Expanding restrictions: Charlotte Smith and the eighteenth-century women's fiction tradition

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Expanding restrictions: Charlotte Smith and the eighteenth-century women's fiction tradition

by

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I. CHARLOTTE SMITH'S PLACE WITHIN THE WOMEN'S FICTION TRADITION

The eighteenth century saw the rise of the novel as the dominant literary form in England. With the development of this form, women authors began to achieve both prominence and profit. While both men and women were writing novels, women novelists outnumbered men toward the end of the century (Rogers, Feminism, 22). By the late eighteenth century, contemporary critics had even begun to note the "blossoming" of women as writers. In 1792, a writer in the New Lady's Magazine noted optimistically that many women writers of the time were too excellent to ever be forgotten (in Spencer, 3).

As the novel developed, and women writers began to find their place in public writing, they found it necessary to create traditions and forms of their own. With the wide and deep separation between the sexes in the eighteenth century, they could not merely follow the forms and traditions which had been created and utilized by male writers. As ladies, women writers could not, for example, write picaresque novels involving the protagonist in a series of sexual adventures. Furthermore, as Joanna Russ has noted in our own time, the accepted sphere of feminine experience in fiction is highly limited (10). As a result, not only the sexual adventure, but the physical adventure, such as that
in Robinson Crusoe, is off limits to the woman writer. Women writers needed a purpose and a form of their own. They found this form and purpose in writing the didactic novel (Figes, 15). The women writers could use their novels to teach proper behavior and attitudes to young women. This didactic form and purpose, which was also used by some male writers such as Richardson and Goldsmith, was the basic format from which women writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries developed their fiction tradition.

Samuel Richardson has been credited by many critics (Le Gates, Spencer, Utter and Needham) with creating the novel form which women writers used to create a "female" novel tradition. As Katherine Rogers has pointed out in Feminism in Eighteenth Century England, Richardson was a sentimentalist (Rogers, 125). His works privileged feelings and sensibilities over action and pragmatic concerns. Since eighteenth century ideology held that women were "creatures" of feeling, Richardson was working in a field that was presumably familiar to women, a field in which they felt they had some claim to particular knowledge. Even more important to women, however, was the fact that Richardson focused his narratives on the heroine rather than the hero. Women were the central characters in his novels Pamela and Clarissa while male characters acted as outside forces which the heroine and other female characters had to cope with.
Richardson's novels valued the feminine viewpoint, thus paving the way for female writers. Richardson delineated a space in which women writers could have special authority. Along with developing a "feminine" viewpoint and subject matter, Richardson also helped create another necessary element for the woman writer, a virtuous motive for writing. Although many women, including Charlotte Smith, wrote novels for the purpose of making money, the profit motive was not an acceptable one for a lady. As Rogers has pointed out, it was acceptable for a lady to write to relieve dire financial need, but not to obtain public recognition or personal gratification (Feminism, 24). Therefore, denied the usual motive espoused by male writers, creative satisfaction, women writers looked elsewhere for a justification for their writing. In Pamela, Richardson helped to illustrate that fictional works could be not only entertaining and profitable, but instructive. His heroines were to serve as role models or ideals of femininity for young readers (Rogers, Feminism, 133).

As Le Gates has noted, Richardson was drawing upon the conduct book literature that had been popular since the previous century (Le Gates, 27). This conduct book tradition continued down to Charlotte Smith's time. Books such as John Gregory's A Father's Legacy to His Daughters (1774) and James Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women (1794),
guided young ladies in proper behavior, advising modesty, submission, and chastity. In his novels, Richardson put the lessons these books provided into a palatable form. He makes this explicit at the end of *Pamela* where he provides a "few brief observations . . . which will serve as so many applications of its most material incidents to the minds of YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES" (Richardson, 530). Thus, the novel could be a moral teacher for the young: As Marlene Le Gates has described this type of novel: "This new literature, centering on the encounter between a sexually aggressive male and the innocent superior female, was the traditional conduct book fictionalized" (27). The exemplary actions of Richardson's heroines could guide the behavior of his readers.

Women writers found this didactic purpose particularly useful because teaching the young was a "feminine" occupation (Rogers, *Feminism*, 23). Uncomfortable with writing what male critics often saw as mere "romances," many women writers went to great lengths to emphasize the instructive purposes of their works. In 1795, Fanny Burney wrote to her father about *Camilla*, her second novel. "I own I do not like calling it a Novel: it gives so simply the notion of a mere love story, that I recoil a little from it. I mean it to be sketches of Characters & morals, put in action, not a Romance" (in Figes, 24).
Burney's *Evelina* is another good example of the didactic plot. As Evelina learns to live within the constraints of the society, she offers lessons to her audience on proper behavior at a ball or at home and proper behavior toward strangers. However, *Evelina* also illustrates the limits that the didactic heroine's story imposed upon the writer, limits which women writers would work under and try to circumvent until well into the nineteenth century. The form of the sentimental didactic novel, centered on the trials of a young virtuous heroine and her feelings and sensibilities, fit so perfectly with topics and concerns allowed to ladies in the eighteenth century that women writers found it difficult to expand or innovate without risking public censure (Rogers, *Feminism*, 23). Women at this time were strictly limited in the amount of self-assertion or individual choice they could exercise. Female virtues were usually expressed in negative terms, as things ladies should not do. Evelina is a good example of the type of heroine who exhibited correct "feminine" virtues. Evelina must learn, through her various misadventures in London, to live within many constraints. These include not selecting her own partner at a dance and not entering a carriage alone with a man who is not a relative. Evelina learns that it is generally unacceptable to be independent or self-assertive. This pattern of a virtuous chaste heroine who does not have
any real faults, but who is beset by difficulties, helped women writers in giving them a structure; but as Rogers has noted, "like any pattern, it could degenerate from a model to a set of constrictions" (Rogers, "Inhibitions," 64). The young naive heroine that was common to this type of novel could easily become insipid and unrealistic. Women writers found the pattern restrictive sometimes, but they did find ways to build upon it and develop within it.

One tradition that developed out of sentimental didacticism was the female Gothic tradition. Horace Walpole is usually given credit for developing the Gothic in The Castle of Otranto, published in 1764 (MacAndrew, 9). However, women writers found the Gothic a new way to develop the didactic form. Eva Figes in Sex and Subterfuge: Women Novelists to 1850, has pointed out that the Gothic novel presented a means for women writers and their heroines to escape the narrow bounds of correct female behavior (61). The Gothic fantasy world put young women in situations where they were forced to be active and to take the initiative. As Figes points out, the Gothic mode allowed writers to give their heroines active, positive virtues rather than passive negative ones. Anne Radcliffe (1764-1823), the most celebrated Gothic writer of the late 1700s, used Gothic horrors to illustrate the virtues of common sense over excessive sensibility and bravery over timidity. While
there are definitely appeals of horror and covert sexuality in Radcliffe's novels, the happy ending is brought about by the heroine conquering her fears and eluding both sexual and mortal threats through bravery and determination. Thus, the Gothic could be used to teach readers positive values, such as fortitude and self-reliance, that would be "unladylike" for a heroine to display in a more conventional setting.

In addition, the Gothic novel, as critics Claire Kahan and Jane Spencer have noted, also reflects women's feelings about their womanhood and the position of women in society. The castle in which the heroine lives can be seen as either a prison or a refuge (Spencer, 194). Also, although she is imprisoned, the heroine's ability to escape that imprisonment indicates her power (Spencer, 194). Therefore, the Gothic imprisonment is an ambivalent symbol, sometimes indicating women's powerlessness and sometimes their power. Thus, the Gothic was a didactic form but also allowed writers to address some issues, such as a woman's role in society, that were not openly discussed.

Charlotte Smith used both the traditional didactic form and elements of the newer Gothic form to address concerns about society in her own novels. Born into a prosperous family in 1749 and raised by an indulgent aunt after her mother's death when she was three, Charlotte Turner had a pampered childhood (Elwood, 285). When Charlotte was
fifteen, however, her father decided to remarry, and her family felt it would be better for her to be "established" by "an advantageous marriage" (Elwood, 287). Charlotte's marriage to Benjamin Smith, the son of an East India merchant, was apparently a constant struggle due to Benjamin's financial incompetence and what Anne Elwood calls his "habits of dissipation" (Elwood, 290). Charlotte Smith left her husband in about 1786 (Anne Elwood and Julia Kavanagh disagree about the exact date). It was shortly after this that Smith tried novel writing in an attempt to make money, publishing *Emmeline*, her first novel, in 1788.

Considering her own unhappy marriage and her constant financial difficulties as the single mother of eight children, it is not surprising that women's place in society and the difficulties of a woman trying to survive in a patriarchal system, became one of the dominant themes in Smith's novels. Beginning with the traditional heroine-centered didactic form, which she employed in her first three novels, and later turning to a hero-centered strategy, Smith portrayed the struggles of women in trying to maintain dignity and autonomy, and also explored with increasing subtlety the ways in which males create and exploit women's difficulties.

The three novels that I have chosen to study as illustrations of Smith's feminist concerns are *Emmeline*
In this period Smith also published two other novels, *Ethelinda* (1789) and *Desmond* (1792). In choosing to exclude *Ethelinda* and *Desmond* from this study of Charlotte Smith's early works, I have omitted material that is interesting in its illustration of Smith's development of the Gothic form and her growing interest in politics. However, neither novel contains elements which contradict the basic theories about Smith's changing focus and technique which I will be discussing. While *Ethelinda* and *Desmond* could have been used as additional illustration for my theories, I feel that particularly in the case of *Desmond* little of importance to this study is lost by the exclusion. While *Ethelinda* fits neatly in the stylistic progression from *Emmeline* to *Celestina*, Smith's focus in *Desmond* is so totally political, that the social elements of greatest interest in this study are overshadowed. *Ethelinda*, which contains many Gothic elements, is much closer in focus to the three novels I will discuss in depth. However, excluding *Ethelinda* allows me to more effectively cover the five year time span in which Smith's focus and technique were changing in significant ways. Therefore, in the interests of time and space constraints, I have confined myself to an in-depth discussion of three of Smith's earlier novels.
In *Emmeline*, Smith uses the well-established didactic heroine-centered form, but includes elements which indicate her feminist concerns. Emmeline, the heroine, has an impressive amount of perseverance. An active, courageous character, Emmeline preserves her feminine modesty and propriety but also exhibits more active virtues such as loyalty, common sense, and determination. In addition to creating an unusually strong heroine, Smith also addresses a number of important issues affecting women’s status in society.

First, Smith dramatizes the causes and effects of bad marriages. Using minor characters as illustrations, Smith shows how upper class males’ lack of practical and ethical training causes them to be incompetent husbands. The bad husbands in the book, possibly based on Mr. Smith, have been raised indulgently, never being taught the value of self-discipline, and never being restrained from gratifying their physical appetites. This discussion of bad marriages, and the overly-indulgent male upbringing that leads to them, is closely related to a second major issue in *Emmeline*, male education. Smith uses Emmeline’s suitor, Delamere, as an example of the tragic consequences of the typical male education of the period. As the only son of a nobleman, Delamere is never taught to restrain his temper or his passions. His impetuous behavior as a result leads to
unhappiness for himself and others and eventually to his death. Smith does not portray Delamere as a villain; in fact, she shows that he has many good qualities that are unfortunately marred by his lack of constraint and consideration for others. Finally, in *Emmeline* Smith uses the subplot of Fitz-Edward and Adelina to present what Spencer identifies as "the new feminist revision of the seduction tale" (Spencer, 128). Through this story of a "fallen" woman, Smith attempts to show how the conventions of society, and specifically men's inadequate social educations, cause women to commit the acts for which this same society then condemns them.

In *Celestina*, Smith "softens" the heroine, making her more conventional and creating a world in which Emmeline-like self-assertion is impossible. While still a strong heroine, Celestina has more traditional, passive virtues. She is more timid than Emmeline, and unable to defy social convention for fear of damaging her reputation. While making her heroine more conventional, however, Smith becomes more insistent upon the flaws of male education. She shows how her gentle virtuous heroine is forced to cope with obnoxious suitors, whose various educations have taught them to regard women either as sexual objects or as ethereal objects of devotion. In either case, the woman's humanity is ignored, and her rights to dignity and self-determination
violated. Smith, as I will argue later, concentrates more and more on the male figures in her novels, finding perhaps that male behavior makes independent and progressive female characters unviable.

Smith's sense of her heroines' limitations in the face of societal constraints reaches its culmination in The Old Manor House. In this novel, the shy and fragile heroine, Monimia, is literally imprisoned in an old house by her aunt. The fact that Monimia's persecutor is female reflects an even greater pessimism about women's ability to change society than in earlier novels, where women were oppressed by men. Having taken her vision of female constraints and limitations to its logical conclusion, Smith turns her attention from the heroine to the hero. Through his eyes she depicts the selfish men and oppressed women society has produced. While poor marriages are also discussed in The Old Manor House, as they were in Emmeline and Celestina, this novel focuses more specifically on the customs of society that either cause or allow men to become incompetent husbands.

As can be seen from this brief overview, Charlotte Smith utilized the women's didactic tradition in fiction. However, while most writers within this tradition focused on the development of the heroine, Smith expressed broader concerns in her work. She seems to have become increasingly
convinced that male roles must be modified, and men taught to exercise more judgment, self-discipline, and sensitivity to others before women could play wider and more satisfying roles in either life or fiction.
II. EMMELINE

In 1786, Charlotte Smith left her husband, Benjamin, whom she had married in 1765 when she was only 15 years old. Since the marriage, Mr. Smith had been in constant financial difficulties, spending time in debtor's prison and also in France, where he fled to escape creditors (Elwood, 294). At the time of separation, Charlotte Smith had borne 12 children, nine of whom were living. It was apparently in an effort to raise money to support herself and her children that Smith turned to writing fiction, publishing Emmeline, her first novel, in 1788.

Modern feminist critics have mixed reactions to Emmeline. Some see it as an example of the conventional novel of female development, which focused on the courtship period of a delicate and sensitive heroine. Eva Figes, for example, refers to Emmeline as "a rattling romantic yarn on the Pamela model" (57). Dale Spender refers to Emmeline and Smith's second novel, Ethelinde, as "somewhat predictable love stories with a dash of mistaken identity and worthy sentiment" (221). On the other hand, some critics have noticed unconventional elements in Emmeline, which deserve further consideration. Jane Spencer has noticed Smith's unconventional treatment of Lady Adelina, a "fallen" woman (128) and also Smith's emphasis on the need for masculine trust in the heroine (158). Katherine Rogers notes that
Smith's *Emmeline* has "independence of mind" and "fortitude" (*Feminism in Eighteenth Century*, 153).

Following the lead of critics such as Spencer and Rogers, I would like to explore three general ways in which Charlotte Smith, in *Emmeline*, expressed discontent with the state of society, particularly in regard to women and their relationships with men. I will look at Smith's portrayal of marriage and courtship, male education, and, finally, *Emmeline* as a heroine.

Considering her position as a woman newly separated from a selfish, spendthrift husband, it is not surprising that Charlotte Smith portrayed bad marriages with great accuracy and clarity in this novel. While the number of bad marriages in *Emmeline* is probably greater than in her later novels, the unhappy marriage in all its varieties was to remain an interest to Smith throughout her career. Good marriages, by contrast, are rare in *Emmeline* and rather sketchily dramatized in comparison to the disastrous ones.

The marriage of Lady Adelina and Lord Trelawny provides the starting point for the novel's major subplot, the "fall" of Lady Adelina. Like the young Charlotte Smith, Adelina is compelled to marry at a very young age because her widowed father's new bride wants her out of the way. Adelina's husband-to-be is a man of "splendid fortune" and her father adds that he has heard "most favorable accounts" of his
character. Under pressure from her father and aunt, Adelina agrees to the marriage, as Smith did in real life. She notes, "Tho I was very far from feeling for Mr. Trelawny that decided preference which would in other circumstances have induced me to accept his hand, yet I found my father so desirous of my being settled, that as I had no aversion to the man, I could not resolve to disappoint him" (Smith, *Emmeline* 2:213). She describes the outcome of this psychological pressure to marry in poignant simplicity, "I married him, therefore; and gave away my person before I knew I had an heart" (Smith, *Emmeline* 2:213).

After marriage, Adelina quickly discovers that her father's judgment of Trelawny's character has been incorrect. He is a profligate who spends his time and money drinking, hunting, and gambling with his friends, who in turn spend some of their time trying to seduce Adelina. As she states the case, "In my husband I had neither a friend or companion---I had not even a protector..." (Smith, *Emmeline* 2:216). Observing the joy and contentment of her sister's marriage, Adelina realizes "with a dread from which my feeble heart recoiled, a long, long prospect of life [lay] before me---without attachment, without friendship, without love" (Smith, *Emmeline* 2:217).

It is while visiting her sister and her sister's husband Lord Clancarryl, that Adelina meets Clancarryl's younger
brother, Fitz-Edward. She finds him attractive at first sight, and this attraction grows when Fitz-Edward assists Adelina in the stormy crossing return to England, while her husband lies in a drunken stupor. When Trelawny goes bankrupt and flees to France a few weeks later, Adelina is again forced to depend on Fitz-Edward. As Fitz-Edward works to help Adelina untangle the family's financial situation, the attraction between them grows, until it results in an affair and Adelina becomes pregnant. Adelina is immediately repentant and remorseful and goes into hiding from both her family and Fitz-Edward. Although Adelina must go through a long and painful period of repentance and self-accusation, Smith shows sympathy for her as well. Emmeline and Mrs. Stafford, two characters who are portrayed as having sound moral judgment, pity Adelina rather than condemn her, and help her to be reconciled with her brother, Godolphin. In addition, Smith draws such a vivid picture of Trelawny's thoughtless behavior, that the reader is naturally drawn to sympathize with his young wife. Smith implies that the crime is not in Fitz-Edward and Adelina's love for each other, but in the cruel, selfish behavior of Trelawny. It is his neglect that forces his wife to rely on Fitz-Edward's protection, practically driving her into another man's arms.

Mrs. Stafford, a slightly older woman who befriends Emmeline, likewise suffers from her husband's foolish and
inconsiderate behavior. Like Trelawny, Mr. Stafford goes bankrupt, although his fortune is lost through ridiculous money-making schemes rather than drinking and gambling. He also flees to France, forcing his wife and children to follow him. Eventually, Mrs. Stafford returns to England to attempt to clear her husband's debt. This is a tedious process, involving arguments with lawyers and long periods of waiting. Mr. Stafford, however, is dissatisfied with his wife's "slowness" and so demands that she return to France without having settled the affairs. He blames her for failing to gain cancellation of his debts, never considering the difficult travel and humiliation she undergoes in attempts to extricate him. Mrs. Stafford's words seem like an echo of Adelina's "... others have in their husbands, protectors and friends; mine not only throws on me the burden of affairs which he has himself embroiled, but adds to their weight by cruelty and oppression." Mrs. Stafford, unlike Adelina, does not give in to her passions, although Fitz-Edward courts her also, but remains dutiful and obedient to her husband. Therefore, although she is hurt by her husband's cruelty, and humiliated by lawyers and debt collectors she never has to suffer the self-hatred and repentance that drive Adelina to the brink of insanity. By the end of the novel, her husband dies and her good friend Emmeline has been restored to an immense fortune, providing
Mrs. Stafford with psychological and economic relief.

There is a paradox in the situation of Lady Adelina and Mrs. Stafford which points to a basic societal difficulty that Smith and other "liberal" women writers were wrestling with. The difficulty is to discover an acceptable pattern of behavior for women trapped in miserable marriages. In her own life, Smith escaped a selfish, foolish husband by leaving him and becoming a professional writer. However, she seems unwilling or unable to present legal separation as a possibility for her fictional characters. While Smith sympathizes with Adelina, the misery, both physical and mental, that Adelina undergoes seems to indicate that adultery though forgivable was not a desirable alternative. Mrs. Stafford, in contrast to Adelina, remains a dutiful wife, patiently suffering the consequences of her husband's behavior, and also accepting his blame for those consequences. Smith emphasizes the moral rectitude of Mrs. Stafford by making her a sort of mentor for the heroine, Emmeline. Mrs. Stafford's sound, sensible advice on propriety and etiquette indicate that her behavior is undoubtedly the correct model. However, Smith can only create a happy ending for Mrs. Stafford by killing off her husband.

As Nancy K. Miller has noted in *The Heroine's Text*, novels about females are limited by culture to the same
basic plot (157). She points out that a novelist is limited in the portrayal of women because the culture has a limited view of women: "... [because] the novel ... is forced by the contract of the genre to negotiate with social realities in order to remain legible, its plots are largely overdetermined by the commonplaces of the culture (158)."

Smith is trapped in this "contract of the genre" to the extent that she is no more able to create a satisfactory solution in her fictional world than the society of the eighteenth century was able in reality.

The happy marriages which are presented, those of Lord and Lady Clancarryl and Lord and Lady Westhaven, are too sketchily drawn to present a model for designing a happy marriage. The only important element that can be discerned is Lord Clancarryl and Lord Westhaven's constant concern and attention to their wives' welfare. Adelina comments on the behavior of her brother-in-law, Lord Clancarryl, while comparing him to her husband Trelawny. "His tender attention to his wife; his ardent, yet regulated fondness for his children; the peace and order which reigned in his house ... made me feel with bitterness and regret the difference between my sister's lot and mine" (Smith, *Emmeline* 2:216). The description here is clearly of what Lawrence Stone calls "companionate marriage" in which the husband and wife regard each other as friends and companions
(Stone, 221). This was a theory of marital relations which was gaining popularity at the end of the eighteenth century. Smith, however, does not dramatize the creation of such a good marriage. The only clear direction she gives for building such a marriage is that the major responsibility lies with the husband. He determines the atmosphere of the home and is largely responsible for creating a happy marriage. Therefore, it may be useful to look at Smith's portrayal of male education, which suggests how Trelawny and Stafford may have become such useless creatures, unable or unwilling to create a happy marriage.

Delamere, Emmeline's cousin and the son of her guardian-uncle, Lord Montreville, is the most dramatic example of poor education in the novel. Delamere falls in love with Emmeline when he visits the half-ruined family castle where she has been secluded since infancy. Deciding that he must speak to her in private, he bursts into her bedroom late at night and pursues her as she flees through the intricate passageways of the castle. Displeased with his son's interest in Emmeline, Lord Montreville attempts to separate the two, extorting a promise from Emmeline to avoid Delamere. Delamere, however, is unwilling to be thwarted in anything he desires. He pursues Emmeline as she moves from one part of the country to another, trying to conceal herself from him. Each time Delamere discovers Emmeline's
hiding place, Lord Montreville becomes more angry with her, assuming that she has managed to communicate her whereabouts to him.

For her part, Emmeline does not love Delamere, although she admires certain good qualities that he has, and says that she loves him as she would a brother. However, she finds his hasty temper alarming. He eventually kidnaps her and is persuaded to release her only when she falls dangerously ill during the escape to Scotland. Later, Emmeline promises to marry him in one year if he will obey his parents' dictates not to see her for that time. Delamere comes to a tragic end in a duel, convenient in releasing Emmeline from her engagement, but also a fitting end for such an impetuous man.

Smith leaves no doubt as to how Delamere developed such an uncontrollable temper. She describes Lady Montreville's extreme indulgence of her son, the Lady never being willing to see or correct his faults. "Her fondness was gratified in seeing the perfections of his person (which was a very fine one) while to the imperfections of his temper she was entirely blind" (Smith, *Emmeline*, 1:29). Lord Montreville is also described as being overly-indulgent of Delamere, believing his son to be perfect except for "a few youthful indiscretions, which were overlooked or forgiven. . . ."

The narrator's irony is clear here, especially in light of
Delamere's later behavior, such as the abduction of Emmeline. As a result of this upbringing, Delamere has never learned to curb his passions, or accept disappointment. "Accustomed from his infancy to the most boundless indulgences, he never formed a wish, the gratification of which he expected to be denied; and if such a disappointment happened, he gave way to an impetuosity of disposition that he had never been taught to restrain, and which gave an appearance of ferocity to a temper not otherwise bad" (Smith, *Emmeline*, 1:29). Thus, Smith illustrates the beginnings of a temperament which will eventually become a Stafford or a Trelawny. Delamere's bad temper is not due to any natural tendency, but to the kind of indulgent, permissive upbringing which was the rule for sons in upper class families of the time. Richardson had made similar comments on the education of Pamela's Mr. B. However, Smith does not use education, as Richardson did, as an excuse for Delamere's behavior, but rather as an avoidable cause.

To show the proper behavior for a young gentleman, Smith sets Delamere as a foil to Emmeline's true love, William Godolphin, Adelina's brother. Smith does not tell the reader much about Godolphin's early education. She seems to be concentrating on what can go wrong rather than what is the right way to educate a child. Godolphin is a younger
brother who has taken on responsibility early in life, as he is presumably in his late twenties and has already had charge of a man-of-war in the West Indies. He has learned to control his passions, and, in contrast to Delamere, he is always calm and reasonable. When Delamere sees his married sister behaving improperly with another man, he becomes involved in the duel which ends his life. When Godolphin discovers that his married sister, Adelina, has borne an illegitimate child, he is angry and wishes to seek revenge also. However, Emmeline convinces him of the futility of a duel that would end in the death of either himself or his sister's lover, either outcome probably destroying Adelina's fragile sanity. Godolphin forgives his sister, avoids a confrontation with her lover, and adopts her child as his own. This humane action is less gratifying to his passion for revenge but is clearly a better solution to the problem.

While Godolphin is like the static heroine in his inborn moral perfection, Smith also presents a hero who grows from selfishness to maturity. Fitz-Edward, who becomes Adelina's lover, begins the book as a thoughtless rake. The narrator says that he "concealed, under the appearance of candor and non-chalance, the libertinism of his character." Much like Fanny Burney's rakes, such as Sir Clement Willoughby, Fitz-Edward is capable of acting very correctly when it is to his advantage. "Where he desired to please, he seldom
failed of pleasing extremely; and his conversation was, in the general commerce of the world, elegant and attractive" (Smith, *Emmeline* 1:28). Fitz-Edward, at this stage, tries to seduce any woman he finds attractive. At the same time, his generosity to his friend Delamere shows that he has a good heart. When Adelina becomes pregnant and goes into hiding, Fitz-Edward becomes reformed. He is stricken with remorse and searches vainly for her. The reasons for Fitz-Edward's reform are not clearly explained by Smith. It appears that her dependence on him and her obvious suffering from her husband's neglect have made an impression on him. He tells Emmeline that her helplessness and trust "made me consider her rather as my sister than as an object of seduction." Seeing Adelina as a sister apparently humanized her for Fitz-Edward, making it impossible for him to abandon her as he had done to women before. Smith illustrates through Fitz-Edward's story that it is possible for a rake to reform, but she also puts him through a long and painful repentance to show the difficulty of reforming. Through Adelina's suffering she also shows clearly the pain that one's low morals can inflict on another.

Smith's portrayal of male education is a shift from the typical romantic novel which focused on the heroine's education and development. In addition, although protest against arranged marriages was common in popular novels
throughout the century, Smith's depictions of unhappy marriages are more detailed and more emphasized than in other novels. She shows the unhappy couple later-in life, while many other novels focused on helping the heroine to avoid an arranged marriage in the first place. However, it is Emmeline herself who makes this novel progressive, as she is a truly heroic heroine, illustrating positive virtues such as courage and independence.

Emmeline is the daughter of a nobleman, but because she is believed to be illegitimate, all her father's property has been inherited at his death by his younger brother, Lord Montreville. Lord Montreville leaves the young Emmeline in the care of the housekeeper and steward at the old family manor house which the Montreville family no longer uses. Emmeline is raised by the old steward and housekeeper until she is sixteen, when the two die within a few months of each other. At about the time that Emmeline's caretakers die, Lord Montreville decides that the old manor house would make a good hunting lodge for his son, so Montreville and his son, Delamere, both go to the house, Montreville to talk to Emmeline and see the house put into order, and Delamere and his friend Fitz-Edward to do some hunting. Delamere is taken with Emmeline's beauty at first sight, and he pursues her ardently. Montreville, viewing Emmeline as a poor dependent, is far from pleased with Delamere's attraction to
Emmeline, and when the new steward, a coarse man by the name of Maloney, requests Emmeline's hand, Montreville sees the opportunity to solve two problems at once. By marrying Emmeline off to this man, he secures his son Delamere from her and also relieves himself from any further concern for her.

When Lord Montreville presents the idea of this match to Emmeline, she shows her independence for the first time. Although terrified of Montreville, as he actually controls her fate, Emmeline not only refuses the match but tearfully scolds Montreville for offering such a degrading match to a member of his own noble family. When Montreville asks what he should tell Maloney in regard to Emmeline's refusal, she puts it in no uncertain terms. "That you are astonished at his insolence in daring to lift his eyes to a person bearing the name of Mowbray: and shocked at his falsehood in presuming to assert that I ever encouraged his impertinent pretensions!" (Smith, Emmeline 1:27). Other heroines in mid to late eighteenth-century novels have refused arranged marriages; some have even run away to escape a match. However, Emmeline is unusual in her open defiance of male authority and her clear articulation of her own worth. Emmeline will not marry a man she considers beneath her, even if financially he offers her greater security than her precarious situation as Lord Montreville's dependent. She
makes it clear that she is not refusing Maloney solely because he is of a lower class. She states that she would prefer poverty to marriage to a man who is socially and mentally her inferior: "... suffer me to be myself a servant and believe I have a mind, which tho' it will not recoil from any situation where I can earn my bread by honest labor, is infinitely superior to any advantages a man such as Maloney can offer me!" (Smith, *Emmeline* 1:25).

Seeing that Emmeline will not agree to his first plan, Lord Montreville agrees to arrange housing for her at the distant village of Swansea and provide her with an annual allowance if she will agree to keep her location secret from Delamere. Emmeline agrees, and at Swansea she has the good luck and judgment to become friends with Mrs. Stafford, who was discussed earlier. Mrs. Stafford undertakes to improve Emmeline's formal education, teaching her French, Italian, and drawing. Emmeline has an even better reason to appreciate Mrs. Stafford, however, when Delamere and Fitz-Edward appear on the scene. Delamere is as forward and pushy as before, and Fitz-Edward attempts to seduce Mrs. Stafford. With Mrs. Stafford's help, Emmeline keeps Delamere at a discreet distance until Lord Montreville arrives and Emmeline is once again spirited secretly away, this time to the home of Mrs. Stafford's sister-in-law near London.
While hiding at Mrs. Ashford's house, however, Emmeline is still not safe from unwanted attentions. Not only does Delamere find her, but a new suitor comes forward. Mr. Rochely, the new suitor, is not as coarse as Mr. Maloney, the steward. Also, he is quite rich. However, the fact that he is ugly, fat, and old does not make him a perfect match. Lord Montreville, again seeing the opportunity to rid himself of Emmeline, views the match as ideal. He and his lawyer present to Emmeline the choice of marrying Mr. Rochely and retaining full rights to her noble name and marriage portion, or refusing Mr. Rochely and giving up all "countenance, or support, or protection" from Lord Montreville. Once again, the full weight of patriarchal power is against Emmeline. As a woman, she has no right to retain even her own name if she disobeys male authority. Other female novelists have gotten their heroines out of such scrapes by having the hero rescue them, or having the heroine cry and plead until she softens her tormentors heart. Richardson's Pamela escaped a forced sexual relationship through her writing. Emmeline, however, is not the type to resolve a situation through passive or indirect means. Her answer is so strong, so full of the self-assertion seldom seen in fictional heroines, that it merits quoting in large part:
... Lord Montreville may abandon me, but he will not make me wretched. Tell him therefor [sic], Sir, (her spirit rose as she spoke) 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. Tell him too, that if she had not inherited a strong sense of honor, of which at least her birth does not deprive her, she might now have been the wife of Mr. Delamere, and independent of his Lordship's authority; and it is improbable, that one who has sacrificed so much to integrity, should now be compelled by threats of indigence to the basest of all actions, that of selling her person and her happiness for a subsistence. I beg that you, Sir, who seem to have delivered Lord Montreville's message with such scrupulous exactness, will take the trouble to be as precise in my answer; and that his Lordship will consider it as final.

This is hardly a speech which could have come from any of the heroines from Pamela or Evelina! Elizabeth Bennet in
Pride and Prejudice might have uttered such a firm denouncement, but Elizabeth did not yet exist. There is more here than just a refutation of arranged or economic marriage. Many authors (including Mary Wollstonecraft in Mary written the same year) were condemning arranged marriages on the grounds of sensibility and romance. They argued that a woman's delicate sensibilities could never allow her to be happy in a marriage that was not based on personal attraction and regard. A careful reading of Emmeline's speech, however, reveals a new assertion about women's nature. Emmeline is not refusing the marriage on the grounds of her "female" sensibilities; she is refusing the marriage on the grounds of honor, honor which she has inherited from her father. Emmeline is asserting that women have the same virtues as men, and are just as capable of thinking and acting according to a code of honor as men.

Emmeline's private code of honor operates in other situations in which feminine sensibility and virtue, however useful, are not sufficient to cope with the situation. The case of Lady Adelina is one example. While Emmeline is staying with Mrs. Stafford at her country house, they find a young woman, very ill and pregnant, in a nearby cottage. Mrs. Stafford suspects her to be a young woman who has been seduced by Mr. Stafford and insists on speaking with her. She and Emmeline then discover Lady Adelina's
true story. Despite Lady Adelina's unpleasant marriage, her surrender to her physical and emotional passions in loving Fitz-Edward would have been considered unforgivable by most eighteenth-century moralists. Even Mary Wollstonecraft, at that time more conservative than she would later be, felt that Smith had not been correct in her relatively gentle treatment of Lady Adelina (Figes, 59). Mrs. Stafford, acting as Emmeline's mentor in the code of honor, does not condemn Adelina for a transgression already committed. Lady Adelina is already sunk in repentance and grief, and Emmeline and Mrs. Stafford rather try to divert her from further contemplation, Mrs. Stafford sending over some books "which she hoped might amuse her mind, and detach it awhile from the sad subject of it's [sic] mournful contemplations."

When Fitz-Edward appears in the neighborhood, and Lady Adelina's time of delivery draws near, Mrs. Stafford realizes that it will be necessary for Lady Adelina to deliver in a town somewhat distant, so that she can receive medical attention without her identity being revealed. Emmeline determines that despite the imputations to her reputation that will be caused by a sudden and secretive disappearance, she will accompany Adelina to Bath. Her personal code is an active one, demanding that she not only feel for other's sufferings but act. Reflecting on Adelina's fear of going to Bath alone, Emmeline illustrates
that, "to give to the wretched, only barren sympathy, was not in her nature, where more effectual relief was in her power." By the eighteenth-century standard of male activity and female passivity, Emmeline is exhibiting a masculine tendency toward action rather than reaction or reflection.

Emmeline's sudden disappearance does cause her further difficulties, for it is then reported to Delamere by some vicious gossips that Emmeline has had a child by Fitz-Eduard. Delamere, with his unfortunate ability to find Emmeline, discovers her in a cottage caring for Adelina's baby. Without allowing her to make explanation, he condemns her and rushes madly out of the house. When Delamere breaks their engagement because of his suspicions, Emmeline feels some relief, since she has by that time met and fallen in love with Godolphin. However, she has no desire to explain herself to Delamere, as he does not trust her and so as Mrs. Stafford tells her, is not entitled to an explanation. In contradiction of the prevailing moral code, Emmeline realizes that, to jealous or suspicious minds, a woman can never avoid all appearance of impropriety. Therefore, one must live according to one's own code of right or wrong, accepting that truly virtuous and generous behavior must sometimes involve the appearance of impropriety. In a culture that preached that the appearance of impropriety could ruin one's reputation, writers like Charlotte Smith
and Anne Radcliffe who denied this in their novels should be credited with a feminist insight.

In *Emmeline*, Charlotte Smith uses personal examples to make larger statements about society. Her descriptions of unhappy marriages are unusually vivid and detailed, helping the reader move from personal sympathy for the characters to consideration of the situation of unhappily married women in general. Further, Smith implies criticism of the system of male education through her portrayal of ideal and flawed male characters. She shows that although reform, through maturity, as in the case of Fitz-Edward, is possible, some of these flawed characters, such as Delamere, never have the motive for reform, and sometimes do not get the opportunity. Finally, in Emmeline Smith has created a character who develops self-assertion rather than self-restraint. Emmeline overcomes the difficulties created for her by male authority through active virtues such as self-assertiveness and courage, rather than through the passive powers of the weak.
Celestina, Smith's third novel, was published in 1791. To readers who are expecting an Emmeline-like heroine, Celestina is a surprise and perhaps a bit of a disappointment. Smith still shows concern for the plight of women, both socially and economically. However, Celestina herself is a much more conventional character, and many of the other concerns that Smith expressed so strongly and unmistakably in Emmeline are toned down in this novel. Male education, as I will discuss later, is the only theme from Emmeline which is addressed with greater force in Celestina.

Because she presents such a contrast to her predecessor, Emmeline, it is useful to start with an examination of Celestina's situation and her personality. Celestina is an orphan adopted out of a French convent and orphanage by Mrs. Willoughby, an English widow who has two children, Matilda and George. Celestina is raised with the Willoughby children, until, when George is about sixteen, Mrs. Willoughby decides that he must marry his rich cousin, Miss Fitz-Hayman, to save the family estate. She is shocked when George replies that he loves Celestina, and refuses to marry Miss Fitz-Hayman. Mrs. Willoughby threatens to remove Celestina from the home if George allows Celestina to learn of his partiality to her. George, therefore, quickly returns to school to avoid being near Celestina. However,
when Mrs. Willoughby is on her deathbed a month later, George promises her that he will marry Miss Fitz-Hayman. In order to steel himself in this resolution, Willoughby adopts a cold formal tone with Celestina, speaking with her only as business requires.

This treatment would probably have determined the independent Emmeline to leave the family and make her own way in the world. Celestina, however, is without Emmeline's independent capabilities, and can only beg Willoughby not to treat her so coldly. When Willoughby hands her the eighteen hundred pounds that Mrs. Willoughby left her, she is shocked at his apparent lack of feeling. "'I cannot take the notes indeed, Mr. Willoughby,' said she. 'What can I do with them? I who am a minor, a stranger, an orphan; who have no relation, no guardian — no friend! I did indeed hope that you, Sir, would have the goodness to have kept it for me till —'" (Smith, Celestina 1:27). Celestina cannot, as Emmeline could and did, repay cruelty with hard honest words. Celestina's only protection against cruelty is her own trust and innocence.

Willoughby's coldness, so contrary to his impetuous temper, cannot last, especially in the face of Celestina's apparent tearful helplessness. He admits to Celestina both his feelings for her and his promise to his mother, and tells her he will break that promise in order to marry her.
Now Smith begins to show the positive virtues of Celestina, who has seemed rather colorless and passive up to this point. Although she loves Willoughby, she feels that his hot temper should not allow him to break his oath to his mother. Like Emmeline, Celestina has a code of honor which she puts above considerations for her own pleasure or comfort. Smith also makes it clear that Celestina's determination arises from mental, not emotional powers: "... however soft her heart, her reason was equal to the task of checking a dangerous or guilty indulgence of that sensibility; and after long arguing with herself, she found she loved Willoughby better than everything but his honor and his repose" (Smith, Celestina 1:72). She decides to retire to the country to avoid Willoughby and conquer her feelings for him: "the consciousness that she was doing right blunted for a while the poignancy of that pain which she too sensibly felt in tearing herself from Willoughby" (Smith, Celestina 1:83). Smith again points out Celestina's superior will power and ability to act independently. "Obliged to act for herself, having no breast on which she could with propriety lean, her naturally exalted soul acquired new firmness, before which trifling inconveniences disappeared. . ." (Smith, Celestina 1:83).

Willoughby follows Celestina, however, and convinces her to marry him by representing how miserable his marriage to
Miss Fitz-Hayman would make both himself and eventually Miss Fitz-Hayman also. The day before they are to be married, Willoughby is summoned to a nearby inn where a mysterious lady gives him a message. He then leaves for Europe in haste, sending Celestina only a message that he will be gone an indefinite period of time and that she should not injure her health or mistrust him because of his unexpected departure. After keeping the reader in suspense as long as possible, Smith eventually reveals that Lady Castlenorth, Miss Fitz-Hayman's mother, has met Willoughby at the inn and told him that Celestina is actually his sister, Mrs. Willoughby's illegitimate daughter. Unbelieving, but of course unable to marry Celestina until he knows the truth, Willoughby has gone to Europe to discover Celestina's origins.

The result of this plot complication is that Celestina is left completely without friends or protectors. Much like Emmeline, she must now depend on herself. Although, like Emmeline, she has some small financial resources, she has no social or moral guide, and must depend on her own moral code. The major challenge she faces is to avoid the numerous suitors who seem to come from all directions. They range from the sons of the pastor with whom she takes refuge to Willoughby's best friend, Vavasour, a confirmed rake, who claims he wants to watch over Celestina for Willoughby, but
who is also hoping that Willoughby may not come back. Celestina continually rejects these suitors. However, despite her strong will, Celestina is necessarily restrained by the rules of "lady-like" behavior from rebuking the suitors with the harshness they deserve. Like Burney's Evelina, Celestina's gentleness and extreme politeness are simply used by men as a way to continue addresses that are obviously unwanted.

For example, the minister's younger son, Montague Thorold, one evening brings Celestina some wine and water in her bedroom, because she has decided not to go down to supper. She does not want to see him in private, and has been trying to discourage his addresses. However, she is too polite to tell him to leave. "Distressed by civility, which it seemed so rude to refuse and so painful to accept, she hesitated a moment, and then opened the door..." (Smith, Celestina 1:263). Her politeness results in Montague reciting romantic poetry to her and trying to kiss her hand.

Later in the novel, as Celestina tries to repulse Vavasour, she comments on the difficulty of a young woman trying to refuse a man in a "genteel" manner. "'Really, Mr. Vavasour,' said Celestina, as soon as he would give her an opportunity of speaking, 'your conduct and manners are so eccentric, that it is difficult to know what to say to you,
which you will not call either prudery or coquetry, or
impute to a partiality for some other person" (Smith,
_ Celestina_ 3:64). Herein lies the difficulty of a young
woman without family. It was a commonplace in the
eighteenth century that young women, who could not make
proposals or initiate action, retained "the power of
refusal." However, this power was not so absolute as was
implied. Even if a young woman had no family who might
contradict her refusal, there was nothing to impel the
unwanted suitor to take her refusal seriously. As Mary
Poovey in _The Proper Lady and The Woman Writer_ states in
another context, "A woman who is not 'private property' is
implicitly available for public use. . . " (20). Poovey also
discusses the difficulty that Celestina finds in that the
"code of propriety" created all sorts of chances for a
woman's real intentions or feelings to be "distort[ed] or
repress[ed]" (25). Poovey cites the example of a Burney
character, Camilla, who attempts to manipulate polite
discourse to gain the attention of Mandlebert, in whom she
is interested. However, because Camilla must work
indirectly, her actions are open to misinterpretation, and
she alienates rather than attracting Mandlebert (25).
Because the rules of polite discourse determine that a young
woman must refuse modestly and politely, and because this
same type of polite refusal was one of the techniques of
coquetry, Celestina's unwelcome suitors are able to interpret her refusals as encouragement and continue to court her as long as they wish.

Celestina might seem to the modern reader much less admirable than Emmeline who always voiced her opinion vehemently in a way that left no room for misinterpretation. In Celestina, Smith seems to be taking a much more pessimistic view of young women's opportunities or abilities for self-assertion. Mary Poovey asserts that the belief in feminine virtue as a kind of disembodied humble submission gathered strength as the eighteenth century progressed (14). This general restriction of female roles, leading up to the Victorian era, may have influenced Smith's vision of the possibilities of female personality. In addition, Smith had now been separated from her husband for several years, and with her reputation as a writer and woman of high moral standards firmly established, perhaps was less inclined to challenge the female status quo and risk her own reputation.

In any case, Smith's attention seems to be shifting from the personality of the heroine to the education of the young man. While not criticizing Celestina for her lack of self-assertion, Smith is criticizing the society which raises its young men to be arrogant and self-assured, seeing any young woman who is unattached as fair game, regardless of her stated intentions.
Like Emmeline, Celestina contains portraits of a number of young men, illustrating a variety of problems in the system of male education. In fact, Celestina's suitors are actually an interesting group, displaying a wider and more subtle range of defects than Emmeline's. Celestina's first suitors are a pair of brothers, Montague and Captain Thorold. Although they are almost foils of each other, both are flawed because their educations, though of different types, have both been indulgent and lacking in the teaching of either practical or moral considerations. Captain Thorold, the older brother, has had a military education. The heir of a rich uncle, he has enjoyed the freedom of a soldier's life along with the advantages of a large fortune. "Thus spoiled from his first entrance into life, he had learned to consider himself as irresistible, and supposed every woman he saw his own, if he chose to take the trouble of securing her" (Smith, Celestina 1:209). Foreshadowing Phillip Somerive in The Old Manor House, the Captain is quite proud of his exploits, and scornful of his quieter, more scholarly brother. Smith spares no words to describe how despicable he is: "... from having indulged himself in the cruel vanity of extensive conquest, he was incapable of any lasting or serious attachment." Smith also notes that while his father, Reverend Thorold, is bothered by his son's excesses, and likes the Captain less than his other
children, Mrs. Thorold dotes on her son, much as Lady Delamere dotes on her son. Mrs. Thorold believed that "no young woman could possibly deserve [him] unless she possessed at once fortune, beauty, and fashion." From Smith's description of this mother-son relationship, plus the relationship of Lady Delamere and her son in Emmeline, it becomes clear that Smith felt the mother's attitude toward her son was one of the most important deciding factors in the son's attitude toward women. If the mother admires her son's "figure and fortune," the son expects all women to admire him, and while developing a great deal of vanity, he never develops an appreciation for women.

Montague Thorold, the Captain's younger brother, is a very different sort. Smith seems to have more sympathy for him than for his brother the rake. Montague is studying at Oxford to enter the clergy. Unlike his brother who will approach any woman he chooses, Montague is too shy to approach the women he admires openly. Instead, he falls madly in love with a particular woman and then worships her from a distance, sighing and composing melancholy poetry on her beauty and inaccessibility. He falls instantly in love with Celestina, and follows her about reciting poetry and reading to her. At first she finds his polite cultured conversation pleasant, particularly in comparison to his brother's offensive bravado. Montague himself at first
respects Celestina's feelings for Willoughby and tries only to gain her friendship, at which he succeeds. However, as time passes his passion grows until he is unable to restrain himself from open declarations of love. These shock Celestina, who considers herself Willoughby's fiancee. But in respecting a woman's right to refusal, Montague proves no more reasonable than his brother. In fact, Captain Thorold's vanity is so hurt by Celestina's first rebuff that he subsequently ignores her. Montague, on the other hand, refuses to accept reality or propriety and continues to press his adoration on Celestina. He even pursues her when she accompanies her friend Mrs. Elphinstone to the Isle of Skie.

While Montague does not pose a physical danger to Celestina, his behavior creates impressions that cause inconvenience and embarrassment to Celestina and come close to ruining her relationship with Willoughby, whom she truly loves. For example, it is Montague's constant attendance on Celestina that leads Willoughby to believe rumors that she is engaged to someone else when he returns to England. While Smith makes it clear that Montague is preferable to the unscrupulous rakes such as his brother, she also makes it clear that his idealization of women is actually as dehumanizing as the captain's objectification of them. While Smith's work has sometimes been described as
containing romantic elements, she does not approve of the type of romantic idealization of women that Montague indulges in. His idealization leads him to treat Celestina almost as thoughtlessly as his brother does, and while he does not threaten her virginity, he threatens her reputation, which in the eighteenth century was virtually the same thing. He treats Celestina as an object of adoration, not a human being, often completely disregarding her feelings.

Celestina tells him that his behavior is unpleasant to her, although it does not have much effect. In one scene, he refuses to return a poem she has written and allowed him, after much begging, to read. He puts the poem in his pocket next to his heart, and grasping her hand and pressing it against the pocket, vows he will not return the poem until she gives him "some yet dearer memorial to remain there." Celestina tells him clearly how she feels about his behavior. "You behave, Mr. Montague, not only improperly in this foolish matter, but cruelly and insultingly towards me..." (Smith, Celestina 1:241). As far back as Richardson's Mr. B a woman's writing has been connected with her person, the violation of the one being symbolic of the violation of the other. Celestina is trying to explain to Montague here that he is invading her privacy. However, still seeing her solely as the object of his "devotions," he
is unable to recognize her need for privacy and individual rights.

Another unwelcome suitor whom Celestina copes with is Willoughby's best friend, Vavasour. He, like Captain Thorold, is a rake. He also apparently falls in love with Celestina at first sight, but because of his loyalty to Willoughby he controls his emotions. When Willoughby leaves for Europe, Vavasour accepts the task of watching over Celestina and apparently starts out with the best of intentions. However, as time passes without any definite word from Willoughby, it is rumored that Willoughby has finally decided to marry Miss Fitz-Hayman. Vavasour, his passion for Celestina further inflamed by seeing so many other men vying for her attentions, determines that he is the fair successor to Willoughby. This is despite the fact that Celestina has never particularly trusted or liked Vavasour, and has already determined that should Willoughby marry someone else, she will not marry at all. As he puts it simply to her, as Willoughby is now to marry someone else, Celestina "will look out for somebody else to transfer those affections to that he resigns." Vavasour is so self-centered that he does not even consider the sorrow Celestina must feel at losing her fiancé.

Vavasour's wild temper, boldness, and occasional drunkenness disgust Celestina and insure that even if she
could conquer her feelings for Willoughby and marry another, that other would not be Vavasour. Vavasour however, cannot believe his own charms are so ineffectual, and concludes that Celestina’s lack of response must be due to her having heard about his mistress. In one of the most bizarre parts of the novel, Vavasour admits to Celestina that he has a mistress. He begs her not to consider this, however, because his mistress, Emily, knowing of the love that Vavasour has developed for Celestina, "wishes my success, and bids me say, that convinced my happiness depends upon you, she withdraws every claim which she had on my heart, and beseeches you to believe it is not unworthy of your acceptance" (Smith, Celestina 3:62).

Since Celestina had never considered Vavasour as a serious suitor, it is difficult to understand why Smith finds it necessary to make him look so ridiculous. His behavior certainly reveals his deeply entrenched belief in the sexual double standard. It does not even occur to him that Celestina might object to him on moral grounds. However, this illustration of the double standard is so heavy-handed that Smith seems to be trying to take the matter lightly. Vavasour seems more comic than sinister. Smith apparently was somewhat ambivalent herself, seeing the double standard itself as wrong but not willing to admit that it could pose a serious threat to her heroine. In
seeking to empower Celestina, Smith seems to have felt she must minimize her difficulties.

Another theme that Smith had considered in *Emmeline* and continues in *Celestina* is the unhappy marriage. While she does not have as many unhappy marriages in *Celestina*, the ones she does portray are more varied in their causes than the ones in *Emmeline*. In *Emmeline*, the heroine becomes friends with Mrs. Stafford, an older woman who is married to a man who is not only foolish and wasteful, but cruel. Mrs. Stafford had been pressured into marriage by her family at a very young age. Adelina Trelawny is married to a similar man, whom she also married under family pressure. In *Celestina*, the heroine is befriended by Mrs. Elphinstone. Like Mrs. Stafford, she has several children and is constantly concerned with financial problems created by her self-centered husband. However, Sophia Elphinstone had met her future husband when she was eleven years old and he came to live with her family as an apprentice to her father, a merchant. They grow to love each other, and the young Sophia overlooks those faults in his character which she later found to be a great worry to herself. She describes him as, "open, good humored, and undesigning; too gay and careless to think, too quick to learn. . . ." When Sophia's father goes bankrupt, they marry. Elphinstone's father dies shortly, leaving all his property to Elphinstone's elder
brother. The couple endures incredible poverty followed by fleeting opulence when Elphinstone works as a secretary to a man who is temporarily rich. This is apparently to be the pattern that the rest of their lives are to follow, their fortune fluctuating as Mr. Elphinstone pursues one hopeful scheme after another. As she describes him,

My husband is amiable, good tempered, and, I believe, truly attached to me; but he is so volatile! so unsteady! misfortune has made him restless, and his desultory life increased the original blemish of his temper — a want of firmness; from which have arisen some of the evils that have pursued us (Smith, Celestina 3:116).

In this example, Smith makes a point about marriage which goes beyond her assertions in Emmeline. In the earlier novel bad marriages always involved a lack of love and concern between the husband and wife, which leads the husband to behave in a selfish manner. In the Elphinstones’ case, however, Mr. Elphinstone does love his wife. It is not lack of concern for her, but his lack of common sense and his inability to apply himself that lead to hardships for her and his children. Mrs. Elphinstone, an intelligent woman with much more common sense than her husband, is unable to stop him from involving himself in various
disastrous schemes, although she is clearly able to see the trouble coming. The criticism is, therefore, less directed at Elphinstone personally, than at the societal system which puts the man completely in charge of family finances and teaches him to disregard his wife's opinion.

As in *Emmeline*, Smith creates such a problematic character in Mr. Elphinstone that the only way to resolve Mrs. Elphinstone's dilemma is to make her a widow. However, unlike the deaths of Stafford and Trelawny in the previous novel, which seemed fortunate for their wives, Elphinstone's death is seen as a tragedy for his wife, and the end of a wasted life that could have been useful and productive. As Mrs. Elphinstone has described him, he was a charming, likable man who from his school days "was so much a favorite that when he neglected to do his business, somebody or other was always willing to do it for him." Thus, he never learned the kind of perseverance necessary to complete any of his schemes.

Another bad marriage depicted in the novel is that of Lord and Lady Castlenorth, the parents of Willoughby's intended wife, Miss Fitz-Hayman. Lord Castlenorth is one of the most amusing characters in the book, although he does not play a big part in the action. The only heir of an ancient noble family, his upbringing is of a type by now familiar to Smith's readers. "Lord was one of those
unfortunate beings who have been brought up never to have a wish prevented or a want ungratified" (Smith, _Celestina_ 1:47). After a career of wild pleasure, at thirty his health is ruined. He goes under the care of a physician who is clever enough to invent a good genealogy and get his daughter married to the Lord. The invention of a noble lineage for the daughter is necessary because ancestry is Lord Castlenorth's great pride and obsession. "As he advanced in life, he found himself of so little consequence for individual merit, that he was compelled to avail himself of the names of his ancestors, from whom only he derived any importance at all" (Smith, _Celestina_ 1:50).

Lady Castlenorth is a supremely arrogant woman. She not only dominates her sickly husband, but everyone else she can. Smith depicts them as a completely comic couple, the wife leading by the force of will as neither seems destined to lead by the force of intellect. In a comic reversal of the Elphinstones' situation, Smith notes that Lady Castlenorth's control of her husband "saved him the trouble and probably the disgrace of governing himself." Lord Castlenorth, who has few virtues except a general lack of cruelty, is joined to a woman who combines his traditional aristocratic pride with her overbearing haughtiness. Although fairly respectful to each other in public, they have no concern or affection for each other. As Lord
Castlenorth is dying of a rather non-specific "decline" brought on by wild living, his wife is selecting his successor. Willoughby's servant tells him of the scheme: "my Lady knew well enough, that my Lord could not hold it long — and that she was providing herself with a handsome young husband, and making sure of him, as she thought, before the old one hobbled off. . ." (Smith, Celestina 3:144). Thus Smith portrays the end result of marriages arranged for money and influence on one side, and hereditary pride on the other, without love or respect between the two parties.

Celestina may be a bit of a disappointment for modern readers who are looking for a feminist progression in Smith's development as a novelist. Smith's view of her heroine's possibilities seems narrowed and more pessimistic in Celestina. However, her concern with the education or miseducation of young men is expanded in Celestina, and as in Emmeline she shows how society's defective system of male education has a negative effect on females. Finally, Smith again illustrates her concern over unhappy marriages and the plight of women who are married to irresponsible men. In Celestina she shows that even a marriage based on love may be subject to those problems. So, despite her more conventional heroine, Smith's third novel continues to address non-conventional topics concerning women.
IV. **THE OLD MANOR HOUSE**

In 1793, Charlotte Smith published *The Old Manor House*, which is considered by many to be her best work (Ehrenpreis, xi). In this work Smith continues her concern for education and courtship. In addition, she focuses more on the hero, using him as an eyepiece through which she can view the effects of those issues which concern her on many different people.

Monimia, the heroine of *The Old Manor House*, is Smith's most conventional heroine. She has a conventional heroine's beauty, described in the book's first chapter: "Her dark stuff gown gave new lustre to her lovely complexion; and her thick muslin cap could not confine her luxuriant dark hair. Her shape was symmetry itself, and her motions so graceful that it was impossible to behold her even attached to her humble employment at the wheel, without acknowledging that no art could give what nature had bestowed upon her" (Smith, *The Old Manor House*, 1:14). It is this beautiful Monimia, an orphan virtually imprisoned in a decaying old manor house, who has earned Smith a place among the Gothic novelists. Monimia certainly fits the description of the Gothic heroine as presented by Hazel Mews - "possessed of the qualities of person and mind most admired by society, endowed with beauty, grace, intelligence, taste, sensitivity, sympathy, and 'softness'" (25). However, if
one views the Gothic novel, as many feminist critics do, as a metaphor for women's sexual domination by men, showing men as sinister but exciting sexual threats from whom the heroine must escape, then *The Old Manor House* itself is not a Gothic novel. Rather, in this novel, Smith uses Gothic elements, such as the crumbling manor house, haunted by strange sounds, as a backdrop for the female oppression of women. While these elements add interest and suspense, they are not an integral part of the plot, and Smith may have used them simply because Gothic fiction was becoming popular at the time.

However, although Smith does not put Monimia in the typical Gothic situation, pursued by men who wish to rape or kill her, I think that her position can be seen as a metaphor for the societal position of women. It is a different metaphor from the one in typical Gothic romances, the works of Anne Radcliffe, for example. Nevertheless, it is symbolic of women's secondary position in society. Although Monimia's persecutors are female, they are still working within the patriarchal structure.

Monimia, like most of Smith's heroines, is an orphan whose origins are slightly vague. She is under the guardianship of her aunt, Mrs. Lennard, who works as a companion to the elderly Miss Rayland, mistress of Rayland Hall. Miss Rayland is the main authority figure in the
novel. The last direct descendant of the ancient Rayland family, Miss Rayland's main interest in life is boasting about her lineage. As Janet Todd has noted, patriarchy's main support is pride of blood (14). Mrs. Rayland, although a woman, is actually a member of the patriarchy by default. She is the only living person who cares about the honor and glory of the Rayland men of old. Smith makes clear her feelings about those who have great pride in their ancestry. They make themselves ridiculous because their pride of blood does not actually make them stronger or better than other mortals. "The little withered figure, bent down with age and infirmity, and the last of a race which she was thus arrogantly boasting - a race, which in a few years, perhaps a few months, might be no more remembered - was a ridiculous instance of human folly and human vanity . . ." (Smith, The Old Manor House 1:15-16). Nevertheless, Mrs. Rayland has the fortune to force others to pretend interest in her illustrious ancestors. Like male patriarchs, Mrs. Rayland's power is based on her economic control of resources and her social sanction as a member of the upper class.

One of the people who lives by Mrs. Rayland's fortune, and hopes to profit from it more in the future, is her hired companion, Mrs. Lennard, Monimia's aunt. Mrs. Lennard began her employment with Mrs. Rayland as a housekeeper and moved up the ranks through flattery and toadyism. She hopes that
this disagreeable work will be rewarded by a substantial
inheritance when Mrs. Rayland dies. Mrs. Lennard is a cruel
and peevish guardian to Monimia. To keep her out of Mrs.
Rayland's way, Lennard secludes Monimia throughout her
childhood. "Mrs. Rayland had an aversion to children, and
had consented to the admission of this [Monimia] into her
house, on no other condition, but that she should never hear
it cry, or ever have any trouble about it." As she grows
older, Monimia does handwork and waits on cranky Mrs.
Rayland. Her room is in a secluded turret, where she is
locked in by her aunt at night.

Mrs. Lennard treats Monimia with extreme cruelty,
beating and scolding her for the slightest offense. She is
particularly angered by the friendship which develops
between Monimia and Mrs. Rayland's nephew, Orlando. She is
afraid that Mrs. Rayland will discover the friendship and
consider it beneath Orlando, who is related, after all, to
the Raylands. In addition to her isolation, the need by her
aunt to please Mrs. Rayland causes Monimia to be kept in
ignorance because "... Mrs. Rayland had, with the absurd
prejudice of narrow minds, declared against her being taught
anything but the plainest domestic duties, and the plainest
work" (Smith, The Old Manor House 1:26). Monimia wishes to
learn. She teaches herself to read, and tries to write, but
her aunt, again fearing Mrs. Rayland's displeasure, will not
allow her books or writing materials. As Orlando observes, "she seemed to be condemned to perpetual servitude, and he feared to perpetual ignorance." And if it is not enough to deny her any intellectual nourishment, Mrs. Lennard seeks to make Monimia more tractable by re-enforcing her tendency toward shyness and timidity by telling her ghost stories.

Mrs. Lennard is a cruel woman, and Smith seems to enjoy making her as capricious and selfish as possible. However, her cruelty to Monimia is not without a motive. Lennard deprives and mistreats Monimia in hopes of being monetarily rewarded by Mrs. Rayland. Mrs. Rayland herself is not consciously cruel. Her thoughtless behavior is an outgrowth of her patriarchal pride of blood. Blood or class is one of the things that keeps Monimia in ignorance and isolation. In order to please a member of the upper class and meet Mrs. Rayland's expectations, Mrs. Lennard is willing to mistreat Monimia.

Another factor that leads to Monimia's lack of education is her sex. While Monimia's case is an extreme example, and some young women, including the young Charlotte Smith, received good educations in the arts and modern languages, poor education was the norm rather than the exception for the young lady of the time. Smith was certainly aware of the great interest in and debate about women's education that was prevalent throughout the century. There was, of
course, the abundance of conduct books which offered conservative advice and tried to encourage young ladies to be properly submissive and modest. However, women writers were challenging the conservative assumptions about female education throughout the eighteenth century. One of the earliest of these writers was Mary Astell, who published "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies" in 1697. In this piece, she proposes the institution of a female "monastery" in which young women could study, worship, and prepare to live useful lives. Although she bases her proposal on the conventional goal of better suiting women to serve society, it is clear that she finds the present female education almost worse than useless. As she states, "Thus ignorance and a narrow education lay the foundation of vice, and imitation and custom rear it up." When Mary Hays published Letters and Essays, Moral and Miscellaneous in 1793, the same complaints about female education were apparently still valid. Hays uses an allegorical story to illustrate how women brought up without any intellectual training or stimulation bring misery to themselves and others.

Given this atmosphere of concern and discussion over female education throughout the century, it is not surprising that Smith should address the topic. She uses a Gothic metaphor to illustrate the limits of female education. Monimia is not threatened sexually as in the
conventional Gothic, but is deprived of self-confidence and reflective ability, as to a lesser degree many young women were at the time. The fact that it is female rather than male authority figures who impose this deprivation may seem surprising at first. However, it is interesting to note that Hayes' Letters, which came out in the same year as The Old Manor House, presented a mother as the person who chooses her daughters' narrow education. Thus, Smith was not the only writer to suggest that women who supported the status quo shared responsibility with men for the poor state of female education.

Monimia, in true Gothic tradition, is rescued from her persecutors by a hero, Orlando Somerive, Mrs. Rayland's nephew. Orlando's family has been ostracized by their relatives, the Raylands, because Orlando's grandmother fell in love with and married a merchant. This descent to common blood is considered by Mrs. Rayland to be a great insult to her family name. However, because she is the last survivor of her father's branch of the family, it is generally believed that she will leave her fortune to Orlando or his older brother, Phillip. Phillip is wasteful and undisciplined, but Orlando is a much more serious young man. He likes Monimia from childhood, and becomes a frequent visitor at Rayland Hall, partly to please his aunt Rayland, but mainly in hopes of seeing Monimia. As a teenager, he
discovers a boarded-up stairway which leads from the lumber room to Monimia's turret room. Strictly forbidden by Mrs. Lennard to meet or communicate, Orlando and Monimia realize that the secret stairway will provide their only means of seeing each other. Unlike many Gothic heroines, Monimia does not need to use the stairway to escape from a potential murderer or rapist. Instead, Orlando realizes that the stairway can provide a means for Monimia to escape from her intellectual imprisonment. He suggests that he should come up the stairway at night, after the rest of the household is in bed, and bring Monimia down the stairs, through the old chapel, and into the library that he uses as living quarters while visiting his aunt. Monimia at first objects, pointing out the impropriety of the two of them being alone, unchaperoned. Orlando convinces her, however, that in addition to the pleasure of their meeting it is right for her to try to obtain learning for herself. "I want you to read, which I know you have now no opportunity of doing. I would find proper books for you; for you may one day have occasion for more knowledge than you can acquire in the way in which you now live. Perhaps clandestine meetings might not be right in any other case; but, persecuted as you are, Monimia, we must meet clandestinely, or not meet at all" (Smith, *The Old Manor House* 1:33).
Orlando does not, as one might expect, eventually rescue Monimia physically from the hall as well. Although she does eventually leave the hall and marry Orlando, his rescue consists initially of rescuing her from the mental and emotional deprivation she has suffered. Not only does he give her access to knowledge, but Orlando gives Monimia self-esteem through his affection: "The reading he had directed her to pursue, had assisted in teaching her some degree of self-value. She found that to be poor was not disgraceful in the eye of Heaven, or in the eyes of the good upon earth; and that the great teacher of that religion which she had been bid profess, though very little instructed in it, was himself poor, and the advocate and friend of poverty."

Orlando, Monimia's rescuer, is Smith's attempt to portray the young man of perfect education. In her earlier novels, she has detailed a variety of vices a young man may acquire by poor education or upbringing. However, when Smith tries to describe how a gentleman should be educated, she becomes vague and does not give any details. Orlando's education is never described in any great detail, although from his personal perfection the reader is led to believe that his upbringing and education have been correct. Nevertheless, it is possible to find a few elements which seem to contribute to Orlando's character.
First, Orlando seems to hail back to an older gentlemanly tradition. He has a strong sense of honor, once almost fighting a duel with a neighboring squire who has insulted Monimia. In addition, he has somehow cultivated the old-fashioned manners that please Mrs. Rayland, herself a relic of another time. Two factors seem to have influenced Orlando's development of gentlemanly conduct.

First, there is blood. Homai J. Shroff in *The Eighteenth Century Novel: The Ideal of the Gentleman*, discusses the confusion at this time over the use of the word "gentleman." He notes that while it was increasingly used to denote a man of good morals and character, there remained a strong belief that a man must be born into the genteel or upper classes in order to be a true gentleman (19). While Smith ridicules Mrs. Rayland's pride of birth, she paradoxically uses noble lineage as a partial explanation for Orlando's natural excellence. He has been named after his great-grandfather, Sir Orlando de Rayland, and Mrs. Rayland attributes Orlando's good looks to inheritance from this illustrious ancestor. Although Smith generally does not hold great families in reverence, there is an implication that Orlando's gentlemanly behavior is at least facilitated by his having "gentle" blood, which his brother has not apparently inherited.
The second factor in forming Orlando's old-fashioned ideas of chivalry may be his reading in the old library at Rayland Hall. As he gains favor with his aunt, he is allowed to use the library and a small adjoining room as bedroom and study. The narrator explains that Orlando is "passionately fond of reading" and it is partly the reward of being able to use the ancient library that reconciles him to attending on his aunt. The fact that the library has not been used for years makes it clear that the books must be very old, but Smith never elaborates on exactly what Orlando reads. However, it is quite likely that in reading such old literature, Orlando would pick up chivalric ideas about honor.

Another element which contributes to Orlando's development is his relationship with his family, particularly with his sisters. Orlando's close affectionate relationship with his three sisters seems to give him the model for male/female friendship, which may with Monimia develop into romantic love. In his first open avowal of love to Monimia, he puts his affection for her in terms of this relationship. "I will, however," he replied warmly, "pity and love you too - love you as well as I do any of my sisters - even the sister I love best. . . ." When Orlando joins the army and must leave home, he introduces Monimia to this sister he loves best, Selina. He hopes that Selina can
provide some company for Monimia, and that they can comfort each other in his absence. He waxes romantic about the meetings Monimia and Selina will have and the discussions they will have about him while he is gone. "I shall then be present with you . . . at least in imagination - yes, however distant my person may be my soul will be here! I shall, in fancy, at least, enjoy the delight of seeing together the two beings whom I most fondly love, and knowing they are occupied with the thoughts of their poor Orlando!"

While the terms that Orlando chooses may seem overly romantic and somewhat self-centered, it must be remembered that he is very young and is leaving home for the first time. Despite the self-centered tone, it is interesting to see how frequently Orlando equates the sister-brother relationship and the romantic relationship. Jane Miller in *Women Writing About Men* discusses the ways in which husbands and brothers may have been equated by the Bronte sisters (Miller, 102): "Charlotte Bronte imagined lovers and husbands as brothers, twins, alternative visions of herself, who would know her and who were themselves knowable and intimately related" (102). Smith also seems to see the brother-sister relationship as a crucial one in determining men's views of women in general. Orlando is not the only hero of Smith's who is shown in relationship to his sisters. Orlando's counterpart in *Emmeline*, Godolphin, meets the
heroine and falls in love with her while both he and she are trying to aid his sister Adelina. In Celestina, the hero and heroine are brought up together as brother and sister, and it is the love of siblings that they first experience. In contrast, the rakes and other villains are generally lacking in filial feeling. The brother-sister relationship, characterized by trust and honesty, is apparently an important model for Smith's ideal romantic relationship. It differs from the conventional romantic relationship in its emphasis on a mutual concern for each other's needs. The rake is concerned only with sexual fulfillment, and many female characters, such as Miss Hollybourn in this novel, are concerned only with economic advantages. Brothers and sisters, by contrast, are concerned with each other's feelings, as Orlando is concerned with both Monimia's feelings and those of his sister, Selina. I think this redefinition of the romantic relationship in familial terms indicates a kind of "pre-feminism" on Smith's part.

As I noted earlier, the central focus in The Old Manor House shifts away from the heroine, who was central in Emmeline and Celestina, and toward the hero. Monimia is not nearly as real to the reader as Emmeline or even Celestina. Monimia is designed to play the role of passive victim. Between her "soft" personality and her imprisonment in the manor house, Monimia is incapable of many adventures. Her
encounters with a rake, unlike encounters experienced by Emmeline and Celestina, end in saving intervention by a third party. However, Smith's interest in courtship and male behavior continue in this novel. In order to portray the difficult courtship situations that interested her, Smith needed a female character who was not entirely a passive victim, someone more similar to her earlier heroines. She solves her problem by creating Isabella, Orlando's beautiful and vivacious older sister. Isabella deals with the difficult courtship situation that Monimia, passive and imprisoned, will never encounter.

General Tracy, Isabella's suitor, is an excellent example of Smith's ability to create minor characters who threaten to "steal the show." The General, an acquaintance of Orlando's father, is near 60 but would like to pass for 35. Like many of Smith's rakes, he has spent his life in the army, learning bravery but gaining few other virtues. Upon learning that his old friend Somerive now has three beautiful daughters, he decides to visit the family. The Somerive girls are not the General's typical choice of love object, as to avoid complications of "honor" he "generally pursued only the indigent and the defenceless." However, after meeting Isabella, he is so captivated by her beauty that he is ready even to consider marriage as a last resort for obtaining her favors. Isabella sees the General's
attempts at courtship as great entertainment, and teases him unmercifully. When her mother tells her she should not ridicule such a "worthy" man, she replies, "Well if this man will flirt with and make love to girls young enough to be his grand-daughters, I must laugh, if it be wrong" (Smith, *The Old Manor House* 2:144). However, the General, unlike some of Smith's earlier rakes, is not clownish. Although Isabella laughs, Smith soon shows the darker side of the situation.

The General, finally deciding that to try to seduce Isabella would be too dangerous and probably too difficult, asks Mr. Somerive for permission to marry her. Mr. Somerive realizes that the General is not a suitable husband for Isabella, but he has also discovered that his elder son, Phillip, has squandered the entire small family fortune and his daughters would be left indigent if he died. He explains this economic necessity to Isabella, and she agrees to the marriage. Orlando asks the younger sister, Selina, how Isabella could do such a thing, and Selina explains to him the code of honor under which women feel compelled to act in these situations.

Were my father to say to me, as he has said to my sister Belle, that to see me opulently married would make his latter days easy, and save him from those hours of anguish that now
torment him about the future fate of us all, I should certainly marry this old man, if he were ten thousand times more odious to me than he is. To make my father happy, Orlando, whom I now see sinking under a weight of anxiety that is destroying him - to secure our dear indulgent mother the comforts of affluence, if we should lose him - and to promote your interest, Orlando, and poor Phillip's, and my sister's, I would throw myself alive into the fire; or what would be more hateful, I would marry a man I abhor" (Smith, The Old Manor House 3:275).

Isabella is not acting foolishly or selfishly, but is fulfilling a female code of honor and acting with true heroism.

Thus, General Tracy, while sometimes humorous, is more dangerous than a young rake. The young rake tries to get a young woman to abandon her virtue and disobey her family for sexual passion. While this is tempting, young women have been brought up to avoid this persuasion, and to value their virtue and reputation above all else. The old rich rake, however, while he could never seduce the girl with his physical charms, has much more powerful means of persuasion. Instead of convincing the woman to abandon her moral code,
he appeals to it. The young woman's belief in duty to her parents and family, and her underlying suspicion that it is wrong to refuse a man because he is physically unattractive, convince her to accept an offer that is disgusting to her. There is more than a slight clue to Smith's opinion in the fact that Isabella's marriage to the General will displace his resident mistress, a young woman whom he has "bought from her mother." Although it is in a socially acceptable sense, Isabella has also been sold.

The sacrifice of Isabella to General Tracy is necessitated by the behavior of her older brother, Phillip, another vivid example of poor male education. As the eldest son of Mrs. Rayland's only surviving relative, it is assumed by the neighborhood and family that Phillip will inherit the Rayland fortune. Because of this, he has been indulged not only by his parents but by neighbors and servants as well. Possessing from childhood "violent passions, and an understanding very ill-suited to their management," Phillip displeases Mrs. Rayland with his wild behavior as a child, and mortifies her with his wild lifestyle as an adult. Mr. Somerive sends Phillip to Oxford, where he does not stay long due to his love of drinking and gambling. When he eventually is so deeply in debt to his gaming friends as to be embarrassed, he returns home to his family. However, he soon finds a similar group at the home of a neighboring
nobleman, and spends his time there. He returns to his father's house only when he runs out of money. Clearly, Phillip's expectations of inheritance have spoiled him for any useful employment, and his parents' continuing to supply him with money has only allowed him to continue his dangerous and unhealthy lifestyle. Smith pardons young women, such as Lady Adelina, who temporarily give in to their physical passions, but she never pardons an unrepentant man who brings pain to his family. After a false will leaves the Somerive family indigent, Phillip no longer restrains his behavior at all. By the time Orlando returns from the army to try to dispute the will, Phillip is dying of a "rapid decline, brought on by debauchery and excess." Although he repents "on the bed of pain and languor," and gains the forgiveness of his family, it is too late to save his family from the miserable poverty brought on them by his selfish lifestyle.

Smith creates a good brother/bad brother pair in Phillip and Orlando, a concept common in eighteenth century fiction and drama. Phillip lives by no code but selfishness, while Orlando lives strictly by a code of honor and honesty. Phillip disregards his family and behaves in a way which eventually results in their misery, while Orlando is loving and concerned, always putting the needs of his mother and sisters before his own. The problem with Smith's comparison
is that while she illustrates the societal indulgence that makes Phillip bad, she never explains what makes Orlando good, although she suggests some possible influences. She has observed and analyzed the incorrect education of young aristocratic males in many of her books. However, she seems unable to formulate a plan or model for a good male education. It seems fruitless to search for an answer to this problem in the text, when Smith has apparently not formulated one. It is wiser and more fair to Smith to recognize and admire the fact that she identified and described some of the serious problems of male education, vividly illustrating them with examples, thus preparing the way for others to formulate acceptable alternatives.

While it is less important in The Old Manor House than in her earlier novels, Smith portrays marriage in this novel also, using one example which is particularly interesting in a metaphoric light. Monimia's cruel aunt, Mrs. Lennard, is eventually courted and married by Mr. Roker, a young lawyer who wishes to get the money that Mrs. Rayland will undoubtedly leave her faithful servant. After Mrs. Rayland's death, Roker's hopes are fulfilled and he and his aging bride retire to a Hampshire estate which is part of the legacy she receives. There Roker finds his elderly wife an inconvenience, and fears she may reveal an illegality involving Mrs. Rayland's will, in which Roker is involved.
Therefore, to keep her out of sight and to free himself to enjoy his new fortune with congenial mistresses, Roker confines his wife to her bedroom, telling everyone that she is insane and setting his sister as a guard over her. Mrs. Lennard/Roker's fate, betrayed and imprisoned, is ironic in view of her imprisonment of Monimia. Part of the reason she was cruel to Monimia was in order to secure a fortune. And now this fortune has caused her to be imprisoned. Under the power of a cruel husband, Mrs. Lennard/Roker cannot enjoy the money, as it now legally belongs to him. Finding herself imprisoned and helpless, Mrs. Lennard/Roker repents her cruel treatment of Monimia and her part in defrauding Orlando of his inheritance. In smuggled letters, she tells Orlando where to find the true will that will make him Mrs. Rayland's rightful heir. It is also ironic that it is the patriarchal structure represented by Mrs. Rayland that Mrs. Lennard was attempting to ally herself with, and it is the patriarchal structure of the marriage laws that allows her husband to declare her insane and imprison her. The balance of poetic justice in the story of Mrs. Lennard/Roker is one of the intricate and ambiguous facets that make *The Old Manor House* such a complex work.

Smith's treatment of her continuing concerns with courtship, male education, and marriage is focused differently in *The Old Manor House* than in *Emmeline* or
Celestina. In general, the latter book seems to present those concerns more pessimistically. The heroine is not just limited socially, but is physically imprisoned. The unwelcome suitor who was often comic in earlier works is here given the economic and social power to compel a woman to marry him. Finally, a bad marriage becomes a literal prison, in which the husband uses his economic power to declare his wife insane and allow her no communication with the outside world. Smith apparently turned to the hero-centered novel at this time because her pessimism about the role of women was imprisoning her. Her dark view of a woman's alternatives and possibilities had made it impossible for her to create another Emmeline. Instead, Smith's heroine becomes Monimia, the passive victim.
V. CHARLOTTE SMITH'S CHANGING VISION

In the three novels that have been examined, it can be seen that while Charlotte Smith's concerns with the relationships between men and women remained consistent, her focus and technique in addressing these concerns changed greatly, particularly between Celestina (1791) and The Old Manor House (1793). She continued throughout the three novels to be concerned with the dangers that courtship and marriage posed for women, and the kinds of male attitudes, fostered by the culture, that created those dangers. In addition, Smith continued to be concerned with how women met these dangers, and how able or unable they were to do so successfully. However, beginning in Celestina and becoming more apparent in The Old Manor House, Smith's focus shifted from the heroine to the hero. Smith no longer found the heroine-centered novel a suitable vehicle for expressing her ideas.

If one looks at the social elements that are consistent among the three novels, the most evident is the bad marriage. Dale Spender has commented that Smith seemed to write about her own marriage throughout her career, patterning her bad husbands after Mr. Smith. From Mrs. Stafford in Emmeline to Mrs. Roker (Lennard) in The Old Manor House, women, regardless of their class or status, suffer abuse and neglect from husbands whose faults range
from the careless childishness of Mr. Elphinstone to the deliberate cruelty of Mr. Roker. However, despite the number and variety of bad marriages, there is some change in the type of marriage portrayed. In *Emmeline*, neither Mrs. Stafford nor Adelina is shown to be at all responsible for her unhappy marriage. Both were coerced into marriage at a young age because of family financial or social aspirations. Adelina and Mrs. Stafford both deny that they married for any personal reasons such as sexual attraction, claiming that they married solely to please their families. Their husbands, Trelawny and Stafford, are selfish and inconsiderate. They waste their money on gambling and drinking, and Stafford spends much of his on ridiculous investment schemes. Neither shows any concern for his wife's welfare. Trelawny abandons Adelina when he flees to France, and Stafford forces his wife and children to accompany him on the difficult journey when he also goes to France to escape his creditors.

In *Celestina* and *The Old Manor House*, the wives, while certainly mistreated, are at least somewhat responsible for choosing their husbands and thus their situations. Also, in the marriages of Mrs. Elphinstone and Mrs. Roker, Smith puts new emphasis on the unfair marriage laws that put all financial matters under the husband's control. Mrs. Elphinstone, like Adelina and Mrs. Stafford, married when
she was probably too young to make a wise decision. However, unlike her predecessors, her decision was her own. She fell in love with Elphinstone as a child, and throughout the story continues to express affection for him. Elphinstone, in turn, loves his wife and expresses concern and affection for her. The unhappiness of their marriage is caused not by a failure of affection, but by Elphinstone's total inability to make a living.

Elphinstone is not like the typical eighteenth century rake, such as Sir Clemont Willoughby in Burney's *Evelina*. He is not a villain, motivated by lust. However, Smith clearly illustrates the misery that Elphinstone creates for his family through his financial bungling. He is an apparently new type of male "antagonist" in the novel, one that I believe Smith originates. Rather than failing through character faults, Elphinstone's failure is attributable to the marriage laws and social customs that dictated that the husband would be responsible for managing family finances, even if he was clearly incompetent. These laws and customs decreed that the man should be the financial and social head of the household, putting great responsibility on men like Trelawny whose educations clearly have not given them adequate preparation. While the dangers of arranged marriages were popular themes among women novelists of the eighteenth century, Smith is pointing to
society's dictate that the man be the head of the household, combined with poor male education, not arranged marriage alone, as the source of misery. The Elphinstones' case illustrates that a husband's good intentions or a couple's affection for each other will not overcome a husband's lack of preparation for his role as financial manager and social leader of the family.

Mrs. Lennard/Roker's case differs dramatically from the other bad marriages not only because her mistreatment is of a more drastic sort, but also because more than any of the other women, Smith seems to imply that Mrs. Lennard/Roker is so responsible for her situation as to deserve it. In addition, the abuses that are possible under the marriage laws are vividly illustrated by Mrs. Lennard/Roker's imprisonment. Mrs. Lennard/Roker does not marry Roker because of either true affection or coercion. She marries him because of sexual attraction. While Mrs. Lennard/Roker's case can not be taken as Smith's new model for the poor marriage (she reverts to the earlier theme of the spendthrift in subsequent novels), it does seem to fit an emerging pattern with her portrayal of bad marriages. Roker's narrow, materialistic upbringing is responsible for his mistreatment of his wife, just as earlier husbands were made selfish by their indulgent upbringings. Thus, failures of male education create men who are not competent, or in
Roker's case, ethical, heads of households. In addition, marriage laws and social custom allow Roker to imprison his "insane" wife and use her fortune as he wishes. The combination of these two factors, poor male education and restrictive sex roles, seems to make bad marriages inevitable. Despite the sad fate of Mrs. Lennard/Roker, however, Smith's view of marriage seems to be most pessimistic in Emmeline and Celestina. In The Old Manor House, the existence of affectionate, mutually-supportive marriages, particularly that of Mr. and Mrs. Somerive, Orlando's parents, softens Smith's criticism of marriage in general.

If Smith's pessimism about marriage was softened, perhaps by her own distance from the experience by 1793 when The Old Manor House was published, her pessimism about the situation of women, particularly her young heroines, had deepened until the heroine-centered novel seemed unviable to her. Katherine Rogers has commented that Smith was probably restricted as well as helped by the women's fiction tradition. Rogers suggests that the convention of concentrating on the heroine prevented Smith from developing some of the broader social themes and male characterizations that seem to have interested her (Rogers, "Inhibitions on Women Novelists," 78). The change in Smith's work over the period studied may be an indication of her increasing
feeling that the heroine-centered novel could not adequately address her concerns about men's and women's roles in society. Emmeline, her first heroine, is vivacious and courageous, always observing the rules of propriety, but challenging the authority of males in her life by refusing to be bullied by Lord Montreville, her guardian, or persuaded into an unsatisfactory marriage by her tempestuous suitor, Delamere. Emmeline reflects Smith's most optimistic view of young women. Women may be surrounded by males who wish to objectify and control them, but Emmeline proves that one can overcome this authority and direct one's own life, while maintaining perfect virtue and propriety.

In Celestina, directing one's own life is not so easy. Celestina is not capable of the kind of self-assertion that Emmeline used. She is afraid not only of seeming rude, but also of injuring her reputation. Celestina's politeness is taken as encouragement by her unwelcome suitors. In Celestina's world, a woman's refusal is not taken seriously, and any assertive behavior she uses to emphasize that refusal may be labeled immodesty and be injurious to her reputation. Thus, the modest, virtuous Celestina, who follows all the rules of propriety, is in a double bind. The fact that Emmeline was not trapped in this same double bind is an indication of Smith's earlier optimism about women's situations. As Smith writes more heroine-centered
novels, she seems to be increasingly limited by the heroine's narrow sphere of action and increasingly pessimistic about the heroine's ability to widen that sphere.

The progression of this feeling of limitation reaches its natural conclusion in *The Old Manor House* in which the heroine is literally imprisoned. Monimia is physically imprisoned and also imprisoned intellectually and emotionally by her Aunt Lennard and Miss Rayland. Smith has taken the metaphor of female imprisonment so far that she can no longer use the heroine as the book's central figure. As Joanna Russ has put it in terms of a continuing problem in creating books about women, "of all the possible actions people can do in fiction, very few can be done by women" (5). Monimia remains in her turret, and Smith turns her attention to Orlando, making the hero the book's central character.

Smith's shift to a male protagonist coincides with a growth in her interest in male education. Possibly, Smith began to feel that concentrating on the heroine would not be a fruitful way to demand a change in society. In *Emmeline*, Smith showed that she could create a strong heroine and make her believable. Yet her heroines grow progressively "weaker" and more passive. The fact that Smith so clearly realized the kind of troubling male personalities her
society produced may have led her to conclude that it was the male personality that should first be reformed. If male attitudes are the root cause of women's problems, then one should concentrate on changing those attitudes if one wishes to help women.

Smith's concern with male development sets her apart from her contemporaries, who at this time were more concerned with the development of the heroine. Fanny Burney's *Evelina* is a superior example of this concern with female development. Other major writers included Anne Radcliffe, who addressed feminine over-sensibility, and Mary Wollstonecraft, whose *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman* addressed general societal oppression and woman's response to it. Smith may have seen that as long as male attitudes remained the same, women's development would be thwarted. Therefore, she moved away from the traditional focus on the heroine, and began to create male protagonists.

In her portrayal of the problems of male education, Smith was an unusual woman novelist. In her establishment of a link between these problems of male development and the oppression of women in society, Smith was unique. She depicted the varied effects of poor male education and how women suffered from men's lack of practical and moral education. In doing so, she made a valuable contribution to the eighteenth-century women's fiction tradition.
VI. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Maria or the Wrongs of Woman*. London, 1798.