. And in *Mansfield Park*, as in *Jane Eyre*, an analogy is drawn between the dependency of the child (as orphan or virtual orphan) and the dependent position of women in general. Thus the novel uses the Bildungsroman theme of childhood and youth spent in a hostile setting to focus on questions of sexual politics as well. (McDonnell 198)

The most important is that she learns that her identity, although closely tied to Mansfield Park, is not defined by it. Fanny “has come to such terms with tedium and disregard—not through a false angel-in-the-house piety but by taking a rigorous interest in her own private longings and equivocations, her affections and her fears” (Potter 618). Her union to Edmund suggests that she has acquired “the most valuable knowledge we could any of us acquire—the knowledge of ourselves and of our duty” (*MP* 455).

4.2 Memento Mori

As suggested in *Mansfield Park*, marriage may not always be an option to restore order and to rejuvenate society. Sometimes, marriage can even contribute to the crisis, as exemplified in *Cecilia*. Her union²³⁷ to Mortimer Delvile furthers the conflict between Mrs. Delvile and her husband and subsequently, with Mr. Delvile and Cecilia. “*Cecilia* ends on a bitter-sweet note. The heroine does marry the hero, but instead of finding wedded bliss, she continues to be plagued by the memory of her misfortunes” (Fung 946). The resolution comes in the form of death, or rather near-death experiences: at the climax of her social isolation, Cecilia literally runs mad and suffers from a threatening fever that leaves her defenceless and incapacitated. Furthermore, Mrs. Delvile suffers from a broken vessel that leaves her at the brink of death. What was once hopeful and optimistic in Cecilia—as well as her hopes of a better or positive future—is depressing as she is turned out of doors, without money and without any support, or at the very least, limited resources. The spectre of her death—or at least of its possibility in a near future—forces the Delviles to reassess their values and opinions, and the very definition of family.

In a variation on the theme, *Emmeline*’s conclusion also hinges on the near-death and ultimately death of one of the characters. Delamere’s death releases Emmeline of her promise and it allows her to admit to herself her true feelings for Godolphin. Through his death, she also gains her independence from her uncle: it frees her of the agreement she had with her uncle as he can no longer extort her into submission. She is then free to distance herself from him as she finds in Lord Westhaven a better advocate and protector. In other cases, like in *Ormond*, communities are united not through marriage but following the death of an important

²³⁷ Not counting the incident when she refuses to marry him.

member of the community. As the community gathers to honour the deceased, the protagonists are faced with their own mortality, with their own finality. “The refusal to consider the future still ‘open’, we have seen, is presented as an indication of maturity. *Bildung* is concluded under the sign of memory, of *mémoire volontaire*, of the rationalization of the accomplished journey” (Moretti 68). After all, death is the ultimate step in our journey in life. The wake and the funeral are occasions to re-evaluate the legacy—both material and immaterial—bequeathed by the deceased.

Cecilia’s conclusion, like *Mansfield Park*, lacks a profoundly optimistic conclusion:²³⁸ the antagonists are not entirely punished for the problems they caused all around them.²³⁹ Even when they are, as for example with Mr. Harrel’s public suicide, they are incorporated into the public sphere and the consumer society and become another spectacle to follow; another auction to attend for Miss Larolles.

From these [Mr. Harrel, Mr. Monckton, and Mr. Delvile] characters’ lack of redemption, the reader gets the sense that Burney’s society is not only hazardous, but also one whose members cannot be improved. Nor does Burney suggest that there are means of escaping *Cecilia*’s problems. (Fung 945)

The only salvation from this never-ceasing circus is to either to accept to participate in it—and risk being part of the spectacle—and adjust one’s behaviour or to leave it all altogether. None of these options are satisfying for *Cecilia*. She is reluctant to participate in the consumer and public society as she would rather maintain her privacy and deal with honesty and truth, instead of dissimulation and dishonesty. This leads her directly to be entangled in imbroglios, and to be the subject of scandalous rumours. As for opting out of society, besides men, only

²³⁸ See Betsy Bolton’s “Imperial Sensibilities, Colonialism Ambivalence: Edmund Burke and Frances Burney” for more on Burney’s discussion with Burke on the lack of a clearly cheerful or depressive ending.

²³⁹ We could argue that Mr. Monckton is punished by the very good health of his wife, but it seems to be limited to a feeling of *schadenfreude*.

Mrs. Delvile and Cecilia towards the end can effectively retire far from the bustle of the consumer society.²⁴⁰

Matrimony seems to be a way out of the public sphere as married women are under less scrutiny than their unmarried counterpart. As Lady Honoria discusses with Cecilia, “for you can do nothing at all without being married; a single woman is a thousand times more shackled than a wife; for, she is accountable to every body; and a wife, you know, has nothing to do but just to manage her husband” (C 934). Lady Honoria is maybe not a model for Cecilia to follow, but her pieces of advice represent the distorted views on women the “polite” society has. Mary Crawford in *Mansfield Park* reaffirms Lady Honoria’s maxim when she laments that the true shame is that Maria was *exposed* as having an affair with Henry.²⁴¹ Nevertheless, women’s sole marital status cannot shield them from suspicions and rumours. After all, Cecilia has been the object of scrutiny despite being married to Mortimer. He is led to believe he surprises her with her lover when he visits Mr. Belfield. Despite her pleas to explain the reason why she called at Mr. Belfield’s house, Mortimer refuses to listen to Cecilia and sends her directly to his father, who has yet to acknowledge her as part of the family. Mortimer has to confront Mr. Belfield to eliminate any doubts he has about Cecilia’s faithfulness. Even Mrs. Belfield is under the impression that her son and Cecilia are more than just acquaintances. She is so convinced of the affair that she facilitates the indiscretion. Although Cecilia is innocent, the “discovery” breaks the fragile union between Mortimer and her, and pushes her to the brink of insanity.

²⁴⁰ Here I exclude those who only participate from the margins: Mrs. Harrel’s exclusion from the society is not so much voluntarily as it is forced on her. It is, moreover, momentarily, as she quickly finds a new husband and a new society to partake in.

²⁴¹ It must be noted that Lady Honoria’s advice is rebuked by all the characters present. It is quite obvious that her advice is a bad one and not one to follow as it is against the didacticism of the novel.

Therefore, the consequences of Cecilia's desire to withdraw from the public sphere are that everything that she does or says is filtered through the common expectations of the public sphere. Every act of privacy is understood as a deception. For instance, when she accepts to marry Mortimer the first time, she conceals every details of the elopement.²⁴² Yet, once inside the church, she refuses to go forward because the whole scheme is improper and she cannot willingly accept to take part in such a ruse.

The greatness of her undertaking, the hazard of all her future happiness, the disgraceful secrecy of her conduct, the expected reproaches of Mrs. Delvile, and the boldness and indelicacy of the step she was about to take, all so forcibly struck, and so painfully wounded her, that the moment she was summoned to set out, she again lost her resolution, and regretting the hour that ever Delvile was known to her, she sunk into a chair, and gave up her whole soul to anguish and sorrow. (C 624)

The interruption of the ceremony, orchestrated by Mr. Monckton, is the last straw for Cecilia and she exits the church unsure of why she agreed on such a plan. While she leaves the church in the same marital state as she entered it, her actions do not support this fact. Unbeknownst to her, she is recognized as she leaves her carriage and walks toward the church. To the witness, there is no doubt that she entered as Miss Beverley only to leave as Mrs. Delvile. To further add to Cecilia's plight is that she plays with discretion and privacy as others do with deception and schemes. It is on that premise that she is turned out of her house, as her cousin—Mr. Eggleston—comes to claim his rightful inheritance.²⁴³ Cecilia's conduct—the failed

²⁴² Julia Epstein links Cecilia's failed attempt to marry Mortimer to her struggle to maintain or assert ownership. She states that "Cecilia Beverley struggles to integrate ownership of self with ownership of property. She seeks to put her 'seal' (her name—her confirmation and authentication) on her lover, Mortimer Delvile, on her secret marriage (a 'seal' is also a vow of secrecy), and on the material possessions her name bestows" (28).

²⁴³ "No sequence in the novel" according to Zonitch "illuminates the hypocrisy of patrilineal codes more, for not only is Mr. Eggleston not a blood relation of her uncle... but he also has 'extravagant and dissipated' sons who have accrued significant debts. It is clear that they will seize the estate and slowly bring it to ruin... All of Cecilia's acts of charity and domestic economy are thus sacrificed to the idea of the male line" (81).

elopement as well as the secrecy around the private marriage—has all the appearance of dissimulation after the fact.

To have her affairs and situation become publicly known at the present period, she felt would half distract her.—Privately married, parted from her husband at the very moment of their union, a husband by whose hand the apparent friend of her earliest youth was all but killed, whose father had execrated the match, whose mother was now falling a sacrifice to the vehemence with which she had opposed it, and who himself, little short of an exile, knew not yet if, with personal safety, he might return to his native land! (C 859)

Even when she has nothing to hide, Cecilia's negotiations of the public sphere leaves her exposed to misinterpretation of her intent and of her actions.

At the peak of her isolation, Cecilia's life hangs in the balance. Alone on the streets, in a feverish delirium, without any marks of proper identification on her, she is in a vulnerable position to say the least. Those who should protect her either refuse to do so, like Mr. Delvile, or are just not there with her to take her to safety. Those who find her, however, either take her for a prostitute, or a lunatic. When she assures them she "is not mad" but trying to get to her husband in Nice,²⁴⁴ the pawnbrokers assert that "she's quite crazy" and that "she's somebody broke out from a private mad house" (C 897). Despite the fact that they are unable to find any money or valuable on her, her clothes are the only sign that she belongs to a higher class and thus, that keeping her safe is an investment worth the expenses. Therefore, Cecilia, without anyone at her side, is reduced to a commodity and a potential reward. This situation echoes Cecilia's fate and social position in the novel. Even as a married woman—and consequently outside of the marriage market that defined her earlier in the novel—Cecilia cannot escape the consumer society and the fact that her very existence is ruled by mercantilism. The only sliver of hope for Cecilia is that even when exposed as penniless, in the literal sense as a destitute

²⁴⁴ Mortimer left for Nice with his ailing mother.

woman and in the figurative as a portionless heiress,²⁴⁵ she still has some value to society. It is a question of finding the balance between the charity projects that Albany wants her to sponsor and those that are really making a difference, like the little shop she sets for Mrs. Hill.

As Cecilia's fate remains uncertain, it is a point of assessment for the other characters. This is emphasized as Albany visits her often during her feverish days with the children she sponsors.

Sweet flower... untimely cropt in years, yet in excellence mature! early decayed in misery, yet fragrant in innocence! Gentle be thy exit, for unsullied have been thy days; brief be thy pains, for few have been thy offences! Look at her ye, also, who are nearer to your end—Ah! Will you bear it like her! (C 917)

For Albany, Cecilia's potential death represents the end of her charitable endeavours. As she appeared to be the only one to answer his calls for action, this loss represents the failure of his benevolent crusade. Albany's relationship with Cecilia is peculiar in the sense that as a moral advisor, he entices her to work independently from the rest of her society toward helping those in need. Those actions are often what lead to misunderstanding between Cecilia and other characters. For instance, as she helps Henrietta, she is accused of being attached to Henrietta's brother, Mr. Belfield. It is this kind of independence that isolates Cecilia from her friends.²⁴⁶ Yet, while she is lodged against her will at the Three Blue Balls pawnshop, it is Albany who recognizes her and alerts Mortimer. The same man who, in a way, was responsible for her

²⁴⁵ She lost her right to her uncle's fortune by taking Mortimer's name and her father's portion to Mr. Harrell and Mr. Monckton. "Burney herself expressed dislike over those 'name-compelling' wills, making this issue the center of a critical debate between Cecilia, Mrs. Delvile, and her son. The conflict of tradition, represented by the Delvile family, versus individual desire, represented by Mortimer and Cecilia, arises over the question of whose name the couple will take" (Cutting-Gray 32).

²⁴⁶ In her detailed analysis of Cecilia's madness, Cutting-Gray explains that "The mad Cecilia vividly demonstrates how the community interprets her on the basis of a nonverbal fabric—her gestures, facial expression, clothes, circumstance—a fabric that does not include any verbal significance provided by Cecilia herself. That is, Cecilia's madness reveals how ruthlessly the discourse of reason excludes the value of female speech when it denies the nonverbal texture with which *it* interprets the world" (50).

demise is the *deus ex machina* who allows her to be reunited with her friends and family. Albany—like the majority of Burney’s characters—is a man of extremes: while he repents for his previous wickedness by overtly caring for the destitute of the world, he brings down with him those who help him. Cecilia’s downfall echoes his own downfall and it clearly emphasizes that excess, whether in kindness or in cruelty, leads to social alienation. His situation is similar to that of Mr. and Mrs. Harrel: they spend all they have without keeping some in case of emergency or planning for future needs. Cecilia, once she recovers, must repair his mistakes and she makes sure that the orphans who were left without support while she was incapacitated do not suffer from Albany’s oversight.

Cecilia’s fever is also the occasion for reconciliation between Mortimer and Cecilia. When he discovered his wife in conversation with Belfied, he was led to believe that the latter is her lover and he refused to hear Cecilia’s explanations. Without any other regards to her insisting demands to clarify the situation, he told Cecilia before sending her to his father’s place: “I never *have* had, I never *will* have a doubt! I will *know*, I will have *conviction* for every thing!” (C 888). Because their marriage was still secret, they were not at liberty to interact with each other as husband and wife would. Mortimer could not express his fears and his jealousy and Cecilia could not assure him of her faithfulness and the reasons behind her visit to the Belfields. Once he is reunited with her, he is remorseful: he feels acutely his part in her downfall as he knows he has not treated her like his wife. He has failed to protect her and shelter her when he dispatched her to his father house in St. James’s Square.²⁴⁷ Yet, it is when she appears to have lost all her senses that he begins to act as a husband to her: he takes care

²⁴⁷ It is also an unfortunate coincidence that Mr. Delvile, who was supposed to be at Delvile Castle, was in fact in St. James’s Square to quarrel with Cecilia and to deny her the right to stay.

that physicians are called and that she is treated not as a lunatic, but as his wife. Once she recovers from the delirium, it is for them the time to explain each other's action on that fateful night. Her condition is the occasion for Mortimer to make his marriage to Cecilia public and to put an end to the deception and the lies. The crisis becomes the perfect opportunity for Mortimer to talk with his father and to reconcile with him.

Before knowing Cecilia's state, Mr. Delvile had always refused to give his blessing to the young couple while his wife has instead decided that she would stand by her son and has gone so far as to exert a separation from her husband rather than abide by his prejudice.²⁴⁸ Despite her potential fortune, Cecilia is not from an ancient and respectable family. Furthermore, the money she could bring into the marriage is dependent on Mortimer abandoning his surname, an act that Mr. Delvile, due to his pride, considers to be senseless. Therefore, he stands firm, but alone, on his refusal to acknowledge his daughter-in-law. When Cecilia is in needs of an asylum, he refuses to welcome her at St. James's Square. Yet, when he hears of the desperate state she is in, he has to reconsider the part he played in the events.

Mr. Delvile, though he would gladly, to have annulled an alliance he held disgraceful to his family, have received intelligence that Cecilia was no more, was yet extremely disconcerted to hear of suffering to which his own refusal of an asylum he was conscious had largely contributed. (C 911)

Sadly, Mr. Delvile's initial concerns for Cecilia derive more from the fact that he is involved in the situation and that, in a way, he is caught acting contrary to his social status by refusing to help a damsel in distress.²⁴⁹ Yet, Cecilia's state surprisingly proves to be a turning point for

²⁴⁸ Lady Honoria and Mrs. Delvile both represent the subversion of the patriarchal order. The difference is that while Lady Honoria talks of those matters without thinking about the social repercussions, Mrs. Delvile acts upon them within the confine of propriety and the law.

²⁴⁹ Barbara Zonitch states in *Familiar Violence: Gender and Social Upheaval in the Novels of Frances Burney* that "The patriarch who was also an aristocratic landowner had significant communal power, for he played a major role in the political and judicial government of the surrounding county, and his protective duties

Mr. Delvile and Mortimer. Father and son, with the help of the benevolent Dr. Lyster, can mend the breach caused by the secret union. Moreover, after seeing Cecilia, still a victim of dementia, he

regarded her with the utmost horror: the refuge he so implacably refused her on the night when her intellects were disordered, he would now gladly have offered at the expence of almost similar suffering, to have relieved himself from those rising pangs which called him author of this scene of woe. (C 912)

It is only after witnessing the real consequences of his inaction that he can realize the errors of his character. “His pride, his pomp, his ancient name, were now sunk in his estimation; and while he considered himself the destroyer of this unhappy young creature, he would have sacrificed them all to have called himself her protector” (C 912). Cecilia’s near-death state forces Mr. Delvile to reconsider his actions towards her and his son. It is at that very moment that the image of Cecilia as his daughter-in-law is cemented: as part of the Delvile family, she is worth every expense to make the best recovery possible. Once her fragile health permits it, she is removed from the pawnshop and is carried to the Delviles’ house in St. James’s Square, her rightful home.

Since the death of her uncle, Cecilia has struggled to fit in society. At the Harrels’ she is too much a recluse and she makes a great effort to understand the *Ton* society but her reluctance to use social mask makes it nearly impossible for her to appreciate the London social life. With the Delviles, her lack of ancient pedigree makes her feel subpar to their company. Her secret union to Mortimer does not help her to be fully accepted by her new family. At the same time, she is pushed to act independently as a charity patron with Albany.

were presumably extended to those outside of his immediate family” (17). She states that this arrangement is mirrored in other forms of relationship: “between patrons and clients, landlords and tenants—in short, symbolic fathers and children” and that this arrangement “justified inequalities by protecting the most vulnerable: women, children, and the impoverished” (17). Mr. Delvile fails his aristocratic and moral obligation to Cecilia, which is especially shocking since Cecilia is now family.

It is only when she is on the brinks of death that Mortimer and Mr. Delvile realize that they have misjudged her conduct. It is only then that she can be welcomed in the Delvile family. In that aspect, *Mansfield Park* is similar to *Cecilia*: only after many trials does Fanny become a Bertram. Cecilia's price to pay to enter the Delvile family is both financial and physical: she must abandon her estate and her fortune as per her uncle's instructions and she almost dies.

In the first place, the violence inflicted upon the heroine by the rigidity of the behavioural patterns she is forced to follow, which makes her powerless even to clear up the misunderstandings that could ruin her prospects of happiness. Secondly, the omnipresent sense of danger lurking upon any heroine who, like Cecilia, finds herself alone and unprotected in the outer world, having strayed, circumstantially, out of the domestic realm. (Palomo 448)

Nonetheless, *Cecilia* ends with a slight positive note: Cecilia lives with Mortimer the life she has always wanted, surrounded by those she loves, but most importantly on the periphery of the fashionable society. Cecilia maintains her charity with Albany, although she is more restrained in what she donates. "She had learnt the error of profusion, even in charity and beneficence; and she had a motive for œconomy, in her animated affection for Mortimer" (*C* 939). While her virtues are rewarded,²⁵⁰ *Cecilia* is not as joyful as *Evelina*, in which the heroine's problems—her father who refused to recognize her as his daughter and the discrepancy between her social status and the one from her fiancé, Lord Orville—are all solved by the end of the novel by a profusion of *deus ex machina*. *Cecilia*'s conclusion is less of a fairy tale and more in line with reality: Cecilia might have changed and influenced those close to her, but the world at large does not change.

Emmeline is another example of a protagonist fighting to find her way in a world that negates change. False reports of Emmeline's disgraceful conduct reach Delamere who goes

²⁵⁰ She receives from Mortimer's aunt a large inheritance.

directly to Woodfield to confront Emmeline. There, he finds her playing with Lady Adelina's infant. Given his fiery temper, he jumps to the conclusion that the baby is hers and he storms off, convinced that she and Fitz-Edward betrayed his trust. "'Till I saw this, all the evidence they brought me was insufficient to cure my blind attachment... what? for Fitz-Edward! for the infamous plunderer of his friend's happiness! (*EOC* 287). He calls off the engagement and settles for Miss Otley, a young woman picked by his parents. Because Emmeline is protecting Lady Adelina's illegitimate child, nobody privy to the situation can disprove the claim without exposing her, and must suffer to see Emmeline's reputation being sullied. As Godolphin has befriended Delamere and cannot stand the defamation of Emmeline's character, he divulges the whole truth. Delamere expediently tries to reach Emmeline who is staying at St. Alpin to regain her trust and to renew the engagement, but he is forced to stop at Besançon due to a fever brought by his ardent temper and the travelling conditions. Delamere's fever weakens greatly his constitution. Despite her emotional response to the news, Emmeline sets the record straight with Lady Westhaven, Delamere's sister:

Hear me without resentment explain to you at once the real situation of my heart in regard to Lord Delamere. I feel for him the truest concern; I feel it for him even to a painful excess; and I have an affection for him, a sisterly affection for him, which I really believe is little inferior to your own. But I will not deceive you; nor, since I am to meet him, will I suffer him to entertain hopes that it is impossible for me to fulfill. To be considered as the friend, as the sister of Lord Delamere, is one of the first wishes my heart now forms—against ever being his wife, I am resolutely determined. (*EOC* 370)

Even though she is pressed by both Delamere and his sister, Emmeline remains steadfast in her resolution.²⁵¹

²⁵¹ In "The Happy Marriage: The Importance of Charlotte Smith on Jane Austen," William H. Magee discusses, among other things, how Emmeline's rejection of Delamere, a suitor that would "save" her from

She is now unwavering and immune to his emotional blackmail. The difference is that she now knows the truth about her parents. After meeting her father's servant, Le Limosin, she dwells on her mother's fate. To satisfy her curiosity on the matter, she opens the caskets²⁵² she received from Mrs. Carey and peruses their content.

What was her astonishment to find in it two certificates of her mother's marriage; one under the hand of a Catholic priest, by whom they were married immediately on their arrival at Dunkirk; the other signed a few days before the birth of Emmeline by an English clergyman, who had again performed the ceremony in the chapel of the English Ambassador at Paris. (*EOC* 342)

With these papers, Emmeline has the proof that she is not an illegitimate child. Instead, she is the heiress of the Mowbray family and she is therefore entitled to the family seat and the revenues related to it. These were along Mr. Mowbray's mother's letters in which she deploras her son's choice. The letters prove that the union was frowned up by his family. The discovery of the certificates exemplifies the drawback of clandestine marriages: even though the ceremony was performed twice, it takes nearly two decades for the truth to be revealed and acknowledged.

So the support of clandestine marriage... in *Emmeline* between the heroine's aristocratic father and commoner mother, is not simply an opposition of the new and the old. Rather, it takes an unfulfilled promise of the old order—in this case 'natural' unions of passion that know not class distinctions—and make it the future towards which the new order is unfolding. (K. F. Ellis 97)

Ellis argues that the passion that impelled Mr. Mowbray to marry Emmeline's mother, or Lady Adelina to have an affair with Fitz-Edward, marks the beginnings of the new system of values.

destitution—or, for that matter, all the others suitors to the exception of Godolphin—is similar to the plot of *Pride and Prejudice* ("The Happy Marriage" 123).

²⁵² In "Women and Property in Late Eighteenth-Century Fiction: Gendered Property and Generic Belonging in Charlotte Smith and Mary Wollstonecraft," Kaley Kramer states that "Smith's heroines face the conventional problems associated with female disinheritance from cultural, social, economic, and familial support networks" (1150). These caskets are literally everything that Emmeline owns, besides her personal items. Yet, they are tied to her inheritance, in literal and figurative terms.

Female passion should not be feared, but instead with proper examination and scrutiny, it can be a positive outlet. That is not to say that all expressions of passion are constructive. Delamere is a good example of how destructive passion can be if it is not regulated. Moreover, as the fate of Augusta's sister illustrates, passion is not always the catalyst to "natural unions:" she marries clandestinely Mr. Crofts. Her clandestine marriage is contrasted with Mr. Mowbray's: while the first originates in her jealousy of her sister Augusta, the latter is based on true love. Miss Delamere is a coquet²⁵³ and her reaction upon meeting her happily married sister highlights the difference between Emmeline's parents' clandestine union and Miss Delamere's: "she had repented of her clandestine union almost as soon as she had formed it, the comparison between her sister's husband and her own had embittered her temper" (*EOC* 310). Since passion always finds a path to surface, she takes to gambling and her public affair with Bellozane brings shame and dishonour to Lord Montreville.²⁵⁴

Ironically, the papers which contain the proof of the marriage between Emmeline's parents were always in her possession and followed her from Mowbray Castle to St. Alpin. Yet, Emmeline needed to take the journey before being able to emancipate herself from Lord Montreville. She needed to learn by experience that she is not the helpless woman that she was led to believe. Between the moment that she received the paper and the moment that she realizes their legal significance, Emmeline has found her strength and has built a circle of close friends around her. Nevertheless, before she can challenge Lord Montreville's claims

²⁵³ For more on Miss Delamere (also known later as Lady Frances) and Lady Adelina and the dissipation of the metropolitan women, see Kate Scarth's "The Obligation of Social Form: Social Practice in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline* and *Celestina*."

²⁵⁴ Eleanor Ty remarks on the similarities between *Emmeline* and *Mansfield Park* that "Both Austen and Smith use the disgraceful affairs to show the inconstancy and unsteadiness of the suitors. The rash, unthinking act of going off with a married woman becomes the irrevocable step that divides these incompatible suitors from the heroines" (327).

on Mowbray Castle, she needs more proof than the papers and her friendship with Le Limosin proves to be an invaluable ally as he was a witness of Mr. Mowbray's weddings to Emmeline's mother. With his testimony, Emmeline adds a legal protection to her claim to Mowbray Castle. Indeed, it is easy for Lord Montreville to deny her claim by arguing that the certificates are either forged or entirely fabricated. She cannot on her own confront her legal guardian and accuse him of defrauding her of her property. She must then appeal to the legal channels in which, as a woman, she has but little access and little agency.²⁵⁵ For example, Mrs. Stafford is unable to convince James Crofts of not seizing Woodfield and she thus must follow her husband in France until their financial situation is stable. In the matter of Emmeline's inheritance, Lord Montreville has the upper hand as the legal institutions are not designed to consider women as credible agents. Helped by his lawyers, he could destroy Emmeline's claims and maintain his grasp on her financial situation.

Fortunately, Emmeline can count on the support of Lord Westhaven, who grants credibility to her claim. Upon looking at the documents, he is astonished by Lord Montreville's behaviour. He expresses his utmost disbelief: "Yet, from a man of honour—from Lord Montreville—such conduct is most unworthy. I can hardly conceive it possible that he should be guilty of such a concealment" (*EOC* 346). They do not know, however, that he is not aware of the deception. Sir Richard Crofts, who had voluntarily destroyed documents that proved Emmeline's legitimacy, continues his deceit and advises Lord Montreville to delay answering his niece while he plans on destroying the certificates. Furthermore, it is a sudden

²⁵⁵ Emmeline's helplessness is one characteristic that defines Charlotte Smith's writing. Jacqueline Labbé asserts that "her poetry is infused with sadness and loss, need and grief, and she returns repeatedly to her lack of a home, of succour, of protection. In fact, she makes her sorrows plain: financial troubles, wastrel husband, dishonest lawyers. She comports herself as a romantic figure, an abandoned wife, a needy but devoted mother... In short, she plays the gender game with skill" (12–3).

reversal of fortune for the young woman: Lord Montreville, out of spite and influenced by Sir Richard Crofts, has been inconsistent in sending her the promised allocations to support her daily expenses. “Sir Richard had conceived against Emmeline the most unmanly and malignant hatred, and had invariably opposed every tendency which he had observed in Lord Montreville to befriend and assist her, for no other reason but that he had already irreparably injured her” (*EOC* 398). Thus influenced, he has very little interest to recognize Emmeline as his brother’s legitimate heiress. Moreover, Lady Montreville feels with an acute pain the prospect of Emmeline finally inheriting her father’s estate.

That Emmeline Mowbray, whom she had despised and rejected, should suddenly become heiress to a large fortune, and that of that fortune her own children should be deprived; that Lord Westhaven should be the instrument to assist her in this hateful transition, and should interfere for this obscure orphan against the interest of the illustrious family into which he had married, stung her to the soul. (*EOC* 432)

Only Delamere sees the news as positive: he is convinced that his father will finally agree to the union between him and Emmeline as a tactic to keep the assets with the Montreville family.

However, Emmeline has no interest in marrying Delamere, or anyone else for that matter, as she has explained herself to Lady Westhaven. Despite Godolphin’s declaration of love, Emmeline acts with prudence when it comes to matrimony. “But Emmeline still adhered to her resolution of remaining single, if not ‘till she was of age, at least till her affairs with her uncle were adjusted, and ‘till she saw the unhappy Delamere restored to health and tranquility” (*EOC* 419). She fears the retribution of Lord Montreville who could cut her from her inheritance before she comes of ages. Part of her reasoning is also that she has witnessed both Mrs. Stafford and Lady Adelina live through bad marriages and she does not want to repeat

the same mistake as they did. Fortunately for Lady Adelina, she receives the news that her husband passed away. Since she is still weak, both physically and mentally, Godolphin blocks Fitz-Edward to communicate or see her fearing that he would induce another episode of delirium. Fitz-Edward's visit surprises everyone and despite sending Lady Adelina in a delirium, Emmeline is able to convince Godolphin to show clemency towards Fitz-Edwards: as Lady Adelina's confusion is short-lived, Emmeline advocates on his behalf. The morning after the events, he thanks her, telling her that "Godolphin wishes me not now to see his sister. I have acquiesced. He wishes me even to refrain from seeing her 'till she has been six months a widow. With this, also, I have complied... Ah! Generous, lovely Emmeline! *You* can influence the mind of your friend" (EOC 448). Though Lady Adelina is now freed from her husband,²⁵⁶ she is not yet at liberty to resume her relation with Fitz-Edward, nor is she entirely looking forward to it. The narrative parts with the star-crossed lovers in those terms: "Fitz-Edward... with the most painful reluctance, tearing himself from Lady Adelina by her express desire, was yet allowed to carry with him the hope, that at the end of her mourning she would relent, and accede to the entreaties of all her family" (EOC 475). Lady Adelina seems to exert more control this time over her life instead of giving in to her passions.²⁵⁷

Emmeline's decision to remain single is also an attempt to spare Delamere's feeling as she does not want to exacerbate his condition and feed his jealousy. He recovers from the fever, but he remains weak and more susceptible to fall prey to his irritability. He persists in

²⁵⁶ "That Charlotte Smith did not find it necessary to kill Adelina, as Elizabeth Gaskell would find it necessary to kill Ruth sixty-five years later, indicates that the narrowing of female sexual possibilities in print that had begun in the middle of the eighteenth century was still in an early stage" (K. F. Ellis 83).

²⁵⁷ When examining *The Romance of the Forest*, Mary Jacobus draws parallels between Radcliffe's novel and Rousseau's precepts on female education, "where constraints imposed on women become the mode of simultaneously arousing and restraining the desires of men and women's role is to make men strong by surrendering their own desires; it is this that makes possible the domestication of desire" (254). Lady Adelina, after failing to domesticate her desires, and incidentally those of Fitz-Edwards, imitates Emmeline and represses them.

his belief that Emmeline is partial to the Chevalier de Bellozane, whom she met at St. Alpin. Delamere refuses to listen to what Emmeline actually tells him and instead believes in her duplicity. He is therefore surprised and hurt to witness his sister's behaviour with Bellozane.

Bellozane... was soon so much at ease in the family, and so great a favourite with her Ladyship, that only her high rank exempted her from those censures, which, in a less elevated condition, would have fallen on her, from the grave and sagacious personages who are so good as to take upon them the regulation of the world. (*EOC* 433)

Lady Frances' affair becomes too big to ignore for Lady Montreville who implores her own son to fix the situation. Both the mother and the son are mentally weakened by their respective health concerns and she fails to anticipate his own furious reaction. Once she realizes that he has the intention to duel Bellozane, she succumbs to her illness. To make matter worse for the Montrevilles, Delamere is wounded in the duel. Despite Godolphin's quick intervention, Delamere's wounds are too extensive and he follows his mother to the grave. "It was the excruciating task allotted to Emmeline to inform this wretched parent that his only son, the pride and support of his life, had fallen; and what made it still more horrid, by the hand of his daughter's paramour" (*EOC* 471). Delamere's passionate disposition finally costs him his life.

Delamere's death changes the relation between Emmeline and her uncle. Since she has never entirely complied with his instructions, Lord Montreville holds a grudge. Discussing the dual-nature of the gothic feminism—that it is both a submission to and a rebellion against societal norms—Hoeveler argues that the same duality is present within Emmeline:

In an analogous manner I would contend that the British middle class built itself on the shorn backs of the aristocracy, taking wealth and property where they could and justifying the rout by exposing the emotional and spiritual inadequacies of the class they were replacing. It is no fluke that Emmeline is an aristocrat though her weak father and a member of the middle class through her beautiful mother. She is the embodiment of a society in transition, and thus

unable to understand the rapid social and cultural changes occurring all around her. (49–50)

Though they had somewhat reconciled when Lord Montreville transferred Mowbray Castle to Emmeline—he recognized the errors in the way he had treated her—it is only when hearing the news of his son’s death that Lord Montreville really understands the scope of his behaviour towards his niece. “Uncle! ... Have I deserved to be your uncle? But I am punished—dreadfully, dreadfully punished!” he tells her (*EOC* 472). The most troubling in that dysfunctional relationship is that he blames his son’s death on his refusal to consent to the union between his son and his niece: “Instead of seeing thus my hopes blasted, I might have grown old among his children and the children of my brother’s daughter. But I drove her to France; and in consequence of that, the scourge, the dreadful scourge has come upon me!” (*EOC* 472). Lord Montreville thus proves that he never had Emmeline’s interests at heart: she was always treated as a commodity; a thing that could be moved around according to his own agenda. When she refuses to marry Maloney or Rochely, she rejects the thought of marriage as purely a financial transaction as well as the idea that protection only comes from a male figure.

Even Mrs. Stafford and Lady Westhaven, who are her allies, believe that they can change her mind on the subject: the first tries to convince her that the only solution to end Delamere’s possessiveness is to marry Godolphin; the latter believes that her brother’s passionate temper is only a proof of his true love for Emmeline as she fails to recognize the abusive nature of his conduct. The only man who listens to her and respects her desires is Godolphin. Even though he knows that she has feelings for him, he defers to her and does not press her on to convince her otherwise. Only Delamere’s death therefore completely frees Emmeline from her self-restraint: she can finally follow Mrs. Stafford’s advice without fearing Delamere’s retaliation. The wedding, only a small celebration between immediate family

members due to the circumstances, restores some unity to the families. Even Lord Montreville, who now lives as a recluse in Kent writes to her that “after deploring, in terms expressive of anguish and regret, that unfortunate infatuation which had eventually robbed him of his son, he told her that he had very little now to wish, dead as he was to the world, than to see her happily married” (*EOC* 475). Through his loss, Lord Montreville finally appreciates and values his daughter and his niece, whom he used to consider as burdensome, although he laments the cost of this revelation. Emmeline, now married, can now return to Mowbray Castle²⁵⁸ as its rightful owner where she is welcomed by “numberless tenants and dependants, who blessed the hour of its restoration to its benevolent and lovely mistress” (*EOC* 476). Her *Bildung* is completed: she has learnt the rules of society through imitation of others, but when pressured to act in a way contrary to her values, she resisted. After claiming her matrimonial independence, she listens to her friends and family and allows herself to be liberated from the shadows of her childhood and cleansed from her parents’ tragic passions.

Despite the fact that *Ormond* ends with the expectations of Ormond’s union to Miss Annaly, the marriage does not represent the end of Ormond’s *Bildung* as it does for Emma and Fanny. Before he can redeem himself in her eyes, he is confronted by a multitude of possible social worlds. The young protagonist needs to find an anchor to resist the disorganization and dissolution ahead. He finds solace in his childhood memories, spent in the Black Isles at the margins of the Irish society. Edgeworth uses these idyllic moments to ponder and comment on the state of the political world in Ireland as she compares the retrograde Black Isles clan

²⁵⁸ “The sole remaining couple in the novel who experience connubial happiness—Emmeline and Godolphin—enjoy a much more complex spatial arrangement: both Mowbray Castle and East Cliff will become ‘home’ to the happy couple, and Emmeline and Godolphin will presumably alternate their time spent in each location. In addition, each site is liminal, existing on the very ‘edges’ of Great Britain” (Oliver 209). They are in a way representative of their owners: both Godolphin and Emmeline shy away from being the center of attention and prefer staying at the periphery of society.

system to the “progressive” parliament.²⁵⁹ Both political systems are embodied by Ormond’s guardians, role models, and spiritual father figures, the former by King Corny and the latter by Sir Ulick of Castle Hermitage. Their values and lessons become tools for Ormond to face his problems and finally become a man. While Cecilia’s fever is a dramatic moment that serves as a unifying event, in *Ormond*, it is through his mentors’ death that he can finally reconcile the self with the community.²⁶⁰ Their death offers a vantage point to compare the repercussions of both systems on a larger scale: as leaders of their community, many people depended on them and their death changes the social landscape of the Black Isles and of Castle Hermitage. As their spiritual son, Ormond inherits the memories and lessons from their deception, kindness, drunkenness, and thirst for power and affluence and use them to rebuild his life around as a better man than they could be, for his community, but also ultimately, as a better leader figure for Ireland.

Their death reveals the true impact they have on their community and on Ormond. When King Corny dies following a hunting accident, the whole community of the Black Islands participate in the wake following the Irish traditions. “This night, and for two succeeding nights, the doors of Corny Castle remained open for all who chose to come. Crowds, as many, and more, than the castle could hold, flocked to king Corny’s wake, for he was greatly beloved” (*O* 145). The maid, Sheelah states that there was “plenty of cake, and wine, and tea, and tobacco, and snuff—every thing handsome as possible, and honourable to the deceased, who was always open-handed and open-hearted, and with open house too” (*O*

²⁵⁹ According to Amit Yahav, “From Owenson’s or Maturin’s perspective—as well as from Trumpener’s—Edgeworth’s national tales are both not radical enough and paradoxical, for they demonstrate the inevitability of local determinations, at the same time that they embrace a certain level of systematicity and suspect the preservationist ethos” (80).

²⁶⁰ I here exclude Moriarty’s gunshot wounds, even though it is the catalyst of Ormond’s reformation.

145). The spirit of community is exposed as the wake becomes a gathering for the people of the Black Islands: “His praises, from time to time, were heard, and then the common business of the country was talked of—and jesting and laughter went on—and all night there were tea-drinkings for the women, and punch for the men” (*O* 145–6) much to Ormond’s shock. While he assumes that such light-heartedness is a sign of disrespect to the deceased, he comes to understand the true sentiments of the people during King Corny’s funeral.

King Corny’s funeral was followed by an immense concourse of people, on horseback and on foot; men, women, and children: when they passed by the doors of cabins, a set of the women raised the funeral cry—not a savage howl, as is the custom in some parts of Ireland, but chanting a melancholy kind of lament, not without harmony, simple and pathetic. (*O* 146)

King Corny’s passing highlights the central role he played in the community, role that Ormond has to accept and bear during the wake and funeral.²⁶¹

Following his mentor’s death, Ormond travels to France where Dora lives with her husband, M. de Connal. There, Ormond experiences the thrill as well as the futility of the French court. His stay in France marks a period where Ormond is able to indulge in the pleasure society without giving in completely. By following his resolutions, he trades his Irish identity for one more compatible with the British values.²⁶² Ormond, because of his British identity—here taken in its largest definition as his code—is immune to the moral corruption of the Continent while Dora entangles herself in scandal only to be rescued by Ormond at the eleventh hour. Moreover, he can adapt his conduct to the different societies he encounters,

²⁶¹ In *Bardic Nationalism*, Katie Trumpener mentions that Edgeworth’s father—who was slowly dying from illness—was heavily involved in writing King Corny’s death scene. Richard Lovell Edgeworth died two weeks following the publication of *Ormond*. Trumpener writes that “*Ormond*, then is in several senses a testimonial to a dying patriarch” (64).

²⁶² Not that the Irish identity is limited to the clichés or stereotypes of the crude, loud, and intoxicated Irishman, but the novel provides ample examples of such behaviours.

while maintaining his code of conduct as established in the beginning of the novel.²⁶³ It is in France that Ormond is able to unite the best qualities of his two mentors: a malleability and an easiness to charm, with a steadfast code of honour. His charm, contrary to Sir Ulick's, is sincere and his code is devoted to sobriety and not drunkenness like King Corny's oath to never go to bed *not* inebriated (*O* 39).

Rumours about Sir Ulick's bankruptcy and cryptic messages from his bank concerning his money put an end to Ormond's stay in France. When he arrives at Castle Hermitage, the once prosperous house is a pale image of itself: the gates are closed, and there is no one to welcome back Ormond. When he is finally able to talk to a servant, the servant is the bearer of bad news as he reveals to Ormond that Sir Ulick has passed away.

‘Dead, he is, and cold, and in his coffin—this minute—and thanks be to God, if he is safe there even from them that are on the watch to seize his body!—In the dread of them creditors, orders were given to keep the gates locked. He is dead since Tuesday, sir—but hardly one knows it out of the castle—except us.’ (*O* 288)

Sir Ulick's deception continues even in death as his people must hide his body from his numerous creditors.²⁶⁴ On their way to the funeral, which consists of using “an under ground passage, that goes to the stables, and out by the lane of the churchyard” (*O* 288), the housekeeper informs Ormond of Sir Ulick's sudden illness and the necessity to hide his death. To further add to the dismal situation, Sir Ulick's son, Marcus, refused to pay the loyal servants their due wages. In all aspects, Sir Ulick's funeral is the opposite of his cousin: where

²⁶³ It must be noted that Ormond is constantly identified as the “*bel anglois*” by his French entourage. There are no mentions of his Irishness while in France. Ormond's journey to France makes possible a reunion of Irish and English values as they are both opposed to French decadence. An interesting contrast is Miss O'Faley, or *Mademoiselle*, who unites “French intrigue and Irish acuteness” (*Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* 634–35).

²⁶⁴ According to the editor Claire Connolly, creditors could seize the body of the deceased as a form of payment (313-14).

countless people flocked to bid farewell to King Corny, very few people attended Sir Ulick's.

And the few there could not escape making the comparison:

‘see the difference!’ said they; ‘the one was the true thing, and never changed—and after all, where is the great friends now?—the quality that used to be entertained at the castle above? Where is all the favors promised him now? What is it come to? See, with all his wit, and the schemes upon schemes, broke and gone, and forsook and forgot, and buried without a funeral, or a tear, but from Master Harry.’ (O 290)

Despite his best efforts to deceive and manipulate people, Sir Ulick's true character was known by the people around him. The contrast between the two men Ormond considered as father figures highlights the different kinds of leadership exercised by the two cousins.²⁶⁵ The benevolent king, despite the “royal” subordination of his people, was truly beloved by his people while the scheming statesman is buried in almost indifference, shunned from his influential acquaintances. Sir Ulick's legacy is quite different: a leaderless crowd and the ruins of vain promises of affluence.

Ruins²⁶⁶ haunts the Romantic period: they are the literal ruins of Tintern Abbey visited by Wordsworth and his sister or the figurative relics of the past as conjured by Scott in *Waverley*. With the Romantic authors, they become sites of memory waiting to pass on lessons and experiences. These are converted into immaterial inheritance for future generations. Such memory as immaterial inheritance can be found in *Ormond* and they operate on two levels in the novel. The first manner in which memory functions as legacy is the content of the narrative. Sir Ulick and King Corny bequeath two different kinds of heritage to Ormond and

²⁶⁵ Despite the general criticism painting Edgeworth as unawares of politics, Emma Peacocke in *Romanticism and the Museum*, argues that with *Harrington*, and by extension *Ormond*, she proves that Edgeworth was in fact quite aware of politics and actually combined them to discourses of public and private sphere (107).

²⁶⁶ For more on the intersection of ruins and sensibility in the Romantic period, see Inger Sigrun Brodey's *Ruined by Design: Shaping Novels and Gardens in the Culture of Sensibility*.

these shape the conclusion of the novel. Near the end of the novel, Ormond is offered two opportunities: Marcus is selling Castle Hermitage to raise funds and M. de Connal is selling the Black Islands as Dora and he are living on the Continent. Ormond, with his money intact from Sir Ulick's schemes, faces a most difficult choice. He can either choose the place immortalizing his carefree childhood, or he can restore the lordly place that saw him mature as a man. He can either choose his Irish side with the Black Islands or his English side by choosing Castle Hermitage. Ultimately, Ormond casts his choice: he buys the Black Islands from M. de Connal and Dora.

His reasoning is simple and demonstrates how he has grown into his own identity: even though he could return the mansion to its former glory and entertain the best of the Anglo and Irish society, he would still not be the rightful owner of Castle Hermitage as long as Marcus lives. On the other hand, the Black Islands are without proper leader since King Corny's death and Ormond, not M. de Connal, was always dubbed "Prince Harry" by the inhabitants of the islands. Moreover, by choosing the Black Islands over Castle Hermitage, Ormond chooses an industrious community over vacuous individuality and established traditions over uncertain progress. "Ormond's future home on the Black Islands has features of a transnational Utopia, but on resonantly Irish terms: a mixed community; industry, employment, and children at school; and the Gaelic-Catholic dream, a restitution of the land" (Cosgrove 56). Ormond is bound to lead the people of the Black Islands toward a better future, as he has a better understanding of their manners and sentiments than before he attended King Corny's wake.

Yet by the time she writes *Ormond*, Edgeworth's own utilitarianism is softened by a new, sympathetic interest in how traditional societies function as closed cultural economies, staunchly resisting improvement. The outstanding, endearing characteristic of King Corny's domain is the fact that everything in it, beginning with the shoes, are homemade. (Trumpener 63)

The second level is in the form of the novel: it stands as a memory of what could have been but never was. Edgeworth merges history with romance to address issues that otherwise would be impossible to publish without conjuring the prospect of riots caused by the Act of Union.²⁶⁷ Because the novel is set before the Act of Union, in which Ireland was annexed to Great Britain and before the riots and uprisings of 1798, she can summon the national-Irish spirit while maintaining the national—British status quo. Furthermore, she continues to muddle the genre of the narrative as she gives her novel the appearance of being an historical portrait: she covers the romance aspect with historically truthful references. L.M. Cullen states that Edgeworth’s books “are a parody in which a sense of reality is created by the accuracy of everyday details and of speech, but where the novelist enjoys a wide freedom in imagination by putting the scene safely... in an irrevocable past” (qtd. in Cosgrove 67).

In *Ormond*, the action is set in an indefinite 18th century. Sir Ulick’s speculation schemes around the construction of the Grand Canal²⁶⁸ sets the novel somewhere between 1715 and 1800. Ormond’s stay in France, where the narrator makes reference to Marie-Antoinette as the Dauphinesse, would normally restrict the action to the period between 1770 and 1774, which are the years between her marriage to Louis XVI and his ascension to the throne of France. Yet, the text resists identification as Peter Cosgrove reports temporal inconsistencies within the text: Moriarty escapes from the Kilmainham Jail in Dublin to alert Ormond, his mentor and friend, of Sir Ulick’s schemes to “borrow” and “employ” his money.

²⁶⁷ In *Vocational Philanthropy and British Women’s Writings, 1790-1810: Wollstonecraft, More, Edgeworth, Wordsworth*, Patricia Comitini writes that “Edgeworth guided her readers’ responses in order to create a readership whose shared experiences consolidate them into a category or a ‘class’ of people who have specific moral and social responsibilities: that is, to facilitate the reformation and improvement of those around them through sympathy and benevolent feeling” (112).

²⁶⁸ For more on the importance of the Canal, bog, and drainage, in Edgeworth’s fiction—especially in light of corruption—see Katie Trumpener’s *Bardic Nationalism*, 61-66.

The problem with that passage is that Cosgrove reports that the prison was built around 1792, decades after the glorious days of the Dauphiness. The reference may be historically inaccurate; but its purpose is not so much to depict the situation in Ireland as it was before the French Revolution, but as it is after the Act of Union.²⁶⁹ As Moriarty is sent to Kilmainham under false accusations in the novel, the anachronistic prison becomes the site of nationalism, alluding to the leaders of the 1798 rebellions incarcerated there.

Ormond's anachronistic elements as detailed by Cosgrove are not true anachronisms but rather reveal that *Ormond's* Ireland is a fictional account of the past, an interpretation of the past to mend the present. Through the characterization of Ormond, Edgeworth uses her creative licence to wrap the present in the guise of the past. Much like it is known to contemporary readers that the legacy of Louis XIV, the grandeur of the court of Versailles, came to a tragic end with Louis XVI, they know that Ireland's autonomy after the Act of Union and the clan system as it is known is bound to expire.²⁷⁰

She indicates that the various historical societies through which Harry Ormond wanders are illusions, illusions with only a tenuous hold on existence and all of which have vanished by the end of the novel, mirroring the illusion that Irish history had in some sense ended with the Act of Union. (Cosgrove 66)

By using a fictionalized past and comparing two different legacies, Edgeworth attempts to channel or inspire both the Irish and the Anglo-Irish to govern Ireland as one with a hero embodying what is deemed the best of the two cultures: a sense of the community deeply

²⁶⁹ Pittock affirms that this is intentional: it is a chronotope and "Edgeworth distorts her own chronotope... so that the time and space officially present in the text and plot are not always consistent with those to which either the footnotes or the text alludes. By distorting her time-space envelope she expands it" (168).

²⁷⁰ For more the political instability in Ireland following the French Revolution and the Union to the United Kingdom, see Mary Jean Corbett's *Allegories of Union in Irish and English Writing, 1790-1870: Politics, History, and the Family from Edgeworth to Arnold*, 21-50.

entrenched in Protestant ethics, and the education of both the mind and the soul.²⁷¹ Ormond—the character as well as the novel—is a hybrid resisting categorization: the novel is part romance and part historical novel as the character is Irish but Protestant. *Ormond* is both the nostalgic ruins of a past Ireland and the utopia of a better future.

As Ormond learns the value of humbleness and repentance, he is able to face Miss Annaly again and make amends for his previous rash behaviour. “Ormond took his share of the blame so frankly and with so good a grace, and described with such truth the agony he had been thrown into by the sight of the kneeling figure in regimentals, that lady Annaly could not help comforting him” (*O* 294). Together, they can solve the miscommunication that almost prevented them from uniting two cultures. Ormond has completed his *Bildung*: his brash and sanguine past self has been tamed into a man, maybe quick in action, but who now considers the future consequences of his acts. “Harry Ormond, the propertyless hero of Edgeworth’s last Irish novel, also receives a social and economic education, although, as an Irish resident, it is one based on his experience of contrasting social formations *within* Ireland (and, to a lesser extent, in old-regime France)” (Easton 115). While Marcus must auction Castle Hermitage to repay some of his debts, Ormond can contemplate a future with Miss Annaly made of a “perfect felicity” (*O* 298). For some, it might be counterintuitive that despite Edgeworth’s didacticism throughout the novel that the natural son, with the proper guidance, outdoes the formally-schooled son. However, the novel is so invested in the development through experience that it is but logical that the honest but rough-around-the-edges man must triumph

²⁷¹ On the subject of nationalism in Edgeworth’s novels, Seamus Deane asserts that “The power of her analysis of the Irish situation depends on her version of national character, even though the reality she ascribes to this makes the ‘moral’ of her novels—the exercise of redemptive rationality and responsible authority—inoperable. In that sense, her fiction is not an analysis but a symptom of the colonial problem the country represented” (*Strange Country* 32–3).

from the polished but deceptive man: while Marcus was never shown how to care for others but himself, Ormond learns from the people around him.

The restoration of the *bildungsheld* in the community is not without its pains. The protagonists' experience of freedom often tears up the social fabric and they must make amends for the errors of youth. Emma, Waverley, and Ormond must atone for their decisions and find a path to true happiness. Emma first abandons the notion that she knows better than anyone, and she listens to the people around her. She lets go of her plans of improving Harriet: she realizes that she can no longer play games with people's life. The cruel treatment of Miss Bates and of Jane Fairfax turns out to be a painful but necessary lesson for Emma. Waverley must follow the path of rebellion in order to prove his loyalty, even when he realizes that he is on the wrong side of history. Waverley, by returning to Scotland, proves that his loyalty is not wavering: his careful restoration of Tully-Veolan, down to Bradwardine's silver cup, proves that he can balance the modern political situation with the old-fashioned style of Scotland. In Ormond's case, the death of his two mentors puts in perspective the kind of man he wants to be. This allows him to return to Miss Annaly and explain his rash conduct. He is also more at ease to choose the type of community he wants to be in: he chooses to return to the Black Islands, where he can make a difference. They all, through a form of contrition, finalize their *Bildung*, which is highlighted by the prosperous marriages that they each enter.

For Fanny, Cecilia, and Emmeline, it is not so much them that needed to change, but the society around them needed to see them for who they really are. Fanny's true virtue and worth were not understood at Mansfield Park because of the mercenary views on matrimony, both from the Bertrams and the Crawfords. Her steadfast principles clashed within them and it is only through a major crisis that those principles are considered exemplary. Cecilia, who was

always reluctant to wear a mask—literal and figural—chose nevertheless to hide her union to Mortimer. Her fever and delirium are not consequences of such a deception, yet it played a predominant part in her crisis. As she lies unconscious, the people close to her gather to mourn her loss, paying their respect to her virtues and benevolence. When she recovers, she learns and applies the lessons that excess in everything, good or bad, is essentially to be avoided. It is then that she can finally enjoy the fruits of marriage with Mortimer. Emmeline, like Fanny, finds herself at odds with her uncle: she must fight the legal system to claim what is her due, that is Mowbray Castle and the money attached to it. Her steadfast and almost faultless conduct is strongly contrasted to the volatile and abusive behaviour of Delamere. At this stage, the Bildungsroman's protagonists no longer see society as evil, nor do they see independence as good, but that a balance between self and society must be achieved for order to be restored.

Conclusion

*And knowledge to the studious sage;
And pillow to the head of age.
To thee, dear school-boy, whom my lay
Has cheated of thy hour of play,
Light task, and merry holiday!
To all, to each, a fair good-night,
And pleasing dreams, and slumbers light!*
Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion*

The Romantic period is a tumultuous age, an era that saw many changes: a massive revolution in France, almost continuous wars,²⁷² and the rise of nationalism throughout Europe. Many of these events have roots in the Enlightenment, and many have their conclusion in the Victorian period. Nevertheless, it is an age of contradiction: for instance, scientific discoveries abound and are widely shared—in part due to the progress of the printing press—at the same time that the supernatural rises in the form of Gothic novels and poetry. It is an age of wonders that is marked with struggles and massacres. To use the words of Dickens: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair” (1). From this age of paradoxes comes a new genre of novel: the Bildungsroman. In a time marked by discourses on the universal Rights of men and about the kinship of mankind, the genre that stands out is about the singularity of a protagonist’s trajectory in life. This genre details the movements from interiority to society. This is the most captivating element when analyzing the genre: the possibility to learn with and from someone else; to witness their trials,

²⁷² With the Continent and with the Americas.

their mistakes; and to enjoy (or not) with them their rewards. It can be frustrating at times to look at Cecilia, for instance, and her blindness when it comes to Mr. Harrel's schemes and web of lies, yet those are valuable lessons, both for Cecilia and for the reader. As readers, we learn vicariously through her mistakes. The lessons may not always apply as they are—the etiquette of the London society at the turn of the nineteenth century may be obsolete—but their essence remains.

The *bildungsheld's* progress in society toward achieving the often elusive balance between self and society continues to be an important theme in contemporary literature. It maintains the idea—dear to the Romantics—of a social contract between the protagonist and society, as Moretti points out:

Marriage as a metaphor for the social contract: this is so true that the classical Bildungsroman does not contrast marriage with celibacy, as would after all be logical, but with death (Goethe) or 'disgrace' (Austen). One either marries or, in one way or another, must leave social life: and for more than a century European consciousness will perceive the crisis of marriage as a rupture that not only divide a couple, but destroys the very roots—Anna Karenina, Emma Bovary, Effi Briest—of those sentiments that keep the individual 'alive.' (22–23)

While comedies often use the joyous nature of marriage as conclusions, it must be repeated that the return to society does not necessarily implies that the novel has to end on a cheerful note. Burney's novel endings became increasingly dark as the author aged and, during the Victorian period, many Bildungsromane end with the protagonist either oppressed or ultimately crushed by society. Death compels communities—both small and large—to join and to assess the individual's worth and contribution to society as well as its singularity and to mourn the deceased. This communal introspection enables what are deemed "failed" returns to communities: whether the protagonists come back of their own accord or not, the community

can accept the return on the behalf of the protagonists.²⁷³ In some pessimistic Bildungsromane, death is the only way a protagonist can overcome the perils of independence and isolation. The *Bildung* is nevertheless completed: the *bildungsheld* returns to society as the community mourns the loss. Without the Romantic hope, the restoration to society cannot always be on positive terms from the Victorian age onwards.²⁷⁴

Marc Redfield describes the Bildungsroman as a ghost, a visible but non-corporal entity. Contrary to the Gothic or historical novel of the Romantic period, the Bildungsroman lacks an established definition that unites both content and form. Many critics have tried to formulate the all-defining characterization that would solve a now two-century old conundrum: what is the Bildungsroman? I do not claim that *A Romantic Bildung* is a perfect solution to this puzzle. However, looking at the variety of texts—Smith’s fictionalized Gothic biography, Burney’s conduct book, Edgeworth’s national tale, Scott’s historical novel and Austen’s novels of manners—it is clear that the Bildungsroman is not as dependent on form as it is on content. As such, the Bildungsroman is not so much a ghost, but a climbing plant that needs the support of another tree in order to grow.

With the right narrative arc, namely the education, self-determination, and return to society, it is quite possible that any novelistic genre, from science fiction to realism, could be classified as a Bildungsroman. The distinction, as pointed out, is that contrary to the Romantic Bildungsroman, it is possible that the narrative’s conclusion is not entirely positive. It is truly a

²⁷³ For instance, in Hardy’s *Tess of the D’urbervilles*, Tess, associated with nature and paganism, can only return to society as an object of a “pagan” sacrifice. The only way she can fit in society—and can be accepted for who she is—is, unfortunately, as a dead body.

²⁷⁴ Gregory Castle, in *Reading the Modernist Bildungsroman*, argues that “What we perceive to be the failures of Bildung in modernist Bildungsromane can thus be read as critical triumphs” (3) and that the modernist Bildungsroman acts as a “double gesture of recuperation and critique that characterizes the modernist Bildungsroman” (4).

characteristic of its time that the Romantic Bildungsroman remains positive. Despite the horrors of the French Revolution, the wars and the social struggles, the Bildungsroman offers a glimmer of hope that the best is yet to come. After the treason, the delirium, the alienation, the illness, and the deaths, Cecilia, Emmeline, Waverley, Emma, Fanny, and Ormond all end in a better situation than they first experienced: when the *Bildung* is over, there is order and peace.

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