

# (re)making The Gentleman: Genteel Masculinities And The Country Estate In The Novels Of Charlotte Smith, Jane Austen, And Elizabeth Gaskell

Shaunna Kay Wilkinson  
*Marquette University*

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## Recommended Citation

Wilkinson, Shaunna Kay, "(re)making The Gentleman: Genteel Masculinities And The Country Estate In The Novels Of Charlotte Smith, Jane Austen, And Elizabeth Gaskell" (2014). *Dissertations (2009 -)*. 335.  
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(RE)MAKING THE GENTLEMAN: GENTEEL MASCULINITIES AND THE  
COUNTRY ESTATE IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE SMITH, JANE AUSTEN,  
AND ELIZABETH GASKELL

By  
Shaunna Wilkinson, B.A., M.A.

A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,  
Marquette University,  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May 2014

ABSTRACT  
(RE)MAKING THE GENTLEMAN: GENTEEL MASCULINITIES AND THE  
COUNTRY ESTATE IN THE NOVELS OF CHARLOTTE SMITH, JANE AUSTEN,  
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While perpetually redefined and reimagined by conduct books writers, social philosophers, and literary figures of the eighteenth century, the gentleman is a term that holds significant cultural and social cache through the nineteenth century. My project seeks to untangle the discourse around the gentleman by examining how women writers use work to re-categorize the gentleman and to open access to genteel masculinity for professional men and other marginalized masculinities. The dynamic that we can observe in courtship novels—texts where the interconnectivity of gender allows for the interrogation of performance—enables us to recognize how the professionalization of gender has exploited the anxieties of the aristocracy’s uncertain physical and social place in an evolving class system.

Drawing my theoretical background from Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990), I discuss the gentleman as a specific and characteristic gender performance, one that has its definition validated by the productive work that he performs. This performance, its execution in behaviors and other performative aspects of gender, presents us with accessible ways to redefine masculinity and positions women writers as didactic authorities in the education of men.

If masculinity shifts to accommodate performative aspects of gentility, then the county estate loses its fragile claim as the single marker of a man’s identity. However, the effects of property and the constructs of home refigure into the gentleman’s identity through their use as sites of work and places of performance, not as static touchstones of genteel identity. I argue throughout my dissertation that Charlotte Smith, Jane Austen, and Elizabeth Gaskell anticipate the influence that industrialism and capitalism will have on gender roles and constructs of home. In addition to creating a new sort of heroine, these women writers also worked to construct a new image of masculinity, the bourgeois gentleman, a man who mediated between earlier aristocratic and landed ideals of masculinity and his new middle-class, professional or merit-based identity.

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## Introduction: Charting the Gentleman

This project explores the representation of the gentleman through his relationship to work and place in British women's novels from the late eighteenth-century through the middle of the nineteenth-century. Specifically, my project will examine how the performance of work alters and renegotiates the gentleman outside the traditional tenets of wealth, leisure, and property, which were historically used to define and validate his identity. As more men entered professional, industrial, and otherwise meritocratic positions, this definition became complicated by the application of new avenues of economic production and by the slippery nature of aristocratic and landed lines of inheritance. The English country estate and other manifestations of home, once a man's paradise and the physical emblem of his gentlemanly status, shifted in significance when professional and self-made men emerged as powerful threats to ancestral identity. While the novels of women may seem like an unusual or, at least, unlikely place for the revision of masculinity, scholars' focus on the heroine and the voluminous body of criticism surrounding femininity and female authorship has often undersold the hero's relationship to masculinity.<sup>1</sup> The dynamic that we can observe in courtship novels—texts where the interconnectivity of gender allows us to question behavior and performance—enables us to recognize how the professionalization of gender has exploited the anxieties of the

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<sup>1</sup> On female authorship, seminal studies include Susan Gilbert and Sandra Gubar, *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2000; Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998; Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1985. Relevant studies on the heroine include John Phillips Hardy, *Jane Austen's Heroine: Intimacy in Human Relationships*. London: Routledge, 2011; Laura Fasnick, *Vessels of Meaning: Women's Bodies, Gender Norms, and Class Bias from Richardson to Lawrence*. DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois UP, 1997; Ruth Bernard Yeazall, "Why Political Novels Have Heroines: *Sybil*, *Mary Barton*, and *Felix Holt*." *Novel* 18 (1985): 126-44.

aristocracy's uncertain physical and social place in an evolving class system. Therefore, my project's goals are threefold: first, it will formulate new definitions of the gentleman and illuminate how women writers engage in the process of gender revision. Second, this study will enter ongoing debates about the gentleman's meritocracy, the ownership and transmission of British property, and the rhetoric of work and gentility. Lastly, I will trace a new pattern in women's literature, exploring previously unexamined connections between Jane Austen's influences and her literary descendants in order to provide an alternative history of masculinity.

To this end, my project differs from previous accounts of the gentleman that have defined it as an identity that is tied to the upper classes and, therefore, an identity that is largely understood through a complicated system of birth, rank, and elite access to education.<sup>2</sup> I would not suggest that these factors do not play into the definition, but rather that the reliance on and the juxtaposition with the gentleman's use as an exemplary term of masculinity often appears more vague than useful. Drawing my theoretical background from Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990), I will discuss the gentleman as a specific and characteristic gender performance, one that has its definition validated by the productive work that he performs. This performance, its execution in behaviors and other performative aspects of gender, presents us with accessible ways to redefine masculinity and positions women writers as didactic authorities in the education of men.

Scholars generally agree that the late eighteenth century saw a significant shift and remodeling of gender identity, which, in effect, acted to solidify many of our

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<sup>2</sup> See Clinton Machann, *Masculinity in Four Victorian Epics: A Darwinist Reading*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010; Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldier and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era: Charlotte Yonge's Models of Manliness*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010.

contemporary understandings about the role of men and women in society.<sup>3</sup> This topic has been predominantly addressed with regards to women and the role of women in socio-historical detail. Recently, however, scholarship on the role of men has taken on a more pronounced position in debates about gender due, in part, to the genesis of men's studies that has taken place over the last twenty years. Historians and philosophers like John Tosh and Michael Kimmel primarily have undertaken this strain of gender criticism; more recently, Michael Kramp's *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man* (2007) and Erin Mackie's *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates: The Making of the Modern Gentleman in the Eighteenth Century* (2009) have contributed to the study of masculinity in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literature.<sup>4</sup> Following in the footsteps of these scholars, my project, using the framework of masculinity studies and the background of gender performance, will examine the correlation between models of genteel masculinity and the development of accessible masculine performances.

Michael Kimmel outlines in *The History of Men* that out of the Restoration the anxiety of male identity emerged as the predominant concern of the upper classes. Men who derived their stable social positions from estates and long family lines were forced to adapt to the influx of new and exemplary forms of masculinity. Kimmel describes that

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<sup>3</sup> See Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender and Sentimentality in the 1790s. Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1999. 3-23. Also see Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England 1715-1785*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 1985.

<sup>4</sup> In *Rakes, Highwaymen, and Pirates* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2009), Mackie historicizes some of the deviant forms of masculinity present in the eighteenth-century. The rake, the highwayman, and the pirate all contribute to what the nineteenth-century begins to form: the modern gentleman. In *Disciplining Love*, Kramp argues that emerging classes of men had to be taught how to "discipline" their sexual desire in order to create a sustained, rational masculine identity. Using Austen's novels, Kramp examines how masculinities were transformed into productive models through the discourse and, ultimately, the mastery over love. Also see Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Masculinity: Gender, Politics and Poetics in the Writings of Burke, Coleridge, Cobbett, Wordsworth, DeQuincey and Hazlitt*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999. As the title implies, Fulford examines constructions of masculinity in male Romantic poetry and prose. While Fulford does not examine women's Romanticism or the gentleman specifically, his study provides an important understanding of masculinity as part of a chivalric national project.

the changes men made were largely “reactive” to this invasion and while I agree, I would add that women writers in the context of the novel also create alterations to masculinity by reacting to the changed state of their own gender (126). If heroines are presented as empowered and independent within the parameters of their identity, then it only holds that their partners must also react in order to accommodate these new gender dynamics.

At the center of my discussion of gender is the question of how to define the gentleman outside the constructs of property and home. If masculinity shifts to accommodate performative aspects of gentility, then place, or in this case, the county estate, loses its fragile claim as the single marker of a man’s identity. However, the effects of property and the constructs of home refigure into the gentleman’s identity through their use as sites of work and places of performance, not as static touchstones of genteel identity. I will argue that by elevating work and action in the character of the gentleman, women writers seek to legitimate their own literary tradition and to elevate the genre and production of women’s work. The struggle of the gentleman to redefine his identity through work then becomes analogous of women writers’ experience with work within the same society. Like the gentleman, the work of women’s texts is not done for financial gain; instead, their texts work to construct and promote a community of women writers. I will also argue throughout my dissertation that Smith, Austen, and Gaskell anticipate the influence that industrialism and capitalism will have on gender roles and courtship. However, they counter the individual pursuit of a capitalist man with the gentleman: a man who values the community and the people who inhabit his world. In addition to creating a new sort of heroine, who has received voluminous critical attention, they also worked to construct a new image of masculinity, the bourgeois gentleman, a



man who mediated between earlier aristocratic ideals of masculinity (as represented by his status as leisured and wealthy) and his new middle-class identity (as represented by his investment in the community and his need to do good for others). This shift allows for women to have authority and agency in a patriarchal structure and in the formation of gendered identities. My thesis, therefore, is threefold: women writers engage with masculinities in the novel in order to expand the gentleman's parameters outside of the tenets of wealth, property, and prestige. Second, in order to negotiate performance outside of these barriers, the gentleman's actions must appeal to aspects of work. Lastly, as the gentleman develops stronger professional and industrial ties, the county estate loses its value as a site of identity and instead, men construct new sites within the workplace that fulfill and uphold this performance.

### I. The Gentleman

The gentleman recently has become an object of interest in discussions of eighteenth and nineteenth-century masculinity.<sup>5</sup> While perpetually redefined, reimagined, and re-categorized by conduct books writers, social philosophers, and even literary figures of the eighteenth century, it is an identity that holds significant cultural and social cache through the nineteenth century. My project seeks to untangle the discourse around the gentleman by examining how women writers use work to re-categorize the gentleman and open access to genteel masculinity for professional men and other formerly marginalized masculinities.

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<sup>5</sup> Recent studies include Jason D. Solinger, *Becoming the Gentleman: British Literature and the Invention of Modern Masculinity, 1660-1815*. New York: Palgrave MacMillian, 2012; Megan Woodworth, *Eighteenth Century Women Writers and the Gentleman's Liberation Movement: Independence, War, Masculinity, and the Novel, 1778-1818*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011.

There are several significant studies that serve to define the “gentleman” in the context of his social history. David Castronovo traces the term gentleman through its etymological history from the Old French *gentile hom* to Henry V’s 1413 decree that designated the gentleman as a rank (5). Castronovo rightly notes that the term is presented as an ideal, a title that speaks to a man’s authority over his status and, presumably, over other men. To this end, Castronovo also suggests that by the nineteenth century the gentleman has shifted from what he calls “a condition” to a “process” (12). Castronovo claims, however, that this process does not lose its origin in a man’s blood and ancestry (12). While Castronovo includes a variety of texts and historical documents to illustrate the gentleman’s rise, Robin Gilmour in *The Idea of the Gentleman* and Karen Volland Waters in *The Perfect Gentleman* use exclusively literary texts to map the gentleman’s development. More specifically, Robin Gilmour also sees the gentleman as an ideal condition that Victorian male writers inherit from their Restoration and eighteenth-century predecessors. Using mostly Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s *Spectator* and Daniel Defoe’s later published work “A Compleat Gentleman,” Gilmour argues that the middle-class values presented in these two texts are working to negotiate the gentleman outside the parameters of an aristocratic identity. Gilmour’s emphasis on the middle-class values as seen in Addison and Steel and Defoe suggests that to translate the “dandyism, insolence and licentiousness of so-called polite society,” the idea of the gentleman requires “sobriety and domestication” (23). While Gilmour is quick to point out that Defoe and the *Spectator* disagree over how a man may prove his masculinity, the concept of bred gentility and a liberal education make it a more easily attainable identity for self-made men and those in trade. For Waters, who also examines Victorian men’s

fiction, the term “gentleman” functions to control masculinity and, by default, constructs hierarchies of gender that forestall men’s development (17). While all three scholars are moving towards a performative identity, the use of the gentleman as a distinguished ideal undermines a more expansive understanding of the term’s flexible and performance. All three scholars showcase how the gentleman’s ideal presentation serves to illuminate the paradoxes inherit in the term’s construction. However, I would take it further and suggest that the exclusive use of the gentleman as an exemplary model of masculinity establishes boundaries that are restrictive to performance. Both Gilmour and Waters speak to the anxiety of male identity by male authors, and both suggest that an ideal gentleman functioned to preserve and maintain order over a class system that was dangerously close to imploding. By contrast, I would not suggest that the gentleman then becomes an ideal or aspires to an elite version of masculinity, but that its abstract use as an ideal, or even as Gilmour terms an ‘idea,’ does not benefit literary discussions. What I find problematic about both Gilmour and Castronovo’s use of the gentleman as an ideal is that as an ideal it can be imbued with whatever meaning the author invites, yet remains neither quantified nor revolutionized in the way that it is experienced by multiple audiences. If we think of the gentleman as an ideal, then we are creating the same level of status quo that the term invites. Both Gilmour and Castronovo acknowledge that the term is not static, but this emphasis on it as an ideal undermines the unstable identity that it has in other literary texts. I would not suggest that the term “gentleman” is a revolutionary one, particularly given its long history; merely that a man’s means of becoming a gentleman and performing as a gentleman demonstrates revolutionary actions.

Moreover, I object to the trajectory of both Gilmour and Waters' discussions because each traces a familiar line from Addison and Steele then through Richardson and Austen. Both projects nod to Frances Burney but seemingly skip over some of the other important female writers who transform the gentleman from his conduct book roots to what I see as his full-fledged performance manifested in women's novels. Like Addison and Steele and Defoe, Charlotte Turner Smith and later Elizabeth Gaskell, provide important moments in the gentleman's evolution away from the aristocracy and a born-to-the-manor identity. The education of the gentleman, the behaviors that influence his performance, and the overall attributes that present a solid performance are codified and manipulated by literature, yet women's literature, or at least women novelists outside of Burney and Austen, largely have been overlooked in the conversation about masculinity and the gentleman.

More recently, however, Michael Kramp's *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man* has conceptualized how Austen's male characters—heroes, villains, and supporting cast—have bartered new avenues of masculine gentility, but there has been little done to render the same treatment to Gaskell's men, and even less to the men of Smith's novels. I see my project contributing to the scholarship around Smith's novels, but more importantly to the ongoing debate about women writers' engagement with masculinity. Janet Todd's volume *Men by Women* (1981) began some of the work towards an understanding of female authors' involvement in the process of male gender revision. But in more recent years, Sarah S. G. Frantz and Katharina Rennhak edited articles on the same subject, claiming in the Introduction to *Women Constructing Men* (2010) that the examination of female-authored masculinities "reveals much about

women's assumptions, hopes, fears about the construction of both masculine authority and masculine subjectivity"(3). To this end, I would also suggest that the female - authored gentleman represents an equally interior struggle with the ideologies of class, gender, and work. Indeed, who better understands the pull between one's socially confined gender position and one's work better than women novelists of this time period? I do not pose this question to set up a rubric for biographical criticism; instead, I would suggest that this tension explains why women writers are in the unique position to present the gentleman's relationship to work. For several of the novelists I discuss, the livelihood of their families, the importance of their voice, and the execution of their art depend on straddling the line between the propriety of the authoress and the gently-bred lady of reason. Given how quickly the narrative of a woman's position can turn public exposure into ruin, it seems only appropriate that the authors I examine are invested in making work a prerogative for a man's character development. With uncertain identities in a male-dominated world, both social and literary, they relied on a singular identity to uphold and perform for their audience. Thus performance, and its execution in work, navigates the same untoward and unstable paths for the gentleman as it does for the lady.

As the gentleman develops in the nineteenth century, we see how models of ideal gentility stretch the boundaries of middle-class identity. If we are to understand the gentleman as a fluctuating identity, then it cannot be an ideal or even an idea. Recently, Jason D. Solinger has argued that the gentleman's status as the nostalgic bearer of masculine comportment romanticizes the term and that "Britons used the name 'gentleman' to authorize new modes of masculinity"(3). My project departs from Solinger's approach in that it sees this process of authorization ultimately tied to

masculine performance. My distinction between the utility of an ideal and the multiplicity of performance hinges on the understanding of the gentleman as a concentrated gender performance—versus a static, upper-class male and landed and/or titled identity—that needs constant validation in order to present itself. What Solinger illuminates, and what my discussion will further, is the need to think about the gentleman as a radically unstable identity, one that a man can, to use the verb in Solinger’s title, ‘become’ rather than an identity into which the gentleman is born or that controls him. This manifests in various ways across the class system, but as Solinger also points out, eighteenth-century writers, despite presenting ways for a man to be a gentleman, ultimately conclude that the gentleman belongs to the middle class. However, if we are meant to find the gentleman in the eighteenth century’s gentry class or in the country squire, Charlotte Smith’s characterizations demonstrate how he is sadly misappropriated. And while the gentleman may be invested in middle-class social ideals, the gentleman’s separation from work and from other forms of performance that are deemed traditionally ungentlemanly is a limitation that women writers rectify. There are middle-class values to be viewed in combination with the gentleman, particularly the self-made gentleman, but Solinger ultimately provides an approach that emphasizes how the traditionally middle-class figures of the time—tradesmen, manufacturers, and other men engaged in commerce—were excluded from the avenues of gentility because of work.

If, as Castrovono suggests, the gentleman evolves into a process and is not a static condition defined by a coincidence of birth, then how are gentleman to define themselves when faced with other men? How are gentlemen to differentiate their identities from other, lesser, or inappropriate forms of masculinity? These questions of judgment and

value seem to be part of the central anxious concern of the gentleman as he develops in the eighteenth century. If the gentleman is the most elevated and cultivated form of masculinity that the eighteenth century offers, then the rake is, by contrast, the destructive Other. Dangerous, passionate, volatile, and prone to scandalous and occasionally criminal behavior, the rake's performance departs from the codes of chivalry and politeness that are associated with gentleman. In its ideal form, we might see that the gentleman functions to offset the deviant or unwieldy manifestations of masculinity, identified as rogues, rakes, or libertines.<sup>6</sup> Notably, Erin Mackie has examined these destructive masculinities. With her focus on rakes, highwaymen, and pirates, Mackie argues that these masculine types help to inform the modern man. As Mackie defines it, the modern man constructs a shared identity and system of behaviors that depends on the rake, the highwayman, and the pirate to contribute by criminalizing certain masculine behaviors and setting up what the gentleman cannot or should not do (8). In this Derridian way, we may see the gentleman through his binary opposition to forms of deviant masculinity, which, in turn, creates opportunities for the gentleman to carve out his identity and criminalize other behaviors. Like Mackie, I find that rakes serve as policing agents for the gentleman's masculinity, but I would also add that women writers adapt the rake to present a shrewder façade in the nineteenth century. While Austen's Mr. Wickham and other men like Mr. Willoughby or Henry Crawford are clearly descendants of the rake tradition, they fit more easily into gentlemanly models of masculinity or at least do not display broadly improper manners or aggressive sexuality. The excess and consumption

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<sup>6</sup> While there is a long history to each of these terms, I prefer to use Mackie's term 'rake' because it presents the most straightforward definition for unruly upper-class masculinity and covers more of the deviant behaviors associated with the rogue and libertine. I would suggest that the rogue appears as more of a trickster figure, while the term libertine condemns anti-social sexual predation.

still defines this unruly and harmful form of masculinity, yet as Austen adapts the rake, he has learned to hide many of the more flagrant and degenerative behaviors that we associate with the term. However, the rake's role in the novel—his legal, emotional, and sexual obligations on the heroine—reveals a fragile opening in our understanding of masculine performance. For the performance to be properly executed, we must understand how a man's actions influence his presentation. In texts like the ones that I examine, the gentleman's motivations, feelings, and intentions are not always clear for either the audience or the heroine. This complicates performance, both for the gentleman and the rake, because it puts our focus back on the performance's intent rather than on its easy execution. Because we do not have such hyperbolic and obviously dangerous displays of masculinity in Austen, we, like the heroines of this genre, are tasked with deconstructing the rake's performance. My focus on the gentleman necessitates the rake's inclusion; however, it does not suggest that he holds as valuable or flexible a place. Instead, my project uses the rake to demonstrate how gentility and masculine performance can be distorted by a man's actions.

## II. Work

As previously noted, by the same principles that inform Butler's gender performance, I also argue that work necessitates performance. Butler's definition of gender has its roots in action: specific actions that are gendered either female or male are replicated in order to categorize an individual within a particular gender identity. These gendered actions are part of a larger performance, one that is socially prescribed by the actions that each gender is made to reproduce. Work and action, as modes of agency and



behavior, conceptualize how we are to interpret the performance of gender, and especially, the gentleman in the novel. Similarly, while I use Butler's approach to map out the contours of the gentleman, I see an overlap between the performance of gender and the performance of work. One functions as a way to execute a masculine identity; the other serves as a way of executing commercial or financial actions. There often has existed a certain level of disconnect between these two forms of performance; however, gender, social, and financial work all require a level of dedication and performance.

Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899) provides an important definition of the gentleman. For Veblen, the role of leisure in the gentleman's development means that he must work at leisure, and that work that produces any commercial or financial success negates his appearance as a man of leisurely pursuits: "Refined tastes, manners, and habits of life are a useful evidence of gentility, because good breeding requires time, application, and expense, and can therefore not be compassed by those whose time and energy are taken up with work" (49). Veblen also goes on to suggest that the work of the gentleman requires consumption; this need to consume, to possess and overtake objects, women, people, and I would also argue, land and estates, underscores many of the gentleman's behaviors and motivations. For Veblen, a man's focus on maintaining his wealth leaves him unable to pursue the leisurely activities that one associates with the gentleman. Improper care given to one's estates or family homes, unpaid debts, and insecure financial situations—these are often the products of a gentleman's leisure. Furthermore, a gentleman's ties to an economic understanding of his social position thereby make him unable to perform activities that feign indifference to that economic system. Ostentatious displays of wealth indicate the

amount of leisure which one's money could afford—the gentleman's ability to consume meant more time that he was free to pursue activities that are unrelated to the work and to a daily control of his wealth.

Woodruff D. Smith later echoes the gentleman's connection to consumption when he argues that an individual's chosen and competitive consumption upholds the family honor among other elite members of society (32). What both Veblen and Smith establish is that the gentleman's pursuit of leisure is what defines his relationship to his individual identity and his history. However, I would equate such leisure with idleness, something that women writers find to be objectionable in the heroine's choice of a husband.

Additionally, women writers typically characterize the gentleman of leisure as a rake: his destructive and consumptive behaviors arising from an abundance of time and excess, or seeming excess, of capital. If we think of the gentleman as an identity exclusively afforded to those who have Veblen's "time, application, and energy," then we lose the gentleman's fundamental connection to the middle class. I do not quibble with Veblen's definition of gentility as a set of "refined manners and tastes." Instead I would suggest that leisure and good breeding as means for obtaining gentility showcases a limiting view of masculinity and class. If modes of gentility are acquired through leisure, then that leaves a majority of middle-class men—professional men, manufacturers, tradesmen, and other men who engage in work—bereft of social standing based on actions that require production. If the gentleman of leisure consumes, then the gentleman of work produces.

As we have seen, the gentleman is a middle-class identity and as the boundaries of the middle class are lengthened to encapsulate more forms of masculinity, then it is essential to assert new parameters for the types and varieties of work a gentleman may

perform. Therefore, as the gentleman is a specialized form of male gender performance, we must understand how the actions of work, once an excluding outline for the gentleman, have replaced leisure as the singular determinant of a man's gentlemanly status. If we consider the gentleman's main form of work as consumption, we interrupt many of the fundamental social values that the gentleman dispenses and intercedes. In many of the novels from this time, we see how easily the gentleman of leisure's prescribed apathy results in ignored estates, unpaid debts, and precarious financial situations. In other words, if we read the gentleman as an identity enmeshed with leisure, then the chivalric gestures that he performs and the social values that he upholds lose their utility. The gentleman, as a historical figure and a vehicle of gender performance, illuminates one of the most profound paradoxes between social work and financial work. However, I offer that these two constructions of work—the work of being a gentleman and the commercial actions of work—have more in common. My approach differs from Veblen's in that my project considers the gentleman's work as both of social and financial value. This differs markedly from an exclusively labor definition of work because work completed may be gendered as part of the gentleman's performance or it may be undertaken for the purpose of securing a man's financial future. Additionally, this work may also be of a social nature, particularly in its approach to women and other streamlined behaviors of chivalry such as dancing, caring for women, upholding social order. This takes many forms in the novels, but ultimately, these chivalric actions are often responsibilities that other gentlemen of leisure are not inclined or are incapable of performing. These are behaviors and actions that typically fall to the gentleman and therefore, his undertaking of these actions renders the actions a part of the gentleman's

gender and class performance. This project is interested in placing Butler's definition of action alongside Veblen's definition of the gentleman in order to illuminate and explore the paradox separating the gentleman and the gentleman's work. What emerges is a new rubric under which we may rectify the gentleman's financial success with the social values that he upholds.

Work, that is gendered actions that perform the function of work, may not always be filtered through a specific occupation or professional identity. While the main professions—clergy, military, law—provide important sites for work and an arena for masculine performance, my project does not limit the gentleman's work, social or commercial, to these masculine spaces alone. Indeed, spaces that harbor and develop masculine identity are not often the same sites where men are employed. Herbert Sussman in *Victorian Masculinities* (1995) asserts that a masculine plot—a man's search for adulthood, the father, and a community of men—seeks to reclaim the domestic sphere from women by creating professional bonds among men which interrupt the feminized courtship plot (66). Sussman theorizes that Thomas Carlyle's construction of a masculine utopia imagines a space where men are free from the feminizing and corrupting power of the domestic sphere; a counter space that fulfills domestic needs (companionship, relaxation) without women. Seeing this masculine plot played out in Gaskell's *North and South*, Sussman uses the communal dining hall at Marlborough Mills to illustrate how a separatist environment provides a masculine domestic space in the midst of a workplace (65). While Sussman's account does not consider the scores of female workers who are also employed at Marlborough Mills, he ultimately concludes that Thornton's masculine plot fails when he marries Margaret. However, I see how Carlyle's concept of a separatist

environment undermines much of the gentleman's performance. Expanding our understanding of the gentleman as a performance worthy of gender, social, and financial value, we illuminate how domestic spaces also become sites of work. Additionally, much of the gentleman's work depends on women's inclusion in the domestic workplace. This vision of a separatist community where men are isolated in the workplace does not account for the multitude of ways in which women and men experience work as a collaborative project.

If we understand the gentleman's work in the context of gender dynamics and performance, then an isolated and exclusionary environment like the workplace does not offer a complete understanding of masculinity. Professional masculinity represents a significant place for male development and the gentleman's work, but ultimately the work of the gentleman's performance happens outside of separatist places like the workplace, school, or the social club. In her "Introduction" to *Professional Domesticity in the Victorian Novel: Women, Work, and the Home* (1998), Monica F. Cohen claims that professionalization of the home does not represent a shift in identity for men; instead we should consider how the professions and their emphasis on work and pay influence women writers' construction of home (10). My interest in what Cohen terms "professional domesticity" is in how domestic spaces may be considered workplaces, both for men and for women (11). By extending the parameters of the workplace and the politics of a working environment outside of the home, we can more readily examine the gentleman of the gentry class, not to mention further examine the self-made man in discourses of gentility. Separate spheres rubrics like those outlined in Lenore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's groundbreaking study *Family Fortunes* establish how narratives of

home need to exclude work from the domestic in order to create a respite for men who must enter the harsh and stressful world of commerce.<sup>7</sup> However, when we pause to consider how the gentleman, an identity that includes a variety of different types of labor, works, we can see how the domestic also serves as place for professional and social prowess. If we isolate work as an activity that is completed strictly outside the confines of the home or estate, then we negate much of the work done to maintain financial and social freedom. The country estate functions as a site of work and a site of leisure, a site of management and a site of freedom, but all of these definitions of work are predicated on work and action being the primary sources of masculinity and, therefore, the employment of men.

### III. The County Estate

Examining the pamphlet that accompanies a contemporary tour of Chatsworth House—what many argue is the inspiration for Mr. Darcy’s Pemberley—Malcolm Kelsall observes that the great county house is as much a part of the countryside as it is a part of British history: “The visitor is told by its owner that this is ‘not a palace, not a castle, not a museum’ ...as though they kept their house in trust for all the nation...It has not been built so much as grown by organic process from the English soil” (6). As Kelsall illuminates, the expansion, the ownership, and the transference of property, especially British or British owned property, remain important questions that still dominate our contemporary interpretation of history. As historians Richard Wilson and Alan Mackay

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<sup>7</sup> See Davidoff and Hall’s *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1815*. London: Routledge, 2003. A foundational study in the evolution of Victorian separate spheres, Davidoff and Hall illuminate how narratives of place have influenced our contemporary understanding of gender dynamics.

are quick to note, the main difference between a “*great* county house” and a mere “house in the country” is the land and income that a county house uses for its upkeep and for establishing power in local governments (8: their italics). However, as the single most important and likely valuable form of property, the country estate as the inherited and structural representation of aristocratic or gentry power is often depicted as a space dedicated to the preservation of history and the transmission of British identity.

Christopher Christie ties the advent of the country house to the birth of British national identity, suggesting that the owner’s consumption of luxury items and artistic objects for the estate preserves within its elegant walls an idealized version of British identity in a way that other institutions could not. Christie considers how such models of preservation create myths about how leaders were made from and sustained through the “untainted paradise” offered up by the county estate (2).

Additionally, Virginia Kenny claims that the county estate remains the “touchstone of civility”: both as a totem and a model for imperial goals abroad (212). But the county estate also meant stability. Entailment prevented the sale of one’s estate and often the objects inside the home, so members of the aristocracy and the gentry class could guarantee the inheritance of their sons. But this system of power, derived from estate and land, was not absolute. Even as the Victorian period destabilizes the estate, John Plotz reminds us that for the Victorians, the anxiety of movement—the increasingly global world, the expansion of the railway, an encroaching capitalism market—made tangible, physical objects of value, both for purposes of sentiment and as a way of possessing stability (5). And what is the county estate if not a possession? Many of the novels from the eighteenth century showcase the anxiety of inheritance, the

mismanagement of the grounds, and the uncertainty of property as predominant concerns of the ruling classes. Therefore, the country estate is not merely the brick and pillars that construct the stately home; an estate implies land and moreover, land equals tenants and responsibilities.

Certainly, there are physical boundaries that we rely upon to define an estate's location—for example, Pemberley's location in Derbyshire near Lambton—but the country estate stands as a metaphysical representation of larger English society. In her Introduction to *Austen and Romanticism*, Clara Tuite explains how Austen's county estates have been used to dominate the mainstream and historical version of the British countryside, claiming that even though the countryside remains part of the landed elite's narrative of power, the open invitation that tourists and filmmakers are given provides a "fiction of domestic access" (13). As evidenced in Kelsall's visit to Chatsworth House, this concept of how literature, especially Austen's novels, has reconfigured access to the county estate is one that I want to explore further. Moreover, I seek to extend Tuite's argument and include other female authors as engaging in this practice of refining and broadening access to the county estate, both for the purposes of defining what the country estate means and what it does not. As both Christie and Kenny also illustrate, because of the revered place the county estate holds in past and present British consciousnesses, it is logical for us to consider the estate as a stage for gender performance. After all, it seems hardly coincidental that the gentleman, an elevated figure of proper masculine comportment and manners, traditionally emerges from this property. Within the confines of the county estate, he authorizes how space is managed, how employees are handled, and how his legacy, and that of his family's, is to be presented.



To this degree, I agree with Plotz, that even as the estate hastens into the background, it holds objects of intrinsic value that can be neither sold nor marshaled because of entailment. I see a parallel between the shift to portable property and the decline of the estate, but more specifically, I see professional masculinity adapting to this change by eschewing forms of property altogether. For men like Wentworth and Thornton who abstain from purchasing estates or other forms of property ownership, there is little evidence to suggest that either man spends his money on jewels or other objects of portable value. In novels by women writers, this disenfranchisement of the country estate illustrates how the county estate stands in for British identity but does very little to replicate or produce it. Instead, the county estate serves as a placeholder for identity, and eventually comes to authorize idle forms of masculinity and class which, in turn, promote a framework for marriage that relies heavily on patriarchal power and consumption. However, women writers revise this framework by separating the gentleman from the estate.

John Tosh's *A Man's Place* (1999) has done considerable work on the subject of masculinity and the home, noting that the domestic sphere provides an important site for masculine performance and management. To this end, Tosh forges an important connection between the home and the workplace, claiming that the separate spheres models of gender and space were not always as easily defined for middle-class and professional men. Tosh examines Victorian constructs of home and explains how previous accounts of domesticity in the country estate have generated overlapping paradigms of gender performance: "To establish a home, to protect it, to provide for it, to control it, and to train its young aspirants to manhood have usually been essential to a

man's good standing with his peers"(4). Like Tosh, the governance of the domestic sphere and the happiness of a couple's marriage suggest that the domesticity of a union illustrates more than just how a home is set up. For Tosh, the domestic sphere, even under its banner as the wife's domain, represents an integral part of masculine performance. Both power and influence are given to a man who asserts his patriarchal authority over his home. This level of influence in a sphere that is categorized as a feminine space further illustrates how domesticity has become a ground for male gender performance.

As constructions of work develop, the county estate and other structures of home become less defining and more confining. By the time my study concludes with an examination Gaskell's *North and South*, the workplace and the home—Marlborough Mills—have conflated to produce a space where the home is literally within earshot of the productive workplace. Ownership, too, becomes less important. Once the work of a gentleman was to own and protect his space, now the emphasis on industrial masculinity has rerouted ownership through masculinity and commercial success. It is not incidental that women's inability to own or manage their property filters into the discourse on the country estate. On the one hand, we are hesitant to endorse female characters marrying for property or for the stability that a husband's property offers; on the other hand, we are reluctant for female characters that own property to marry men without property. This paradox forces us to consider how women's access to property, the management of *her* space grants new agency to women, but also through marriage, complicates how property is translated or transferred to the heroine.

#### IV. Counter Hegemony and Female Authorship

And as evidenced by other studies of the novel, many critical approaches and scholarly movements travel through Austen's canon. Prolific, popular, and a dominant figure in the development of the novel and women's literature, Austen plays a crucial role in asserting what defines a gentleman along with his proper work and residence. As Olivia Murphy has noted, Henry Austen's careful cultivation of his sister's image relied upon placing her in a male canon. Nearly anecdotal, Austen's love for *Sir Charles Grandison* has encouraged us to think of Austen as a part of the novel's history and by extension, as an honorary member of a predominantly male line.<sup>8</sup> It would be foolhardy indeed to ignore Richardson and Johnson's roles in the novel's history, but like Murphy, I think the focus on Austen as a direct literary descendent of these authors has proved limiting. There is ample scholarship that has proved how Johnson, Fielding, and Richardson influence Austen, but rather like Murphy, I chart Austen's place in the canon by noting that we have created a separation between Austen as a novelist and Austen as an important foremother in women's literature. What is at issue here is not Austen's place in the canon, but Austen's relationship to other women novelists. As central as Austen is in our cultural and social understanding of Georgian life, Austen is not the first or only female writer to renegotiate the parameters of the gentleman's performance.

In a similar manner, William Galperin provides an important tool for understanding women's fiction in the context of literary periodization. He argues that we should consider Austen and Burney as part of a "counter hegemony"(377). The term,

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<sup>8</sup> See "From Pammydiddle to *Persuasion*: Jane Austen Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Literature." *Eighteenth-Century Life* 32.2 (2008): 29-38. Murphy's emphasis on Austen as "laying the compulsory didacticism of the eighteenth-century to rest" is an approach that informs my view of eighteenth century novels written by men (37). For Murphy, there are explicit and implicit references to Richardson and Johnson, but the historical way in which that these references have been used has proved restrictive.

which Galperin adapts from the works of Paul de Man and Antonio Gramsci, explains how groups that by definition are part of a mainstream movement, function on the borders in order to create an alternative movement. In this way, Galperin posits that it is necessary to read Austen and Burney as both inside Romanticism and outside of it: simultaneously engaging with the issues that we would consider 'Romantic,' and examining topics that do not traditionally fall under that term (378). This position allows us to appreciate women's unique approach to Romanticism and to validate their place in the Romantic canon.

As Galperin notes, Frances Burney, who influenced Austen and other notable writers like Mary Wollstonecraft and Ann Radcliffe, also presents us with significant revisions of masculinity. But Burney's influence on Austen is a well-hewn scholarly path. Even as recently as 2012, Jason D. Solinger's *Becoming the Gentleman*, which I previously used to bolster my definition of the gentleman, forges connections between Burney and Austen on the subject of masculinity and political history. However, for the purposes of my project, Charlotte Turner Smith provides an important addendum to the Burney-Austen trajectory. What my project gains from Galperin's focus on counter hegemony is a way to read Smith, Austen, and Gaskell as a part of a literary movement without displacing their positions inside their respective literary periods. This approach allows me to connect traditionally Romantic novelists like Smith and Austen with a decidedly Victorian writer like Gaskell, and then examine their work as part of a corresponding movement invested in the development of the gentleman through work. I propose to read their novels, as Galperin suggests, as both inside and outside of their traditions; ultimately, to read Smith, Austen, and Gaskell's texts across literary time

periods and, therefore, read these novels as part of a literary movement which influenced how masculinity is constructed in response to gentility and the development of working and performative models of identity. My project, therefore, will disrupt the lines between Richardson and Austen, even too between Austen and Burney in order to incorporate Charlotte Smith and additionally, to add more on the scholarship surrounding Austen and Gaskell.

Henry French and Mark Rothery suggest that while there are dominating stereotypes of masculinity, a hegemonic ideal male does not explain how men expressed and reconstructed their gender and social identities. Rather, French and Rothery suggest that at any time in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there were several competing forms of gentlemanly masculinity that influenced, critiqued, and revised each other (15). They support this claim with the periodical, *The Gentleman's Magazine*, but literature also plays a similar role in this arena.<sup>9</sup> In this way, I would suggest that the gentleman as constructed by Smith, Austen, and Gaskell provides a competing definition of gentility that counters many of the more mainstream or stereotypical portrayals of masculinity, many of which are created by other male authors. One of the main strains of my argument is that women novelists played an important role in the development of masculinity and by extension, molded new models in the performance of gentility. Although each of the novelists ascribed to their own terms of dominant masculinity, we understand how the intersections of home, masculinity, and the gentleman's work across these texts produced a new ideology about representations of past masculinities and

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<sup>9</sup> Founded in 1731, *The Gentleman's Magazine* was a periodical that covered a broad spectrum of topics aimed at men. Samuel Johnson was employed there as a writer. For more discussion on the influence of *The Gentleman's Magazine* on masculinity, see William Stafford's "Gentlemanly Masculinities as Represented by the Late Georgian *Gentleman's Magazine*." *History* 93: 308 (2008) 47-68.

examinations of the future models. For the women writers that I examine, the unstable and uncertain terrain of masculinity and home illustrates the same imbalance between women's positions and women's art. The courtship novel is an important vehicle through which women writers engage in the revisions and reformations of masculinity and class.

In Chapter 2, I examine Smith's first novel *Emmeline; or, the Orphan of the Castle* as a text that foregrounds the self-made man and introduces how work and gentility produce elevated forms of the gentleman, particularly when juxtaposed to a bevy of deviant rakes. Captain Godolphin, a clear predecessor to Austen's last hero Captain Wentworth, centralizes our sense of the professional and self-made man as chivalrous, civil, and ambitious. However, his aristocratic background and his pedigree prevent him from fully separating his identity from streamlined forms of gentility. Ultimately, by concluding the novel with Emmeline's return to Mowbray Castle and the abandonment of Godolphin's self-built home on the Isle of Wight, the novel cannot imagine a place for the gentleman—despite his revolutionary masculinity and the working attributes of his performance—outside of aristocratic space.

In Chapter 3, *Pride and Prejudice*'s Mr. Darcy presents a problematic interruption in the self-made man's masculinity. Whereas Godolphin illustrated the rocky transition between aristocratic masculinity and middle-class professionalism, Mr. Darcy and his lavish estate Pemberley stand as centerpieces of the gentry. I trace Darcy's form of gentrified, working masculinity through a performative lens, examining the duties and actions that Darcy performs that benefit his estate and the people living on it. Coming from a novel tradition where estates often reside in the margins of the novels, *Pride and*

*Prejudice* takes its heroine to Pemberley (much like *Emmeline*) where Elizabeth Bennet witnesses the work that Darcy performs to manage and maintain his workplace.

*Persuasion*, Austen's final complete novel and published post-humously with *Northanger Abbey*, is the focus of Chapter 4. A treatise on the Navy and the self-made man, the novel departs from the other texts in this project because of its landless hero. Captain Wentworth does not live on an estate, does not buy any estate, and ends the novel without a home of any kind. While previous accounts of the gentleman, even the self-made gentleman, have translated his financial success into physical property, Austen eschews this framework in order to envision masculinity completely free from the confines of space.

In Chapter 5, I examine how Gaskell interrupts the professional and gentry masculinity of her predecessors in order to showcase a divergent and decidedly Victorian construct of work: industry. As a manufacturer and an entrepreneur, *North and South's* Mr. Thornton foregrounds this final vision of masculinity and property by constructing a home adjacent to his workplace. While the country estate previously translated the domestic sphere into a site of work, Marlborough Mills, even its later ownership by the heroine, remains a revolutionary site of masculinity by incorporating industrial work into the performance of the gentleman.

My final chapter addresses how the working gentleman has been disseminated and translated for a contemporary audience. For this, I look to the period or the costume drama, namely Julian Fellowes' Edwardian ITV drama *Downton Abbey* (2010). While the television series differs in its time period and its action, it graphs the historical past

onto our modern interpretations of the gentleman and reveals the unstable tenets of masculinity that we are still struggling to understand.



### The Gentleman and the Navy: Charlotte Turner Smith's *Emmeline*

She had great talent—she was one of the best novelists of the day, but the haste and facility with which she wrote, the gloom that overshadowed her life, robbed her of a durable literary fame. As a poetess, she is forgotten; as a novelist, she but helps to fill the vacant space between Miss Burney and Mrs. Radcliffe.

-Julia Kavanagh, 1862<sup>10</sup>

As the author of *Elegiac Sonnets*, Charlotte Turner Smith has been examined as an important and influential Romantic poet. In her role as a prolific poet, most critics associate Smith with the early Romantic poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge, her work influencing both writers.<sup>11</sup> As the author of ten novels, however, Smith's work has been largely misunderstood. Although in more recent years, critics have come to identify Smith as an important novelist, she has been largely overshadowed by other women novelists—Frances Burney, Maria Edgeworth, Ann Radcliffe, and Jane Austen—whose work fits more easily and broadly into the canon of women's literature. There are numerous other reasons for Smith's previous exclusion from the current women's novel canon. Like Kavanagh, Lorraine Fletcher and Jacqueline M. Labbe both cite haste and a lack of editing as one of the main reasons why Smith's novels were not canonized.<sup>12</sup> In addition to these elements of Smith's composition, Fletcher also argues that many readers come to Smith's novels through Austen, finding Smith's texts to lack the same eloquence and professionalism as Austen's (8). It is notable, however, that

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<sup>10</sup> Julia Kavanagh, *English Women of Letters: Biographical Sketches*. Leipzig, Germany: B. Tauchnitz, 1862.

<sup>11</sup> Critics such as Stuart Curran even trace Romanticism's starting point to Smith's first book of poems, *Elegiac Sonnets* (1784). In the introduction to a collection of Smith's poetry, Curran argues that Smith's emotive and eloquent verse poems were an important influence on the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge (xix). This legacy has shifted critics' focus off Smith's novels in favor of examining her poetic works.

<sup>12</sup> See Lorraine Fletcher, *Charlotte Smith: A Critical Biography*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. 33; Jacqueline M. Labbe, "Introduction." *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008. 8.

Smith's greatest impediment to inclusion in a women's fiction canon arises from her carefully crafted public image. A faithful letter writer and journal keeper, Smith's finely hewed autobiography established a considerable artistic split between her poetry and her fiction: poetry was her true art while novels were written purely for capital.<sup>13</sup> Her wastrel husband's gambling and mismanagement often forced her family into difficult financial straits, making Smith, at times, the sole breadwinner. While her poetry sold well throughout her lifetime, her ten novels made up a significant portion of her family's income. But Smith's dislike of her fiction has long prevented critics from taking it seriously, despite its engagement with important issues of the time including the French Revolution, property rights, and women's education.

It is in Smith's first novel, *Emmeline; or the Orphan of the Castle* (1788), however, where we begin to see the beginnings of a female authored tradition of masculinity. Like other courtship novels of the time, *Emmeline* follows the development of the young female protagonist Emmeline Mowbray as she navigates society. Published a decade after Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and following a similar plot, *Emmeline*'s heroine begins the story presumed a natural daughter. Her parents, both deceased, have left her in the guardianship of her aristocratic and wealthy uncle Lord Montreville, who allows the heroine to grow up isolated and alone at Mowbray Castle. Prompted by the death of Emmeline's chaperone Mrs. Carey, Lord Montreville visits his niece at the castle and plans for her future outside the confines of the estate. Emmeline's entrance into society is

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<sup>13</sup> Both Amy Garni and Katherine M. Rogers argue that Smith understood the role of the woman novelist as a limiting and confining position. Garni claims that this acted as a way for Smith to critique structures of power, particularly the limited access women had to politics and political thought (20). In contrast, Rogers suggests that the conventions placed upon the woman writer forced Smith to create ideal and unexceptional characters (12).

complicated by many of the same foibles that plague other young heroines: unwanted attention, false gossip, and awkward proposals.

As a beautiful and naïve young woman, men pursue Emmeline from the start of the novel. Declarations of love and professions of devotion come from men of all ranks; from the estate's steward to a foreign aristocrat, Smith emphasizes how men construct and value Emmeline as an object of desire. And although these proposals and confessions are prevalent throughout the text, nearly ridiculous in their number and presentation, none of Emmeline's suitors is more ardent and committed than Lord Delamere, her cousin and the son of her benefactor. Throughout the novel, he pursues Emmeline with a borderline violent and dangerous obsession, breaching the bounds of propriety and, eventually, kidnapping Emmeline for a clandestine elopement. Even after their first meeting at Mowbray Castle, we understand that Delamere, frenzied and manipulative, will not make a suitable husband, and that his pursuit of Emmeline makes her incredibly unhappy. But for nearly two volumes of the text, Delamere remains Emmeline's most significant suitor and later her tentative fiancée. There are other men and several other proposals of marriage, but marriage to Delamere appears as the novel's eventual conclusion.

But Delamere is not the hero of this novel. Given his many machinations and schemes, he does not read as an appropriate match for the heroine, nor does he possess the characteristics that would construct a superior, or at least passable model of masculinity. By virtue of his poor behavior, he is not the man by whom Emmeline judges all other men. Additionally, she does not encourage his love at any point, nor does his presence impede Emmeline's interest to other men. Delamere is a rake, and, ultimately,

Emmeline must escape his presence and avoid his proposals in order to stay in the good graces of her disapproving uncle.

It is in the third volume of the novel that we meet Delamere's foil: Captain Godolphin, the brother of Lady Adelina and a naval captain just returned from abroad. Kind, patient, hardworking, he is everything that Delamere is not, and he proves to be a rival for Emmeline's affections. In this way, Godolphin demonstrates a significant shift in the way women authors construct male characters. His ability to work and to care for the people, often women, in his circle demonstrates his dedication to community, something that Delamere does not provide in the course of his courtship. In Godolphin's masculinity we see Smith construct a new type of masculine hero, one who does not pursue the heroine with extravagant means or social advantages, but with quiet reserve and kind actions directed towards Emmeline and her friends. I argue that the performance of productive work informs and constructs our understanding of this new and professional hero, making him a suitable match for the heroine and an alternative masculinity to the one offered by the aristocracy.

As my introduction discusses, the development of the gentleman has often been traced through Addison and Steele, Defoe, Richardson, Burney, and Austen. But it is from Burney that Smith inherits a form of the gentleman that she further develops into Captain Godolphin. Although there are obvious similarities between Burney's constructions of masculinity and Smith's, I would argue that Lord Orville is the most notable precursor to Captain Godolphin.<sup>14</sup> Megan Woodworth, examining *Evelina*,

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<sup>14</sup> See Stephanie Russo, *Women in Revolutionary Debate: Female Novelists from Burney to Austen*. Houten, Netherlands: Hes and de Graaf Publishers, 2012. In this study, Russo examines how Burney and Smith, through the novel, were able to access and alter political thought in ways that previously were unavailable to women (18).

suggests that Lord Orville stands a pillar of manliness and English identity: “Lord Orville is marked out as the embodiment of social ideal and stands in stark contrast, not only to other men of similar rank, but to all other men in the novel: he is the embodiment of virtue in the face of their various vices”(29). Expanding Woodworth’s argument, we can see where Captain Godolphin inhabits a similar place within *Emmeline*. Like Orville, Smith’s gentleman also has ties to the aristocracy. As a second son and, therefore, unable to inherit his father’s title or estate, Godolphin must acquire a profession, but he pursues this work with great zeal and success. While he may be less enmeshed in an aristocratic system than his older brother Lord Westhaven or Burney’s Lord Orville, Godolphin is still marked by an aristocratic veneer, which, initially, adds to the cultivation of his genteel masculinity.

But consistently throughout the novel, we also see Godolphin juxtaposed with other men; his behaviors and actions are often exemplary, and while his status may be lower than Lord Orville’s, he illustrates a naval masculinity that is above reproach. However, this is where the similarities between Burney’s hero and Smith’s end; significantly, because Burney’s previous accounts of naval or military masculinity have not been favorable. Alongside Lord Orville, Burney characterizes Captain Mirvan, the father of Evelina’s friend and a naval officer, as a rough and vulgar man who delights in tormenting women. Although Captain Mirvan is not placed in the role of hero and is not presented as a suitor for Evelina, his behavior—bullying Madam Duval, embarrassing his family, befriending a known rake like Sir Clement Willoughby, staging a fake robbery—all point to an unsavory form of masculinity that reinforces how the professions are not appropriate avenues of gentlemanly identity. Unlike his fellow officer, Godolphin’s

behavior and actions, notably undertaking numerous tasks and responsibilities which other men like Delamere, Sir Fitz-Edward or Mr. Stafford leave behind, offsets the poor opinion that Captain Mirvan engenders. By taking the fine qualities and aristocratic background of Lord Orville and the profession of Captain Mirvan, Smith's hero mediates between two different versions of masculine expectations, and provides points of access for both aristocrats, and more specifically, for other military men.

Despite the advantages of his self-made wealth and elevated place in the Navy, Godolphin is still the second son of an aristocrat, and his position within a system of landed power system holds many benefits that he does not acquire through work alone. To this end, even in her revised construction of the hero, Smith prefers that Godolphin stay within the confines of a land-based society rather than break through its conventions as we later see in Austen and Gaskell. This is not to undercut the value or the performance of Godolphin's productive work, which clearly privileges him over other models of masculinity in the novel's history and illuminates a level of ambition that we do not see in other men, but I would claim, however, that in Smith's characterization of Godolphin she is not ready to dismiss the aristocracy's easy access to an education in gentility.

But that does not mean that Smith tacitly accepts the aristocracy's flagrant behavior. Delamere, who casts himself in the role of ardent and misused lover, represents a tangible threat to Emmeline's will and happiness. From their first meeting, we see how quickly Delamere begins his obsessive and improper advances. On the second day of their acquaintance, Delamere comes upon Emmeline in the forest outside Mowbray Castle and accosts her with declarations of love and affection: "To this Emmeline in vain

objected. To escape was impossible. To prevail on him to leave her equally so. She was therefore compelled to follow him. Which she did with reluctance; while he still continued to profess to her the most violent and serious attachment”(64). Not only are Delamere’s advances unwelcome, but also the manner of his address has affected Montreville’s opinion of her, and he quickly casts his niece in the role of scheming upstart.

In a later scene at Mowbray Castle, Delamere taunts his father about the episode, “Here is my father, angry with me for making love to my sweet cousin Emmy”(68). Used only by Delamere, this impertinent nickname represents the crux of familial and class tensions: the poor relation loses both status and propriety at the behest of her worldly cousin. Instead of calling her by the proper “Miss Mowbray” or the less formal “Emmeline,” Delamere alone uses this nickname. While the audience for his speech is only his father and his friend Sir Fitz-Edward, the former has the power to dictate Emmeline’s future and prospects, something that Delamere consistently takes for granted in his courtly pursuits. But in this nickname, we can see how Emmeline becomes a mere object, a malleable person to whom Delamere can gain easy access and, in so doing, manipulate her relationship to his family. He makes Emmeline into an idealized version of femininity: beautiful, weak, and easily constructed to his design.

Additionally, Delamere also blames his father for allowing his passion for Emmeline: “I think I have the most reason to be angry at being brought into such dangerous company: tho’ your Lordship well knows how devilishly susceptible I am, and that since I was ten years old I have been dying for some nymph or other,”(68). Like a spoiled child, Delamere reproaches his father for bringing Emmeline into his company

instead of himself for falling, in the space of a single meeting, for her charms. Here Delamere also refers to Emmeline as a “nymph,” a creature he has searched for since his youth. The mythological nature of his search suggests that Emmeline, or the woman Delamere understands her to be, does not actually exist. By designating Emmeline as “Emmy,” the object of his obsessive pursuits, Delamere holds her to standards that are both confining and punitive. Instead of an unwilling woman, Emmeline remains the object of Delamere’s childlike wonder and a creation that highlights his own desire for control over his ideal female. He does not see or understand her character and instead constructs her so as to maintain control over his illusion.

It is not merely a lack of decorum that characterizes Delamere’s relationship to Emmeline, but also a dangerous and aggressive sexuality. Before Emmeline is exiled from Mowbray Castle, driven from her home in secrecy and darkness because of Delamere, he breaks into her locked room in the middle of the night: “The door, however, was locked. Which was no sooner perceived by the assailant, than a violent effort with his foot forced the rusty decayed work to give way, and Mr. Delamere burst into the room”(71). Smith codes the scene as Gothic: the innocent heroine, beset by the attentions of a lecherous suitor, must escape his presence and navigate the aging castle. Antje Blank reads Smith’s use of the Gothic genre as a way of sensationalizing everyday life and properly explaining the violence of events like the French Revolution. While Blank does not focus on *Emmeline*, the novel’s initial setting and the message about women’s sexual and social freedom inside their own homes is in line with Smith’s use of the Gothic for political purposes (80). Although it is Delamere’s foot, not his penis that breaches her space, the act itself becomes an assertion of brute male strength and power. Underlain in



Delamere's violation is his determination to prove his masculinity and assert ownership over Emmeline by breaking into her space. With a swift kick to the aging door, Delamere obliterates Emmeline's ownership of space, and asserts his dominance.

But the locked door symbolizes more than just an obstacle between Delamere and Emmeline; one might also argue that the locked door serves as a yonic or vaginal symbol, more specifically, as a hymen or a physical barrier between Delamere's force and Emmeline's safety. By pushing his way into her room and violating her space, Delamere essentially deflowers her room, invading a space where Emmeline controls the access. While Montreville may confine her to her room, she still maintains control over who may enter and who may not. Delamere disrupts this control and instead, walks through her last fragile barrier between herself and the other members of the castle, and, eventually, society and the larger corrupted world.

Although Delamere remains Emmeline's most devoted suitor, his love for Emmeline signifies more of his own issues than her suitability as a partner. The motives, emotions, and interests he prescribes to her are anything but genuine, and we see Delamere devolve into the worst type of lovelorn hero, engaging in behaviors that jeopardize Emmeline's reputation and sense of safety. The aggressive nature of his behavior contains a sexual component, particularly in this violation of Emmeline's room. While he may not force his sexual attentions on Emmeline, he attempts to possess her against her will.

In this scene, Smith demonstrates how fragile Emmeline's means of protection are: Emmeline's sense of home is subject to the whims of an aristocratic uncle and his son, both of whom either forcefully intrude her space or allow for this intrusion to

happen. Rusty locks and confinement offer little protection against the ravaging will of Delamere, and even Lord Montreville, to whom she flies, has enabled these impotent means of protection by keeping the estate in its state of decay. With Montreville's orders and Delamere's passion, she must leave this space even earlier than intended and be thrust into a world she has yet to know. Delamere violates her last memories of home, making her final moments at Mowbray Castle full of terror.

But even after she flees Mowbray Castle, Delamere's dangerous sexuality and obsessive pursuit leave Emmeline no place to hide. Her room at Mowbray Castle and several of her successive homes in Swansea and London are compromised because of Delamere, forcing her to abandon them or garner Lord Montreville's wrath. While Emmeline and readers alike are not privy to too many of the details from Delamere's past, ample evidence suggests that Delamere engages in activities that would designate him as a libertine. Allusions to indiscriminate attachments and previous liaisons speak to Delamere as someone who does not often practice gentlemanly behavior. By his own admission at the beginning of the novel, he finds himself easily susceptible to female beauty. Even in Delamere's constant companion, we see some of the same tendencies. We discover later in the text the source of Fitz-Edward's rakish behavior and melancholy: an illegitimate child conceived during an affair with a married woman. While the event shakes Fitz-Edward, his actions, and those of his close companion Delamere, still remain questionable.

It is worth noting that Fitz-Edward is also a friend of Godolphin's, but the two men are so rarely in each other's company that we can assume Fitz-Edward holds no influence over Godolphin. Although Montreville may think that the relationship between

his son and Fitz-Edward will have a steadying influence on Delamere, but with Fitz-Edward's behavior that becomes an unlikely possibility. However, the strongest indicators of Delamere's libertinism are his actions themselves. Easily cloaking his actions in the guise of love, Delamere's behavior speaks to a man accustomed to getting his way with women. One can infer that while he may not have shown such violence of affection, he has certainly engaged in other attachments with women, respectable or not. The brazen actions are detrimental and selfish, but they are also calculated, leading readers to believe that Delamere has practiced his seduction before.

From the description of Delamere's pursuit, readers will likely agree that a heroine such as Emmeline should not marry a man like Delamere. Despite Emmeline's many moral and physical attributes, it is also obvious from Montreville's resistance that Delamere could not have chosen a more unsuitable match for himself. However, it is precisely the inappropriateness of their match that continues to drive Delamere's attachment. In his pursuit of Emmeline, we can see where his courtship takes on a rebellious and immature angle. He is told not to marry her, not to pursue her, and yet he continues to follow through with his outlandish behavior. One has to wonder how much of Delamere's passion is genuine and how much of his courtship is the result of a reaction against his father's authority. To this end, he does everything possible to transgress the boundaries of class, society, and the propriety of the heroine, all to flout his parents' influence in his choice of partner. Unaccustomed to resistance and denial, Delamere's behavior disregards the conventions of society as he works to engage Emmeline in the same reckless conduct. His behavior seems more like the actions of a rebellious teenager

than of a man in love. Emmeline merely becomes a fixation, an object that he uses for his own private rebellion.

Emmeline's superior grace in the face of such masculinized upheaval does her credit. And although she is characterized as naïve, she is described as neither silly nor foolish. While Smith suggests that Emmeline's virtue and kindness are "natural" parts of her character, the old tomes in Mowbray Castle's decrepit library serve as tools for educating the heroine,

From these, Emmeline turned in despair to some others of more modern appearance, which tho' they also had suffered from the dampness of the room, and in some parts were almost effaced with mould, were yet generally legible. Among them, were Spencer and Milton, two or three volumes of the Spectator, an old edition of Shakespeare, and an odd volume or two of Pope. (47)

We can see from the titles that the texts, even in their current state of disuse and mold, are the makings of a classical education and one that Smith wishes to impart on her heroine. Additionally, we should also note that Emmeline, who must cobble together an education from clearly insufficient texts, saves these few pieces of literature from the castle's state of decay. Smith's description here is twofold: it suggests that while Emmeline's education is more than adequate, it is actually rather outdated. Second, this description indicates that the works of previous male writers do not address the concerns or difficulties of the female experience; their words, literally obscured by age and another man's neglect, do not make sense for a contemporary female life. Later, the narrator speaks to novels and their place in Emmeline's education:

Emmeline, however, by her unwearied researches, nearly completed several sets of books, in which instruction and amusement were happily blended. From them, she acquired a taste for poetry, and the more ornamental parts of literature; as well as the grounds of that elegant and useful knowledge, which if rendered not her life happier, enabled her to support with the dignity of conscious worth, those undeserved evils with which many of her years were embittered. (48)

Given the context and the emphasis on “instruction and amusement,” we can assume that Emmeline’s “set of books” are actually novels. While there are no specific authors or the names of recognizable texts as in the description previous, for Emmeline, the novels provide a gateway to a better education. As the narrator notes, both poetry and the “more ornamental parts of literature” are accessible due to Emmeline’s exposure to novels, and Smith also illustrate how pleasure, or at least acceptance, may be gained from such texts. This idea of novels as useful in providing the heroine with tools for a thorough education and happiness may seem like a strange sentiment from Smith, but we are given to understand that Emmeline’s “unwearied researches” and the education provided by the male canon are not enough to satisfy all her needs. This ability to bear the trials of her life, isolated and alone as she is at Mowbray Castle, is exclusively derived from the novels, not from the exhaustive list of men who once filled her family’s library. Although Smith may disdain her provisional work as a novelist, this passage contends that this work provides a necessary, even important, resource for women.

And Emmeline does not rely on novels for too long. After Emmeline’s escape from the castle, Smith inserts Mrs. Stafford, who from Smith’s description, bears a marked resemblance to the author herself: “She appeared to be not more than five or six and twenty: but her person seemed to have suffered from sorrow that diminution of its charms which time could not yet have effected. Her complexion was faded and wan; her eyes had lost their lustre; and a pensive and languid expression sat on her countenance” (80). Emmeline goes on to notice that Mrs. Stafford has a rather elegant mind, with great knowledge of art, literature, and society, which she willingly imparts to the heroine. However, the similarities do not stop with Mrs. Stafford’s education and marital

melancholy; Mrs. Stafford's later departure to France to stave off her husband's creditors remains remarkably similar to Smith's own biography. Critics often note the similarities between Smith and many of her poetic narrators or figures, but it becomes clear that Mrs. Stafford's family, husband, and precarious financial situation effectively insert the author into Emmeline's story.<sup>15</sup> This is born out by the text as Mrs. Stafford guides the naïve Emmeline and keeps the heroine from an inappropriate match with Delamere.

But we see in Mrs. Stafford's story, as we do with Smith, the perils of an early marriage and the effects of a poorly chosen husband: Mrs. Stafford's reality clearly represents Emmeline's future. Delamere's social position and wealth may make them less likely to struggle with debt and creditors, but we see in Mrs. Stafford's countenance—her “lost lustre” and faded complexion—how miserable and uncertain life is with a degenerative husband. A token bad husband and poor father, Mr. Stafford embodies all manner of improper male behavior. In his abandonment, his impatience with his children, and his pursuits of pleasure and its dissolution of their wealth, we see Smith present a full-fledged cautionary tale for Emmeline. More importantly, in the Staffords' marriage we see exactly what future awaits Emmeline if she were to align herself with Delamere.

Stuart Curran argues that Smith reworks the courtship novel from the inside out, and while he sees this work mostly done on Smith's heroines, I see Smith also revising her heroes (200). Like the heroine herself, Smith does not wish to fix Delamere or reform his libertine ways. Instead, Smith forsakes Delamere entirely, forwarding Godolphin as a superior male character and a much better suitor for Emmeline. To this end, Godolphin

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<sup>15</sup> Like Curran, Stephen C. Behrendt explores the connection between Smith and her contemporary poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge. However, Behrendt claims that much of Smith's success lies in her ability to blend autobiography with form: “she mythologized her own physical and psychological experience in poems whose evocative power touched the lives and experiences of many contemporaries” (189).

becomes the embodiment of Smith's masculine project; we see in his profession, his work, and his courtship the very model of what a hero should be. In *Godolphin*, we see the culmination of Smith's ideas about gender dynamics, specifically about how men should interact with women. By juxtaposing the libertine Delamere with the stalwart *Godolphin*, Smith demonstrates how ineffective and antiquated constructions of aristocratic masculinity are when juxtaposed with professional masculinities.

While *Godolphin* does not appear until the third volume (until then Emmeline is subjected to Delamere's courtship), Smith previously makes his presence known to readers and the heroine. Shortly after Emmeline and Mrs. Stafford meet the disgraced Lady Adelina, the young woman tells the entire sordid tale of how she came to be pregnant and isolated in the cottage near the Stafford estate. As Adelina describes her marital hardships and her infidelity with Fitz-Edward, she details the position and state of her family. Emmeline quickly recognizes the first son Lord Westhaven as her cousin Augusta's husband, but it is Adelina's other brother William who receives much attention and love from his sad sister:

He is perhaps one of the most elegant and accomplished young men of his time; but to be elegant and accomplished is his least praise—His solid understanding, and his excellent heart, are an honour to his country and to human nature. That quick sense of honour and that strictness of principle, which now make my greatest terror, give a peculiar lustre and dignity to his character. (223)

Adelina's glowing description of William as a loving brother and an excellent man is later evidenced by his abrupt arrival in Bath. The dedication between the siblings, despite *Godolphin*'s absence of several years, speaks to his devotion and sense of familial duty. While, certainly, Adelina remains a biased source on the subject of her brother's goodness, it is notable that she does not rhapsodize about her other brother in the same

fashion. Her description of her brother Lord Westhaven is brief and to the point, often in this description referring to him as “my older brother”(217), not by his name Charles. She worries that Westhaven will discover the pregnancy, but it is Godolphin whose disapproval she fears most. His “strictness of principle” is the main concern, although when Godolphin does find his sister, he shows remarkable kindness and understanding, going so far as to adopt Adelina’s bastard.

In addition to Godolphin’s brotherly fidelity, in Adelina’s tale we learn that Godolphin also had a strong bond with his father. The relationship between the former Lord Westhaven and his second son illustrates remarkable affection: “My father received him with that delight a father only can feel; and saw and gloried with all a father’s pride, in a successor worthy of his ancestors”(223). While Adelina voices her father’s feelings, the point about Godolphin as a “successor worthy of his ancestors” demonstrates just how much the former Westhaven favored his second son. The laws of entailment prevent a father from choosing which of his children will inherit, but we can gather from this description of Godolphin as a “successor” that had his father been able to choose, he might have chosen Godolphin as the next Lord Westhaven. Neither Adelina nor her father wax poetic about Charles; Godolphin receives all their attention and praise.

While Godolphin remains the family’s pride, his accomplishments and work are a crucial part of his father’s love and his sister’s affection. Unlike his brother or Delamere who inherit titles, Godolphin must work in a profession like the Navy in order to raise his status and maintain his living.<sup>16</sup> However, his strong commitment to his profession does

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<sup>16</sup> Much of the scholarship about the navy surrounds Austen’s later novel *Persuasion*. Namely, Brian Southam’s *Jane Austen and the Navy* (Greenwich, CT: National Maritime Museum Publishing, 2005) historicizes Austen’s connection with the Navy and its relationship to her fiction, particularly in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. Southam’s focus is on Austen and, therefore, does not reference Smith’s Captain



not affect the relationships he builds; they merely force him to navigate the distance and separation. One cannot help but juxtapose Godolphin's congenial familial relationships with that of Delamere's: the indifferent opinion of his father, the subdued relationship with his sisters, and the manipulative relationship with his mother, all show a family full of dysfunction and chaos. To this end, Smith draws a direct correlation between familial and spousal duty: the way a man treats his family directly reveals how he will treat his future wife. In Delamere's indifference to the opinions of his family, we see how he has little respect for the opinions of Emmeline, and will likely treat her in the same manner as his family members.

Additionally, through Adelina's narrative, we learn about Godolphin's superior character and the significance of his work. Godolphin's kindness, even described in the exalted terms of a devoted sister, significantly impacts how Emmeline views men. The ultimate purpose of Adelina's description shows readers and Emmeline, even before Godolphin's late entrance, that he presents a viable alternative for Emmeline. Additionally, Godolphin's profession becomes one of the first things that readers gather from Adelina's first account: "When [Adelina's father] last returned, my elder brother, then near eighteen, desired to be allowed to go into the army"(221). Underpinning this narrative of brotherly fondness is Godolphin's dedication to his work. While Adelina describes her brother as absent for much of her childhood, she bears great affection for him despite the separation, "My brother William, who had always been designed for the navy, left me also for a three years station in the Mediterranean" (222). The narrator later tells us of Godolphin's age, "Godolphin, who was now about five and twenty, had passed

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Godolphin. For my argument, however, I see quite a strong resemblance between Godolphin and Wentworth. Their courtships, their situations, and their relationship to the Navy provide ample evidence for such an interpretation. I will further expand upon these similarities in my later chapter on *Persuasion*.

the greatest part of his life at sea”(269). His title as Captain, something that Emmeline and Mrs. Stafford use, denotes that he has raised himself in his profession. Certainly there are several suitable options for an industrious man: the clergy, the law, or the military, but Godolphin’s choice and his being “designed for the navy” suggest a particular devotion to his profession.

The fruits of Godolphin’s position also include a home and much financial success. His home on the Isle of Wight remains a safe haven for his sister after the birth of her illegitimate son. The independence of his situation and its benefits for his family members illustrate the advantages of hard work and occupation. While Godolphin must work for a living, he actually seems to enjoy and be successful in his given career. Furthermore, his career has afforded him a place that offers stability and independence, which even from Adelina’s description is not a part of his aristocratic childhood. As the narrator describes the house, one also can see its significance to a naval man:

About half an acre of ground lay between it and the cliff, which was beat by the swelling waves of the channel. The ground on the other side rose more suddenly; and a wood which covered the hill behind it, seemed to embosom the house, and take off that look of bleakness and desolation which often renders a situation so near the sea unpleasant...(295)

His seaside home and its place on an island, particularly a remote part of the Isle of Wight, demonstrate a certain affinity for the sea and the independence such a locale affords.<sup>17</sup> Godolphin’s home also serves to differentiate him from the land-bound aristocracy. Free from the conventions of society, or at least able to manipulate those confines, Godolphin’s home offers Adelina freedom and sanctuary with her child.

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<sup>17</sup> Located off the southern coast the United Kingdom, the Isle of Wight is the largest island in the UK. While it later becomes a popular resort spot during the Victorian era and appears in other novels, *Emmeline* is one of the first novels to use it as a setting.

But more than a safe place to live, Godolphin's profession enables him to recognize Adelina's child and save the boy from social stigma. Without the entanglements of a title and entailment, Godolphin may acknowledge little William as his own without fear of muddling the line of inheritance. Their brother Lord Westhaven would be unable to make such a gesture for his sister because of the conventions that bind his title. Because Godolphin owns his home and makes his own money, he does not need to worry about little William usurping his future progeny.

Although Godolphin may choose his profession and become successful in the process, it is difficult to ignore the impact of his aristocratic upbringing. Many of the qualities that Godolphin possesses are considered gentlemanly; his considerate behavior towards the women in the novel and his familial loyalty both suggest that Godolphin retains some of the education from his aristocratic childhood. While we know his family's life itself was not lavish due to the former Lord Westhaven's debts, it remains difficult to separate Godolphin from the aristocratic sphere to which he was born.<sup>18</sup> Certainly because of his upbringing within an aristocratic family, Godolphin bears the markers of an aristocratic life, but his profession offers another way to appeal to gentlemanly behavior. His place as a second son, not a first or the inheritor of an estate, makes his achievements—his home, his wealth—all the more exemplary. While Godolphin's experiences are limited to the Navy, one may extrapolate to other realms of work. It is Godolphin's actions while onshore that determine how his work translates into the type of work a gentleman should do. To this end, Godolphin becomes defined as

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<sup>18</sup> Adelina remarks that her older brother Charles attends Eton (217). As a second son, Godolphin likely would not have access to this same elite education. However, Adelina notes that when their father goes abroad, she and Godolphin are left in the care of a relative where they "received such education as our ages admitted"(217). Although this is still rather vague, we can assume that Godolphin receives an education comparable to his brother's, possibly from a tutor in his home.

much by the actions he performs as the actions he does not. While Robin Gilmour speaks to later developments of the gentleman, her argument recognizes how the gentleman is defined as much by what he is as what he is not (22). Therefore, we know Godolphin is a gentleman because he does not impregnate or seduce any married woman, nor does he kidnap or force any woman to elope, nor does he spend his family into debt. Throughout *Emmeline*, we are shown the full spectrum of destructive male behavior. From impropriety to outright physical force, the behavior of men in the novel leaves much to be desired, and although there are certainly benign male characters that do not wreak havoc on the lives of the women in the novel, they remain marginal. The behaviors and manner of problems caused by men who inhabit the sphere into which Godolphin was born create quite a disaster, one that Godolphin, in his evolving role outside this sphere, must remedy.

Yet it is this role as a man of action and civilian (although still tied to his professional identity) that demonstrates how he strengthens the definition of a gentleman. The actions he performs are often directed towards women or for the purpose of protecting women. When Godolphin legitimizes his illegitimate nephew William, he still bears the brunt of lesser men's mistakes. He continuously takes on responsibilities that are not his own but rather those of other men's—Mr. Stafford, Fitz-Edward, even Delamere's. He escorts Mrs. Stafford abroad and delivers the news of Delamere's death to his family and Emmeline. Both of these are tasks that are not only gentlemanly but all the more significant because they are not a part of his duties. To that end, we can classify Godolphin's main actions as solving the problems of aristocratic men and also strong-arming rakes into doing their duty. By circumstance, position, and wealth alone,

Delamere remains the better match for Emmeline. However, Delamere's adherence to a masculinity that produces little work and causes a great deal of destruction and chaos makes Godolphin's problem solving abilities necessary and eminently attractive.

But the narrator notes that, even for a man who spends much of his time in a naval occupation and in an environment with other men, Godolphin does not develop unsavory habits: "Tho' Godolphin had one of the best tempers in the world—a temper which the roughness of those among whom he had lived only served to soften and humanize, and which was immoveable by the usual accidents that ruffle others, yet he had also in a great excess all those keen feelings, which fill a heart of extreme sensibility"(271). Here the narrator suggests that rather than bend to the perceived "roughness" (we can see where Burney's Captain Mirvan does not possess this same fortitude) around him, Godolphin learns to be more gentlemanly because of that environment. Rather than work as a way to dilute a man's gentlemanly attributes, Smith establishes that the actions of a profession can inform a man's sense of duty and honor. His work and its place in the burgeoning British Empire suggest that masculinity and a gentlemanly image must be part of the comportment of men outside the aristocracy. Graham Dawson argues that the dissemination of British soldiers and naval officers to locations abroad made it necessary for a particular type of "Englishman" to be established and perfected (2). By promoting this image of genteel masculinity that is productive and beneficial, Smith's characterization of Godolphin here precedes later understandings of the Englishman's place in a global world.

Additionally, I would claim that it is not merely civility in the ballroom or drawing room, but Godolphin's behavior outside of the realms of power and prestige

(many of his more gentlemanly actions take place in liminal spaces) that foregrounds a transmutable and strengthened form of genteel English masculinity. In this way, Godolphin's gentlemanly attributes are distinct and easily translate to his sister, Mrs. Stafford, and even the heroine herself. In *Godolphin*, we see the promise of masculinity that will later be developed by Austen and Gaskell. He consistently remains the man by whom all other male characters in the novel are consequently judged. To that end, Godolphin represents the very best of the gentlemanly attributes: courtesy, kindness, and chivalry. Work and his presence in the larger world of capital and class allows for him to develop kindness and introspection. Lord Westhaven, too, represents some excellent and gentlemanly qualities, but in *Godolphin* we see these characteristics united and exalted.

With respect to Smith and later Austen, several critics have argued that the heroine and the presence of other women constitute a civilizing influence on the male protagonist. But I would suggest that placing the heroine in the role of civilizer puts an abundance of pressure on femininity and feminine behavior to modify and correct masculinity.<sup>19</sup> Smith's novel argues that the heroine's very goodness should not be the catalyst for a man's change of behavior. In fact, from *Godolphin*, we gather that a solid profession and activity can make a man worthy from the start. Diane Long Hoeveler argues that these previous modes of masculinity as seen in the violent and overwrought emotions of men like Delamere "were all characteristics of a flawed social and class system that no longer served the needs of a growing industrial economy"(46). The tempestuous emotions of an aristocratic hero, particularly one who changes for the heroine, are no longer guarantees of a secure life and eternal devotion. In fact,

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<sup>19</sup> See Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Trans. E. Jephcott. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982; Enit Karafili Steiner, *Jane Austen's Civilized Women, Morality, Gender and the Civilizing Process*. London: Pickering and Chatto, 2012.4-6.

Delamere's violent affections are more indicative of his unsuitability than his fidelity. Smith shifts the responsibility of civilizing to a man's profession rather than as a part of the educational process of an aristocratic upbringing or as dependent on the heroine's virtue. Like Burney, Smith wants the hero to already have a strong sense of worth, making him an ideal match from the beginning of their courtship. Through work, as Godolphin does, the hero comes to develop a superior character and one that functions to better the life of the heroine. While we cannot completely detach Godolphin from the aristocracy, his development and the maintenance of his gentlemanly attributes as nurtured through work foreground a new image of masculinity that later is reproduced by Austen and Gaskell.

*Emmeline* concludes, as many courtship novels do, with the happy marriage between a worthy hero and a virtuous heroine. While the ending itself glorifies the exalted union of Emmeline and Godolphin, it is in the novel's conclusion that we lose some of the revolutionary aspects of the novel. At the end of *Emmeline*, we are left with a heroine and her reclaimed estate and a hero with a nearly abandoned home. Throughout the novel, Smith has used and revised previous forms of masculinity, and in Godolphin, we see the makings of a new type of male hero, one who exudes civility and appropriate behavior, in spite of the profession that he uses to make his living. This sense of independence and financial stability become Godolphin's most distinctive qualities. He is the best representation of masculinity in the text and authorizes modes of meritocratic work that are later replicated by other women writers.

But it is this burgeoning meritocracy that Godolphin defines through his hard work and financial success that is eventually blighted by the text. He articulates and

formulates a vision of masculinity that does not need aristocratic wealth to make itself superior. At the novel's conclusion, however, Smith back-peddles on her vision of masculinity, comfortable with a distilled aristocratic hero and a recovered ancestral home. Fletcher argues that Smith, more than any novelist before her, uses the country estate as a "precise emblem of England" and its ownership acts as "an organizing emblem for her own opposing political and religious ideals" (305). In Jane Austen, Fletcher sees the place of the country estate further developed, but Fletcher claims that Smith uses the country to dramatize the future of England: whoever controls the estate holds the power in England. To this end, Emmeline claims her rightful place as mistress of Mowbray Castle, overturns her own illegitimacy, and saves the decaying piece of aristocratic land from certain isolation and destruction at the hands of Lord Montreville. This conclusion is certainly a powerful and liberating end for the orphaned heroine. But for all the capital and prestige that Emmeline acquires from the ownership of Mowbray Castle, she merely returns to a place and a patriarchal system that has long mistreated her.

I would not suggest that this conclusion is without progressive power. But in this scuffle for control of Mowbray Castle and, therefore, control of England, Smith's points about women's access overshadow men's meritocracy. By privileging Emmeline and women's ownership, Smith is forced to sacrifice the meritocracy that she has created in Godolphin and the independence that his home on the Isle of Wight has granted him. As revolutionary and feminist as the conclusion becomes for Emmeline, it ultimately tethers her and Godolphin to a patriarchal system that may well play out the drama of disinheritance and illegitimacy all over again. Cynthia Klekar argues that Emmeline's return to Mowbray Castle merely reinstitutes the same cycle of devotion she once had to



the patriarchal system that placed her there initially: “Despite her role as benefactress, however, Emmeline continues to recognize her debt to the system of patriarchal authority that has allowed her, finally, to gain her deserved recognition and place in the socioeconomic order” (286). The cyclical nature of Mowbray Castle and its place in the patriarchal world perpetuates a future that has the potential to spawn another round of men like Delamere and Montreville. Versions of aristocratic masculinity as seen in Lord Westhaven and Godolphin are mere anomalies in the novel.

Thus, the ownership may be in Emmeline’s hands but that is merely for her lifetime. Despite the power that she wields as mistress of Mowbray Castle, she will be unable to start a matriarchal line. She may enter herself into the history of the family and the castle—a history that nearly forgot her in the first place—but she condemns herself and her children to the uncertainty of this gentrified life. Malcolm Kelsall argues that the English country home represents the history of a family’s patriarchal structure and its adherence to traditions of the past (27). In this way, Emmeline and Godolphin’s return to Mowbray Castle represents a significant devolution. Smith’s gentleman, rather than showing how work leads to a productive and meritocratic place, must reconcile and refit his gentlemanly behavior back into a landed place. Despite all of the security that he and his sister have enjoyed on the Isle of Wight, Godolphin returns to a more dilapidated version of his childhood home. We can read his home on the Isle of Wight as more than a representation of his financial success; it comes to represent the freedom of his naval position and a certain independence from an aristocratic and landed class system. Godolphin’s behavior and his own self-made accomplishments are so progressive that to then land lock such a hero and force him back into the bosom of an idle life at Mowbray

Castle stifles the work that Smith has previously done in the novel. As children of a second son, Godolphin's children would have to depend on their ability to work and succeed. Smith abruptly cuts off the innovative history of work and merit, in order to promote allegiance to a land-based system.

In this conclusion, it appears that Smith cannot envision a place for women in a self-made system. The wealth and prestige that comes with the ownership of Mowbray Castle may be Emmeline's birthright, but she has not earned it through hard work. She may have suffered at the hands of her uncle, and be a worthier owner than he, but it is this oppressive system which she willingly reenters that has caused her such displacement in the first place. Instead of aligning Emmeline with the progressive masculinity that Godolphin comes to represent, Smith places the heroine back in the same house, in the same space, in the same situation as before. Emmeline's position may have changed since her early days at Mowbray Castle, but it still holds an oppressive power over her.

Smith props up a patriarchal system because without professions or occupations of their own, women must seek their own wealth, even if it is through inheritance. She, like Austen, does not advocate women marrying for money, but even here, Smith cannot envision an acceptable escape from the patriarchal system that does not involve marrying into it or emulating it. More than that, Emmeline's inheritance also affects the development of Godolphin's position. With marriage to Emmeline, he must return to his past and return to a system out of which he has already evolved. Although Mowbray Castle's complicated tangle of capital and inheritance empowers Emmeline, it also detaches her and Godolphin from a future that might have led to a more innovative type

of freedom. Instead Emmeline chooses to write herself into the history of the estate, upholding its inherited system of power and detaching herself and Godolphin from a merit-based alternative.

Even if we know that Emmeline is a more suitable owner of Mowbray Castle, the estate has been mismanaged from the start, botched by Emmeline's father and later misused by her uncle. Yet instead of choosing Godolphin's home, Emmeline chooses the enemy she knows over the stranger that she does not. She chooses the path of her father, whose reckless behavior left her without stability for most of her life, over that of her husband's. Godolphin can always work and create more wealth, but Mowbray Castle needs an abundance work to stave off further decay. Smith may try to reanimate a dying history and save it from obscurity at the hands of unworthy men, but the situation still remains dire. Even the wealth that would return Mowbray Castle to its former glory does not come from the hard work of its owner. When Emmeline rightly inherits the crumbling castle, she recovers the rents from the hands of Montreville. This is not an independent sense of wealth, but the redistribution of Montreville's wealth into Emmeline's hands. The money is not earned by anything other than her position; it is money that Montreville stole. While this does rectify the initial theft and disinheritance, Smith cannot bridge Emmeline's inherited wealth with Godolphin's meritorious position, and, in the end, Godolphin's masculinity suffers. Not because Emmeline will be the wealthier of the two, but because Godolphin's work becomes irrelevant, except in the way it formed the courtship. His work becomes as ornamental as the accomplishments that a woman must have to snag a husband on the marriage mart. Were this not a courtship novel, the conclusion would embody a strong and radical position on women's property. However,

Smith straddles the political novel and the courtship novel, giving her heroine a good husband but a reclaimed estate. In the process, Smith struggles to reconcile a self-made man with the inherited background of the heroine. Smith eventually abandons the earned estate on the Isle of Wight in favor of an inherited and decayed one in Wales.

The novel's conclusion seeks to empower women through property and prestige, lending an independence to Emmeline's situation that she did not previously possess. However, by placing her heroine back at the beginning, it negates all the work and development Emmeline has completed in the course of the novel. But more than that, it deemphasizes the role of Godolphin and his self-made home. Emmeline has spent the entirety of the novel fighting off the attentions of Delamere, behavior that arises from an upbringing in the bosom of ancestral prestige and inheritance. In Godolphin, we see united the gentlemanly qualities of chivalry with an independent sense of self and work. Smith starts a tradition of masculinity that is later developed by other women writers, but the conclusion of the novel unravels the work she has done to create a productive form of masculinity. It is difficult to begrudge Emmeline the independence she gains at the end of the novel, but the work done to uphold the patriarchal class system, a system that Godolphin works in the very margins of, remains detrimental to both her and Godolphin. While Emmeline makes the right choice of husband, Smith problematizes both Emmeline and Godolphin's relationship to place. Just as Emmeline reaches a pinnacle in her own independence by reclaiming Mowbray Castle, Godolphin must forfeit his own self-created home on the Isle of Wight.

Smith cannot write men and women into a situation that is mutually beneficial; therefore, she chooses to uphold a patriarchal system, but to make Emmeline the head of

it. Godolphin may have escaped the trappings of his own background through his work, but it is marriage that puts him back into the same situation. Later in *Persuasion*, Austen will rewrite the same situation with the heroine's abandoning her father's decaying estate, but in *Emmeline* we find the beginnings of a tradition that lauds the gentleman and abhors the rake/ Smith's novel establishes female authorship and the courtship novel as important locations for the revision and reconstruction of gender.

Ultimately, what Smith establishes consistently throughout *Emmeline* is that men and women's destinies are inexplicably tied together in the process of gender revision. However, the novel leaves much work to be done to promote masculinity that is self-made. Austen furthers forms of constructed and self-made masculinity, privileging the gentleman's home and independently created wealth. Although Smith begins a tradition that does much to explain and complicate masculinity's relationship work, her allegiance leans towards female systems, even limited ones. Austen showcases a more egalitarian approach to the project of gender revision, playing out the drama of revision and courtship in the forms with which readers are more familiar. But in *Godolphin*, we find the most superior aspects of masculinity. His late entrance and the novel's final settings at Mowbray Castle undo some of his progressive and revolutionary masculine qualities. Smith arrives at an important intersection of gender and place, but ultimately aligns her heroine with a more stable sense of home than that of the self-made man's work.

The Gentleman and Pemberley: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*

Jane Austen is easily one of the most recognizable and popular novelists in the British literary tradition. Her place in women's literature and in the history of the novel needs little introduction; the author of seven of the most widely read English novels, Austen's career has created a legacy that rivals that of Shakespeare. However, Austen's interaction with her contemporaries, particularly her female contemporaries, remains a contentious issue. Her connection with Samuel Richardson is well known (it is well documented that Austen's favorite novel was *Sir Charles Grandison*), the result of which has generated a bevy of criticism that traces the trajectory of the novel sharply and exclusively through these two authors, and this trajectory has long been used to connect Austen to a male literary line. Additionally, Austen has been connected with Frances Burney, although as I have argued in my first chapter, in the realm of masculinity, Charlotte Smith's novel *Emmeline* (1788) presents a clear and foundational addendum to the Burney-Austen trajectory. In this way, *Emmeline* foregrounds a significant and previously unexplored link in the novel's evolutionary chain by valorizing the working gentleman over the aristocratic rake. While critics like William Magee, Jacqueline Labbe, and Lorraine Fletcher have sought to fortify a deeper correlation between the works of Smith and Austen, the relationship between the two authors continues to be a sparse area of inquiry. The influence of Richardson, Burney, and even Radcliffe on Austen's canon is well documented by textual and biographical sources. Lesser connections between Austen and Smith exist, but have remained unexplored.

As examined in my first chapter, the relationship between *Emmeline* and Austen's canon puts masculinity and gentlemanly behavior into conversation by exploring the multiple ways that Smith defines and foregrounds the gentleman as a performative identity tied to the execution of professional work. Thus Smith's first novel becomes the missing bond through which we see Austen develop realistic and transgressive male characters. But Smith's characterization of men, from the roguish Lord Delamere to the solid Captain Godolphin, does not represent the heights to which masculinity and the gentleman aspire. As Austen begins her novels, her texts muddle the severely polarized strains of masculinity we have seen in Smith's (among others) constructions of the gentleman and rake. Instead of Smith's villains or paragons, Austen presents several forms of masculinity, even several variations of the gentleman and the rake in order to deconstruct the performative masculinity that informs each character's definition and sublimation. Both Smith and Austen see work as the avenue through which a man obtains and performs gentlemanly civility. Austen, however, narrates the process, to use Jason Solinger's phrase, of becoming a gentleman; whereas, Smith argues for the gentleman's superiority over deviant forms of masculinity (3). In *Captain Godolphin*, Smith presents a pre-made gentleman-hero; his late entrance into the novel saves the heroine from a bad marriage and offers her a more suitable partner. The gentleman of Smith's text arrives in the novel already worthy of the heroine and particularly perfect in contrast to the rogues and kidnappers who have surrounded Emmeline. Austen, on the other hand, presents heroes who are not fully formed, and as such, their development parallels the development of the courtship plot itself. Instead of presenting men who enter the text already codified and represented as exemplary models of masculinity, Austen uses Mr.

Darcy to narrate the struggles that underpin the performance of the gentleman. In contrast to Smith's Godolphin who seamlessly performs, —if we think of the gentleman as performance, then Godolphin appears as a seasoned actor, despite the pursuit of financial success that has kept him on the borders of 'good' society— Austen's hero, although flawed, represents a more realistic form of the gentleman that eventually lends itself towards the process of reform and renewal. In this process, we see Darcy, both in adapting and altering to the society around him, producing actions that locate the gentleman's work on a land-based map of the middle class. Darcy, who has used Pemberley and his status as the estate's owner to foreground his understanding of the gentleman, must negotiate his gentlemanly performance and its work into a framework that produces rather than assumes.

As Butler suggests, it is a constant repetition of actions that defines an identity, whether that identity be gender, sexuality, or class-based, of which the gentleman is all three. In order to become a gentleman in Austen's texts, one must constantly validate the gentlemanly identity through the actions of work. The private lives of men are even more elusive in Austen's texts than in Smith's, and, therefore, men are less vocal about their exploits and less accessible outside the drawing room or the ballroom. There are less apparent markers that can so easily categorize where a man may fall on the diverse spectrum of masculinities. The courtship models and the separate spheres ideologies that are beginning to mark Austen's gender relations showcase the heroine's difficulty, and by extension the reader's, in determining the authenticity of gentlemanly performance. At the center of this anxious discourse on masculinity and gentleman are Austen and her heroine's role in the process of gender comprehension, and, ultimately, gender revision.



Through an examination of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), I will argue that Austen presents a more adaptable and more realistic understanding of masculinity than Smith does. Work figures into Austen's definition of a gentleman, not exclusively as a profession, occupation, or as part of a rubric gained from an aristocratic background, but as the main determinate of a man's character. Masculinity, in its construction and its application, must possess utility, and gentlemanly behavior must be performed and executed through this outlet of work. In flux in Austen's texts are the traditional factors of marriageability and gentlemanly behavior. Therefore, it becomes necessary for women to see men perform work in order to determine their characters. A man's background, his profession or social position, and his wealth mean little if he is unable to prove himself a gentleman. In turn, Austen demands a repetition of such actions, a consistent desire to inhabit the performance of the gentleman's gendered and social reality. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen resituates the place of the gentleman—formerly originating as a descendent of the weakening landed and gentry classes—by re-imagining the country estate, a site of landed dominance as a site of productive work.

One of the biggest differences between *Emmeline* and *Pride and Prejudice* is how wide and varied Austen's portrayals of masculinity are when compared with Smith's eighteenth-century models. While Austen's prose is often filtered through the perspective of the heroine, Austen's use of free indirect discourse allows for additional interactions that are outside the heroine's periphery. But the continued importance of action and its place in the construction of work becomes apparent in Austen's men. The novel draws sharper distinctions between what defines a profession, or what may constitute a profession, but Austen's representation of fickle, ridiculous, or idle men differentiates

between men who actually work and men who have occupations yet do no work. While Smith's Godolphin engages in numerous acts of work that are not directly related to his position as a naval captain, his profession and aristocratic background muddle the origin of his gentlemanly qualities. It is, therefore, not uncommon for the heroine to receive intelligence of the gentleman's actions from other characters. Lines of communication between women and actions that happen off-stage buttress the gentleman's process of revision. *Pride and Prejudice* offers additional male characters that evolve the gentleman outside the boundaries that have solidified Godolphin's gentility as a product of an aristocratic structure.

One might ask why *Pride and Prejudice* was chosen for study rather than Austen's first novel (although published with her last) *Northanger Abbey*. Certainly Henry Tilney's occupation as a clergyman demonstrates the importance of a profession, but like Captain Godolphin who joins the Navy, Tilney's profession results from his place as a second son. While the Tilney men's ambitious careers differ greatly from other families in Austen's canon, it is Mr. Darcy's status in the landed gentry and his vast estate that make him a logical progression between Smith's Godolphin and Austen's Captain Wentworth. Through Darcy's characterization, Austen orients Darcy's relationship to work much differently than that of Tilney or other heroes in her canon. Without a formal profession or occupation like that of other male characters in this study, Darcy shows the imaginative and expansive ways that men can define work. His work—the management, preservation, and upkeep of Pemberley—becomes dependent on the actions he takes in the novel. His wealth and position are inherited, and while those advantages do not come with an aristocratic title like Burney's Lord Orville, he does

retain a superior place in the social hierarchy. Darcy engenders quite a bit of distrust and censure, not only because of his proud behavior but also because of this position. In this way, Austen privileges men of the professions, even if their genuine characters do not always deserve such latitude. Until they prove themselves dangerous, ridiculous, or ultimately worthy of the heroine, professional men are given inherent nobility that Darcy's position does not foster. This does not undercut the actions of Godolphin and Wentworth, but it does explain some of the initial reaction to their profession and overall acceptance. However, with the same stroke, Austen also exposes how fragile a mere profession remains, that the identity that comes with involvement in the clergy, military, or law does not always bolster a man's character.

As someone who does not possess a professional background, Darcy's actions and his process of gender revision becomes a journey in legitimizing and fortifying the gentry's appropriations of work. With Godolphin and Wentworth, readers are given the lens of a profession that establishes their actions as honorable and productive; yet Austen does not supply Darcy with the same tangible boundaries or the duties of a profession. Instead, Darcy in his role as a privileged member of the gentry and the owner of Pemberley indicates how wealth and land require similar work to that of a profession. In his 'profession' as the owner of Pemberley, Darcy performs important tasks that, in his role within a patriarchal framework, are only able to be performed by him: he corresponds with his steward, returns to Pemberley early to conduct estate business, and earns the admiration of his tenants and staff. Yes, these are all duties that other landowners execute, but female novelists like Austen and Smith have demonstrated throughout their work that gentry landowners can inflict family ruin when they fail to

execute these actions with Darcy's same level of care or concern. Also apparent in Darcy's work is the superiority of the middle-class in constructing and sustaining masculinities that retain and preserve the country estate.

The *Lizzie Bennet Diaries* (2013), a recent and modern adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, turns Pemberley House into Pemberley Digital, a media company with Darcy as its CEO. The traction of such a plot detail plays out well for a modern audience but the parallels between Pemberley as an estate and as a corporation are not wholly irrelevant. To understand Darcy's work, we must acknowledge the limitations of his position and to a greater degree, Austen's limitations. Most of Austen's canon demurs on the subject of lower classes, with minimal or nonexistent representations of the servants who work for the families of the hero or heroine. *Pride and Prejudice*, however, does break this pattern, giving names to both Longbourn and Pemberley's housekeepers. While Mrs. Hill is notably silent throughout the text, Darcy's housekeeper Mrs. Reynolds is an important agent of the plot, authorizing and validating Darcy's work at Pemberley. But even Mrs. Reynolds, despite the authoritative role she plays in the novel, does not stand in for Pemberley's many invisible servants, the full household of people who clearly maintain Pemberley and serve the Darcy family. Darcy's work does not include the many duties given to his servants, but his work, according to Mrs. Reynolds, as "the best landlord, and the best master that ever lived," a solicitous host, and as a preserver of Pemberley's legacy holds similar value. Like his servants, he too has a role to play and he must work to play it. He also engages in other forms of work outside the parameters of Pemberley's grounds—namely, saving Lydia from Wickham's roguish intentions---but the management of Pemberley remains his primary source of purposeful employment. His

servants depend on his judgment and proper management for their livelihoods. Although there are numerous benefits to Darcy's elevated position as Pemberley's owner, Darcy has to make Pemberley his own, not through legal means or from the consequences of birth, but through the performance and execution of work on the estate. While confined to his role as Pemberley's owner, he need not let Pemberley define him; instead he defines Pemberley by employing himself there.

Yet outside the confines of Pemberley and the tasks that supply his work there, Austen suggests that Darcy's masculinity is valuable and therefore, still functions by managing and preserving social order. In a later episode in the novel, Mr. Wickham persuades Elizabeth's youngest sister Lydia to elope with him. Darcy, who feels responsible for Wickham's actions because he previously had attempted the same scheme with his own sister Georgiana, finds the couple and forces the wayward Wickham to marry. While his efforts to find Wickham and Lydia, particularly as he feels nothing but anger for Wickham and indifference towards Lydia, are noble and kind, Austen authorizes Darcy's masculinity by presenting him as, literally, the only man who can perform the job. Others seek the lovers out—Elizabeth's father and her uncle—but Darcy rectifies the situation and saves Lydia, and by extension her sisters, from further ruin.<sup>20</sup> This work that he undertakes out of a misguided sense of guilt and responsibility towards Wickham (and possibly Elizabeth) is coded as part of his gentlemanly performance. As we have seen with Smith's Godolphin, one of the most crucial acts of the gentleman's performance is his ability to care for women and to undertake tasks that other men are

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth's uncle Mr. Gardiner, who begrudgingly takes credit for finding the couple and getting them to the altar, seems like the likely person to find them. Living in London, successful in his business, Mr. Gardiner appears as Lydia's probable savior, and no one questions him until Lydia herself lets it slip that Mr. Darcy attended the wedding.

unable to perform. Godolphin accomplishes this by legitimizing his sister's bastard; Darcy performs in a similar manner by helping Lydia.

It is worth noting, however, that unlike Godolphin's sister Adelina, Lydia is neither abandoned by her lover or without other male protectors. Essentially, Lydia is not Darcy's responsibility. Surely Wickham is accountable for Lydia, but still unmarried, Mr. Bennet as her father is responsible for her protection. Yet he remains utterly powerless to protect Lydia in the first place or to help her after she makes such a devastating decision. When Darcy intervenes, he not only corrects Wickham and Lydia's mistakes, but he also repairs Mr. Bennet's. I do not suggest this to shift responsibility away from Wickham or Lydia, merely to point out Mr. Bennet's apathetic role in this drama. He allowed Lydia to go to Brighton, despite warnings from Elizabeth and Jane, and he lacked both the power and the wealth to compel Wickham to marry her. But these are not Mr. Bennet's only oversights. There is a pervading commentary throughout the novel that underscores Mr. Bennet's role as an inefficient caretaker, of both his estate and his family.<sup>21</sup> While Elizabeth remains sympathetic towards her father's guilt over Lydia and does not resent her family's financial situation, as readers, I think we cannot count Mr. Bennet so blameless. Certainly it is a disappointment that he does not have a son who can preserve his family line, but there are other responsibilities as a father and as a landowner of the gentry class that he ultimately neglects to accomplish.<sup>22</sup> His responsibilities as a father—saving for his daughters' dowries, protecting them for unworthy suitors—are tied directly to how he maintains his estate. In this juxtaposition between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bennet,

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<sup>21</sup> I make the distinction between Mr. Bennet as inefficient, or making poor choices as opposed to being an irresponsible caretaker, or willfully ignorant like Sir Walter in *Persuasion*.

<sup>22</sup> While there is a sizeable difference between the financial means of Mr. Bennet and those of Mr. Darcy, in her later exchange with Lady Catherine, Elizabeth draws parallels between her father's position and Darcy's: "He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal"(403).

Austen demonstrates how the care of one's estate correlates to the protection of women under one's care. If we read Darcy's interference here as part of his gentlemanly performance, then we can also see how the responsibilities he undertakes at Pemberley allow him to execute similar acts of care and concern outside the estate. Ultimately, this elevates Darcy's work at Pemberley and charts it within a framework that upholds gentlemanly identity.

Possibly the most famous episode in Austen's canon, if not the most memorable proposal, Mr. Darcy's first proposal demonstrates the many shades of the novel's title, pride and prejudice. And while Elizabeth Bennet cites numerous reasons for her rejection of Mr. Darcy's initial proposal, none is more scathing than her comment about Darcy's ungentlemanly behavior: "You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy, if you suppose that the mode of your declaration affected me in any other way, than as it spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner"(316). As the narrator notes, one of the reasons for Darcy's surprise is that he wrongly presumes that Elizabeth will accept his proposal; the clear enticements of his position and wealth make him a desirable match for most young women, particularly one of Elizabeth's social position.<sup>23</sup> Her reaction and eventual rejection, Austen suggests, signify that the traditional precepts of marriageability—the wealth and status that Darcy uses to validate his identity—are no longer acceptable or complete. More specifically, Elizabeth's rejection demonstrates that Darcy's actions and his "behavior" hold more weight than his wealth. To "behave in a more gentleman-like" manner requires a certain

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<sup>23</sup> Hazel Jones sees Darcy's first proposal, like Mr. Knightley's, as "spontaneous"(27). While I would not suggest that Darcy's speech is practiced to the degree which Mr. Collins practices his, even in the indirect manner that we receive his proposal, there is, at least, a logic that underpins its structure. Certain that he will be accepted, Darcy wastes no time in laying out for Elizabeth all the things that he has ignored by proposing to her.

element of performance: the presentation and repetition of chivalrous actions that properly inform and execute the role of gentleman. As I argue in my introduction, sexual, gender, social identities all coalesce in the gentleman's performance: a series of socially understood and performed actions that define the parameters of identity. And as Darcy's rejection here demonstrates, performance is at the mercy of the audience. In this way, Darcy's performance in Meryton, at Netherfield, and in Kent does not fit with what Elizabeth and others understand to be the behavior of a gentleman. It is the action of work, even in the absence of a recognized profession, that allows Darcy to alter his relationship to Elizabeth and validate his own gentlemanly identity. While Elizabeth's continued abhorrence of Darcy moves the plot along, it is Darcy's ability to "behave in a more gentleman-like manner" that forecasts their marriage.

Darcy's gentlemanly behavior eventually earns him the love and respect of the woman he has long adored, but this shift from insensitive suitor to heroic gentleman is predicated on a stronger connection between the gentleman and work. Unlike his wealth or his social position which remain unchanged throughout the novel, it is Darcy's actions that are modified and, therefore, make him a gentleman worthy of Elizabeth. In criticizing Darcy's performance, Elizabeth garners authority and agency through the only means available to her: denying his proposal. However, by casting Elizabeth as the judge (and rejecter) of Darcy's poor behavior, Austen renegotiates a place for women even within the confines of courtship and marital institutions; heroines are no longer prizes for good behavior or reformers of bad, instead they, like female authors and readers, have a stake in the expansion and revision of exemplary models of masculinity, not as objects to be earned but as equal members of a the larger gender project.



While Smith provides an excellent model in *Captain Godolphin*, the novel *Emmeline* does not demonstrate the progress or the development of the hero to the same degree that Austen's corpus does. Smith's men lack dimension and remain static throughout the novel, forced into roles as either villains or paragons: Darcy does not fit into either category. He does not enter the novel fully formed as a hero, nor does he come into the text with a reputation for debauchery. While his snobbery may be problematic, he does not possess lecherous or inappropriate intentions towards Elizabeth or any other women. Darcy, however, strikes a balance between the two extremes: he is neither a paragon nor a villain, but his behavior demands change in order to secure the heroine. In this same vein, Sarah Wooten argues that Darcy's behavior throughout the text "blurs the line boundaries between hero and anti-hero" (38), noting the parallels between Austen's novel and Byron's *Don Juan*. However, what Wooten reads as Byronic, and, therefore, eternally flawed in Darcy's character, I find problematic when we examine Darcy's altered and pleasing behavior later in the text. For Wooten, the second half of the novel tries to uneasily assert Darcy as the superior man and the consummate gentleman, despite his poor treatment of Elizabeth and his brooding manner. Yet after the first proposal, I see Darcy's behavior as clearer and more discernable. What he has previously lacked in adaptability is remedied in kinder interactions with Elizabeth's relatives and an overall commitment to performing as a gentleman. Although the rejected proposal does much to illuminate Darcy's character flaws, it provides an outline for gentlemanly behavior, one that Darcy uses to change his performance.<sup>24</sup> Darcy does transform because of the

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<sup>24</sup> According to Claudia Johnson in *Equivocal Beings*, Austen redefines English manhood in *Emma* as "brisk, energetic, downright, 'natural,' unaffected, reserved, businesslike, plain-speaking; gentlemanly, to be sure, but not courtly" (202). I would argue that Austen ascribes similar qualities to Darcy.

proposal, but it is not the love of a good woman like one sees in narratives of the reformed rake; instead it is the scorn of a good woman that affects Darcy's behavior.

The finality and force with which Elizabeth rejects Darcy do not invite a second proposal. From the pessimistic tone of the text, we can see how the changes that Darcy effects in his own life are done with little hope to alter his marital situation. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen sets up a courtship dynamic that demands Darcy, through the expanding parameters of gentry work, bridge the gap between the aristocratic and professional classes. Darcy becomes a hybrid form of masculinity. By this, I mean, he embodies characteristics of the aristocratic gentleman, but he performs work that one associates with the professional classes. (Although as Austen points out, the association between work and a profession are not always in sync.) Through Darcy, Austen writes malleable masculinity into the gentry class and shows the evolution necessary to become a gentleman.

It seems ironic that for a novel originally titled *First Impressions* that Darcy and Elizabeth's initial impressions are both unpleasant and inaccurate. While Darcy's attraction to Elizabeth quickly overturns his impression, Elizabeth's impression of Darcy does not so easily abate. It is Darcy's first impression, however, that does much to define his behavior as ungentlemanly, specifically through in comparison with other men and by the general perspective of the people present. Austen's narrator notes the two distinctive ways that Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley are received: "Mr. Bingley was good looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners," (215). The briefness of Mr. Bingley's description compares quite interestingly to the long and extensive description given of Mr. Darcy:

But his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mein; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend. (215)

Here the narrator fashions Darcy into a very unlikable character; his behaviors and interactions are fraught with a certain sense of unease and impoliteness. Additionally, his personality and his rudeness do not garner a welcoming response, nor does he seek to interact with the other people in the ballroom. Between these two passages, the narrator compares Darcy and Bingley, if only to demonstrate exactly what Darcy lacks.

Repeatedly in the novel, Austen uses Bingley as a stock character to define what Darcy is not: Darcy is not amiable, he is not popular, and the company does not please him. The term “manners,” used in both descriptions, is of significant note because it seems to be the main factor in defining a gentleman. Whereas Bingley has “easy, unaffected manners,” Darcy possesses manners that “gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity.” While the narrator articulates the general dislike of Darcy, the initial reaction to Darcy also divides the assembly along gender lines. Certainly in the passage above Austen cheekily emphasizes how Darcy’s wealth colors the initial impression of him, but the separation of the men and women’s reactions do not extend to Darcy’s manners. Unlike Mr. Bingley, Darcy does not show any special consideration or civility towards women, treating them with the same level of discourtesy as he treats the men. This is something that later plays out in his interaction with Elizabeth, but is important because it shows that Darcy does not adhere to one of the basic tenets of the gentleman.

Michèle Cohen argues that the distinction between politeness and chivalry depends on the effeminacy of the former. In this way, Cohen argues that being polite was often associated with the art of pleasing, an ideal feminine characteristic and thus, a characteristic that Darcy would eschew in order to appear masculine (313). While Mr. Bingley's other companions may share Darcy's snobbish opinions, it is Darcy alone who receives the most severe censure and bears the brunt of the criticism because he refuses to please what he sees as an undeserving audience. When Darcy is juxtaposed with Bingley, who is easily pleasing and not as the narrator declares, "above being pleased," we see where Darcy translates his stoicism into masculinity. But effeminacy, Cohen suggests, is the main anxiety of this culture of masculine pleasing, a masculinity that is in danger of losing an authentic English identity. I would not suggest that Bingley reads in an effeminate or unmanly manner, but it is important for us to consider how Bingley's desire to please that influences his later abandonment of Jane. Unlike Darcy who has been taught from childhood to value his own opinion above others, Bingley is persuaded to abandon a woman he has romantic intentions towards on the advice of his sisters and Darcy. While we have been told that Bingley is an exemplary man, too much pleasing has consequences which lead to his (and Jane's) unhappiness.

It is in this ability to please that we see further evidence of Cohen's argument of politeness as a feminine quality. Additionally, Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hunt demonstrate Cohen's 'art of pleasing' by infiltrating society with grace that belies their deep seated contempt for Meryton. Elizabeth notes that Bingley's sisters do not possess the same manners as their brother, but as Jane naively states, "But they are both pleasing women when you converse with them"(217). Although Jane is not the shrewdest of

observers, she does point to the sisters' ability to please where they like. The narrator too remarks upon the ability of the sisters to fit into society: "their behaviour at the assembly had been calculated to please in general...They were in fact very fine ladies; not deficient in good humour when they were pleased, nor in the power of being agreeable where they chose it; but proud and conceited"(218). While Elizabeth finds Bingley's sisters unlikable, she has no reason to think them inhospitable or impolite. Their ability to please becomes an essential part of their interaction with Meryton society; they dance, they converse, and they show an overall interest if not a zeal for the assembly.

It is Darcy who remains the most vocal and unpleasant of the Netherfield group, lacking the pleasing, if inauthentic manners, of the Bingley sisters. Manners, Cohen argues, inform the behavior of masculine comportment that underscore the constructions of politeness and chivalry: "It is in their relation to women that politeness and chivalry appear to share certain features—they are both systems of manners associated with a high regard for women, and they share a courtly language of gallantry and courtesy"(319). If politeness and chivalry both depend on manners that dictate special consideration for women, then Darcy fails to be either polite or chivalrous. The women, just like the men, feel the sting of Darcy's ill manners, no more so than Elizabeth. As Bingley lauds the beauty and kindness of his new acquaintances, Darcy responds with cool disdain and offensive words. When prompted by Bingley to dance, Darcy slights Elizabeth: "Which do you mean?" and turning round, [Darcy] looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt *me*; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men,'" (216, Austen's italics). Humorous as this is given Darcy's

later reversal regarding Elizabeth's beauty, from this exchange, we gather that Darcy's rudeness is not limited to his lack of decorum or the insults he utters within easy earshot of Elizabeth. In contrast to Cohen, Maaja A. Stewart claims that Darcy does not please, not because it is a sign of effeminacy, but because it means he must please in feminized spaces like the drawing room or ballroom (57). Although I would suggest that his refusal to stand up with Elizabeth, especially after other men have slighted her, indicates that Darcy profoundly misjudges his duties as a gentleman. While we can agree that Darcy does not seek to be polite, if we think of him as a chivalrous gentleman, then he might use Elizabeth's situation as an opportunity to save the proverbial "damsel in distress." Instead Darcy uses this episode to further ridicule and draw attention to Elizabeth's visage. It seems particularly unfair and cruel that he judges Elizabeth on her lack of partner, when he readily could alleviate her situation.

Isabel Bour, examining the same passage through the lens of Lockean civility, notes that Darcy's reluctance to dance demonstrates further incivility towards Elizabeth and remains indicative of his inability to engage in society (166). I would also argue that Darcy's refusal to dance with Elizabeth here suggests that Darcy cannot function more specifically in Elizabeth's society, a factor that precludes a courtship between them. While we may think of dancing as a formal social interaction for Austen's men, I claim that the desire and ability to dance demonstrates an aspect of work. Indeed, by the Austen's own standards of masculinity, to dance makes one a viable candidate for marriage: "To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love"(214). Bingley's affinity for dance symbolizes his amiability, whereas Darcy's reticence further showcases his ungentlemanly qualities. Ultimately, to dance in Austen's world represents

an acceptance of and adherence to the rules of courtship and polite manners. As Bour points out, Darcy's role as a gentleman dictates a certain kindness towards women, an ability to smooth over social situations and engage young women in niceties. Therefore, his refusal to dance, and his vocal denouncement of the action altogether suggests that Darcy does not understand the gentleman because he refuses to engage in one of the most crucial and public performances that defines a gentleman. Bingley embodies Bour's definition of a gentleman, whereas Darcy fails to provide an alternative gentleman that properly explains his behavior.

Declining to dance with Elizabeth, particularly with the scarcity of men in the assembly rooms, more than any other action, suggests that Darcy does not act like a gentleman. Coupled with his previous statements about Jane as the only handsome woman in the room or the punishment it would be to dance with someone present, Darcy validates the general opinion of his arrogance and his pride. Cohen also expresses a similar approach to dance and social nicety as the definition of a gentleman, using Austen's Mr. Knightley and the dance he engages with the slighted Harriet Smith. In that novel, it is Mr. Elton who appears unkind by not dancing, similar to how Darcy appears in *Pride and Prejudice*. In these first few scenes with Darcy, Austen characterizes him as snobbish, unlikable, and proud. What Darcy's ungentlemanly behavior helps define, moreover, is his lack of adaptability. He does not possess the manners or the politeness to engage with men and women outside of his circle.

While Darcy's initial impression is damaged when juxtaposed with Bingley's good impression, the novel relies on men other than Bingley to define the behavior of a gentleman. There are numerous male types, ranging from ridiculous men like Mr. Collins

to benign men like Colonel Fitzwilliam. Additionally, Austen peppers the text with several other types of men beyond the gentleman, many of who vie for Elizabeth's attention. She navigates social situations with these men fairly well, rebuffing Mr. Collins's proposal and interacting easily with men like Mr. Bingley and Colonel Fitzwilliam. Yet of all Elizabeth's relationship with men, platonic or otherwise, her relationship with Mr. Wickham remains the most contentious.

In his early role as potential suitor and influential friend, Wickham is dangerous because he both earns Elizabeth's good opinion and exploits her prejudice towards Darcy. Although he is not coded like a reformed rake in the same vein as Richardson's Mr. B, neither does Wickham read as a villainous foil for Darcy like Smith's Delamere acts for Godolphin. Wickham's actions may be destructive and cause a great deal of chaos in the novel, but in spite of the disruption that he visits on both Darcy and Elizabeth's sisters, Wickham's main role in the text seems to be in rounding out the love triangle between Elizabeth and Darcy. Gaining Elizabeth's attention from the beginning of their acquaintance until he departs for Brighton, Wickham establishes himself as a persuasive presence and a strong rival for Elizabeth's affections. During Wickham and Darcy's first meeting on the streets of Meryton, the narrator notes how Wickham's presence creates palpable tension between the two men:

[Mr. Darcy] was beginning to determine not to fix his eyes on Elizabeth, when they were suddenly arrested by the sight of the stranger...Both changed colour, one looked white, the other red. Mr. Wickham, after a few moments, touched his hat—a salutation which Mr. Darcy just deigned to return. What could be the meaning of it? —It was impossible to imagine; it was impossible not to long to know. (250)

We later learn of the history between the men that “was impossible to imagine,” but here Austen emphasizes how Darcy's attraction to Elizabeth forces him to interact with



Wickham. From Elizabeth's vantage point and the details of the exchange, with Darcy noticing the stranger because he interrupts his gaze, we may assume that Wickham stands beside or close to Elizabeth in the collected group. The proximity of Elizabeth and Wickham's bodies in the group does not speak of a deeper intimacy than it appears, but surely it must rankle Darcy to see the woman he cares for in the company of a man he so adamantly dislikes. The men do not meet again during Darcy's time at Netherfield, but Wickham's presence in Meryton and in Elizabeth's company is well known. Several people, even Elizabeth herself, comment on Wickham's character and Mr. Darcy's relationship with him. Most significantly at the Netherfield ball, Elizabeth alludes to her connection with Wickham in an attempt to understand Darcy's reaction: "The effect was immediate. A deeper shade of hauteur overspread his features, but he said not a word, and Elizabeth, though blaming herself for her own weakness, could not go on" (261). Though Elizabeth vehemently accepts Wickham's account of Darcy, by invoking here her unnamed acquaintance, she tries to both decipher Darcy's character and assert Wickham's viability as a rival. While Elizabeth does not fully understand Darcy's affections at this point in the text, Darcy asking her to dance, an action which he previously would not engage in, suggests that his interest is more than passing politeness. Needless to say, by alluding to Wickham's unfortunate situation, Elizabeth asserts her relationship with Wickham and nullifies any further attachment to Darcy. This also happens a second time during Darcy's rejected proposal when Elizabeth accuses Darcy of mistreating Wickham. In many ways, Wickham, both here and in the proposal scene, serves as a convenient red herring for Elizabeth's complicated feelings towards Darcy; Wickham's role as rival allows her to use his name as a way of either shaming Darcy or

angering him.<sup>25</sup> But, ultimately, Wickham functions as a site of relocation for Darcy's feelings. In moments of privacy and during Darcy's gestures or confessions of affection, Elizabeth manipulates the transfer of Darcy's feelings away from her and onto Wickham. Uncomfortable with Darcy's courtship, particularly because Wickham's account has only strengthened Elizabeth's poor opinion of him, Elizabeth exploits the relationship between the men in order to escape from Darcy's courtship.

While Wickham establishes Elizabeth as a desirable woman, which even Mr. Collins manages to do, he also asserts himself as a viable alternative to Darcy. If he did not think Darcy a threat, he need not detail the fictional past to Elizabeth. One might argue that Wickham has no knowledge of any attachment between Elizabeth and Darcy, Elizabeth herself even saying that Darcy is disagreeable, and lacking any awareness of Darcy's deep emotions. I would claim, however, that it seems likely that Wickham, who has known Darcy for years longer than anyone else in the text, would be able to discern his former friend's feelings. All the people he actively pursues are women who have some connection to Darcy, and no matter how tenuous, the connection with Darcy seems to be of the utmost importance. As even Elizabeth's desire to turn Darcy's feelings of affection into feelings of anger signify, we can read Wickham and Darcy's relationship in Sedgwickian terms—that the homosocial bonds between the men necessitates a rivalry and love triangle that validate their heterosexuality as it puts them into contact with each other.<sup>26</sup> While Wickham and Darcy's contact remains marginal at best, the role of

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<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting that Darcy rarely uses Wickham's name, instead referring to him in the abstract as "that gentleman."

<sup>26</sup> See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. In Sedgwick's groundbreaking and controversial book, she outlines what we have come to recognize as the queer theory through the application of the homosocial triangle of male desire onto English literary texts. For my purposes, I think Sedgwick's argument about women's place as objects in the rivalry of a homosocial triangle explains Elizabeth's place between Darcy and Wickham. While I do not see evidence

Elizabeth, and previously Georgiana as objects of Wickham's revenge does explain some of his pursuit. Wickham's motivations may be constantly in flux, but his pursuit of Elizabeth seems to achieve its initial purpose in unsettling Darcy.

Nowhere in Austen's canon do we find rakes in the same vein as Delamere or Lovelace, both with such excessive and emotive responses to rejection. However, Austen's texts are not free of unsavory, albeit often benign men. Only in *Northanger Abbey* does any heroine become in danger of being carried away, and, as to that, Catherine Morland's ordeal with John Thorpe does not last long. Austen's novel lacks the same Gothic tropes that Smith employs, and while her heroines may run away with unworthy suitors, there is little melodrama of the variety which unfolds in Smith's novels. This does not suggest that Smith's situations are unrealistic, but rather I would suggest that Austen's situations have a touch more realism. Certainly Wickham has the potential to cause more damage than any other character in *Pride and Prejudice*, but he lacks the aggressive sexuality of men like Lovelace or Delamere. Although his attempts to elope with Georgiana and Lydia are far from honorable, he does not kidnap either woman against their wills. The main distinction between Smith's rakes and Austen's is that Austen's appear far craftier. While Smith narrates some of the substantial threats to women's bodies and wills, there is something decidedly more sinister about Mr. Wickham's intentions. He remains more dangerous than Smith's Delamere and Richardson's Lovelace because he is an opportunist. There seems little mystery as to why he elopes with Lydia, considering he is a common seducer and libertine. But readers are constantly in suspense as to Wickham's motivations, something that makes him both

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of Wickham's sublimated desire for Darcy, the active way he pursues women in the care of and surrounding Darcy speaks to a strong desire to gain his attention.

unpredictable and difficult to handle. The rogues of Austen's predecessors possess more discriminate taste and fixation than Wickham, who pursues no less than four women—Georgiana, Elizabeth, Mary King, Lydia—in the course of the novel. The dangerous elements of his sexuality are still present, but Wickham does not demonstrate the same sense of fidelity in his pursuit of women, even if he shares the same sexual goals as other rakes. Such a perspective does not diminish the rake's pursuit of the virtuous heroine but makes a distinction between sexual obsession and libertinism. Whereas Delamere and Lovelace use any means necessary to secure and violate their respective heroines, Wickham looks for an easy conquest. Just like Georgiana, Elizabeth is easily abandoned and easily replaced with another hapless female.

In addition, Austen demonstrates that the danger of Wickham's rakishness lies in his ability to move throughout society without detection. He remains more harmful than Smith's Delamere because he does not broadcast his intentions nor does he violate any woman's will. Instead, Wickham succeeds in performing as a gentleman because he is stealthy, civil, and attractive to women, even Elizabeth, with whom readers associate good sense and judgment. Additionally, looking back to Cohen's definition of pleasing as an art, Wickham possesses an acute capacity to please, which ultimately aids him in his benign seduction. This form of pleasing is manipulative and makes him both a seemingly safe gentleman and a reliable informant on Darcy; thus Darcy, whose precarious reputation in Meryton is not pleasing, is silenced. Ultimately, Darcy is unable to reveal the full extent of Wickham's debauchery, despite the ample evidence he possesses, without further impunity. As Austen characterizes the rake, he possesses more spatial freedom: he need not linger outside garden doors or other marginal spaces that

unwittingly snare heroines. Instead, Wickham struts into every ballroom, attends every card party and social event save for the Netherfield Ball, which he even boasted that he would attend.

Tim Fulford argues that it is the militia that makes Wickham dangerous, suggesting that the obscurity of his position and the social mobility gained from the militia allows him to be “all appearance” (170). While Fulford is sympathetic to Wickham’s fellow officers, many of whom were duped by Wickham’s true character, he suggests that the anonymity of the militia allows “gentlemanliness [that] is often no deeper than a shiny uniform” (171). But Wickham’s ability to deceive and to be “all appearance, “as Fulford suggests, is not an affinity that belongs exclusively to the militia or even other professions.<sup>27</sup> Many of the rakish characters that we encounter in Austen’s texts—John Willoughby, Henry Crawford, Frank Churchill—use their elevated social positions and leisurely mobility to act out unacceptable behaviors.<sup>28</sup>

Wickham’s approach to the militia clearly outlines the difference between the terms of a profession and the tenets of work. As Fulford suggests, Wickham may outfit himself in the pomp and ceremony of his position, but he does not perform work or even demonstrate loyalty to the profession, choosing to abandon his post to elope with Lydia (and evade his creditors). It is here that Austen draws a finer distinction between work and a profession: work is performed; an occupation or a profession is a social position. While Wickham has a position in the militia, his actions demonstrate that he does not have special duties or other forms of work in his profession. His greed, his debt, his

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<sup>27</sup> For more on Victorian attitudes toward soldiers, see Susan Walton, *Imagining Soldiers and Fathers in the Mid-Victorian Era*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010. 23-96.

<sup>28</sup> Fulford’s argument also seems to set a bad precedence with regards to military professions. Admittedly, Fulford does not address the Navy but many of the criticisms about Wickham and the militia’s ease of mobility echo Sir Walter Elliot’s later misgivings about the Navy.

schemes—all of these characteristics Austen depicts as the outcomes of an idle life. The performance of work, particularly in front of the heroine or validated through authoritative channels of communication, becomes necessary in the face of Wickham's deceit, if for no other reason than to authorize that work is accomplished.<sup>29</sup>

What Austen sees in the working gentleman is his aptitude to thrive and flourish in new environments, specifically in the company of women and people outside of his rank. To be a gentleman, Austen contends, is to execute an elaborate performance that demands constant action and manners. But ultimately she admires the ease with which the performance and the man's actions coincide. Whereas Wickham is unmasked for the rake that he is, Darcy is revealed to be a much more sympathetic and evolved gentleman; both men throughout the novel have been codified in terms that impede a deeper understanding of their actions or characters.

While one might detect certain snobbery in Austen's relationship to work, specifically to families in trade or other forms of agrarian or industrial work, often the characters that voice such concerns appear unlikable or misled.<sup>30</sup> And there are several moments in *Pride and Prejudice* where we see Mr. Gardiner, a man of trade in Cheapside, demonstrate gentlemanly attitudes not seen in other privileged or more traditionally elevated men.<sup>31</sup> But Darcy's adaptability remains the most crucial part of his

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<sup>29</sup>In *Jane Austen's Civilized Women*, Enit Karafili Steiner notes, "[Austen's] fiction also bring to the fore how our conceptions of moral autonomy and universal rights are affected by the concealment of the private sphere and the marginalization of women"(13). I would argue that because women's access to the lives of men is so decidedly limited, rakes like Wickham (and by extension, Willoughby and Henry Crawford) are able to construct plans and schemes that are by their very nature secret from women and, therefore, destructive.

<sup>30</sup> The Bingley sisters certainly represent this group with their hypocritical snobbery towards those in trade. However, Austen also presents a similar attitude towards trade and work in Emma's comments about Robert Martin. Emma later revises her understanding of work, but the Bingley sisters continue to write trade out of the history of their position.

<sup>31</sup> For more on Mr. Gardiner, see Michael Kramp, *Disciplining Love: Austen and the Modern Man*

genteel masculinity. Neither Wickham nor Bingley change their behavior throughout the novel; it is Darcy who consistently and self-consciously alters his behavior. In this way, he embodies the malleable masculinity that has the potential to forward women's positions and to adapt itself to a shifting class system. What Austen gains in this construction of Darcy's gentility as independent and self-regulating, is an early demonstration of how merit-based actions inform identity. In this way, we see early strains of Captain Wentworth's naval meritocracy in Darcy's performance. But more importantly, we see how Darcy is able to adapt both his behavior and his social position to expand the parameters of his work. If the gentry landowner is a position that proves just as valuable for constructing identity as a profession does, then Darcy rearticulates a role for himself and other gentry landowners in a burgeoning meritocracy.

As previously mentioned, Darcy's entrance into Meryton society demonstrates both how ill at ease he is in new environments and how disagreeably received he is by the community at large. The novel makes it clear that Darcy does not possess the easy manners of someone like Bingley or Wickham, but from the first, Darcy is associated with Pemberley, its abstract presence showcasing the esteem of his wealth and elevated status: "... and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with [Bingley]"(215). Just as Austen correlates Darcy's handsomeness with his wealth, here too she blurs Darcy's behavior with the description of his estate. As the episode continues, his "large estate in Derbyshire" is shown not to possess enough charm to excuse Darcy's behavior or to make him an appealing companion. More than explaining the reception of Darcy's poor behavior, this passage illuminates the ease with which

Pemberley and Darcy are inexplicably intertwined. Throughout the novel, Darcy's marriage, his position, his wealth cannot be separated from his grand estate; its presence in the background informs both Darcy's sense of his own superiority and, therefore, engenders his continual dislike.

There is little doubt that Pemberley is the crowning jewel of Austen's many fictional and elegant estates. In a canon that boasts such places as Rosings Park, Hartfield, and Kellynch-hall, the description of Pemberley borders on the sublime. Its idyllic and beautiful setting clearly characterizes it as a supreme manifestation of the English country home:

It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and back by a ridge of high woody hills;--and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into greater, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. (342)

The narrator and Elizabeth seem to delight in Pemberley's innate beauty and lack of artifice, the word "natural" appearing several times throughout the description alongside phrases like "without any artificial appearance" and "nor falsely adorned." From this description, Pemberley appears to rise out of the very ground of Derbyshire, a part of the countryside, seamlessly a part of the land itself. The ease with which Pemberley situates itself in the natural surroundings speaks to its position as both a family seat and a significant representation of English identity. As mentioned in my previous chapter, Austen inherits from Smith the use of the English country home (or the ancestral estate) as a physical representation of one's identity. For Darcy and others throughout the novel, Pemberley, even in its most abstract forms, informs his masculinity, his Englishness, and his position. While Pemberley is described in terms of its aesthetics throughout the novel,



it is in this description where Pemberley and Darcy's identity coalesces into a singular compound. Darcy is Pemberley, and Pemberley, in its natural beauty and stately appearance, is Darcy.

This combined identity is also clear in Lady Catherine de Bourgh's later irate question to Elizabeth: "Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted?"(404). Just as Lady Catherine has adorned her house with glazed windows and lavishly furnished morning rooms, so too has she shored up her own aristocratic identity and prevented the pollution of her family line by interlopers like Elizabeth. Her concern appears to be less for her nephew's happiness or an ill-conceived match and more for the Wickhams and Mrs. Bennets who inevitably will contaminate Pemberley. Through marriage to Elizabeth, it is Darcy and, thereby, Pemberley that are to be "polluted;" it is his identity as owner, as Pemberley's most elite delegate, that makes him capable of being tainted by an inferior alliance with Elizabeth. While Darcy does not take such an extreme position, he too possesses a similar superior attitude with regards to Elizabeth's connections. For much of the novel, Darcy shares the same prejudices as his aunt, thinking that his estate holds the power to make others tolerate his poor behavior without consequence.

This behavior that Darcy perpetuates throughout the novel hinges on Pemberley's prestige in the background. For Darcy, the ownership of Pemberley excuses his behavior and makes it unnecessary for him to work at courtship or any other form of social nicety: to own Pemberley gives Darcy a bloated sense of his own worth. This is evidenced in Darcy's initial proposal to Elizabeth, where he appears befuddled and confused by Elizabeth's rejection. Always in the background is Pemberley, there to prop up his social position and to make him a desirable match. Ultimately, to have a woman of Elizabeth's

status reject him and, therefore, for her to reject Pemberley seems unthinkable. Although Elizabeth's refusal is a decidedly severe blow to his pride, more than that, her rejection illuminates the inadequacy of Pemberley and all its trappings to obtain Darcy a wife. For Darcy, who has only understood his identity through the large windows at Pemberley, he cannot fathom how his behavior would somehow affect his marital prospects with Elizabeth. This is not to say that we should or even can completely remove our understanding of Darcy from Pemberley. Just as we are unable to do with Elizabeth's own financial situation, the material and economic realities of Pemberley situate and inform Darcy's relationship to his wealth and social position.<sup>32</sup>

And to detach Darcy from Pemberley would be both a severe reaction and would take away from our understanding of the estate as the site of his work. This project does not seek to separate Darcy from Pemberley but to interrogate the tangled relationship between the English county estate and masculinity. It is necessary, however, to put Darcy's relationship with Pemberley into context, to understand that while Pemberley may be a part of his identity, it need not define every facet of his identity. This is one of the questions that he faces throughout the novel. Without Pemberley and all wealth and social cache that it informs, what does Darcy—the man, the gentleman—have to offer a woman?

Austen, in equal doses, both emphasizes Pemberley's importance and deemphasizes its value. In the case of Darcy's identity, Pemberley is a constant factor

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<sup>32</sup> In "'The Future of Pemberley': Emma Tennant, the 'Classic Progression' and Literary Trespassing," Rebecca Munford claims that Pemberley holds a sacred place in Austen's canon, and that many sequel writers "trespass" on Pemberley's grounds as a way of re-appropriating the estate for Elizabeth (61). While this seems like a reasonable and feminist goal from sequel writers, I would suggest that Darcy's power to mold and remold the estate into a valuable site of work is not done without Elizabeth's help, or at least, not done without her prompting.

that helps us recognize his behavior and to a degree, condone it. But like the many other estates in Austen's canon, Pemberley means nothing and holds no value unless properly managed. Over and over in Austen's texts, we have seen the impact of men who are unable to manage their estates and in the process these men leave women vulnerable to debt, displacement, and other financial concerns. While Austen's novels do not advocate marrying for money, she, and her heroines, privilege men who know how to manage their wealth and by extension, manage their estate. In the past, this desire for a financially savvy husband has been read as indicative of the heroine's mercenary intentions. And *Pride and Prejudice's* heroine does not escape this treatment. Many critics point out that Elizabeth's altered attitude towards Darcy seems rather timely, that seeing Pemberley's vast wealth affects her perspective of Darcy because it shows her the many financial benefits that come from being Mrs. Darcy. However, it hardly seems unfair to tie Elizabeth's altered prejudice to Pemberley's glory. For the most part, while the Elizabeth may sarcastically suggest that the grand estate changes her mind, she knows Pemberley and its many advantages from very early on in the novel. Aside from the reports that circulate upon Darcy's entrance into the Meryton ballroom, Darcy and Elizabeth's short acquaintance at Netherfield Park further clarifies Pemberley's charms. During an evening of cards and reading, Elizabeth overhears a conversation between Caroline Bingley and Darcy about Pemberley's library:

“What a delightful library you have at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy!”

“It out to be good,” he replied, “it has been the work of many generations.”

“And then you have added so much to it yourself, you are always buying books.”

“I cannot comprehend the neglect of a family library in such days as these.”

“Neglect! I am sure you neglect nothing that can add to the beauties of that noble place. Charles, when you build *your* house, I wish it may be half as delightful as Pemberley....”

Elizabeth was so much caught by what passed, as to leave her very little attention for her book; and soon laying it wholly aside, she drew near the card table, and stationed herself between Mr. Bingley and his eldest sister, to observe the game.(230)

Karen Newman argues that Elizabeth, while not directly a social climber, is not wholly unaffected by Darcy's finances. Additionally, Newman uses the same passage as

evidence of Elizabeth's interest in Pemberley and, by extension, Darcy's wealth:

"Clearly, the motivation for Elizabeth's action is not to 'observe the game', but to hear more on the subject of Darcy's estate...No one, particularly no woman who is

economically dependent, not *even* Elizabeth, whom we admire, is unmoved by

property"(698). While Newman defines the complicated and messy relationship between

Austen's heroines and property, it is notable that the only details that Elizabeth hears are

of Pemberley's "delightful library." This exchange does little to detail more than a few

scant aspects of Pemberley, with Caroline merely echoing the general opinion of

Pemberley as a "noble place."

In truth, the conversation does more to demonstrate Darcy's love for Pemberley than to enunciate and elaborate on the estate's beauty. Beneath Caroline Bingley's thinly veiled flirtation, we see how Darcy's attention towards Pemberley extends to the cultivation of its library; a detail that speaks to the meticulous care that Darcy takes of the estate. There is something of a history to his home, a sense that he belongs there, among the things he has helped to collect and build. By understanding this scene as an explanation of Darcy's care for the estate rather than as a mere description of Pemberley, we are able to see Elizabeth's actions through more than a mercenary lens. In this way, Elizabeth's early rejection provides a powerful symbol of Darcy's need to show, not tell her of the work done at Pemberley. Certainly, as Newman suggests, we cannot divorce

her from the material means of her situation, but it is worth noting that had Elizabeth intended to better her situation through marriage she had two previous proposals, one of which was from Darcy bartering his large estate for her hand. I would argue that Elizabeth's altered attitude does not signify her partiality for capital; instead, it demonstrates the importance of Pemberley as the site of Darcy's work. Whereas Darcy's wealth and Pemberley's prestige are constant factors throughout the novel, it is Darcy and Elizabeth's attitudes toward each other that change. Therefore, it seems appropriate for us to conclude that Elizabeth's mind is not altered by the grandness of Pemberley, instead she is impressed by how Darcy acts at Pemberley.

Even after seeing the estate, Elizabeth remains skeptical of her ability to fit into the role as Pemberley's mistress. Despite being dazzled by Pemberley's beauty, Elizabeth quickly realizes its limitations with regards to her family: " 'But no'—recollecting herself—that could never be: my uncle and aunt would have been lost to me: I should not have been allowed to invite them'"(342). In her role as mistress of Pemberley, Elizabeth realizes that it would mean cutting off her family to suit a particular vision of herself and the estate. Her Cheapside relations would be both bittersweet reminders of her past and unwelcome guests in her future.

Surely, one might argue that until actually seeing Pemberley in all its glory there was not enough evidence to drive home Elizabeth's luck in gaining Darcy's love, yet Elizabeth is astonished and embarrassed to see Darcy at Pemberley, "She had instinctively turned away; but stopping on his approach, received his compliments with an embarrassment impossible to be overcome"(Austen 163). All she desires throughout their accidental meeting at Pemberley is to escape from Darcy, the one man who could

make her mistress of the lavish estate. However, it is Darcy's treatment of her relations more than any indications of Pemberley's greatness that overturns her previous opinion of him. While one might argue that Darcy is more comfortable as a host in his own estate, the polite and utterly charming interaction he has with Elizabeth's relations differs greatly from his first engagement with any new society in the past. The consideration and kindness that Darcy shows towards Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner astonishes both Elizabeth and her family. To be sure, they are certainly the tolerable and less silly members of Elizabeth's family, but surprisingly their lower social position does not negatively affect Darcy's behavior. Instead, he treats her family with such sincerity and kindness that Mrs. Gardiner even wonders if this is the same Mr. Darcy. The change wrought in Darcy at this point in the novel unbraids the previous opinion of Darcy as snobbish and awkward. The Gardiners prove to be a litmus test of Darcy's altered sensibilities, an interaction that also finds Elizabeth's opinions changing.

We can conclude, therefore, that Pemberley does not appeal to Elizabeth because of the many pounds and pence it represents. Instead Pemberley represents Darcy's independence and worthiness. The estate does not remain a literal symbol of his and his family's wealth, rather it represents the place that Darcy works on and deserves to keep. Without seeing Darcy in his environment and hearing of the work he does to make the estate great, Elizabeth has little knowledge of what work and tasks that Darcy actually does as owner of the estate. In addition, Darcy's home represents responsibility and safety, something that Longbourn no longer holds. Elizabeth and Austen's readers lose the value of the location, of the estate itself if we just see it as a symbol of Darcy's social position rather than a site of work. Pemberley becomes a home, a place that Darcy lives

and maintains, rather than merely the manifestation of his own identity wrought in stone. Austen does this not to take away from Pemberley's beauty or importance, but to put its place into context. We see Darcy broaden our understanding of work, and Pemberley becomes both his home and his place of employment. He works to make the estate productive, no longer using its grandeur as an excuse for his improper behavior.

Austen challenges us to see the multiple avenues of value inherent in Pemberley. Obviously, like many family seats, the estate possesses financial, historical, and social value, but it also holds value as a site of Darcy's profession. While we might be unable to identify Darcy's work through the same professional and occupational lenses as the other men in this study, the distinctive makers of location, both of Darcy's masculinity and of his English identity, signify Pemberley's value as a site of work. For Austen, a worthy and successful landowner aspires to use property as a professional place of performance. Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Darcy comes to understand that his place within the evolving system of power and work is not fixed; rather his position demands work to shore up his place and secure his role in a burgeoning future.

*The Gentleman and the Navy, Part II: Jane Austen's Persuasion*

I conclude my discussion of Austen with an ending. Specifically, I ask the same question that has troubled readers since *Persuasion's* publication in 1818: where do Anne and Wentworth live after they marry? Like other courtship novelists of her time, Austen concludes each of her six novels with the happy marriage of the hero and heroine, and within the boundaries of the courtship plot, the place where the couple will reside after the wedding is often a crucial and well-known piece of information. As we might expect, there is finality in each of these conclusions, Austen creating a solid and spatial foundation that directly correlates to the couple's entrance into marriage. In this way, conclusions that attach the couple to estates like Pemberley or Hartfield provide a figurative space for connubial bliss that by building the marriage on a structural and finite site transcends the margins of the text. However, Austen's final novel *Persuasion* lacks this same finale, providing neither a specific location or relationship to place that could be used to identify Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth's future home.

Film adaptations since the mid-1990s have taken dramatic license with the hazy ending of *Persuasion*. In the 1995 adaptation with Amanda Root and Ciarán Hinds, the film concludes with the new Mrs. Wentworth onboard a naval ship, literally at the helm beside her husband. However, the later 2007 adaptation has a similarly imaginative conclusion, with Anne Elliot unceremoniously placed back at Kellynch-hall as Mrs. Wentworth, not as Lady Elliot. This conclusion, as unlikely and unrealistic as it appears, assumes that Wentworth's self-made wealth has enabled him to buy her father's



aristocratic estate.<sup>33</sup> While my project does not delve into film theory nor does it engage with the concepts surrounding the adaptation of Austen's texts for the big or small screen, these two films in their approach to *Persuasion*'s conclusion demonstrate the uncomfortable and problematic nature with which screenwriters, and by extension readers, perceive the ending of the novel. As Austen's only novel with this uncertain and untethered conclusion, *Persuasion*'s ending remains a notable alteration to her previous novelistic models. Slippery terms of location may be an important theme in the novel: the text begins when the Elliots are forced to retrench in Bath to live out several years of genteel moderation while their estate is rented to strangers. Although the situation of the Elliots remains a significant catalyst of the plot's trajectory and a staunch example of the consequences of excess, we have seen similar, if less extreme, circumstances with the Bennets' entailed Longbourn and in the Dashwoods' exile from Norland Park. However, in spite of the fluctuating sense of home that permeates *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility*, both novels manage to conclude with very specific marital locations for Elizabeth, Jane, Elinor, and Marianne. That Austen neglects to incorporate the same ties to place for Anne and Wentworth in the novel's conclusion speaks to a revised sense of how location and fixed relationships to home impact the Navy's self-made men.

In her previous novels, Austen uses the English country estate, even its smaller manifestations in the parish rectory or other localized places, as the site on which she builds and sustains a secure location for marriage. The county estate provides stability, permanence, and, in several ways, establishes a logistical, albeit patriarchal, solution to

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<sup>33</sup> I briefly discuss Austen's film adaptations in my conclusion. Also see John Wiltshire, *Recreating Jane Austen*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001; Juliette Wells, *Everybody's Jane: Austen in the Popular Imagination*. London: Continuum, 2011; Linda Troost and Syre Greenfield. *Jane Austen in Hollywood*. Lexington, KY: Kentucky UP, 2000.

where the heroine will reside in her new state of identity. And men are no less bound to this same system of identity sharing that uses the county estate as an extension of self. As I discussed in my previous chapter, Austen may critique and revise Darcy's relationship to Pemberley, but it remains central to the development of his work, and later, to Elizabeth's acceptance of his second proposal. However, in *Persuasion*, Captain Wentworth has no such estate to bolster his identity or to provide a site for his work. While we know that he has a "handsome fortune," he does not use his money to purchase an estate or to lease a place of residence during the course of the novel, instead choosing to stay with his siblings or the Harvilles (1107).<sup>34</sup> Even in the space of such a mobile novel, we move from Somerset to Lyme to Bath, and Wentworth's past is no more accessible than the ships that he captained and the friends or family members with whom he stays. Like Charlotte Smith's novels and her speedy output, many critics have argued that the decidedly different feel and texture of *Persuasion* is because of its placement in Austen's canon. As her last complete novel published post-humously, *Persuasion* was written while in Austen's final sick years and therefore, readers argue that this, along with its alternative conclusion, suggests that the novel lacks the editorial touch that often made Austen's texts so shrewd and well crafted. However, such an assumption seems unfair to Austen and does little to explain the nuanced elements of character development, plot structure, and overall tone that permeate the text.

Ultimately, in spite of *Persuasion*'s revisions or lack thereof, Wentworth and Anne's ending provides a lens through which we can examine how masculinity and the professions interact with the county estate. As I have previously argued, the shift away

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<sup>34</sup> In 2002, Deirdre LeFay suggested that Wentworth's prize money might be as much as £1.25 million (29). By 2013 conversion standards, the number would be around \$2 million dollars.

from the aristocracy and its hold on genteel masculinity has illuminated how country estates provide important sites of work and act as products of work, not merely static and empty touchstones of inheritance and wealth retention. But from Darcy to Wentworth, Austen openly attacks the idle aristocracy and the trivial landed-gentry by bestowing the heroine, a figure who was sought after by future inheritors like Mr. Elliot and Charles Musgrove, on the professional man of no estate. Whereas Austen has demonstrated how Darcy earns his continued place at Pemberley through work, Wentworth's prior work dictates that he need not have a location to work towards, nor does that impact how he is viewed or perceived by the heroine. The country estate may stand as the preverbal stomping ground of gentlemanly identity, but Austen suggests that given a meritocratic profession, its usefulness fades. Ultimately, Austen sees the fluctuation of masculinity towards more professional and trade-based forms, and therefore, privileges and molds this form of masculinity into a gentleman.

Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Dickens will later grapple with the restrictions and constructs of being a gentleman, but Austen forwards a successful and sustainable model, a model that does not depend on an attachment to place. By detaching the gentleman from an exclusively place-based identity, Austen makes the gentleman more performative, more illustrative, and therefore, more accessible. This manifests in what Austen presents in *Persuasion* as a new form of masculinity: the self-made gentleman. In Wentworth and his portrayal of the self-made gentleman, Austen unites industry and civility, masculinity and work, and the gentleman with the professions. Self-made masculinity and genteel masculinity, once two separate and distinct forms of manliness, converge in *Persuasion* in order to deploy an alternative form of masculinity that

streamlines chivalry into meritocratic pursuits. More than Darcy or Godolphin, Captain Wentworth represents how a strong sense of occupation, without the attachment or trappings of aristocratic or gentrified masculinity, can be used to inform the gentleman. Austen validates later forms of masculinity through her adherence to a gentlemanly identity in men of the professions, particularly in her final hero. In so doing, Austen aligns herself with the transformative and future power of masculinity that is merit-based rather than inherited.

The terms “self-made” and “gentleman” seem unlikely companions in Austen’s world of wealthy aristocrats and landed elite, and might conjure up images of Dickens’ Pip or other characters who struggle to become gentlemen. Yet the union of these two terms in Austen’s final novel illuminates an unexamined area in the relationship between masculinity and capital. The exclusive definition of the term gentleman, particularly in its separation from all that relates to the gritty nature of work and finance, speaks to how this distinct form of masculinity exists in elevated and idle circles. One might argue that, traditionally, the self-made man is an American construct, or at least his presence has been widely publicized in American cultural myths that tell of hard work creating market success. As Michael Kimmel notes in *Manhood in America*, “success in the market, individual achievement, mobility, wealth” are demanded of the self-made man (23). Kimmel defines a self-made man who embodies the democratic freedom and class mobility necessary to thrive in a meritocracy. There is an underlying assumption, even in Austen’s earlier texts, that a direct relationship with capital negates all aspects of gentlemanly identity. We see this in *Pride and Prejudice* with Sir Charles Lucas, who gives up his trade in Meryton to live out a knightly life in the same town and with the

Bingley sisters whose snobbish attitude towards Jane and Elizabeth's Cheapside relations belies their family's own uneasy origins in trade.

Additionally, Austen's texts include many men who would appear to embody the self-made man. While men like William Price and, at least initially, Mr. Wickham are in the Navy or militia, Austen's previous accounts of self-made men differ markedly from Kimmel's definition because, unlike Wentworth or Admiral Croft, these men benefit from the privileges of their aristocratic relatives or gentrified friends. Austen's portrait of her class system and the interaction between members of her society showcases how many of her self-made men reach positions of power through the influence of their elevated family or friends. Moreover, an aristocratic or gentry benefactor pollutes the independent sense of the self-made man, and, ultimately, does not allow Austen to separate meritocratic masculinity from that of second sons or other men whose proximity to powerful people overrides their merits.

But *Persuasion* promotes a truer definition of Kimmel's self-made man: a man who ascends to a position of affluence through hard work. From very early in the text, Austen establishes that Wentworth prospers from his work, not from the favor of others. This is evidenced by Lady Russell's comments about Wentworth at the beginning of his courtship with Anne: "[Wentworth] had nothing but himself to recommend him, and no hopes of attaining affluence, but in the chances of a most uncertain profession, and no connexions to secure even his further rise in that profession"(1106). While we may see latent snobbery in Lady Russell's appraisal, her points about Wentworth's "uncertain profession" in the Navy and his lack of "connexions" only serve to strengthen his position as a capable self-made man. As the narrative plays out, not only does Wentworth

quickly gain employment without the benefit of powerful connections, but his position has made him very wealthy: “He had, very soon after their engagement ceased, got employ; and all he had told [Anne] would follow, had taken place. He had distinguished himself, and early gained the other step in rank—and must now by successive captures, have made a handsome fortune” (1107). This description, with its strong and evocative action verbs— “distinguished,” “gained,” “made”—suggests that he was neither an idle figure in the pursuit of financial success, nor was he without an independent sense of ambition that has only rewarded him. Likewise, John Peck notes that Austen’s description of Wentworth’s success here sounds more like that of a self-made businessman than a naval officer (45). In revising this form of professional masculinity and centralizing the Navy, *Persuasion* signals the definitive rise of the self-made man.

Sir Walter later adds his own objections to Lady Russell’s, claiming that the Navy allows men to rise too far, too fast and in the process of rising, makes them unwelcome sights for those in polite society: “First, as bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction and raising men to honours which their fathers or grandfathers never dreamt of; secondly, as it cuts up a man’s youth and vigor most horribly”(1102). Vain and self-important, we can see how Sir Walter might find the Navy, with its meritocracy and its conditions, a distasteful endeavor. However, if we read Lady Russell and Sir Walter’s comments, hers from before Wentworth leaves and his after Wentworth returns, we can see how the position and the utility of the Navy has altered to accommodate meritocratic values. Between Lady Russell’s initial snobbery and Sir Walter’s later conceit, Austen shifts the Navy from “an uncertain profession” to a position that raises “persons of obscure birth into undue distinction.” These aristocrats still may mark the Navy as an

inferior profession, but the distinction holds that the Navy is no longer just ornamental employment for second sons of the gentry.

Additionally, this change in the Navy's perspective serves to further distinguish Wentworth and promote his position as a self-made man. While Lady Russell objects to Wentworth's overconfidence and hyperbolic ambitions, his ability to rise within the ranks of his profession enables him to make his position into an avenue for wealth and affluence, something that other men are unable to do.<sup>35</sup> More specifically, Wentworth's ability to enact this change in his own life, without the assistance of others, makes him a revolutionary hero worthy of Anne and the success that he garners.

However, Austen's previous texts beg us to consider what wealth, particularly one's self-made wealth, has to do with being a gentleman. In the past, Austen has constructed a buffer between one's avenues of wealth production and one's identity as a gentleman, choosing to promote the landed gentry over the professional classes.

But Wentworth and his rise to the status of self-made man problematizes this assertion. In my previous chapter, I argue that Mr. Darcy's ability to construct and deconstruct his own gentlemanly performance through work elevates Pemberley from a site of inheritance to a site of work, rendering the county estate a stage for genteel masculine performance. Often Darcy's "gentleman-like manner" is defined by what it was not; his rude and awkward actions are not the same as Mr. Bingley's, nor are his actions pleasing to Elizabeth or other characters in the novel. However, in *Persuasion* the parameters of a gentleman are equally in flux and rely even more on the production of

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<sup>35</sup> In *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire*, Jonathan Rutherford notes that the Navy's imperial mission was often couched in terms of a game or games(19). Financial success, Rutherford contends, indicated that a man had triumphed. In this way, we can see Wentworth accomplishing this imperial goal.

work. Early in the text, upon hearing about his new tenants' previous attachment to Somerset, Sir Walter quibbles with Mr. Shepard's description of country curate Mr. Wentworth as a gentleman: "You misled me by the term *gentleman*. I thought you were speaking of some man of property"(1104, Austen's italics). While Sir Walter remains confused by other people's use of the term 'gentleman,' the apparent irony of the statement makes it difficult to take Sir Walter's definition of the gentleman seriously. As a man whose own property has recently been leased to pay off a mountain of debt, Sir Walter's claim to the title of gentleman seems just as problematic as he claims a nobody like Mr. Wentworth's is. Significantly, Sir Walter's use of property as the criterion for determining a gentleman represents a limited and stilted view of masculinity, a category in which as an exiled aristocrat no longer fits. Even Wentworth, whom the text defines as a superior and genteel character, does not have the property necessary to pass muster for what Sir Walter considers a gentleman, nor does Wentworth aspire to fill this absence. What we gain from Austen's juxtaposition of Wentworth, a gentleman without property, and Sir Walter, a seeming gentleman who must lease his property, is a discourse on the decline of country estate. What Austen manages to construct through Wentworth and with many of the other naval men in *Persuasion* is a form of the gentleman that is constructed outside the boundaries of this unstable, and as the Elliots retrenchment shows, unreliable site of identity-making.

If we consider the country estate as a site where one may develop, grow, and ultimately validate one's gendered social identity, in Wentworth's separation from such paths of identity-making, Austen emphasizes how Wentworth's gentlemanly performance is validated by the work that he has done in the Navy. While Wentworth may lack



Darcy's property, the location of his gentlemanly identity becomes embodied rather than outwardly defined. In so doing, Austen redefines the place of the gentleman as outside the realm of aristocratic or gentrified forms of masculinity, thereby making the gentleman a more accessible identity to other men who might not have the means to purchase property. However, in *Persuasion*, Austen does not merely remove the gentleman from his traditional place in landed social classes nor does she simply separate the self-made man from a benefactor. Instead Austen unites these two processes into a new form of masculinity: the self-made gentleman. My project classifies the self-made gentleman's definition as twofold: self-made in his ability to construct and maintain his social destiny, and a gentleman in his ability to perform socially accepted practices of masculinity. One might be tempted to argue that the term itself should be separate, that we define Wentworth as both a self-made man and as a gentleman. However, to separate the term loses the transgressive power that it holds in its unity. In past models, the terms "self-made" and "gentleman" appeared as antonyms because avenues of wealth production seem to taint the title of the gentleman. The term "self-made gentleman" compounds the two distinct identities in order to understand the nature of Wentworth's production of work with his performance of masculinity. In addition, the convergence of the self-made gentleman exposes the fragile constructs of both the self-made man and the gentleman. By combining characteristics of the self-made man with the gentleman, we see how Austen enhances the background of the self-made man and expands access to the gentleman.

In a text that boasts a bevy of occupations from lawyers to a variety of naval officers, it is necessary to differentiate what work and the action of work entails versus

the façade of work within a specific profession. I argue throughout this project that work becomes an integral part of the performance of being a gentleman, that the action of work validates one's performance of masculinity. However, other texts in this project may easily trace the gentleman to a specific gentry or aristocratic position. While this does not deflate Captain Godolphin or Mr. Darcy's work, it does provide a substantial foundation for their gentlemanly identity and a background history that does much to foreground and define how they might acquire the education necessary to perform the practices of the gentleman. With Wentworth and the other naval officers in *Persuasion*, lacking such a foundation in aristocratic or gentry roots, the British Navy and the work they perform in their role as officers stands as their only means of becoming a gentleman, self-made or not. They must work because they have no other means of providing for their families and few other outlets for masculine performance.

According to Jocelyn Harris, Austen's Royal Navy promotes the ideal British manliness and uses imperial terms to negotiate a lost sense of identity at home. For Harris, in this juxtaposition with the idle aristocracy, Wentworth and the other men's "naval chivalric values" restores national identity (201). By contrast, Audrey Hawkrige argues that the naval men of *Persuasion* seem far too passive for their occupation:

Indeed Admiral Croft and the three captains—Wentworth, Harville, and Benwick—do seem very peaceable (one of them admittedly too much so), but surely that is part of being a gentleman. More fire is on show in Jane's seafaring characters when they are lower down on the social ladder—the more lowly, the fierier, in fact. (94)

While Hawkrige makes a point that gentlemanly behavior might inhibit *Persuasion's* men in their professional development, what she equates as fire is closer to vulgarity, something which is evident in her use of the elder William Price one such 'fierier' man.

Indeed, Hawkrige assumes that naval masculinity requires a rough and harsh approach to the performance, leaving little room for Harris's "naval chivalric values" as seen in men like Wentworth, Harville, or Benwick. Hawkrige later goes on to question Captain Benwick's masculinity: "Captain Benwick, an emotional, easily depressed gentleman whose love of poetry would not in itself detract from his masculinity if only there were any other evidence that he is manly enough to have ever taken command of a ship" (135). While Hawkrige admits that Wentworth and Harville are convincing as naval captains, she sees Benwick feminized by the text due to his love for poetry and the grief over his deceased fiancée. This assumes a singular and hegemonic approach to gender performance that cuts naval masculinity down to an authoritative and patriarchal force without the benefit of diversity of feeling.

One of the most crucial differences between the disposition of Fanny Price's father and the naval officers of *Persuasion* is their claim to the title of gentleman. No one would presume to call the elder William Price a gentleman, but Wentworth, Harville, and Benwick all perform the duties—chivalry, civility, care towards women—of such an identity. It is also necessary to consider that were the officers vulgar instead of calm and stately, their authority might be easily compromised on board. Additionally, Hawkrige's argument speaks to a correlation between one's performance of the gentleman and one's ability to rise in the ranks in the Navy. If the naval officers are to rise in their profession as Wentworth and the others have done, then they must prove that they can be a part of more elevated society. This refined sense of self and manly comportment combats the negative opinions held by men like Sir Walter while also providing the officers with an opportunity for professional development. For naval officers who are turned out on shore

and separated from their ships, the performance of the gentleman remains a crucial touchstone in the absence of professional sites of work. By the time that Wentworth and the other officers enter the novel, the action of their professional success has already happened; their present social positions and wealth are products of previous work.

The self-made gentleman, however, uses his professional work to make his wealth and raise his social position, something that manifests in his professional dedication and his success within it. Wentworth's accomplishments establish two parts of the gentleman's work: that to have an occupation does not guarantee that one will work and also that to be a gentleman, one's work must be productive rather than consumptive. As to the gentleman's work as productive, we often see the opposite approach. In Thorstein Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), he argues that to be a gentleman requires a life of leisure: "Refined tastes, manners, and habits of life are useful evidence of gentility, because good breeding requires time, application, and expense, and can therefore not be compassed by those whose time and energy are taken up with work"(49). However, as we see with Wentworth's performance of the self-made gentleman, the background of such gentility requires work to properly elevate and maintain it, and therefore, the work of being a gentleman usurps the identity as one of leisure. While Veblen argues that one cannot be both self-made in its definition of work and a gentleman in its definition of leisure, I would argue that the self-made gentleman unites these two identities under the banner of performance. Both require the same time and application of which Veblen speaks, so too are both forms of work that overlap in terms of performance.

What we are left with in Wentworth's self-made gentleman is a sense of work, a process and set of procedures which perform a certain societal function. Ultimately, Austen concludes that the self-made gentleman is better suited to be a gentleman because his work within the realm of capital demands the same time and energy that the former gentleman's good breeding requires. We can easily transfer Wentworth's success in his occupation to his success at being a gentleman. More importantly, Veblen extends the leisure class's consumption to the ownership of property: that to possess and consume property leads the gentleman of leisure to possess and consume women. In the history of marriage, we certainly see legal, literary, and other illustrations of men equating women with property. And for Austen and her contemporaries, issues of women's property and ownership are realistic concerns. The gentleman of leisure's desire to consume, not merely to possess, remains an important element of Veblen's argument. Leisure gives the gentleman time to consume goods, property, and people, and indicates his power and prestige.

From the first moment he opens the text by reading his own history in the *Baronetage*, Sir Walter personifies Veblen's gentleman of leisure. Austen describes him as a character that possesses "vanity of person and of situation," which he uses to justify the extravagant lifestyle and lack of economy that has put his family in danger of financial ruin (1091). Tim Fulford ties Sir Walter's vanity to the Navy's rise, suggesting that Sir Walter's idleness make him unable to protect British manhood and by extension, British soil (188). This is apparent when he is faced with the consequences of his mounting debt: "It had not been possible for him to spend less; he had done nothing but what Sir Walter Elliot was imperiously called on to do....[Sir Walter and Elizabeth]were

neither of them able to devise any means of lessening their expenses without compromising their dignity or relinquishing their comforts in a way not to be borne”(1097). Unable to identify any measures that might stop his excess, Sir Walter must lease his estate and retrench to Bath. This passage demonstrates how thoroughly the expectations of a baronet permeate Sir Walter’s performance of the gentleman. He remains helpless and uncertain as to how he, as a baronet and owner of Kellynch-hall, can simultaneously be a gentleman without consuming and spending. The Veblenian “time, application, and expense” of his refined manners quickly erode his possessions and his ability to reproduce capital that may adequately sustain his consumption. And as the Elliots entrench to Bath, we see how Sir Walter’s consumption has eaten away at the forms of safety and security that the estate provides. If the county estate is meant to provide stability to the upper classes, then Sir Walter paradoxically undercuts the value of his estate by consuming like a gentleman of leisure.

Mr. Elliot’s form of consumption, however, has more destructive effects. Unlike his foppish uncle who exiles his family, Mr. Elliot’s form of consumption centers on both women and property, each in turn informing the other. When Mr. Elliot enters the text, he is a widower; his late wife’s wealth has already benefited his situation and saved him from an unnecessary attachment to Sir Walter. But this wealth does little to stem Mr. Elliot’s desire for Kellynch-hall or the women who might help him secure it. Like many of the other rakes in Austen’s canon, Mr. Elliot’s malicious intentions are indiscernible, even to the heroine. Anne remarks that Mr. Elliot’s reserved nature makes it difficult to decipher his motives or determine his character: “Mr. Elliot was rational, discreet, polished—but he was not open. There was never any burst of feeling, any warmth of

indignation or delight, at the evil or good of others. This, to Anne, was a decided imperfection” (1179). Olivia Murphy points out that Lady Russell, whose high opinion of Mr. Elliot is well known, approves of the match because he lives up to her “notions of gentlemanly perfection on an outmoded ideal”(34). If Lady Russell’s interference in Anne and Wentworth’s earlier courtship demonstrates anything, it is that she lacks the ability to properly judge men. Mr. Elliot may live up to her standard of a gentleman and be from the proper rank, but his actions throughout the text are anything but gentlemanly. By promising Mrs. Clay a place as his mistress, he frees himself to court Anne and crush any burgeoning relationship between his uncle and Mrs. Clay. The consumption of women—Anne, Mrs. Clay, and even Mrs. Smith—overlaps with his desire to consume property; courting Anne and Mrs. Clay simultaneously holds his place as Sir Walter’s heir, and streamlines his possession of Kellynch-hall. The actions he takes and the performance he acts of the charming and affable gentleman are bound up with his desire to consume property and women. Sarah Ailwood, although examining Willoughby and Edward Ferrars, suggests that without gainful employment or a profession, Austen’s men must find other forms of distraction. This often results in poor and manipulative behavior towards women (68). While Anne remains ignorant of the full extent of Mr. Elliot’s actions, her unease about his too practiced manners and evasive answers demonstrate how Veblen’s gentleman of leisure can enact schemes because he has too much time available.

Further instances of Mr. Elliot’s consumption appear in his role as the executor of the late Mr. Smith’s will. While the beleaguered widow Mrs. Smith consistently implores Mr. Elliot to take action with regards to her West Indies property and livelihood, he

refuses to perform any deed on her behalf. The nature of Mrs. Smith's position as a poor and disabled woman prevents her from doing anything to alleviate her situation. More than even promoting himself as a viable suitor for Anne and Mrs. Clay, Mr. Elliot, in refusing to help Mrs. Smith, displays an exercise of his power that illustrates a greater truth about his character. In his assigned role as executor (he is also an esquire), he holds the fate of her fortune and future in his hands, and does nothing to alleviate her troubles. While Anne and Mrs. Smith rightly chalk Mr. Elliot's motives up to mere cold-heartedness and cruelty, by denying Mrs. Smith access to her husband's property, he continues to maintain possession of it, even if he does not benefit from the property. The consumption of women and property for the gentleman of leisure originates from a place of power, a need to dominate and make others submit to his will. In hindsight, many of Mr. Elliot's other actions in the text have very clear motives: he courts Mrs. Clay to thwart his uncle and he courts Anne to gain a wife. But the malicious apathy acted on Mrs. Smith seems groundless, particularly given how little influence he would need to exert in securing her finances. The possession of this property, particularly property that might merely be useless to him or Mrs. Smith, displays a certain level of cruelty, something that colors Anne's vision of Mr. Elliot. As Austen casts Mr. Elliot in the unusual role of executor of the late Mr. Smith's, we can see how she draws new parallels between how power and property play out in interpersonal relationships, something that is often overlooked outside of the realm of familial or marital relations. Mr. Elliot's failure to discharge actions that would help Mrs. Smith reveals the callousness of his character, something that designates his actions as consumptive rather than productive. Like his overindulgent uncle whose actions force his family to flee to Bath, we see Mr.



Elliot's actions as part of his role as heir to Kellynch-hall, unconcerned with how he affects the other women in the text.

One might also argue for another possibility: Mrs. Smith's property is also the only property that Mr. Elliot has control over, therefore, his is concerned with keeping it within his grasp. Even with his future prospects as Sir Walter's heir, the text gives little illustration of what his late wife's wealth has helped him acquire. While his London life remains a mystery, like Captain Wentworth, Mr. Elliot stays with his friends while in Bath and at an inn in Lyme. Additionally, Mrs. Smith's narrative illustrates how Mr. Elliot's newfound love of the baronetcy speaks to an altered relationship to property. By reuniting with his relations in Bath, Mr. Elliot preserves his family line and secures his place as the next Sir Walter, but, in the process, he manages to overpower nearly all the women in the text.<sup>36</sup> His manners make him dangerous because they hide a callous disregard for the basic tenets of the gentleman, first of which is a concern for the welfare of women. Ultimately, Mr. Elliot illustrates how Veblen's gentleman of leisure manipulates women under his control.

If Mr. Elliot, like his uncle, embodies Veblen's gentleman of leisure, then Captain Wentworth, who eventually puts to rights Mrs. Smith's property, is his productive foil. Here, too, Austen's use of property as the site of masculinity seems a significant one. While women's access to property remains an important question throughout Austen's canon, by aligning Anne and Mrs. Smith with Captain Wentworth, Austen posits that the self-made gentleman is the best solution to women's limited access.

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<sup>36</sup> By the end of the novel, Mr. Elliot has misused Elizabeth Elliot twice. Although an unsympathetic character, she, like Anne and Mrs. Clay, has been misled in Mr. Elliot's affections.

In terms of colonialism, the West Indies as the location of Mrs. Smith's property forces us to consider the source of Wentworth's production and wealth. While the novel supports Wentworth's rise in the ranks and "handsome fortune" as products of his hard work, Austen remains vague about the type of work that he does to earn such success. Ruth Perry notes that what Austen persuades the reader to believe about colonization and what Wentworth takes part in are two different things: "One is never encouraged to feel that Wentworth's success is at the expense of labor and property of colonized peoples even though the nation project in which he proves his worth and makes his fortune depends on extracting wealth from the natural resources of colonized territories and the labor of captive peoples"(246). Although Perry contends that Austen is never overt with any connection between Wentworth and colonialism, the duties of his profession, in addition to its execution in the margins of the text leave room to us to consider his more explicit place in the colonial project. Gabrielle R.V. White, however, suggests that Austen's vagueness supports a favorable approach to Wentworth's role in colonization. Looking to British history, White notes that by the end of the novel, the Royal Navy enforced the Slave Trade Act of 1807<sup>37</sup>, which mandated high fines (nearly £100 per slave) and charged violators with piracy (73). Both Perry and White illuminate the ambiguities inherent in understanding Wentworth's position within the greater British colonial project; but without further evidence of Wentworth's colonial interactions, it is difficult to decipher his role in the colonial enterprise. Admittedly, as an agent of the British Empire, we can assume that Wentworth was offered numerous opportunities for wealth collection and consumption at the expense of colonized people. Nevertheless, if

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<sup>37</sup> The Slave Trade Act of 1807 did not abolish slavery, but it did outlaw the capture and trade of slaves within the British Empire, essentially undercutting the production of slavery if not eliminating the entire practice.

Wentworth does gain his “handsome fortune” from colonized peoples, he appears to consume little throughout the text; he does not use his wealth to buy fine carriages or a tenancy in any home or estate, and he does not purchase any goods which might indicate an pattern of consumption brought on by colonial interaction.

While both Perry and White’s arguments share a favorable view of Wentworth’s relationship to colonization, his naval work does not speak to the role he plays in rectifying Mrs. Smith’s property. Far from marginal, the work Wentworth perform in reconciling Mrs. Smith with her property remains a crucial part of his gentlemanly identity. As Wentworth helps with Mrs. Smith’s property, something that she had previously hoped Mr. Elliot would accomplish, we can assume that it is Wentworth’s gender as a man that rectifies the situation and not his role as a naval captain. The work that Wentworth executes for Mrs. Smith facilitates her acquisition of the property; he does not own the property himself, nor does he control or manage it. I do not make this distinction to hedge Wentworth’s place in a colonial system, but to emphasize how property ownership is not his ultimate goal. As land and the country estate play significant roles in the construction of rank and identity, Wentworth, being partitioned from ownership of either Mrs. Smith’s West Indies estate or other property in England, preserves an essential part of his identity as self-made and landless. Tracing his identity and constructing it outside of the physical boundaries of property, Austen allows Wentworth to map his masculinity in terms of his profession, not like Sir Walter or Mr. Elliot, inside a land-based system.

As evidenced by Mrs. Smith’s estate and by the Elliots’ retreat to Bath, property remains constantly in flux throughout *Persuasion*. Even Kellynch-hall, the Elliots’ family

seat and a supposedly secure site of aristocratic power, remains contested in the novel: Sir Walter owns it, Mr. Elliot will inherit it, but the Crofts actually inhabit the estate. What is at issue in Austen's commentary on place and property is how ineffectual discourses of identity—the gentleman, the baronet, the heir presumptive—are when constructed on unstable sites. The country estate, which is meant to provide security, loses its power for definition when the inheritors of the estate are unworthy like the Elliots. Julia Prewitt Brown has shown that the real inheritance of England belongs to people like the Crofts and Anne and Wentworth: “William Elliot will inherit the improvised Kellynch, but that does not matter. The future is in the hands of Anne and Wentworth, as the present is in the hands of the Crofts, that almost comic national couple whose defence of England abroad makes them the rightful inheritors of Kellynch”(132). According to Brown, Kellynch-hall becomes the battleground for England, and, therefore, its ownership does not equate with its possession.

The Crofts' time at Kellynch-hall, however, seems short-lived. A few months into the lease, they quickly join the exiled Elliots at Bath to ease Admiral Croft's gout.<sup>38</sup> In *Northanger Abbey*, Mr. Allen's gout serves a similar function, moving Catherine Morland to Bath as the Allens' guest. In *Persuasion*, all roads seem to lead to Bath. By the end of the novel, most of the Musgroves along Captains Wentworth and Harville have also joined the Crofts at Bath. But the Admiral's diagnosis and the Crofts move to Bath remains a curious part of the plot. While it serves to situate the Crofts and Wentworth in Anne's life at Bath, the Crofts' abandonment of Kellynch seems like a peculiar aspect of their possession. Even Sir Walter remains befuddled by the Crofts' retreat to Bath,

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<sup>38</sup> In Austen's era, Bath was a well-known retreat famous for the healing powers of its water and even in Austen's canon, its treatment for gout.

although he quickly uses the opportunity to reassert his title and superior position: “ ‘I suspect,’ said Sir Walter coolly, ‘that Admiral Croft will be best known in Bath as the renter of Kellynch-hall ’”(1182). Despite the Admiral’s naval accomplishments and their extensive society in Bath, Sir Walter asserts that the Admiral will be “best known” for the lease of Kellynch. Similar to how he constructs his relationship to Kellynch, Sir Walter identifies the Crofts through their relationship to place. His dwindling ownership of Kellynch and the fragility of the baronetcy has demanded that Sir Walter reassert the connection between his identity and his estate; this lens, which has allowed Sir Walter to read the Crofts as nothing more than tenants of Kellynch, is the lens through which he views his own identity. An early instance of this same self-reading happens when Sir Walter studies his entry in the *Baronetage*. Almost like reading a conduct book, the *Baronetage* allows Sir Walter to reaffirm his place by reading about who he is and what he possesses. Therefore, the Crofts abandonment of the estate for Bath, the same location that Sir Walter has been forced to retreat from, unsettles his sense of personal value because it forces him to confront his own displacement.

Susan Fraiman argues that Austen’s target in *Persuasion* is the “dying but still haughty aristocracy” (814). As Fraiman points out, Sir Walter, Lady Russell, and the Elliots, save for Anne, illustrate unfounded snobbery in the face of great change and the uprooted foundation of their aristocratic identity. Whereas Fraiman rightly sees the aristocracy ‘dying’ in *Persuasion*, I would argue that in its state of dying, it also manages to decay. By decay, I mean that the aristocracy erodes, decomposes, and most importantly, loses its overall identity slowly. Illustrations of this decay can be found in the lines of inheritance and marriage: Sir Walter’s stillborn son and his unmarried

daughters. Also, Mr. Elliot's neglectful behavior separates him from Sir Walter's identity, despite sharing the same name.

But, ultimately, the tenancy of Kellynch represents the most definitive symbol that the Elliots' previous way of life no longer proves fruitful. From the description of the estate, we gather that aside from the family's move and a badly needed refurbishment of the drawing room, the estate's structure does not suffer from physical neglect. There are no crumbling towers, no rotten structures, or poorly kept grounds as one might expect on a debt-ridden estate like Kellynch. Indeed, from the evidence, we could argue that part of Sir Walter's debt must have been accrued through the estate's maintenance. Sir Walter's tenuous hold on power and status vanishes when faced with Admiral Croft's exemplary career and, more importantly, his ready money. And while Kellynch-hall's passage into the hands of the Crofts demonstrates defeat for the aristocracy and victory for the Navy, the Crofts' possession of the estate is not without consequence. Kellynch bears no structural manifestations of its corrosion but the estate, the last powerful symbol of a dying aristocracy, retains a sense of decay.

It is not, as Sir Walter contends, the Crofts who taint Kellynch-hall, it is instead Kellynch-hall that taints them. Up until their emergence into Bath society, the Crofts faithfully fulfill their lease and live exclusively at Kellynch. Unlike Wentworth or the other families in the neighborhood, the Crofts do not visit Lyme with the party nor do they visit Mrs. Croft's brother in Shropshire. But gout, particularly the sudden onset of the disease, prompts the Crofts to leave Kellynch and thereby, moves their home from Kellynch to Bath. During Austen's era, gout was often attributed to an extravagant lifestyle, one full of rich food and leisure. While one might argue that the Admiral's time

onboard a ship has affected his overall health, there is little evidence suggesting that the Admiral is anything but hearty and hale. What changes is the Crofts' location, particularly their move from a small cabin onboard a ship to a large estate in the country. One might be inclined to think the Admiral's gout coincidental or merely plot development, but the his onset of gout parallels his possession of Kellynch.

Gout, a painful inflammation of the joints that can result in blisters and broken skin on the extremities, reads as a corporeal manifestation of Kellynch's aristocratic decay. The erosion of flesh, the breakdown of cells, and the excess waste that causes the affliction parallels the aristocracy's waning power and decayed sense of self. As we see in *Pride and Prejudice's* early correlation between Mr. Darcy's fine features and his estate in Derbyshire, Austen exploits the relationship between the body and property in order to demonstrate how physical places define gender and social identities, or in the Admiral's case, how place may infect a person with a problematic and harmful identity.

Paul Morrison has coined term "domestic carcereal" to define an environment that thrives on the subversive binaries of "here/there, now/then, light/dark, open/closed" (2). Domestic carcerals, Morrison indicates, are most dangerous to women, particularly Catherine Morland, who reads the space of Northanger Abbey as both a safe haven of patriarchal control and as a gothic space plagued with danger and confinement. However, Morrison contends, the main problem with domestic carcerals is their powerful adherence to both danger and visibility. Like the many Gothic heroines that Catherine has read of in Anne Radcliffe's canon, she discovers that Northanger Abbey's confinement lies in its openness. While Catherine may experience Gothic horrors, real or imagined, the hazards of Northanger Abbey are in the psychological realm, not the physical. She may see and

feel the telltale characteristics of the domestic carceral, but her physical body is not assaulted by any of the terrors she experiences or imagines.

Morrison sees Catherine's experience as an exclusively female one, which Henry Tilney uses his masculine logic to unbraids. But unlike *Northanger Abbey*, Kellynch-hall does not mark itself as a Gothic space; the lack of outward decay implies that the estate's horrors might lie within the confines of its pristine walls. Admittedly, there is little evidence to suggest that *Persuasion* belongs in the Gothic canon, or that like *Northanger Abbey*, we may read the text as an extension of Austen's parody of the Gothic. But what *Persuasion* takes from the Gothic tradition and from other texts in Austen's canon is the ability of place to sustain and inform identity. As we have seen in Austen's other novels, country estates become sites of identity-making, places that act as symbolic pillars of power and thus infuse one's identity with dimensions of prestige. Like *Northanger Abbey*'s heroine, Admiral Croft inhabits in a place that is not his, where he is a guest, albeit a paying one (although I would argue that Catherine's imagined fortune has the same effect). But for Admiral Croft and Catherine Morland inhabiting someone else's home has consequences; the horror and psychological implications of the domestic threatens their sense of self. Imprisonment, rape, murder, and other Gothic tropes are physical threats that Catherine does not experience but which repeatedly occupy her mind.

However, men have no such limitations with regards to place. Admiral Croft may purchase the tenancy of Kellynch and legally inhabit the space without fear of removal or even confinement within its walls. Yet the Admiral does not escape Kellynch unscathed, the effects of his time spent at the estate manifests in physical ailment that, like Sir



Walter before, sends him to Bath. In the Admiral's retirement to Bath, we see the marked difference between the experience of confinement and space. While the Admiral possesses the means and power to leave Kellynch, Catherine Morland does not possess those same for removing herself from Northanger Abbey. We often assume that the Gothic remains more dangerous for women because of the enclosure of the body in a space, but Austen uses Admiral Croft to illuminate that the Gothic or even spaces that are infused with Gothic-like sensibilities also infect men's bodies. The Admiral's gout remains symptomatic of Kellynch-hall's infection and the tainted power of the aristocracy. Domestic spaces, especially those that prop up power, remain dangerous for both men and women. Such limited structures of power as seen in the country estate do not properly execute the meritocratic project that defines the Navy or Wentworth's performance of masculinity.

At the heart of the Admiral's gout is the value of property and by default, the value of the domestic sphere. Despite the entanglements of gout and health, the Crofts' retirement to Bath illustrates a clear message: property and place are interchangeable. After meeting Anne on the street in Bath, Admiral Croft declares how comfortable he and Mrs. Croft are in their Gay-street lodgings: "[we] shut ourselves in our lodgings, and draw in our chairs, and are as snug as if we were at Kellynch, ay, or as we used to be even at North Yarmouth or Deal." (1184). Kellynch, North Yarmouth, Bath, or Deal, all possess the same level of appeal and luxury for the Crofts. What remains a central part of Sir Walter's identity does very little to define the Crofts. Kellynch is merely another place to retire, another home to inhabit. In the hands of Admiral Croft, the estate

devolves from an exalted seat of power to an ordinary accommodation. At the conclusion of the novel, Kellynch is left to languish in the periphery, no longer a part of the courtship plot or understood as the heroine's final home, but rather abandoned to an uncertain future under the care of Sir Walter and later Mr. Elliot. Whereas control of the estate and thereby control of England was once a powerful theme in Austen's novels, the control of Kellynch does not become the endgame for either the Crofts or Wentworth.

Wentworth's property, or lack thereof, is understood in terms of what it is not. Despite his fortune, he does not buy property, nor does he seek to establish himself anywhere within the confines of England or the novel. Like the Crofts, place seems to be interchangeable for Wentworth—Kellynch, Lyme, Bath, Shropshire, *The Asp*—he seems to bumble from place to place with little regard for its value or the embedded image that each place may cultivate. Place becomes for Wentworth a mere means of movement, adventure, and occupation. He uses place not as a way to define his identity but as a way to perform his masculinity. The shift from Darcy's performance of gender in *Pride and Prejudice* hinges on the absence of estate possessing the same significance as an estate. We must read Wentworth's lack of estate in the same manner that we read Darcy's Pemberley: as a localized place of employment and performative masculinity. Instead of Pemberley or any other place-based location, Wentworth prefers to write his identity through relationships and the Navy. His masculinity does not have an established home; therefore, he must consistently rewrite and redefine his

relationship to place. Wentworth's stalwart indifference here contrasts sharply with the Elliots, who think of nothing but their own situation at Kellynch or the prestige to be gained from their lodgings in Bath. As the Elliots' means of self-definition shifts throughout the text, they are unable to adapt to the terms of their exile.

The Crofts and Wentworth demonstrate flexibility of character through interchangeability of property. Their willingness to adapt to a variety of places, situations, and people demonstrates the malleable identity they have forged through the Navy. With the genesis of the British Empire and the dispersion of British identity to previously unknown parts of the world, Wentworth illuminates the useful practicality of an embodied rather than inhabited identity. Graham Dawson argues that in the colonial project, the two identities of the soldier and the Englishman reinforce each other and eventually construct the national identity. As Dawson characterizes this sense of national masculinity, a real man "would henceforth be defined and recognized as one who was prepared to fight (and if necessary, to sacrifice his life) for Queen, Country and Empire"(2). While Dawson focuses on the soldier's masculine identity in relation to the Victorian Empire, Wentworth's masculinity, coupled with his position as a naval captain, makes him a predecessor to the soldier heroes that filter into the British imagination in the Victorian era. However, to take Dawson's argument further, I would argue that Wentworth also uses the lack of place to establish his identity outside the parameters of the antiquated form of masculinity that we see

in Sir Walter and Mr. Elliot. Their sense of masculinity has long segregated the wealthy from the poor, aristocrats from the professions or other gainful employment, and leisure from work. The Elliots and their sense of English identity remain firmly lodged at Kellynch, and coupled with the decay of their behavior and estates, Wentworth's masculinity emerges superior.

Wentworth eschews colonial property and the capital that he acquires abroad does not seem to buy anything in England: no carriages, fine horses, or estates. Whereas Darcy initially relies upon Pemberley to acquire Elizabeth's hand in marriage, Wentworth does possess the same enticements. And like Elizabeth Bennet, it seems too easy to attribute mercenary intentions to Anne. This reading of the text, however, oversimplifies the discussion of property and courtship that Austen uses to alter and reformulate the courtship model. Furthermore, while Wentworth has acquired wealth and promotions through work, he has little to offer Anne with regards to property or security. On the other hand, Mr. Elliot also has a fortune acquired through marriage and remains heir of her childhood home. It seems as if the more mercenary act would be to accept Mr. Elliot's proposal, a proposal that comes before Wentworth even confesses his love. According to Cyndy Hendershot, it is Wentworth's contact with the larger imperial world which makes him a more attractive partner: "As a result of imperial expansion, British male sexuality frequently becomes exoticized and eroticized as both appealing and dangerously Other"(165). While Hendershot focuses on Wentworth's place in a colonial system, the work that

Wentworth does in promoting the colonial project also forwards his masculinity and establishes him as a self-made gentleman. We could also extend the Otherness of the colonial identity to the self-made gentleman. What Austen fetishizes with regards to Wentworth is not merely his colonial interaction but his meritocratic image, his place outside of the staunch social system that dooms Anne, like her elder sister Elizabeth and the rest of the Elliots, to an uncertain future.

Wentworth's power lies both in his transgressive place in Austen's canon and his novelty within the larger catalog of women's literature. As *Persuasion's* narrator judges other men by the force of Wentworth's civility, Austen differentiates Wentworth from the other naval officers and previous professional men of her canon: "though not equaling Captain Wentworth in manners, was a perfect gentleman" (1145). While this study has seen the development of Wentworth from Darcy, there are more commonalities between Smith's Captain Godolphin and Austen's Captain Wentworth.<sup>39</sup> Obviously both men share the same rank and profession in the Navy and make their fortune from their profession at sea. Additionally, both Wentworth and Godolphin court and eventually marry heroines who have been exiled from their homes due to mistakes of birth or mismanagement.

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<sup>39</sup> For more on Captain Godolphin, see Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism: The Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 1998.27-50.

However, the most significant parallel manifests itself in their performance of gentlemanly behavior. Despite prevailing attitudes in both novels as to the suitability of naval men as company for respectable society, Smith and Austen establish that Wentworth and Godolphin manage to avoid the more unsavory qualities of their profession. Both Wentworth and Godolphin present exemplary and lauded models of gentlemanly behavior in spite of prolonged isolation from women.

While both men benefit from self-made wealth and advancing positions, with Godolphin the prestige gained from his position in the Navy does not eclipse his role as second son in an aristocratic family. In spite of his hard work in the Navy, he still remains son of a lord and brother to an aristocrat, a man who could just as easily be brother to Austen's Sir Walter. The access that Godolphin has to structures of power within England trumps his work-hewn identity abroad. In addition, the casual link between his aristocratic background and his role as a gentleman muddies the work done to shore up his gentlemanly identity. The expectations of a second son, while not nearly as grand or various, account for many of Godolphin's chivalric qualities. The advantages he receives because of his place in the aristocracy undermine his performance-based identity as a gentleman. With Wentworth, Austen presents no evidence of a childhood among elevated circumstances. From what we know of his family, they are perfectly respectable people (even if Sir Walter does not agree), with his sister married to an Admiral and his brother a parson. Austen also does not present Wentworth as

someone who has had access to the type of education that would polish one for a life among the elite, which is something that Smith makes abundantly clear in Godolphin's character. The overlap in their professions does lead one to think Godolphin and Wentworth are similar models of masculinity, but Godolphin's background within the upper crust of English society already establishes him as a gentleman by outdated models. On the other hand, Wentworth's exclusion from such hierarchies legitimizes his variation of masculine performance and galvanizes his rise to power, wealth, and prestige through work.

Additionally, Godolphin's relationship to property, both purchased and inherited, showcases continued allegiance to his aristocratic roots. While Godolphin's home on the Isle of Wight stands as a pillar of meritocratic accomplishment and an overture of his naval prowess, the purchase of property literally buys into the system by which land makes identity. Just as many critics read the country estate and its ownership as a manifestation of England's destiny, so too can we read Godolphin's own island home as such. He may be partially segmented from the aristocratic system because of his birth order but Godolphin legitimizes his place in England through ownership of property and eventually, through marriage to Emmeline.

Godolphin's experience establishes one truth: English land fortifies English identity, something that informs both Emmeline and Godolphin's lives. Had *Emmeline* concluded with the hero and heroine's retirement to the Isle of Wight, it likely would have been read as a powerful commentary on meritocracy.

Instead Godolphin abandons his self-made estate for a more legitimate place on land, a home that situates him right back in the bosom of the aristocracy.

According to Anne Frey, one of *Persuasion's* most important contributions lies in its definition between Englishness and Britishness. Frey sees Austen's rejection of the aristocracy as a rejection of the English model of nation. Therefore,

Wentworth's inclusion in the British Empire and his contact with the increasingly global world promotes a British identity founded on difference rather than a shared past (215). For my purposes, land becomes one of the markers of a shared past, and one of the markers of an outdated English identity. Whereas English land bolsters English identity for both Mr. Darcy and Captain Godolphin, Wentworth's British identity demands work over land. Indeed, Wentworth does not want any of the trappings of aristocratic or gentrified property. He neither reclaims Kellynch-hall for Anne, nor does he claim any place for himself.

Certainly, the thirty years between the novels, in addition to the altered image of the Navy and the colonial project, accounts for the different experiences of Godolphin and Wentworth. But Wentworth remains on the cusp of change whereas Godolphin, despite his self-made wealth and work-cultivated power, remains woefully loyal to his land-based roots. He has not forgotten his former place in an aristocratic system and clings to its form of identity making; therefore, he cannot transition to a performance-based form of masculinity.

While we can still read performative aspects into Godolphin's masculinity, it is Wentworth who emerges as the forerunner of a landless and meritocratic masculinity. We



see Wentworth fulfill the promise of Godolphin's original plans; he has the means to purchase a similar estate on the Isle of Wight, but he chooses to negotiate his place outside of land, even taking the daughter of an aristocrat with him. His performance of work and separation from landed forms of identity-making paves the way for industrial masculinity as we later see in the novels of Elizabeth Gaskell. But between Darcy and industrial masculinity, Austen gives us a successful profession, both transgressive in its ability to make wealth and yet civilized enough to flourish in her society. Wentworth inhabits the borderlands between an idle past and a working future, his masculinity exists in the space between the gentleman and the industrial worker, and his capital stands between self-built and ancestral symbols of power. Through Anne's marriage to Wentworth, Austen aligns herself and her readers with the self-made gentleman, depending on work to barter new approaches to gender. Through work, the gentleman exercises the practices and behaviors of his role. The uncertainty of property illuminated in *Persuasion* demonstrates the uselessness of location to define the self, particularly for masculinity that thrives in the newly open environment of the British Empire. While Austen envisions the devolution of a stratified class system, one that allows men to engage in all varieties of professional work and keep their sense of gentlemanly identity, Wentworth's naval masculinity evolves beyond Darcy's gentrified work and previews later industrial work done by Mr. Thornton. Whereas Mr. Darcy emphasizes land as a place of employment and a way to situate identity, Wentworth previews Gaskell's urban landscapes and lower classes by dismantling the landed system.

The Gentleman and Marlborough Mills: Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

And what did I find? An accurate daguerreotyped portrait of a commonplace face; a carefully fenced, highly cultivated garden, with neat borders and delicate flowers; but no glance of bright vivid physiognomy, no open country, no fresh air, no blue hill, no bonny breck, I should hardly like to live with her ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses.

-Charlotte Brontë in an 1848 letter to George Henry Lewes

Taking aim at Jane Austen's "delicate" and "cultivated" Southern places, Charlotte Brontë illuminates a particular truth: that Austen's world of regency gentility seems a far distance off from the industrial cities, burned estates, and working-class characters that populate later Victorian women's novels. And while we cannot presume that Elizabeth Gaskell, despite her role as Charlotte Brontë's biographer and a close friend of the author, shared this same prejudice, her affiliation with the Brontës has stymied inquiry into the literary interconnections between Austen and Gaskell. Although there are strains of Austen's influence in Gaskell's other texts, *North and South* (1855) draws some of the most distinct parallels to Austen's canon. Scholars have often remarked upon the similarities between *North and South* and *Pride and Prejudice*. Janine Barchas argues that *North and South* reads as one of the first adaptations of Austen's text, with Gaskell subverting our gender expectations by casting Margaret Hale as the proud Mr. Darcy (53). Rosemarie Bodenheimer suggests that *North and South*, because of the emotional conflict and class tension between Margaret and Mr. Thornton, is merely a version of *Pride and Prejudice* set in an industrial milieu (241). It is in this industrial environment where I see Gaskell expand the definition of the gentleman, turning Austen's self-made gentleman into the Northern gentleman.

As Austen's final vision of masculinity depicts professional masculinity as the ultimate avenue through which gender and social improvement are constructed,

Thornton's position in industry and, therefore, commerce-based trade seemingly excludes him from being a gentleman.<sup>40</sup> Once Margaret, who acts as the consummate Southern heroine, enters the North, her sense of what it means to be English and how men act must shift in order to accommodate a Northern set of values and performance. Set as the novel is within a larger conversation with Austen's novel, Gaskell illustrates how Margaret's limited notions of class and gender cannot appreciate Thornton's form of genteel masculinity because it differs from the Southern and professional forms that she has come to recognize as hegemonically gentlemanly. Jane Mansfield makes a useful distinction which illuminates how Northern and Southern forms of masculinity evolve in relation to one another: "The Regency period values a particular form of masculinity that was linked to gentlemanly behaviour. In contrast, northern masculinity and values stood in opposition to the outmoded world of an earlier, weakened and degenerate Regency elite"(36). The other novels of this project claim the gentleman as a Southern construct, and, for Mansfield, the North's emphasis on hardened, work-based, and occasionally brutish models of masculinity was developed to displace the ineffectual gentleman of the South. To some degree, this is also true of *North and South*. My project hypothesizes that Thornton, who represents an accessible, instructive, and progressive model of Northern masculinity, upsets this regional difference by transporting the gentleman to the North and inserting him into an industrial workplace. While professional men often evolve from the landed classes, by using the means and economics of Northern industry, Gaskell turns

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<sup>40</sup> In the BBC film adaptation of *North and South* (2004), Margaret is first introduced to Mr. Thornton after he shamelessly beats an employee for smoking in the Mill. The scene is purely a construction of the screenwriter's imagination; this event or any similar demonstrations of Mr. Thornton's violence do not take place in the novel. Critics and viewers have taken umbrage at this scene as it merely serves to cast Thornton as an uncivilized and temperamental brute. In particular, Sarah Wootton, who I later cite, sees this dangerous characterization exploiting and capitalizing on Thornton's Byronic elements (32).

Milton into a site of dignified work. Therefore, Marlborough Mills and other industrial spaces function in the same manner as the country estate and the naval ship: as locations where masculine and genteel work is performed. Ultimately, Thornton, who prevails as both a gentleman and a regional hero, frees Northern masculinity from its brutish implications while, simultaneously, ridding the gentleman of further idleness. In this way, the rustic sensibilities and the sophisticated urbanity that previous women writers of the South have constructed in order to uphold the Southern gentleman do not prevent Gaskell from mapping this revised Northern masculinity onto the gentleman. Instead Milton and Thornton act as dominant forms of regionality and masculinity, reforming the gentleman outside of strictly Southern boundaries and promoting a Northern ideology that approximates genteel masculinity within both a meritocratic and industrial system.

But like the aristocracy and other landed forms of identity that Smith and Austen critique earlier, Gaskell sees Southern professional men becoming impotent models of masculinity. Margaret's father and brother Fredrick, who both lose their professional identities, are unable to negotiate new avenues for their gentlemanly performance. According to Margaret Hunt, these professional men (again, often from the South), in their ties to the gentry, were able to establish positions that are on par with their elite brethren (19). So while Austen opens the gentleman up to more meritocratic pursuits, there is still a corrupted sense of masculinity that underpins the professions.

However, trade and industry do not possess the same affiliation with the gentry. In the tumultuous nature of Thornton's work, Gaskell illuminates how genteel masculinity that is constructed around forms of labor and production has provided an alternative location of renewal and rebirth for men in crisis. Industrial and trade-based

masculinities, attached as they are to an independent and merit-based system, are more liable to experience this crisis without it completely eroding or disintegrating their identity. For men like Thornton, who lose and gain fortunes, crisis is a constant economic reality. John Tosh has suggested that for men who are involved in economically volatile industries (like the cotton trade), the “loss of masculine self-respect” was as much a hazard as the loss of one’s income (45). And while I would agree that Thornton’s masculinity is disheartened by the loss of his business, he, unlike Mr. Hale or Fredrick, is not crippled by this change in situation. Through the capitalist system, the Northern gentleman is able to reinvent himself. Therefore, we can conclude that Thornton’s work and his performance of the self-made gentleman provides a more accurate portrait of middle-class values.

But it is exactly the industrial and capitalist aspects of Thornton’s work that prevents Margaret from seeing the necessity, viability, and overall malleability of his masculinity. In broadening the parameters of the gentleman’s place in the middle class, Thornton’s masculinity embodies a work-hewn identity more than the professional and occasionally idle manifestations of the gentleman that we still see across various levels of class. Region as part of the construction of industrial masculinity emphasizes the North, not the South, as the birthplace of accessible forms of the gentleman. In this way, Thornton provides a sustained construction of the self-made gentleman: a man whose regional and masculine identity overlap in order to create a position of civility. Gaskell’s use of the North, not an estate or even a landless sea as we see in Austen or previous women writers’ texts, attaches the self-made gentleman to region, not to merely specific markers of place. Austen negotiates new boundaries for a burgeoning middle class in

*Persuasion*, but it is Gaskell who sees it come to fruition in *North and South* and flourish in Thornton's character. By reconciling industrial masculinity with the gentleman, Gaskell elevates meritocratic values and legitimizes new types of work.

As the title implies, *North and South* is nothing if not concerned with regional identity. This manifests throughout the novel in the relationship between Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton. As *North and South* continues, it is Margaret Hale who emerges as a decidedly Austenian heroine. The daughter of a clergyman and a heroine from the South, Margaret could very well be the child of Elinor Dashwood and Edward Ferrars or Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney. Her start in a world of country cottages and London townhouses, places that exude Austenian influence, mark out Southern forms of femininity and models of class. But when her father's dissent from the Church of England forces the family into exile, the Hales uproot from Helstone, their country parsonage in the South to the urban and industrial Milton in the North.

It is in Milton that the Austenian heroine is forced to confront Gaskell's world. Mr. Thornton, the embattled hero of the text, is the first man that Margaret encounters upon her arrival to Milton. During their first conversation in the sitting room of a Milton hotel, Margaret's manner forces Thornton to understand how his masculinity is understood by the a southern heroine: "she looked on him with cold indifference, taking him, he thought, in his irritation, he told himself he was—a great rough fellow, with not a grace or a refinement about him"(71). Thornton rightly infers from Margaret's behavior that she finds his person, occupation, and his overall character unattractive. Later, when Margaret and her father describe Mr. Thornton to absented Mrs. Hale, Margaret echoes Thornton's internal monologue, describing him as "not quite a gentleman; but that is to

be expected”(73). After her father defends Thornton’s appearance, Margaret concedes that Thornton is neither “vulgar nor common,” but “altogether a man who seems made for his niche”(73).

These initial impressions—of him as a rough and ungentlemanly character and she as cold and beautiful—continue to dominate Margaret and Thornton’s understandings of each other. As her father’s pupil, Mr. Thornton is constantly inside her home. While she feels some sense of gratitude for the company that he offers her father and his kindness towards her ill mother, her opinions of him as a proud and unlikable man are further exasperated by the strike Marlborough Mills. In a dramatic turn of events, Margaret saves Thornton from a mob of strikers’ by shielding him with her body. This gesture, witnessed by his household and workers, prompts Thornton to propose both as a way of securing the woman that he loves and thus protecting her from others’ gossip. Outraged and offended by his interference and romantic assumptions, Margaret coolly rejects him.

Her mother’s eventual death, however, prompts the return of Margaret’s exiled brother Fredrick, and after the funeral, he is involved in a late night scuffle at the train station. Thornton, who steps in and protects her reputation from wagging tongues, later saves Margaret, scandalously present at the event, from further inquiry and public exposure. While his position at Marlborough Mills was once prosperous, the falling price of cotton has forced him to close the Mill. By the end of the novel, Margaret’s father has died as has her wealthy godfather Mr. Bell (Thornton’s former landlord), leaving her an independent heiress and the owner of Marlborough Mills. In an attempt to help Thornton reestablish his business, Margaret proposes to loan him some money as an act of love.

Overwhelmed and still desperately in love with her, Thornton shows her a dried rose that he has plucked from the hedgerows at Helstone. The novel ends with their engagement.

As significant and pervasive as the similarities between *North and South* and *Pride and Prejudice* are, I would suggest that *North and South* opens with another set of Austen characters: Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth. Edith Shaw and Captain Lennox may bear little resemblance to the hero and heroine of Austen's final novel *Persuasion*, but the imminent marriage of the couple begins *North and South* at the conclusion of another's story and, in this case, at the very end of Austen's canon. Surely, it is not an uncommon trope in women's literature for the plot to open with a marriage—after all, *Emma* begins in the evening following the nuptials of Miss Taylor and Mr. Weston—yet here Edith and Captain Lennox's nuptials emphasize an ongoing connection between the novel and *Persuasion*, locating *North and South*, at least initially, within the framework of an Austen novel. But Gaskell quickly upsets Austen's framework and revises the uneasy bridge between *Persuasion*'s conclusion and *North and South*'s beginning by exposing how these next generation inheritors of Anne and Wentworth's meritocratic future are ill prepared for the burdens of their profession.

This beginning Austenian outline does not to suggest that men like Thornton are absent from Austen's canon; indeed, comparable representations appear in characters like Robert Martin in *Emma* or Mr. Gardiner in *Pride and Prejudice*. Their roles in Austen's canon appear utilitarian: Mr. Gardiner takes the credit for Lydia's salvation, and Robert Martin legitimizes Harriet Smith through marriage. But they are never possible or appropriate matches for the heroine, remaining on the periphery of the main courtship



plot. By contrast, Austen's heroes are often wealthy, landed, or both, with Captain Wentworth concluding her canon with meritocratic wealth.

Although like Wentworth, Thornton is not born into wealth family and earns his fortune through his work, beyond that he possesses none of the traditional attributes of an Austen hero. While he has a prosperous business, his fortune is not secure and eventually, is lost. He may rent Marlborough Mills but it serves as both his business and his residence. To Margaret's mind, he is "not quite a gentleman," and still Thornton is neither poor enough for her to pity, nor does he possess the characteristics that she might value in a romantic partner. Neither Austen nor Margaret disparages work done in the professions or on an estate; hence the problem lies in Thornton's work, specifically his involvement in the cotton trade. Even in his elevated position within a system of power, Mr. Thornton's roots in trade make him an unlikely hero and an even more unlikely gentleman. As *Persuasion* unites a daughter of the aristocracy to a self-made man of the Navy, we understand how Austen, who has personal allegiance to the naval profession, sees the future of the class system tied to the destiny of professional men like Wentworth. And aside from Captain Lennox, men of the three main professions—military, clergy, law—are prevalent in Gaskell's text: Margaret's brother Fredrick Hale joins the Navy, Captain Lennox's brother Henry is an esteemed barrister, and Mr. Hale and his friend Mr. Bell are both trained clergymen. These are all men of Margaret's most intimate circle and remain important figures throughout the novel. But by using industrial work to destabilize the self-made gentleman, Gaskell disrupts Margaret's carefully drawn lines of class appropriate work, and therefore, supplants professional masculinity with an industrial self-made gentleman.

In the canon of women's literature, novels are often located in Southern settings and places like London or the Southern counties. As we see evidenced with the other novels in this study, Southern settings situate London and Bath as the cosmopolitan centers of high society. For Austen, the farthest North her novels ventures is Derbyshire for the location of Mr. Darcy's Pemberley. His estate, however, easily falls within the cosseted world of gentry life, removed from any regional attachments. Like Gaskell's Milton, the placeless quality of Pemberley defines Darcy's relationship to the estate; yet Austen writes Northern identity out of his character and, in so doing, makes Pemberley a site of gentrified work rather than a specimen of Northern life. The result of this focus on Southern settings is that the North is either ignored entirely or characterized as an Other. In *North and South*, Gaskell seems aware of this harsh characterization and, in turn, creates a city that cannot be attached to a specific place. Therefore, it is Margaret, by virtue of her family's exile to Milton, who remains the Other, not Mr. Thornton or the inhabitants of Milton.

Gaskell's Milton functions as a token representation of the North. Whereas her previous novel *Mary Barton* was located in Manchester, Gaskell situates *North and South* in Milton, a fictional industrial city located in the equally fictional county of Darkshire. We are never given any coordinates or specific details about Milton, only that it is in the North of England.<sup>41</sup> There are clear correlations to Manchester, but Gaskell does not situate Milton beyond its place in the North. In this way, Milton strengthens the ties between regional identity and masculinity: Milton could very well be any industrial city

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<sup>41</sup> There are several cities in the UK that bear the name "Milton" or some form of it: Milton in Cambridgeshire, Milton Keynes in Buckinghamshire, New Milton in Hampshire, and the hamlet of Milton in Derbyshire. By virtue of their size or region, we can eliminate them as models for Gaskell's Milton. Given Gaskell's biography and its industrial ties, Manchester still seems to be the most obvious model for Milton.

in the North and as such, Thornton could be any man from such a place. In this way, Gaskell relies on Milton's fictional location to negotiate Thornton's gender and regional identity outside the constraints of actual spatial constructs because it provided an opportunity to explore his identity without presuming a specified and tangible location. Just as Thornton represents the North, Gaskell also uses Margaret as a stand-in for the South; her initial view of Thornton's regional and gender performance sounds remarkably like the judgment heaped on the North and its men in other literary texts.

"They are very different," Mr. Hale ominously warns Margaret of manufacturers and tradesmen early in the text (73). Neither Mr. Hale nor Gaskell further explains this difference and, like Margaret, who acquiesces with "I apply the word to all who have something to sell," readers are left to ponder the disparity between the terms. From the context, we are led to believe that the term "tradesmen" is somehow offensive to men like Thornton. This is later explained by Mrs. Hale, whose use of the word also echoes its provocative nature: "...that any child of mine, would have to stand half a day, in a little poky kitchen, working away like any servant, that we may prepare properly for the reception of a tradesman, and that this tradesman should be the only—" (87). Here Mrs. Hale, a former member of the landed gentry, objects to her ladylike daughter performing work for the visit of a mere tradesman. Margaret interrupts her mother's tirade with an expression of pity, offering that he "can't help that now, poor fellow" (87). In so doing, she turns Thornton into an object of sympathy, not an honored guest. However, Margaret's conflation of tradesmen and manufacturers on the grounds that they both engage in capitalism demonstrates how little she knows about Thornton's work or other forms of trade-based work. As a cotton mill, Marlborough Mills does not directly sell

cotton to consumers. Instead, Thornton's workers actually spin cotton fabric to be sold on the larger market. There is certainly a level of engagement with money, and true to Margaret's definition, they do have "something to sell," but, overall, much of the work completed at the Mill and under Thornton's management is creation, not the traffic of goods. This distinction elevates Thornton's work from merely the exchange of goods, to a more artistic, if not practical form of work. While tradesmen and "men in trade" are peripheral fixtures in Austen's canon, in Gaskell's world of industry, Margaret and Mrs. Hale eventually find out how central these men in trade are to society as a whole. Even Mr. Hale, a tutor and sole supporter of his family, must rely on the largess of industrial men like Mr. Thornton. However, like tradesmen, Thornton still works for a living and his position as a wealthy manufacturer remains outside of the boundaries of Margaret's circle of professional, and therefore, marriageable men.

Anne Graziano has pointed to another John in Gaskell's canon to examine how the working-class hero has not fared as well as Thornton does in *North and South*. John Barton, Mary Barton's father and the murderer of her ill-fated lover, may occupy an economic sphere closer to that of Nicholas Higgins's, but his role as the tragic hero provides an important avenue through which Gaskell examines the plight of the Victorian working poor. Ultimately, Graziano argues that Gaskell fails to portray an accurate working-class hero because Barton's confining class experience inhibits mobility and a rise to wealth (150). Thus what Graziano terms the "novelistic hero" must be bourgeois because the middle class offers the most opportunities for social advancement(151). This is certainly a valid claim as Barton's untimely and unremarkable death at the end of the novel signals the close of a cycle of poverty, much like Boucher's suicide does in *North*

*and South*. However, I would suggest that where Gaskell does not produce an appropriate working-class hero in *Mary Barton*, she succeeds in *North and South*. Thornton, despite his positions as a master, actually becomes middle class by evolving through the system. While his time spent in poverty happens in the margins of the text, his meritocratic journey frames his performance as a gentleman.

As Thornton is a manufacturer and, therefore, inhabits a literal and figurative space outside the parameters of “good” society, it holds true that he defines the gentleman in a distinctive fashion. In an early exchange in the text, Thornton grapples with the gentleman’s confused definition and provides an important treatise on masculinity:

I take it that the term ‘gentleman’ is a term that only describes a man in relation to others; but when we speak of him as a ‘man,’ we consider him not merely with regard to his fellow-men, but in relation to himself—to life—to time—to eternity. A castaway, lonely as Robinson Crusoe—a prisoner immured in the dungeon of life—nay, even a saint in Patmos, has his endurance, his strength, his faith, best described by being spoken of as a ‘man.’ I am rather weary of this term ‘gentlemanly’, which seems to me to be inappropriately used, and often, too, with such exaggerated distortion of meaning, while the full simplicity of the noun ‘man’ and the adjective ‘manly’ is unacknowledged. (194)

As Thornton points out, the “inappropriate” use and “exaggerated distortion” of the term upsets Margaret’s notion of the gentleman as a singular and recognizable identity, ready to be codified and judged. Scholars and historians also seem uncertain as to what defines a Victorian man as a gentleman. Dan Biovana and Roger B. Henkle in *The Imagination of Class* suggest that the term “gentleman” is defined more by his experience than his wealth: “someone who is worldly, who can still operate in the experiential realm, but not in the competitive/acquisitive”(15). This sounds remarkably similar to Thorstein Veblen’s approach in *Theory of the Leisure Class*; there the work of being a gentleman

requires the consumption of goods and the collection of experiences (51). Like Biovana and Henkle, Penelope Corfield also argues for the term's informal application, suggesting that the gentleman led an admired lifestyle, something which "unpropertied wage-earners" like Thornton could not achieve because they "lacked the reserves of capital to fall back upon in hard times"(236). What emerges from the definitions these scholars provide is the gentleman's need to be self-sufficient and separated for any avenues of wealth-production. Significantly, in an attempt to deconstruct the term, Thornton distinguishes between the more generic term "man" and the performative term "gentleman." Although Thornton may advocate for the simplicity of the term "man," he does not fully abandon the gentleman as an appropriate identity, merely suggesting that he finds its use vague and improper. As a largely self-educated and self-made man, Thornton problematizes the term's performative aspects, particularly how the performance remains at the mercy of a fickle audience. Margaret, who prompts his treatise by asking Thornton to confirm another man's gentlemanliness, consistently judges Thornton's performance of the gentleman, all the while never defining how she has determined that a gentleman should act, except by marking Thornton's transgressions. And despite his privileging of the generic man, Thornton does not take an essentialist perspective on masculinity; rather, I hypothesize that Thornton modifies the performative nature of the gentleman to authenticate emotions and validate selfhood. As Thornton juxtaposes the two terms in the passage above, we understand how he recognizes the utility of performance yet also negotiates performance into a longer legacy.

In addition to being a gentleman, Thornton's identity as a man is bound to his identity as a self-made man, an identity that Gaskell imagines to be equally as performative. At odds with his individualistic and meritocratic pursuit of wealth and security, Thornton's approach to the gentleman necessitates an achievable and controlled performance. In the context of the previously quoted conversation and later instances where Margaret rebukes him, Thornton approaches the gentleman with flexibility and insight; Margaret, in contrast, approaches with policing. This does not negate Thornton's place as a gentleman or even his role as a self-made gentleman; instead we understand how Thornton places more emphasis on the self's inclusion in performance.

This interplay between Margaret and Thornton's ideal forms of masculinity works to explore their regional allegiances. Whereas Margaret's Southern roots skew the gentleman towards a class identity, Thornton sees it through the lens of gender. For Thornton and other men like him, men who constantly shift class positions in an uncertain industrial trade; they must rely on masculinity to inform their performance of the gentleman. While Thornton may eschew the term "gentleman" as the name for his masculinity, he perpetuates many of the values of civility, chivalry, and production that inform the ideals that he upholds in his gender performance. The fluctuation of his character and position throughout the novel emphasizes the importance of the self-made gentleman's mobility and flexibility of class.

Gaskell consistently characterizes men of the professions as limited and ineffectual models of masculinity, particularly when compared to the robust and productive models offered by manufacturers and men of industry. The nuances of each profession aside, as these professional men are members of Margaret's intimate and

familial circle, we are left to ponder how their application of professional work translates into success at the performance of being a gentleman. The Lennox brothers may sustain their professions, even if Captain Lennox appears foolish and Margaret rejects Henry Lennox, but it is Margaret's family members who fail to adopt productive models of masculinity. When faced with similar crises of identity like those which Thornton faces, Mr. Hale and Margaret's brother Fredrick both find the loss of profession and their class position difficult to accommodate. Their departure from a profession leads to a significant loss of identity and, eventually, loss of home and detachment from place altogether. Both father and son are somewhat forcibly removed from their professions and are pushed into exile by their actions. Not surprisingly, exile fails to provide the same level of capital, security, or identity. So much of their identity is bound in the professional ties of their role in the Navy or the clergy that they are left without any other means of deriving identity once those connections are dissolved. Even other forms of work and new places fail to provide an appropriate outlet for the lost expectations of one's profession. The end of the novel solves neither of the Hales' conundrums: Mr. Hale dies an unsung tutor in Milton and Fredrick remains in Spain, with little hope of a pardon and return to England.

In terms of masculinity, it is important to understand how easily professional identity conjoins with class identity. Mr. Hale and Fredrick's departure from professional service nullifies any position that might keep them within the gentry class. Obviously the more extreme example, Fredrick's mutinous actions criminalize his very presence in Milton, but Mr. Hale's dissent forces the Church to repossess his home. The very structure of the Navy and the clergy contributes to an allegiance to authority; therefore,



acts of mutiny, rebellion, or dissent are punished with loss of class position and profession. Professional masculinity may provide means of identity-making and masculine performance but these means are too dependent on the gentry and aristocratic classes for advancement and do not allow men to reinvent themselves or establish new means of support outside of their past profession. We see professional masculinity exhibit independence in its dependence, which here merely translates into freedom within a very rigid set of parameters. Mr. Hale and Fredrick are not permitted to alter or shift any of their doctrines or philosophies about their profession without significant losses.

Significantly, as in Austen's *Persuasion*, exile and the loss of one's class identity have severe consequences for men as well as women. In *North and South*, Margaret and her mother are forced to leave their beloved Helstone because of the actions of Mr. Hale. Indeed, Mrs. Hale remains ill throughout most of the novel, languishing away in her sick bed unable to bear the sudden change of place or the degradation of her husband's departure from the Church. And while Margaret bears Milton tolerably well, she also suffers the burden of her brother's actions. In a dramatic after-hours episode at Milton's train station, Fredrick scuffles with a former neighbor, a scene which Mr. Thornton witnesses and that results in the man's death. While Fredrick must depart for London after his reckless actions to avoid further punishment, Margaret, also present at the event, must bear the brunt of the scandal over Leonards's death. Because Fredrick is not permitted to stay in England, his absence forces Mr. Thornton to step in and control the gossip surrounding Margaret's improper presence at the train station and involvement in the episode. Here and throughout the novel, Gaskell underscores the superior authority and actions of industrial men like Thornton.

Even with the legal entanglements of the inquiry, it is the manufacturer Thornton, not the lawyer Henry Lennox, who saves Margaret's good reputation and prevents further inquiry. His power, both in removal of wall-paper inside the Hales' home and in this train station scandal, has the ability to remove obstacles that professional men, or former professional men, are unable or unwilling to accomplish. To that end, Gaskell never gives us the sense that the loss of Thornton's business forces him to question his overall identity as a man, nor is he pushed out of Milton by either danger or embarrassment. Because his work and social position are not tethered to the class system in the same way that the professions are, the self-made gentleman possesses an inherent freedom for reinvention. Throughout the text, Thornton protects, provides, and behaves in a gentlemanly manner towards all of the Hales, especially Mrs. Hale and Margaret. Where professional men fail to offer means or support, Thornton presents himself as willing and able to troubleshoot a variety of issues in both the private and public arena. While Thornton may struggle against the constructs of gentlemanly identity, his actions clearly speak to an understanding of the role of the gentleman and its execution in his work.

While men like Mr. Hale and Henry Lennox ascribe gentlemanly values to their work, it is Thornton who actually performs the actions of a gentleman. Thornton's work within the novel is industrial; but the privileges afforded to him as a titan of industry in the North are useful and productive, remedying issues for Margaret and her family that professional men are unable to accomplish. It is Marlborough Mills that serves as a set-piece for much of the novel's tension between the industry of the North and the gentility of the South. Whereas the Hales require a multitude of rooms to accommodate their lifestyle of former professional gentility, Mr. Thornton, who is vastly wealthier at the

beginning of the novel, lives and works within the same space. To some degree, Marlborough Mills as his place of employment and his home echoes Darcy's relationship to Pemberley. However, Pemberley's placement in the country and located as it is within a gentrified space preserves the estate's definition as a site of domestic work, not the industrial domesticity seen at Marlborough Mills. And Thornton does not own Marlborough Mills like Darcy owns Pemberley, he merely rents it from Mr. Bell and later, from Margaret. Admittedly, his marriage to Margaret at the close of the novel grants him some ownership of the Mill, but he will continue to work and live there.

The mob episode of the novel represents one of the most dramatic and violent interactions between domestic and industrial space. Margaret, who calls on the Thorntons to inquire after a bed for her mother, unwittingly finds herself caught in the middle of an ugly struggle for power, jobs, and dominance as the strikers attack Marlborough Mills. Because the Thorntons reside at Marlborough Mills, their residence is adjacent to the vein of the Mill. This permits the safety of their home to be just as vulnerable to the strikers' violence as Mr. Thornton's factory does. Hence Margaret and the other occupants of the house—servants, Thornton's mother and sister, all the most powerless victims—draw the mob's ire by merely being guests or inhabitants of Mr. Thornton's domestic space. The object of their violence is Thornton, who has brought in Irish scabs to break the strike, and it is his home that draws their aggressive passion. Although the narrator earlier in the novel has shown readers residential areas bisected by industrial sites of work, Marlborough Mills stages a unique interaction between the workplace and the home. According to Mike Goode, the separation of the domestic from industry or commercial spaces "repaid the hardness of the office"(151). Expanding on the philosophy of separate

spheres, Goode lays out how this division between sites of work and sites of domesticity reinforces the home as a calm respite from the harsh and rugged environment of a man's workplace.<sup>42</sup> Unlike his workers who leave the Mill at the end of the day, or as Goode argues, the academic who engages in intellectual work at seminars and workshops, Thornton's workplace abuts his home.<sup>43</sup> John Tosh also suggests that this separation from work is responsible for turning "workhorses and calculating machines" into men again(6). Thus when Thornton's decisions are questioned, his workers --who seek to destroy the very space in which he would hide—violate his home and disrupt his refuge. This emphasis on Marlborough Mills as both a site of work and a domestic space suggests that Gaskell imagines the domestic sphere vulnerable to the volatile force of commerce and the marketplace.

Yet beyond the danger of the domestic sphere, the mob episode of the novel functions to articulate the slippery boundaries of the domestic and its inability to confine women. When Margaret appears beside Thornton in front of the strikers, he declares, in what the narrator describes as a "deep voice," that "this is no place for you" (212). Thornton's words, uttered in a presumably masculine voice suffused with patriarchal authority, suggest that Margaret does not belong among these unruly displays of industrial masculinity. Yet Marlborough Mills seamlessly conjoins the domestic and the industrial, as the strikers attack Thornton's home, not his factory. Margaret's entrance into the scene merely serves to remind Thornton and the strikers of the vulnerability of the female body, which, in turn, she uses to appeal to the men's reason and to shield

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<sup>42</sup> For more thorough analysis on separate spheres, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*.

<sup>43</sup> But what if, like Thornton, men are never permitted to leave their workplaces? I would suggest that because Thornton's genteel masculinity depends on the performance of work, we could consider this close proximity as further evidence of his dedication.

Thornton from further attack.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, her appearance outside of the protective domestic sphere has injurious consequences and eventually infuses unwelcome and romantic implications into her relationship with Thornton. The use of her body to defend Thornton from the mob's ire functions as a defacto declaration of her feelings.

Ruth Bernard Yeazell even suggests that Margaret's "sexual vulnerability is all the more humiliating because it is staged before a crowd of lower-class witnesses"(136). Although Margaret may revise and rewrite Thornton's masculinity throughout the novel, as an unmarried woman, she is equally as vulnerable to revision by others. In using her body to protect Thornton before an audience of strikers and household staff, she breaks the rules of her own gender performance and leaves her body's performance open for interpretation. Barbara Leah Harman discusses the importance of women's public appearance and its connection to Gaskell's own entrance into the public arena as a woman writer. For Harman, because Gaskell does not doom Margaret to exile or spinsterhood, a treatment Gaskell administers to her other exposed and vulnerable female characters, she desires to liberate women and by extension, women's writing from the censure of the public (360).

Just as there is no "place" for Margaret among the men, so too is there no place for Thornton inside the house. Earlier, judging Thornton's inaction as cowardice, Margaret goads him into facing the mob on his doorstep: "Mr. Thornton....go down this

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<sup>44</sup> There are a number of parallels between this scene and Louisa Musgrove's fall in Austen's *Persuasion*. Along with similar injuries to the head, both incidents serve to derail the plot's trajectory and to interrogate the heroine's suitability. For Margaret, the incident actually prompts Thornton's first proposal. There is little evidence to suggest that Gaskell connects Margaret's injury with Louisa's. Yet in their similar injuries we can see how female body remains emblematic of the domestic. Thus, we see the assault of the female body (particularly the head which is often coded as the maidenhead) as tantamount to an assault on female domestic virtues. Unlike *Persuasion's* Captain Wentworth who is nearly unmanned by the sight of a woman in distress, Thornton turns eloquent in the face of such violence, using Margaret's injury as a platform to diffuse the violence and prove his masculinity.

instant, if you are not a coward. Go down and face them like a man”(209). Her taunt to “face them like a man” suggests that Thornton, in his current state inside the house, is not acting like a man. He must “go down this instant” to face the strikers, in that he must immediately leave the temporary safety of the domestic for the certain danger of the industrial. To be locked inside the house may be the wiser course of action given the fervor of the mob, but, as Margaret expresses, it is the action of a coward and not the action of a man. In addition to the action of a man, Emelyne Godfrey also suggests that a man’s national identity is defined by his reaction to ruffians: “yet in the civilian self-defence scenario, belligerence was often considered to be un-British. The way in which a man responded to a threat was the barometer of his character”(11). By this estimation, Margaret’s prod to “face them like a man” acts as a litmus test for Thornton’s character, one that he clearly passes.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, by doing what Margaret declares to be the proper actions of a man, Thornton stands between the strikers and his family, placing himself, literally, on the threshold between his work and his home. It is a situation that only Marlborough Mills, in its place as a home and a business, allows. If we read Marlborough Mills as a site of Thornton’s identity-making, then we can see how as a self-made gentleman, Thornton, who embodies the qualities of both the self-made man and the gentleman, is able to thrive in such a liminal space, even when subjected to the violence of others.

As in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, the first proposal scene in *North and South* plays out the title’s binary tension: the dynamic between North and South, more

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<sup>45</sup> Godfrey marks the difference between British military narratives of defense and those of the British civilian. Notably, Margaret’s brother Fredrick, a wanted naval mutineer, does not adhere to this notion of British masculinity; despite his civilian status, he still engages in violent behavior towards the decidedly ruffian character of Leonards.

specifically between a Southern heroine and a Northern gentleman. Thornton's first proposal, however, demonstrates his most significant work as a gentleman. After Margaret saves Thornton from the mob of strikers on the steps of Marlborough Mills, the public and declarative nature of her actions have subjected her to speculation and gossip. In light of this and in an attempt to acknowledge his gratitude, Thornton proposes, much to Margaret's dismay.

Margaret accuses Thornton of not perceiving her actions "as a gentleman would—yes, a gentleman," when in fact, his offer of marriage is undertaken with the very intention of acting like a gentleman (232). Certainly his feelings for Margaret factor into his willingness to propose, but Thornton also seeks to save her from the vulnerable position in which her own actions have placed her. As an unmarried female, Margaret, in exposing her feelings before an audience of strikers and his household staff, has demanded his response. It is significant that as Margaret claims her actions as part of her performance of femininity, she sanitizes any aspect of personal feeling or sexual desire from her protection of Thornton. While Margaret expects Thornton to understand "as a gentleman would" that her actions do not necessitate either gratitude or a proposal, her outrage at Thornton's assumption that "it was a personal act between you and me" suggests that she is unaware of the interdependency of gender performance (232). In her zeal to assert her own performance of femininity, she denies Thornton the opportunity to perform his own gender, to perform as a gentleman by proposing: "And the gentleman thus rescued is forbidden the relief of thanks!...I am a man. I claim the right of expressing my feelings" (232). Here Gaskell employs the word "relief" to suggest that, for Thornton, the performance of masculinity liberates him from emotional upheaval.

It is notable that Margaret previously uses a similar form of the word “relief” when she declares that she will hear Thornton’s words, “if it will relieve you from even a fancied obligation”(231). When Margaret denies the opportunity for any type of gratification, she restrains his masculinity; his declaration of gender—“I am a man” — and claim to the right of expressing his feelings recognizes that in order to perform as a man, or here as a gentleman, he must have access to his own performance. By her own admission, Margaret may reinterpret the scene through the lens of female sensibility, suggesting that her previous actions were only “natural,” part of the “sanctity and high privilege” of her gender and actions “that any woman would do”(230). Yet when Thornton attempts to do the same through his performance, he is rejected and even criticized for somehow misreading his cue.

This is further illustrated in the language that Margaret uses in her refusal. After Thornton declares his intentions, Margaret responds with commentary highlighting how “his whole manner offends” her and how “blasphemous” his words are to a woman of her sensibilities. Her reaction makes it clear that Thornton’s attempts at being a gentleman are distasteful. Later, before he departs rejected and unhappy, he echoes back her language:

One word more. You look as if you thought it tainted you to be loved by me. You cannot avoid it. Nay, I, if I would, cannot cleanse it from you. But I would not if I could. I have never loved a woman before: my life has been too busy, my thoughts too much consumed with other things. Now I love and will love. But do not be afraid of too much expression on my part. (233)

Whereas Thornton has previously asserted the masculine “right of expressing [his] feelings,” by the end of the proposal he has only “one word more” and will not trouble Margaret with “too much expression.” Although we may read these reluctant words as his



attempt to curtail his performance, his “one word more” ultimately proves to be the most passionate declaration of the novel. This suggests that Thornton understands the conventions of Margaret’s gentleman but resists the constructs that it places upon his feelings and his words.

Consistently, Margaret’s objections center on Thornton’s passion and its impertinent assumptions: he declares too much, he expresses too much, he expects too much. This proposal scene is also where some of the strongest allusions to Austen’s canon play out in *North and South*. Instead of Thornton’s actual offer of marriage, it is the passion he displays and the robust nature of his feelings that triggers the language of repulsion in Margaret’s response. Yet it seems that Margaret objects to Thornton’s manner more than his words, his assumptions more than his feelings. As an oral recitation of his feelings rather than a measured speech, Thornton’s manner of declaration provokes Margaret’s cruel refusal.

Certainly, we can see parallels between this proposal scene and Darcy’s first proposal in *Pride and Prejudice*, but Gaskell shifts the power dynamics to account for the altered social situations of Margaret and Thornton. Unlike Darcy, Thornton is not in a position of power; rather he comes to Margaret because he seeks to reconcile her protective actions at the Mill with a promise of marital protection. Although we may also see parallels in between Thornton’s words above and Darcy’s letter in *Pride and Prejudice*. Darcy writes Elizabeth that he will not renew any offers that “were last night so disgusting to you”(317). To a lesser degree, we may also see allusions in Thornton’s speech in Wentworth’s final letter in *Persuasion* as the uncertain Captain Wentworth instructs Anne to give “a word, a look”(1233). In Austen’s canon, both of these moments

occur during letters, not during declarations of love or moments of impassioned speech.<sup>46</sup> Throughout Austen's two novels, letters appear as the logical and proper place for one to express feelings of love or to address grievances against one's character. In other words, where Thornton equates masculinity with the vocal recitation of feelings, Margaret sees the performance of genteel masculinity as reserved for private letters or quiet post-marital moments. Anything that deviates from this performance presents an impertinent threat to her Austenian-like sensibilities, and, therefore, must be subjugated.

Sarah Ostrov Weisser addresses a similar parallel between Austen's understanding of love and later Victorian constructs. Weisser argues that Charlotte and Emily Brontë's respective portrayals of men and courtship popularized a sexualized view of romantic love. Seemingly at odds with Austen's companionate marriage, Weisser sees the legacy of what she terms this "Brontëified" view of love in the 2005 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (94). While this project does not focus on the film adaptations beyond their place as a barometer of the author's legacy and interpretation from text to screen, Weisser aptly pinpoints where Austen has been hijacked by these sexualized and more highly volatile views of marriage and courtship. Given the close relationship between Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë and the novel's connections to *Pride and Prejudice*, it seems safe to extend Weisser's argument to *North and South*.

Similar to *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, Gaskell's novel serves to deconstruct the discourse of romantic love and, by extension, the gendered ideologies that underpin courtship narratives. Unlike the Brontës, who seem to dispense with Austenian heroines and heroes nearly altogether, Gaskell bridges the distance with a courtship

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<sup>46</sup> Even in Darcy's first proposal, Austen chooses not to dictate the language of his declaration and forgoes dialogue for content. We only are told that he is proposing; his actual words are unnamed.

between an Austen-like Southern heroine and a Northern industrial hero. Ultimately, Gaskell's novel forges a line between Austen and her later Victorian contemporaries by staging a clash between Austen's notion of masculinity and Gaskell's construction. Margaret may be an Austenian heroine but Thornton is not "Brontëified." He may not be coded in the same terms as Austen's gentleman but he is also not of the same ilk as Charlotte and Emily Brontë's men, who are arguably not gentleman at all. Additionally, there is little throughout *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* to suggest that either Rochester or Heathcliff have notions of community work or seek to perform as gentleman to the same degree that Thornton does.

Sarah Wootton, citing Thornton's Byronic appearance and propensity for "disorder and renewal," suggests that his love/hatred for Margaret demands sexual fulfillment: "This 'positive bodily pain,' revealing the hero's subversive longing for violent penetration, demonstrates not only his psychological complexity but also illuminates Gaskell's subtle revisions of her Romantic predecessors"(32). Here Wootton is referring to an earlier scene where Thornton clenches his fists in response to Margaret's behavior. Although Thornton does not clench his fists during the proposal scene, he does seize Margaret's hand for the duration of his initial profession. Yet there are no further gestures that would suggest a violent, physical, or assaulting display of Thornton's turbulent emotions. Like Wootton, my project is interested in analyzing Gaskell's involvement in producing models of male behavior; however, it seems unfair to place Thornton in a Byronic line when his actions throughout the text are more gentlemanly than aggressively sexual. We may be tempted to read the proposal's setting—alone and enclosed in the drawing room with an unwelcome suitor—as both

dangerous and potentially Gothic; however, this setting is no more perilous than the Collins' drawing room is for Darcy's first proposal.<sup>47</sup>

It is Thornton's passion that calls into question his performance as a gentleman and even that he has quelled to appease Margaret. Before he opens his declaration, Thornton interrupts his dialogue in an attempt to appear composed: "He was on the verge now; he would not speak in the haste of hot passion; he would weigh each word"(230). Thornton understands that "hot passion," what we can assume is both improper or excessive passion, will overwhelm Margaret, and therefore, he self-consciously tries to convey his feelings in tones and manners which Margaret will understand. While her adamant refusal expresses in detail how he does not succeed in this endeavor, Margaret experiences bodily responses to his words. Later, as Thornton speaks, he specifically "Lower[ed] his voice to such a tender intensity of passion" that Margaret "shivered and trembled before him"(231).

At first blush, we might be tempted to read her reaction as physical symptoms of fear or discomfort. Yet the language of the description suggests that Thornton's passion appears gentle and unthreatening: he quiets his voice and uses "tender intensity" rather than an aggressive tone. In other words, he works throughout the proposal scene to moderate any moments of violent passion that might cause her to fear him or his sexuality. Examining another rejected proposal in Gaskell's *Mary Barton*, Jill L. Matus argues that for Gaskell emotional and physical response to emotions spoke of instinctive truths that are often unable to be acknowledged. Like Margaret, who trembles to hear Thornton's words of love, Gaskell's other heroine Mary experiences an unexpected

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<sup>47</sup> As to the danger of the room, towards the end of the proposal scene, Margaret asks Mr. Thornton to lower his voice as her mother is sleeping. From an earlier account we receive of the house's coziness, we can presume that Mrs. Hale's room is very close by.

episode of violent sobs after rejecting her suitor. For Matus, such an unprompted physical response like crying or in this case, Margaret trembling, “demonstrates the deep-seated, unconscious emotional knowledge that trumps consciously-held conviction”(22).

Towards the end of her interview with Thornton, Margaret also experiences tears of wounded pride, but the unexplained nature of Margaret’s reaction here better illustrates Matus’s point. Although Margaret may adamantly refuse Thornton in intelligible and forceful words, her corporeal response to his “tender intensity” indicates that she is susceptible to his sexuality and, in turn, experiences a sexualized response that contradicts her strongly held objections. While Thornton restrains his passion to the degree that it is neither silenced nor reproduced in a letter, he does not represent a tangible threat to her will or her body.<sup>48</sup> Herein lies the crux of Gaskell’s characterization: Thornton’s passion, in that he loves Margaret and openly declares his feelings, is not dangerous, yet in this proposal scene, Margaret responds as if it is. She criticizes him, she villainizes him, and eventually, she rejects him. Ultimately, that is how she and the tradition from which she has emerged handle seemingly unrestrained passion in men. As Austen is an author from a long tradition depicting male power and dominance that create rogues who cause undue physical and psychological harm to the heroine, she rightly presumes that passionate outbursts by men may be malignant and manipulative displays of emotion. For Austen, unrestrained passion is sexual passion, and this passion is accompanied by an overwhelmed set of emotions that transgresses reason and logic, and, by its very nature, is volatile and destructive. We only have to look to Mr.

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<sup>48</sup> Examining Miserrimus Dexter from Wilkie Collins’ *Law and the Lady*, Gwen Hyman posits that the danger of work-driven masculinities is in their equation of commerce consumption with sexual consumption (146). In this way, we may read Margaret’s fear as her continued disapproval of the consumptive nature of Thornton’s trade.

Wickham, Mr. Willoughby, and Henry Crawford to see how easily sexual passion can upset the lives of women. However, Gaskell does not equate unrestrained passion with lecherous intentions. While the threats to Austen's heroines and their predecessors were often from the unwieldy, ravening rake, Margaret does not encounter men quite like that or like the wily rogues of Austen's texts. But for Margaret, who embodies the Austen heroine, Thornton's masculinity is an unknown threat, especially because she is ill-equipped to handle men's passions so that they do not infringe upon her will. To this end, Margaret's attempts to police his masculinity and separate him from the role of the gentleman demonstrate an inadequate education in masculinity rather than the reality of Thornton's sexuality. By this time in the text, Margaret is not prepared for the emerging models of masculinity that Thornton embodies. The passion and expressions that he claims for masculinity have worked to disassociate passionate outbursts from the rake and instead, have re-appropriated passion for gentlemen.

Restrained performance and passion for Thornton results in emasculation at the hands of Margaret. It seems only logical to assume that as Margaret objects to Thornton's masculinity, she genders him as feminine. Effectively, Margaret's rejection has stymied his gender performance and silenced both his words and the seemingly unclean feelings that he has displayed and evoked. To be denied this outlet for his feelings and the obligation of his masculinity is to block his means of identity-making and performance. In her role as both recipient of Thornton's proposal and critic of proper "gentlemanly" performance, Margaret translates unwieldy and hyperbolic displays of masculinity into controlled forms of feminized emotion, both as evoked and performed by Thornton. For Margaret, who consistently bends the rules of her gender performance, the unsettling

departure of Thornton from what she understands as the gentleman, causes a crisis of identity. If she cannot control his masculinity or place it in a proper context, then her feminine identity is in danger, and the respective aspects of her position as a lady (her virginity, her social position) are too. To subvert her position as an object of desire, Margaret must turn Thornton into both an object of ridicule and eventually, one of pity. Whereas Margaret cringes from the romantic love that Thornton professes, she remains empathetically drawn to his moments of potential physical injury or vulnerable emotional displays.

Hence, a man who does not perform as a gentleman is a threat, but a man who does not understand his masculinity is an object of pity. What sympathy the proposal does not elicit, Margaret musters when Thornton nearly sheds a tear after her rejection: “When he was gone, she thought she had seen the gleam of unshed tears in his eyes; and that turned her proud dislike into something different and kinder” (233). These “different and kinder” feelings counter Margaret’s incivility with a healthy dose of guilt. Yet Thornton’s near tearful departure is juxtaposed with Margaret’s previous “tears of wounded pride [that] fell hard and fast”(232). Whereas Margaret may freely and openly purge her frustration, Thornton must resist such gestures under Margaret’s watchful gaze. Furthermore, to cry in her presence would serve as a reminder of the unrestrained nature of his passion, but this “gleam of unshed tears” works to garner Margaret’s compassion if not her love. While Margaret may no longer see him as a threat, his unshed tears have turned him from an oppressive force into a man worthy only of her sympathy.

This tearful moment is a gesture that emphasizes the placeless nature of Thornton’s gentleman. On the one hand, he has eased her fears by demonstrating

restraint; on the other, he has performed in a particularly unmanly fashion. This can be seen in Margaret's shift in pronoun from the generic man to the generic individual. In defense of her previous actions at the Mill, Margaret explains that she would have behaved the same way towards any man: "Why there was not a man...for whom I should not have done what little I could more heartily"(232). Later, the narrator notes that in response to Thornton's unshed tears, Margaret feels "self-reproach for having caused such mortification to any one"(233). While we may note the difference between the former as part of Margaret's dialogue and the latter as part of the text's prose, Thornton still transitions from a generic man that Margaret has shielded with her femininity to a genderless individual that she has harmed. She is not sorry to cause mortification to "any man" because, as his tears illustrate, her proposal has unmanned him. As Margaret comforts herself with the notion that she behaved properly because her "manners must have shown the truth," the cost of her rejection falls on Thornton, who has been humiliated and schooled on his impotent performance of masculinity (233). Later in the text, as Thornton tells his mother of Margaret's rejection, the narrator describes tears "forcing themselves into his manly eyes"(249). The use of "manly" to describe Thornton's eyes serves to draw our attention to the strangeness of the gesture as part of his performance, just as the verb "force" promotes a sense of battling the emotions. Again, the text does not use any descriptions that suggest Thornton weeps or sobs. Instead, we are consistently told that his eyes water, as tears are visible as a sign of his distress and sadness. At both junctures in the text, the gesture seems at odds with Margaret's desire for restrained masculinity and the construction of masculinity that he perceives as part of his identity.



And this is not the only time when Margaret emasculates Thornton for the protection of her gender. In the episode that prompts Thornton's proposal, Margaret goads him into speaking to the bloodthirsty mob that beats down his door. Later, during this proposal episode, Thornton reinterprets the scene through Margaret's lens of displeasure: "I now believe it was only your innate sense of oppression (yes; I, though a master, may be oppressed)—that made you act so nobly as you did. I know you despise me; allow me to say, it is because you do not know me"(232). Although it may be bold on Thornton's part to declare his person oppressed by his workers, he does illustrate the shift of power from master to servant. In other words, Gaskell relegates Thornton to an oppressed party rather than oppressor in the same way that Thornton does not position himself as a power figure over Margaret in courtship, she does the same to Thornton. However, such moments as this and her later comments about Thornton's gentlemanliness systematically work to undermine Thornton's masculinity and place restrictions on his space and behavior. Although we may argue that the confines of any gender performance are restrictive, the dictates for Thornton's masculinity consistently come from Margaret. When Margaret acts in a manner that does not properly fit into her role as a woman, her sexual reputation suffers. Yet when Thornton avoids facing the strikers or proposes in a similar departure from his traditional gender performance, his entire gender identity is called into question. There are consequences to both departures from performance; however, Thornton may attribute romantic intentions to Margaret's protective gesture at the Mill, but he does not assume that the danger of her reputation means easy acceptance.

The narrative that emerges from the proposal scene and the previous incident at the Marlborough Mills illustrates the many pitfalls of intertwined gender performances. More importantly, Margaret's taunts and subtle rewriting of her own performance call to mind many of the questions that surround gender performance, most particularly the relationship between the control of performance and the sexual/desexual nature of the body. The emphasis that Gaskell places on Margaret as the vocal and sharp gender critic of the text speaks to a significant place for women—authors, heroines, and characters—as governors of their own performance and that of men. However, as Gaskell notes, this shift of power from patriarchal to an egalitarian, or feminist, one is not without consequence. The nearly oppressive manner in which Margaret manages Thornton's masculinity signals how the unstable and dying strains of Southern masculinity she upholds do not apply to Thornton's robust and expansive gentlemanly performance. The troubling aspects of her father, her brother, and the Lennoxes' professional masculinity—class dependent, rigid and unable to thrive without the professional identity—illustrates the need for a mutable and buoyant masculinity like Thornton's. By comparing Thornton's masculinity to the seeming gentlemanliness of the South, Margaret effectively has aligned herself with masculinities that are restrictive for women. Gaskell exercises women's control in gender performance, only to reveal how fragile that control is when dictated by weakened forms of masculinity.

However, Thornton's declaration also appeals to his work, noting that he has never loved a woman before because he has been “too busy” and “too much consumed with other things.” With the knowledge that we have of Thornton's rise to wealth, we can safely assume that “other things” speaks to his work as a manufacturer and the amount of

time and energy that he has expended on his enterprise. The productive work of the gentleman as performed by Thornton has implications for his workers, for Margaret, and for his community. Gaskell, through Margaret's marriage, stages a battle between professional masculinity and industrial masculinity, drawing lines between dignified work and undignified work, between trade and respectability. But in a courtship novel, even in one that boasts significant commentary on poverty and the condition of England, the heroine's choice of husband at the end establishes the superior male character and the type of masculinity with which she aligns herself.

Herbert Sussman suggests that the courtship plot of *North and South* derails what he terms the "masculine plot" or the male-male bonds that Thornton creates through his industrial work (63). For Sussman, the narrative that underpins Margaret and Thornton's courtship is the development of a community of men and an erasure of women from industrial settings. While Sussman makes a good point about how the dining hall immerses Thornton in a community of men, my project sees the courtship as validating Thornton's masculinity. Whereas Sussman claims that the courtship plot dissolves any questions about Thornton's heterosexuality, I see Gaskell using the courtship plot as the vehicle that helps Thornton realize his goal of a longer male legacy. It is only through Margaret that Thornton is able to reclaim his male-bonding space; and, therefore, it is through marriage to Margaret that he can navigate his gender performance into a larger male and female presentation. Gaskell may disrupt many of our notions of the gentleman hero through Margaret's wealth and Thornton's downfall, but he emerges as the best representation of masculinity and the most sustainable form.

The Gentleman and the Period Drama: *Downton Abbey* and Contemporary Masculinities

I want to conclude this project by considering how concepts about gentility, masculinity, property, and work that Smith, Austen, and Gaskell foreground in the nineteenth century have been translated and disseminated to a contemporary audience. For this, I turn to the modern domain of the gentleman: the period drama. The year 1995 represented an important moment in terms of both the rise of the period drama and of Austen's legacy. That year, four major film adaptations of Austen's novels emerged on the big and small screen: Alicia Silverstone appeared as an updated Emma in *Clueless*, Emma Thompson and Kate Winslet played Austen's best-loved sisters in *Sense and Sensibility*, Amanda Root and Cirián Hinds performed as Austen's reunited lovers in *Persuasion*, and not to be forgotten, Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle appeared that same year as Austen's most popular couple in the serialized BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice*. This surge in film adaptations spurred many unlikely Austenites to theaters, reigniting interest in Austen's novels and reaching audiences who otherwise might not watch *Masterpiece Theater* on Sunday evenings. Juliette Wells attributes the long-standing crest in Austen's popularity to the growing number of new fans who have experienced Austen through the lens of these film adaptations and then were encouraged to read Austen's texts (3). There are several collections that juxtapose the rise of the film adaptations with the development of Austen's legacy. Some examples include *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (1999) edited by Linda Troost and Syre Greenfield; and John Wilshire's *Recreating Jane Austen* (2001); and *Jane Austen on Screen*, edited by Gina MacDonald and Andrew F. MacDonald. In the essay collections that I detail above, how

the novels are interpreted on screen is just as important a question as for what purpose they were adapted. However, I would also suggest that the popularity of the historical drama due, in part, to the film adaptations of the mid-1990s has also resulted in renewed interest in other British women novelists. It seems hardly coincidental that Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* received a similar big-screen adaptation the following year in 1996. Nor does it seem surprising that the BBC later adapted two of Elizabeth Gaskell's novels: *Cranford* (2007) and *North and South* (2004).<sup>49</sup> Austen's revival of the genre, both for Hollywood and small screen adaptations, speaks to how the period drama is employed as a tool for interpreting the core text and translating historical manners for a contemporary audience.

While the film adaptations and other interpretations of the novels I examine add to the thriving discourse around the gentleman's legacy in modern society, I also look to an original period drama as an indication of how contemporary audiences view the gentleman. Julian Fellowes' ITV costume drama *Downton Abbey* (2010) is one of the most popular and critically acclaimed television series to emerge in recent years. Currently in its fourth season with plans for a fifth, *Downton Abbey*, as the title implies, is a series that chronicles the lives of both the upstairs and downstairs inhabitants of Downton Abbey: a fictional country estate in Yorkshire and family seat of the aristocratic Crawley family. While the series has garnered consistently favorable praise from viewers on both sides of the pond, despite its apparent success and historical themes, it has been relatively unexamined in scholarly circles.

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<sup>49</sup> Since I began this project in 2010, several modernized adaptations have appeared using the web series as the format for their reinterpretation. Austen's novels remain the most popular to adapt—examples include Hank Green and Bernie Su's *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and their more recent *Emma Approved*—but *The Autobiography of Jane Eyre* also demonstrates that the novels manage to thrive even outside their historical frameworks.

Recently, however, a few scholars have begun to examine *Downton Abbey* using the tools of literary or film analysis. Of note is Katherine Byrne's "Adapting History: Class and Conservatism in *Downton Abbey*," which examines how *Downton Abbey*'s view of the past promotes Thatcherite constructs of class while undermining its own social commentary. Also significant is Estella Tincknell's article on Dowager Countess Violet Crawley, played by Maggie Smith. Like many series in the BBC and ITV catalog, Tincknell contends that *Downton Abbey* portrays a realistic narrative of aging women and aging femininity.

Moreover, the popularity of *Downton Abbey* and the questions that it asks about issues of privilege, class, and gender are discussions that are not left in the nineteenth century, nor are they questions that are isolated to the Edwardian period in which it begins. While this conclusion is, by no means, an attempt to enter this discourse, *Downton Abbey* serves as a historical set-piece that both historicizes and represents the past in a way that exposes the fractures in our modern class system. In that vein, I see *Downton Abbey* as a series that mediates a discussion between the novels that I examine and our contemporary views about what civility means, how we preserve history, and how property is transferred. The series' unique position, set in the historical past and yet written for a modern audience, allows for *Downton Abbey* to engage its viewers in a discourse that is both familiar and exotic. If we consider *Downton Abbey* as a historical interpretation of the Edwardian period meant for a contemporary audience, what emerges is a gentleman who is tied to our present and our past; the series' representation of the gentleman reveals the ways in which masculinity is affected by the harsh world of commerce. Although there is an entire project lurking in the many seasons of *Downton*

*Abbey*, for the purposes of this conclusion, I will confine my discussion to the first season.

With a plot that starts like a novel, *Downton Abbey* begins as Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* does, with death and property: the unexpected death of Downton Abbey's heir on board the *Titanic* has unsettled the once stable family lines that would carry forward a new generation. Like the Bennets of *Pride and Prejudice's*, the entailment on the estate has forced Lord Grantham to welcome his distant cousin Matthew Crawley as the new heir apparent, despite his first born daughter Mary's tenuous claim on the estate and his wife's American money which has only recently restored its coffers.

But the literary connections do not end with the estate's entail. Matthew Crawley is an industrial solicitor from Manchester who grudgingly accepts the earldom at his mother's behest. From this description, I do not think that it too much of a stretch for us to imagine him as a descent of Margaret Hale and Mr. Thornton. Unaccustomed to the estate's luxury, unfamiliar with the aristocratic lifestyle, and unused to what appears to be an idle lifestyle, Matthew Crawley arrives at Downton Abbey with all the awkward and offending grace of an eighteenth-century heroine like Burney's Evelina or Smith's Emmeline. While his initial impression receives nothing but censure from both the upstairs and downstairs set, the most notable complaint lodged against him is uttered by the snarky ladies' maid, Mrs. O'Brien: "Gentleman don't work, silly. Not *real* gentleman" ("Episode 2"). As O'Brien's comment illustrates, issues of work and gentility are still prevalent. Because the series is structured around the interplay between the downstairs servants of Downton Abbey and the upstairs aristocrats, work signals an important distinction between those who serve and those who are served. But for

Matthew, who leaves his job and removes to Yorkshire for the earldom, not working seems like a symptom of idleness and certainly not an advantage of his impending inheritance. In a later scene, Matthew's desire to continue working at a local solicitor's office proves to be point of contention between him and Lord Grantham as they discuss his duties as earl: "And you can't be busy at Downton?" to which Matthew replies, "I can and will be. But it won't keep me busy enough" ("Episode 2"). That there is work involved in the running of Downton is something that Matthew fails to understand throughout much of the first season. Forced into the world of an elite class that he does not fully understand, Matthew equates being Lord Grantham with leisure and thus assumes that such activities will not keep him "busy enough." For many of the series' viewers, who are also without a household staff, Matthew represents a realistic response to the seeming excess and lavishness of Downton Abbey. Yet between these two impressions of Matthew as not a "real gentleman" and someone who is "not busy enough" on the estate, we can see where Thorstein Veblen's gentleman of leisure clashes with women writers' gentleman of work. For Matthew, being a middle-class solicitor is an essential aspect of his gender and social performance; the crisis of identity that inevitably follows this shift in both occupation and class position threatens to, figuratively, unman him. In clinging to the fragmented framework of his previous identity, he eschews any work that might somehow restructure the identity he previously had built on his professional foundation.

For Lord Grantham, who tells Matthew early in the series that Downton Abbey is "my life's work," the estate serves as more than an ornamental structure of aristocratic and financial value ("Episode 2). Like Mr. Darcy's Pemberley, Downton Abbey is Lord



Grantham's literal place of employment; its management is his duty, his pride, and the site where he most often performs as a gentleman. In a moving treatise after he refuses to fight the entail, Lord Grantham explains his role as earl to his disappointed daughter Mary: "My fortune is the work of others, who labored to build a great dynasty. Do I have the right to destroy their work, or impoverish that dynasty? I am a custodian, my dear, not an owner. I must strive to be worthy of the task I have been set" ("Episode 4"). While Austen and later Gaskell move away from landed constructions of home, Lord Grantham's description of the estate explains it in terms that are nearly capitalistic. The "work of others, who labored to build a great dynasty" suggests that the estate has been built for the purpose of preservation, and while this is an aristocratic ideal—to preserve one's estate and to pass it on—Lord Grantham's approach suggests that his actions here extend beyond the basics of historical transition. He truly cares for the estate, manages it properly, yet by his own admission, does not own it. Similar again to Darcy's Pemberley, we gather that Downton Abbey and Lord Grantham's claim to the estate is not so much given as earned. This separation between being a custodian of one's estate and an owner suggests that one requires work while the other requires a mindset.

Matthew's easy dismissal of life at Downton and the work that it entails also appears in his approach to his valet, Mr. Moseley. Yet another incident where he reacts poorly when faced with the privileges of his position as heir presumptive, Matthew insults his valet by suggesting that Moseley's job "seems like a very silly occupation for a grown man" ("Episode 2"). At once, Matthew's comment illustrates both insensitivity towards Moseley and a seeming ignorance of Downton's roles. Because of Matthew's

class background as a middle class lawyer—his mother is quick to remind us that they are “*upper middle class*”—his notions about proper masculine employment are unsettled by a valet’s devotion to his dress (“Episode 2”). However, Moseley’s main job throughout the series is to equip Matthew with the most important performative aspects of both his gender and his new social position: his clothing. For Matthew to infantilize and dismiss Moseley’s masculinity because his valet’s occupation means he must create another man’s performance locates a fracture between the professional masculinity and domestic masculinity (or domestic in the sense that Moseley’s work is inside the home). While Matthew may value his work as a solicitor, the domestic work that Moseley does within the confines of *Downton Abbey* does not hold the same value, despite both being avenues of economic production and means of identity-making.

In many ways, because the show rectifies this tension at the end of “Episode 2,” we are left to ponder the significance of the collaborative work between valet and master. As I argue in my Introduction, masculinity neither can nor should operate within a separatist framework; women writers showcase how collaboration between the genders constructs more inclusive and accurate definitions of gender performance. While my argument centers on work as the defining characteristic of the gentleman’s performance, Matthew and Moseley’s shared and equally beneficial performance of masculinity suggests that systems of masculine power operate in conjunction with one another. By this, I mean *Downton Abbey* suggests that consolidating masculinity with other men and experiencing the gentleman through and with other men manages to produce performances of masculinity that are both authentic and transgressive.

Since its start in 2010, *Downton Abbey* has established a reputation as a powerhouse in terms of television ratings and fan devotion. Yet the series remains valuable because as a period drama it addresses modern questions in a historical forum. My project has charted the development of the gentleman from the late eighteenth-century through the nineteenth, yet as *Downton Abbey* proves, this tension between work and gentility is one that still dominates our contemporary gender mindset. The legacy of Smith, Austen, and Gaskell's working gentleman is that professional bonds, more than financial success or property ownership, have become the metaphysical home of masculinity and a seat from which dignity is derived. However, in recent years, the dignity of one's work and its effect on the class position and property has become an issue of contention. Similar to the men of the late eighteenth century, we, too, are experiencing a crisis of male identity. With the Recession of 2008, the real estate crisis, and other forms of economic upheaval, the ways in which men had formerly constructed their identity, with solid, full-time jobs and dream homes, has been replaced by tangible threats to social and financial security. And just as Smith, Austen, and Gaskell's predict, with altered masculinity comes altered femininity. New breadwinners, stay at home fathers, and redrawn lines of occupational gender (more women in sciences and engineering, more men in nursing and other traditionally feminine fields) have allowed for women to enter the politics of the workplace in ways that have been previously unseen. This also means that women, because of the politics of meritocracy that have also been extended to their gender, have been mired in the same economics and the same unstable identity. Through the act of writing and producing models of masculinity, Smith, Austen, and Gaskell proved that it was both necessary and important for women to be

involved in the process of gender revision. By creating forms of femininity and masculinity that were adapting and progressive, these women writers showed a universal truth that we continue to see in our contemporary society: gender truly is a codependent undertaking, and if we are to have successful models that support each other's performance, then women—authors, heroines, characters, mothers, daughters, sisters, spouses—need to be involved in any projects of gender revision.

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