

**Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands in female-authored novels,
1810-1820**

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the use of regional spaces in a corpus of forty-four female-authored novels set in Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands, published between 1810 and 1820. By so doing, it aims to address a gap in current scholarship on Romantic regionalism. It argues that these case study regions form a coherent grouping within the wider phenomenon of the English and Welsh regional novel, due to their contiguity, their many similarities, and their shared differences from other spaces. This study focuses on the 1810s as a significant point in the development of the regional novel genre. It considers trends which correlate with formal regional boundaries, as well as transregional themes, particularly remoteness and retirement.

This thesis argues that there is a certain amount of regional distinctiveness in the representation of each of its case study regions. However, it also explores how this distinctiveness coexisted with prevalent stereotypical images associated with a generic rural ideal, which is often nationalistic and conservative. It considers women writers' approach to the relationship between literary space and female freedom, arguing that the corpus of novels which it discusses presents an overwhelmingly conservative vision of gender politics; it also highlights exceptional images of alternative gender performance, which primarily appear in Wales. This study aims to situate Jane Austen's use of regional settings in the context of her publishing contemporaries, drawing attention to those who represent these spaces in distinctive ways, particularly Catherine Hutton.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1. Introduction

Long after recovery work on women's writing and representations of the regions of Britain have, separately, become established areas of research, women's depictions of regional spaces in Romantic period fiction remain under-studied. In this thesis, I aim to address this gap. I take a synoptic approach, considering forty-four texts by thirty-one writers. These are all of the novels published 1810-1820 which I identified as making significant use of one or more of my three case study regions: Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands.

My corpus includes novels by Jane Austen, Frances Burney, and Mary Shelley. It also includes the works of a larger number of novelists whose writing is rarely or never addressed by scholars, such as Adelaide O'Keeffe, Anne Ryley, and Elizabeth Thomas, to name only three. The three most prolific female novelists of the decade (Barbara Hofland, Ann Julia Kemble Hatton, and Sarah Green) are represented in my corpus, as well as several authors of single texts.¹ It is important to note that the majority of these writers have no known significant connection to the places where their novels are set. They mostly share an English, metropolitan perspective, and construct their intended readership as such. My corpus is representative of the fact that 92.3% of novels published in Britain in the 1810s came out of London.² All of the novels in my corpus were published there, except Olivia More's *The Welsh Cottage* (1820), published in Shropshire, and Grace Buchanan Stevens' *Llewellen, or the Vale of Phlinlimmon* (1818), published in Edinburgh.³ The publisher responsible for the largest proportion of the novels covered by this thesis is the Minerva Press, which also reflects the 1810s publishing market.⁴

In this introductory chapter, I will situate my analysis of this corpus in three key contexts, regionalism, gender, and decade of publication. Then I will outline my

¹ Anthony Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel: The Determined Author* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 30.

² Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', in *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Published in the British Isles, Volume II: 1800-1829*, ed. by Peter Garside, James Raven and Rainer Schöwerling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 76.

³ Olivia More, *The Welsh Cottage* (Wellington, Shropshire: F. Houlston & Son, 1820); Grace Buchanan Stevens, *Llewellen, or the Vale of Phlinlimmon* (Edinburgh: Macredie, Skelly & Co., 1818).

⁴ Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era', p. 84.

methodology. I aim to contribute to and build upon scholarship on Romantic regionalism through my work on three particularly under-studied case study regions. This thesis is the first detailed research on female-authored novels in the Midlands and the West Country in the 1810s. It also aims to expand the scope of previous scholarship on the Welsh novel. I use cartographical analysis to handle my large corpus and consider the representation of these three regions together, for the first time. I hope to demonstrate the value of including these regional novels in scholarship on the Romantic period. I also hope to provide further impetus for the recovery of forgotten women writers. I wish to suggest that these female novelists engage with some of the concerns associated with Romanticism as a movement, namely its preoccupation with rurality, nostalgia, and nature.⁵ I aim to resituate Austen in the context of her publishing contemporaries, giving them equal weight, rather than privileging her novels based on their canonicity. I hope to present the development of the female-authored novel in a new light, by taking a synoptic approach in my study of a decade in which the majority of novelists were women. In focusing on the 1810s, I also aim to encourage the extension of discussions of the ‘regional novel’ genre, often considered to be a later nineteenth century phenomenon, to include the early nineteenth century. Regional novels are an important record of cultural attitudes. They often represent an ideal of ‘how things ought to be’.⁶ This thesis will outline the often conservative and nationalist stereotypes presented in my corpus, which I call the ‘generic rural ideal’. It will also draw attention to the main ways in which the representation of each case study region departs from these stereotypes.

2. Regional contexts

This section will introduce the ways in which my discussions of regionality draw on the interrelated scholarly contexts of Romantic regionalism, ‘four nations’ recovery, literary geography, and the regional novel genre. It will also explain the spatial terminology which I will use throughout this thesis. My choice of Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands as case study regions will be contextualised. I will then introduce key themes common to the

⁵ James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin, ‘Introduction: engaging the eidometropolis’, in *Romantic Metropolis: the urban scene of British culture, 1780-1840*, ed. by James Chandler and Kevin Gilmartin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 1; p. 21.

⁶ K.D.M. Snell, ‘The regional novel: themes for interdisciplinary research’, in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland 1800-1990*, ed. by K.D.M. Snell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 18.

representation of all three of these regions: the generic rural ideal and representations of remoteness and retirement.

Romantic regionalism

The importance of regionalism in Romantic-period literature is becoming increasingly recognised in the early decades of the twenty-first century. A ‘monolithic, metropolitan’ conception of British, and often specifically English, Romanticism is beginning to be replaced by one which considers a wider range of regional spaces.⁷ Regionalism has become a ‘key critical dynamic of Romantic studies’.⁸ Discussions of British Romanticism and Romantic-period literature increasingly emphasise locality, including the provincial.⁹ To date, the recovery of Romantic-period regional literature has primarily taken place through a ‘four nations’ framework. ‘Four nations’ research highlights the ‘multiple nations and regions within the British Isles’, but, in practice, it rarely considers internal regions within these nations.¹⁰ ‘Regional’, in this scholarship, often functionally means Scottish or Irish and, to a lesser extent, Welsh. As David Higgins argues, Englishness ‘has not been sufficiently recognised’ in Romantic regionalism, partly due to greater interest in ‘writing from traditions that have been most obviously marginalised’.¹¹ Moreover, Welsh literature has not enjoyed comparable ‘prominence’ to that of Scotland or Ireland, despite ostensibly being included in ‘four nations’ work.¹² While key research on English regional spaces and on Wales has been brought together by Nicholas Roe in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* (2010), and Damian Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt in *Wales and the Romantic Imagination* (2007),

⁷ Daydd Moore, ‘Devolving Romanticism: Nation, Region and the Case of Devon and Cornwall’, *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008), p. 953.

⁸ Nicholas Roe, ‘Introduction’, in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 5.

⁹ For discussions of locality in Romantic period literature, see, for example: Moore, p. 952; Fiona Stafford, *Local Attachments: The Province of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 30; David Higgins, *Romantic Englishness: Local, National and Global Selves, 1780-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 12; Christina Morin, *The Gothic novel in Ireland, c. 1760-1829* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

¹⁰ Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Four Nations Fiction by Women, 1789-1830: Introduction’, *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (Spring 2017), p. 14.

¹¹ Higgins, pp. 9-10.

¹² Damian Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt, ‘Introduction: Devolving Romanticism’, in *Wales and the Romantic Imagination* ed. by Damian Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 2.

the regions of England and Wales remain relatively critically neglected.¹³ Scholarship on regional Romanticism has tended to focus primarily on poetry and non-fiction, and on male writers of these forms; this is particularly noticeable in the cases of the English regions and Wales.¹⁴ Representations of both have been overlooked in scholarship on Romantic-period novels, despite their frequent appearance as settings. Although novels set in England receive a great deal of scholarly attention in general, they are not frequently studied in relation to their ‘regional aspect’.¹⁵ Welsh novels of this period have not benefited significantly from reassessments of Celtic literary history due to their mostly being written by Englishwomen, and therefore not being considered ‘Celtic enough’.¹⁶

Scholarly interest in Romantic regionalism emerged in the context of the interdisciplinary ‘spatial turn’, which began in the later part of the twentieth century, influenced by the work of theorists including Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre.¹⁷ Attentiveness to space in literature increased further with the development of the field of ‘literary geography’.¹⁸ ‘The opposition between space and place’ has become a central concern of this scholarship.¹⁹ My use of these terms in this thesis is influenced by the work of Yi-Fu Tuan, who argues that ‘space’ is more abstract than ‘place’.²⁰ For Tuan, place ‘is a concretion of value’, while space includes the ‘expanses that separate or link places’ and it is ‘transformed into place as it acquires definition and meaning’.²¹ This thesis includes discussion of places, such as towns and landmarks, but the novels in my corpus frequently

¹³ Damian Walford Davies and Lynda Pratt (eds.), *Wales and the Romantic Imagination* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007); Nicholas Roe, (ed.), *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁴ See, for example, Walford Davies and Pratt (eds.); Roe (ed.); Stafford, *Local Attachments*.

¹⁵ K.D.M. Snell, *The Bibliography of Regional Fiction in Britain and Ireland, 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 50.

¹⁶ Jane Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales: Nation, Gender, Identity*, 2nd edn (University of Wales Press, 2010), p. 10.

¹⁷ Damian Walford Davies, *Cartographies of culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012), p. 3; Bertrand Westphal, ‘Foreword’, in *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2011), pp. xii-xiii; For further discussion of the spatial turn in literary studies, see: Robert T. Tally Jr., ‘Introduction: The reassertion of space in literary studies’, in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space* (London: Routledge 2017), ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr., pp. 18-27.

¹⁸ Walford Davies, *Cartographies of Culture*, p. 6.

¹⁹ Andrew Thacker, ‘Critical Literary Geography’ in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 62.

²⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: the perspective of experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p. 6.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12; p. 136.

describe their settings without this degree of specificity, thereby positioning them as spaces. Although I refer to spaces and places in this thesis according to Tuan's definition, I depart from his definition of them as a binary. Instead, I draw on Bill Richardson and Doreen B. Massey's theorisations that place and space are more akin to points on a continuum, particularly when discussing literary settings.²² I use the term 'settings' to refer to both spaces and places which are the scenes of action in novels. These settings are distinguished from references to, or comments on, locations not visited by characters.

'Literary cartography' has become a key methodology within literary geography.²³ The cartographical field has expanded rapidly in recent years, with developments in digital mapping technologies leading to a 'digital spatial turn'.²⁴ This approach has begun to influence Romantic studies, as demonstrated in a series of recent projects, such as the work in *Romantic Cartographies: mapping, literature, culture, 1789-1832* (2020).²⁵ This thesis aims to contribute to Romantic cartography through its focus on the regional settings of a large group of previously overlooked texts. I follow the cartographic methodology pioneered by Franco Moretti, of using maps as 'analytical tools' for investigating literary works.²⁶ I have created maps which reveal trends in the distribution of settings within each region under consideration (see 'Methodology and structure', below).

I use the term 'regional' throughout this thesis because it is more neutral than 'rural' or 'provincial'. I also use the term 'subregions' to discuss counties and cities within these regions. This allows me to consider the extent to which the novels in my corpus acknowledge internal regional variation. Regional does not necessarily mean rural, although this association is sometimes assumed. Urban spaces still exist in a regional context.²⁷ I discuss

²² Bill Richardson, 'Mapping the Literary Text: Spatio-Cultural Theory and Practice', *Philosophy and Literature*, 42:1 (2018), p. 77; Doreen B. Massey, *Space, place, and gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1994), p. 5.

²³ Barbara Piatti and Lorenz Hurni, 'Cartographies of Fictional Worlds', *The Cartographic Journal*, 48:4 (2011), p. 218.

²⁴ See, for example, David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson, and Patricia Murrieta-Flores, (eds.) *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016); for discussion of 'the digital spatial turn', see, Peta Mitchell, 'Literary Geography and the Digital: the emergence of neogeography', in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space* (London: Routledge 2017), ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr., pp. 151-166.

²⁵ Sally Bushell, Julia S. Carlson, and Damian Walford Davies (eds.), *Romantic Cartographies: mapping, literature, culture, 1789-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); for an overview of digital mapping work in British Romantic writing, see, David Cooper, 'Digital Literary Cartographies: Mapping British Romanticism', in *The Routledge Handbook of Literature and Space* (London: Routledge, 2017), ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr., pp. 231-250.

²⁶ Franco Moretti, *An Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998). p. 3

²⁷ Snell, *The Bibliography*, pp. 2-3.

both rural and urban settings in my case study regions. This enables me to identify region-specific trends and, conversely, those which relate to urban or rural spaces, generally. The novels in my corpus represent rural settings much more extensively, frequently, and positively than urban ones. Although many of the novels discussed in this thesis prioritise ‘non-metropolitan’ settings, this term is not always an acceptable alternative for ‘regional’. Like other urban spaces, metropolitan areas are not detached from regionality. I similarly avoid describing novels as ‘provincial’ because the term often has ‘patronising’ or ‘disdainful’ connotations, implying the superiority of the metropolitan, against which it is defined.²⁸ London is the primary metropolitan space which these novels position in opposition to my case study regions. At the same time, several provincial urban settings function as local metropolises in these texts: they operate as ‘capital to the provinces and point of contact with the wider world’.²⁹ We ought not to assume ‘a binary polarity’ between the metropolitan and provincial in the long eighteenth century, as Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory have highlighted.³⁰ I will discuss the ways in which some regional urban spaces are associated with similar connotations to London. For example, they are often associated with a negatively constructed sense of worldliness in opposition to the nationalistic and insular rural ideal constructed by many of the novels in my corpus (which will be outlined below).

Although it is important to distinguish between regional and national spaces, this is complicated by their interdependence. This thesis’ focus on regional settings often entails discussion of the nation. In the novels in my corpus, the representation of a regional space frequently serves to reinforce an image of the wider nation, whether by microcosm or by contrast. Relatedly, it is also important to consider the context in which the terms ‘Britain’ and ‘England’ are used in these texts. In this period, ‘England’ was often used to stand for ‘Great Britain’ and ‘very often for its empire as well’.³¹ This ‘interchangeable’ usage of ‘British’ and ‘English’ can lead to confusion; it is often ‘not clear’ whether a writer intends to use the extended meaning of ‘English’ or to refer only to England.³² In this thesis, I follow

²⁸ William Hughes, ‘Introduction: The Uncanny Space of Regionality: Gothic Beyond the Metropolis’, in *Gothic Britain: Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles*, ed. by William, and Ruth Heholt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), p. 4; Snell, ‘The regional novel’, p. 48.

²⁹ Chandler and Gilmartin, p. 1.

³⁰ Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory, ‘Introduction’, in *Creating and Consuming Culture in North-East England, 1660–1830*, ed. by Helen Berry and Jeremy Gregory (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p. 10.

³¹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 162.

³² Sara L. Maurer, ‘National and Regional Literatures’, in *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature*, ed. by Kate Flint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 604; Higgins, p. 10.

Elizabeth K. Helsinger's approach to the relationship between Britain and its constituent parts, and the particular role of English rurality within this. As Helsinger argues, in the early nineteenth century, 'Nation might', according to context, 'presume an English core or expand to include one or more of the 'internal colonies', namely Wales, Scotland, or Ireland.³³ There was a prominent trend for representing the British nation through 'images and narratives of, usually, English land and rural life'.³⁴ These spaces are 'placed at the center [sic] of a British nation' and 'made to stand for' it.³⁵ The novels in my corpus which use English regional settings participate in this trend. I have found that Wales has a similar role in national representation in my corpus. This is because Wales is commonly treated as an extension of England and is often subsumed within the model of Britishness which is defined by the centring of English rurality as an ideal. These novels' representations of my case study regions in England and Wales often participate in national identity construction which symbolically centres England, rather than necessarily reflecting the more nuanced reality of the British nation. These novels generally use their regional settings to promote a nationalist ideal of Britain. Nationalism has been a common motivation of the regional novel genre throughout its history.³⁶ I will discuss the prominent role of natural landscapes in national representation below, under 'The generic rural ideal'.

The regional novel

Given that regional and national spaces are interdependent concepts which had a particularly 'vexed' relationship in the early nineteenth century, 'no distinct line' exists between national and regional fictions in this period in a British context.³⁷ This is further complicated by the fact that the regional novel form was 'developed by writers exploring national [...] cultures', namely Maria Edgeworth and Sir Walter Scott, who are often cited as its originators.³⁸

³³ Elizabeth K. Helsinger, *Rural Scenes and National Representation: Britain, 1815-1850* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 9; Michael Hechter, *Internal colonialism: the Celtic fringe in British national development, 1536-1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 9.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

³⁶ Snell, 'The regional novel', p. 15.

³⁷ Maurer, p. 598.

³⁸ Liz Bellamy, 'Regionalism and nationalism: Maria Edgeworth, Walter Scott and the definition of Britishness', in *The Regional Novel in Britain and Ireland 1800-1990*, ed. by K.D.M. Snell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 54.

Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800) was ground-breaking in its depiction of 'small provincial living' in a 'particular locality'.³⁹ K.D.M. Snell argues that Scott's innovations meant that the genre was developing throughout the 1810s, the decade on which this thesis focuses.⁴⁰ Snell has demonstrated that the regional novel is 'widely neglected', as it is often studied 'in guises other than its regional aspect'.⁴¹ The traditional focus on the Victorian era and the twentieth century in scholarship on the regional novel has led to the particular neglect of the Romantic-era regional novel.⁴² This is despite the period's importance as that of the genre's 'birth'.⁴³ Later regional novels owe their development to a transition which occurred in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the use of 'unidentified or neutral' settings gave way to 'intense interest in local color [sic]'.⁴⁴ This focus on locality was expressed not only in regional fiction but also in adjacent forms including travel writing and the national tale (see discussion of genre development under 'The 1810s', below).

In this thesis, I use the term 'regional novel' to discuss the genre of fiction with a regional focus which was developing during the 1810s. The extent to which my corpus of novels from the 1810s conforms to the conventions of the later (Victorian and twentieth century) regional novel genre sheds light on the pattern of its development. The novels in my corpus meet Bentley's definition of the regional novel in that they represent 'a particular region'.⁴⁵ My analysis will consider the extent to which they represent their settings in 'such a way as the reader is conscious of the characteristics which are unique to that region', by comparing their regional representations to a British regional stereotype.⁴⁶ As novels 'set in a recognisable region' that 'bears an approximation to a real place' through representation of 'aspects of the culture of that area' and 'local geography, topography, and landscape', they

³⁹ Marilyn Butler, 'Introduction', in Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent and Ennui* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. 2-3

⁴⁰ Snell, 'The regional novel', p. 5.

⁴¹ Snell, *The Bibliography*, p. 50

⁴² See, for example, Phyllis Bentley, *The English Regional Novel* (New York: Haskell House, 1966), p. 13; John Lucas, *The Literature of Change: studies in the nineteenth-century provincial novel* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1977), pp. ix-xi.

⁴³ Fiona Stafford, 'England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 115.

⁴⁴ James Reed, *Sir Walter Scott: Landscape and Locality* (London: The Athlone Press, 1980), p. 6; Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 165.

⁴⁵ Bentley, p. 7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

also partially conform to Snell's definition of the regional novel.⁴⁷ However, the regional novel of the 1810s discussed in this thesis differs from the later genre conventionally labelled as *the* regional novel. The novels in my corpus have mostly not yet developed some key aspects of the regional novel genre as defined by Bentley and Snell. Specifically, they do not primarily focus on 'working' or 'ordinary' people or emphasise 'reality and democracy', including in the representation of dialogue (see discussion of dialect under 'The generic rural').⁴⁸ Instead, the novels in my corpus share more of the characteristics of eighteenth-century regional fiction, such as the use of 'regional stereotype[s]' and an 'elite overview'.⁴⁹ The majority of the novels discussed in this thesis therefore represent an earlier stage in the development of the regional novel than the innovative works of Edgeworth and Scott with which they were contemporaneous. The development of the genre was, therefore, not strictly chronological.

The case study regions: Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands

I have chosen Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands as case study regions. I did so partly because they are all currently under-studied in relation to female authors of the 1810s, and also because they complement one another, as contiguous spaces. This thesis allocates a chapter to each region in order to examine the extent to which they are represented distinctively. Many of the novels I will discuss combine two or even all three of these regions as settings for different passages, so several of them will appear in more than one chapter.

Although Jane Aaron and Andrew Davies have drawn attention to Welsh novels of this period, these texts have not yet benefited extensively from 'four nations' recovery projects.⁵⁰ I have therefore chosen Wales as a case study region in order to attempt to expand the breadth of scholarly discussion of Welsh novels. I have identified nineteen female-authored novels published in the 1810s which use settings in Wales. This is a larger number than has been included in previous research. This thesis also aims to offer a new perspective

⁴⁷ Snell, 'The regional novel', p. 1.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 2; Bentley, pp. 45-46

⁴⁹ Snell, 'The regional novel', p. 5

⁵⁰ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales*; Andrew Davies, 'The Reputed Nation of Inspiration: Representations of Wales in fiction from the Romantic Period 1780-1829' (Doctoral thesis, Cardiff University, 2001).

on Welsh novels because my choice of case study regions allows me to compare novelistic representations of Wales with those of the contiguous English regions. This contextual approach has not been previously attempted. I will argue that Anglophone fiction of this period commonly treats Wales as a particularly remote region of England. This trend further justifies my discussion of Welsh settings alongside English ones.

The tendency of writers in this period to use England to stand for Britain, as discussed above, has made it difficult to undertake scholarly discussion of representations of England itself. Sara L. Maurer describes Englishness as ‘an identity so invested in assimilation as to be no clear identity at all’.⁵¹ I agree with Berry and Gregory’s assessment that Linda Colley’s influential work on the coherence of Britishness as a ‘superimposed’ identity has contributed to a lack of scholarly attention to the distinctiveness of England’s regions in the long eighteenth century.⁵² This thesis participates in the renewed attention to the English regions suggested by Berry and Gregory and the overdue ‘reassessment of the English tradition’ called for by Higgins.⁵³ England is ‘one of the most varied countries in the world’ in terms of physical landscapes, a diversity that is reflected in Romantic-period literature.⁵⁴ However, regional differences in the representation of English spaces in novels of this period are rarely acknowledged in existing scholarship. As Roe notes, ‘the provincial diversity of English Romantic writing’ is frequently ‘absorbed into the Anglo-British monoculture’.⁵⁵ Gary Kelly has argued that, in novels of this period, England, as the colonial ‘centre’, was ‘defined’ by ‘tales of fashionable life’ in London and ‘village anecdotes’, but ‘there was very little in the way of a regionalized market for fiction dealing only with a particular locale’.⁵⁶ Contrary to this, my analysis of a wide range of texts set in my three case study regions shows a notable degree of specificity in the representation of England’s regions, albeit alongside broad generalisations and the polarisation of urban and rural spaces. Also, the particularly frequent use of some subregions, for example, Devon and the Peak District, suggests that some novelists chose settings which they could expect to have popular appeal.

⁵¹ Maurer, p. 604.

⁵² Berry and Gregory, pp. 1-3; Colley, p. 6.

⁵³ Berry and Gregory; Higgins, p. 10.

⁵⁴ Alan Everitt, ‘Country, County and Town: Patterns of Regional Evolution in England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 29 (1979), p. 106.

⁵⁵ Roe, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

⁵⁶ Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830* (London: Longman, 1989), p. 92.

This thesis contains the first detailed study of a corpus of novels from the Romantic period in relation to their shared settings in the West Country and the Midlands. The importance of the West Country in Romantic literature is now acknowledged. For example, Roe's *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* has demonstrated the existence of 'a distinct, West Country appeal to the Romantic imagination'.⁵⁷ Criticism has, however, focused on the West Country in relation to male poets and non-fiction writers. The role of the female-authored West Country novel has been relatively overlooked. Work on the Romantic novel in the West Country has centred on the role of Bath as a social centre.⁵⁸ The Romantic Midlands has fared similarly, with scholarship primarily focused on the 'Midlands Enlightenment's' influence on the 'emergence' of the Romantic movement.⁵⁹ The Midlands has not previously received any specific scholarly attention as a setting of Romantic-period novels. I chose the Midlands and the West Country as case study regions not only because they are under-studied, but also because their contiguity with each other and with Wales allows me to consider how far novelistic representations of space are influenced by physical geography, as opposed to formal regional boundaries. As definitions of English regions are acknowledged to be 'particularly difficult' for scholars to agree upon, I refined working definitions of the West Country and the Midlands based on patterns which emerged in my corpus (see Chapters Three and Four for these definitions).⁶⁰

The generic rural ideal

In these novels, many features which initially appear to be distinctive local colour are often, in fact, generic. This is an irony common to many cultural representations of locality. As Roland Robertson argues, 'much of what is often declared to be local is in fact the local expressed in generalized recipes of locality'.⁶¹ My analysis revealed a consistent transregional stereotype, which I call the 'generic rural ideal'. In my corpus, this imagery is most commonly used in order to support conservative, often specifically Tory and Anglican,

⁵⁷ Roe, 'Introduction' p. 4.

⁵⁸ See, for example, Mary K. Hill, *Bath and the Eighteenth Century Novel* (Bath: Bath University Press, 1989).

⁵⁹ Gavin Budge, 'Introduction: Science and the Soul in the Midlands Enlightenment', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 30:2 (2008), p. 160.

⁶⁰ Everitt, p. 80.

⁶¹ Roland Robertson, 'Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity Heterogeneity', in *Global Modernities*, ed. by Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995), p. 36.

ideology. Many of what would have been the distinguishing features of a region are generally excluded because they are not conducive to this ideal. In this section, I will describe the most common generic rural features, in order to facilitate the subsequent discussion in each chapter of the ways in which the representation of that region relates to or departs from these stereotypes. I will begin by discussing the context of this generic rural ideal, then outline the tropes which it includes and those which it excludes.

In the majority of the novels in my corpus, the use of idealised generic rural tropes relates to their participation in conservative ideology. Many of them embody the early-nineteenth century form of ‘free-floating conservatism’ in novels which developed out of anti-Jacobinism, noted by Matthew O. Grenby.⁶² Conservatism was ‘returning to old, pre-Revolutionary battles’ including fights ‘against social change’ in relation to gender roles and social mobility.⁶³ The prevailing political tone of the novels discussed in this thesis relates to the particular pressure on women writers to ensure their work was perceived to be acceptably conservative in the wake of the French Revolution and the backlash against Mary Wollstonecraft.⁶⁴ This conservatism often has a nationalist aspect. It frequently draws on the long established relationship between British national identity and its pastoral landscapes which ‘became firmly riveted to the national imagination’ during the eighteenth century.⁶⁵ I agree with Helsinger that idealised nineteenth-century images of rural England often imply ‘that rural life in geographically English places is (or has been or should be) like this, and that rural England can represent Britain’ (see the discussion of this and its application to Welsh spaces under ‘Romantic regionalism’, above).⁶⁶ Representations of rurality ‘acquire[d] increasing currency as metaphors for Englishness’ throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶⁷ In their preoccupation with the rural as natural, the novels in my corpus show the influence of eighteenth-century attitudes which developed into the concerns of the Romantic movement. For example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s ‘conception of nature and the natural’ was

⁶² Matthew O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel: British conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 207.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 208.

⁶⁴ Elizabeth A. Fay, ‘Travel Writing’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Women’s Writing in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Devoney Looser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 76; Stuart Curran, ‘Women readers, women writers’ in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. by Stuart Curran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 180.

⁶⁵ John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, e-book edn (London: Routledge 2013), p. 489.

⁶⁶ Helsinger, p. 13.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

influential in shaping cultural preferences for ‘places perceived as more natural or primitive’ in the face of the urbanisation of Europe.⁶⁸ During the eighteenth century, ‘England became the most rapidly urbanizing part of Europe’, and by the Romantic period, there was ‘a general sense of displacement from country to city, and especially to London’.⁶⁹ Many writers responded to this by further emphasising the value of ‘rusticity’ and by participating in the ‘cult of nature’; John Brewer argues that this ‘European phenomenon [...] took on a strongly patriotic and even regional tone’.⁷⁰ This trend for associating regional spaces with a positive image of natural rurality which is made to symbolise the nation is often visible in my corpus.

As Raymond Williams famously argued in *The Country and The City*, the association between ‘the country’ and ‘a natural way of life: of peace, of innocence, and simple virtue’ can be traced back to the classical pastoral and bucolic, Arcadia, and the Biblical Eden.⁷¹ English ‘poetry of “rural retreat” of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries developed these ancient ideas into the ‘neo-pastoral’ of ‘the country house and its estate’, a precursor to the images of country life presented in my corpus.⁷² The presentation of private estates as ‘symbols of the old natural order’, as interrogated by Williams, is as central to these early nineteenth century novels as it is to the poetry which preceded them.⁷³ In many rural art forms, an ideal is created through a perspective which deliberately excludes particular elements of rural life. Martha Bohrer demonstrates the influence of landscape design and painting on fiction, using the metaphor of ‘visual and verbal ha-has’, which have ‘aesthetic and hegemonizing functions’.⁷⁴ The representation of the poor in my corpus strongly resembles the conditions in which they appear in contemporary landscape paintings. John Barrell, for example, demonstrates that ‘poets and painters’ represented the ‘rural poor’ of

⁶⁸ Heather Williams, ‘Rousseau and Romanticism in Wales’, in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau and British Romanticism: Gender and Selfhood, Politics and Nation*, ed. by Russell Goulbourne and David Higgins (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 75; p. 80.

⁶⁹ Brewer, p. 395; Chandler and Gilmartin, p. 2.

⁷⁰ Brewer, p. 488.

⁷¹ Raymond Williams, *The Country and The City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 1, pp. 12 -14; David Fairer, *English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century 1700-1780* (Harlow, Essex: Pearson Education, 2003), p. 80; Brewer, p. 489.

⁷² Raymond Williams, p. 18; p. 22; Helsing, p. 5.

⁷³ Raymond Williams, p. 41.

⁷⁴ Martha Bohrer, ‘Thinking locally: novelistic worlds in provincial fiction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 93.

England in a limited manner, in order to portray them as ‘contented’.⁷⁵ I argue that this also applies to the novels in my corpus. They similarly display a conservative tendency to restrict their regional representations to an idealised generic stereotype, in order to avoid implying a need for radical change. Where the novels in my corpus suggest improvements to contemporary society, they usually avoid calling for a revolutionary shift by instead advocating for a return to the ‘unlocalised “Old England”’ which Williams describes.⁷⁶ This nostalgic ideal evolves across time according to the nature of the problems for which it is being proposed as the alternative. As well as appearing in rural painting and poetry, this theme is consistent across the tradition of rural fiction which developed throughout the eighteenth century and the Romantic period. I agree with Liz Bellamy that regional fiction of this period often evokes a ‘cult of primitivism’ which shapes the rural ‘into a romantic ideal which could challenge the values of the present, instead of being a dangerous and destabilising force’.⁷⁷ The use of the ‘*topos* of rural simplicity’ increased ‘during and after the 1790s as a refuge from the political struggles of that decade’.⁷⁸ After 1800, this developed into a focus on the theme of ‘rural domesticity’, which can be seen in my corpus.⁷⁹

The generic rural ideal relates to the overwhelmingly positive representation of country settings using a limited range of tropes. These settings limit the potential cast of characters and facilitate some conventional plot elements, a phenomenon on which Jane West comments in *The Refusal* (1810):

a lady of fashion finds the yawning propensity increase with each preparation for removing the heroine into the country. Indeed, unless there be an absolute necessity for a bower scene between two lovers, an elopement at the garden gate, or an insuperable want of moonlight and nightingales for a ready-made sonnet, I would not recommend going into the country at all.⁸⁰

The novels in my corpus are mostly commonly structured around a happy rural childhood, a period of tribulation, often in an urban setting, and an eventual happy married life. This latter

⁷⁵ John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Paintings, 1730-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 16.

⁷⁶ Raymond Williams, p. 10.

⁷⁷ Bellamy, p. 57.

⁷⁸ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 86.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁸⁰ Jane West, *The Refusal* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1810), ii, p. 20.

stage may take place in the original rural setting, or an alternative space, which is usually also rural. Rural settings are overwhelmingly associated with hygiene. They embody contemporary preoccupations with ‘unhealthful air’ and the benefits of ‘change of air’.⁸¹ Country air is ‘free’, ‘pure’, ‘invigorating’ and ‘salubrious’.⁸² Heroines bred in the countryside are typically in ‘rude health’, in contrast to those born in cities, in keeping with contemporary beliefs.⁸³ This is valued because it will make them better future wives and mothers. Relatedly, a countryside upbringing is also associated with moral purity. The correlation of rurality with ‘innocence’ and ‘virtue’ was long-established by the time of these novels’ publication.⁸⁴ This appears in my corpus in the trope of the education of an innocent and virtuous wife in the countryside (see ‘Female freedom in regional spaces’, below). It is sometimes explicitly stated that a heroine’s rural upbringing has left her incapable of even understanding cruelty: ‘innocent, reared in the country, how could a mind so pure and so tutored as her’s [sic] harbour suspicion?’⁸⁵ The prominence of themes of childhood innocence in these novels also relates to nostalgia, a preoccupation which influenced many writers in the Romantic period. For example, Charles Lamb’s *Rosamund Gray* (1798) explores the desire to return to a ‘harmonious’ childhood.⁸⁶ Raymond Williams described the Romantic period as one of ‘three main periods of rural complaint in which a happier past is explicitly evoked’.⁸⁷ This nostalgia was not just personal but societal; it appears in these novels not only in the lives of individual heroines, but also in the portrayal of supposedly contemporary action which is also quasi-historical in that it excludes symbols of change, such as industrial development (see below). As Helsinger outlines, from the 1810s onwards, the impact of financial and social crises meant that a contemporary rural scene could not

⁸¹ Erin Lafford and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, ‘Introduction: Change of Air’, *Romanticism*, 27:2 (2021), p. 121, p. 117.

⁸² Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, ed. by John Wiltshire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 476; Elizabeth Pinchard, *Mystery and Confidence: A Tale* (London: Henry Colburn, 1814), ii, p. 201; [Mrs] Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer; Or, Memoirs of the Bristol Family* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1814), i, pp. 76-77. N.B., the anonymous Mrs Edgeworth, author of *The Ballad Singer*, is not to be confused with Maria Edgeworth.

⁸³ Maria Iliff, *The Prior Claim* (London: J. Burch, 1813), ii, p. 101; Pamela Sharpe, ‘Population and society 1700-1840’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 498.

⁸⁴ Raymond Williams, p. 1; Brewer, p. 512.

⁸⁵ Sarah Green, *The Fugitive, Or Family Incidents* (London: Black, Parry, & Co., 1815), i, p. 59; see also, Alicia Lefanu, *Strathallan* (1816), ed. by Anna M. Fitzer (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008), p. 81.

⁸⁶ Charles Lamb, *A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret* (Birmingham: Thomas Pearson, 1798); Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 66.

⁸⁷ Raymond Williams, p. 291.

realistically be represented as an ‘image of serene retirement’ or of ‘British power and prosperity’.⁸⁸ In order to evoke nostalgia, these novels often represent a timeless, generic rurality, rather than keeping pace with developments in realism and ‘naturalism’ that were taking place in other genres.⁸⁹ Nostalgia was commonly referenced in this period by both radicals and conservatives.⁹⁰ In my corpus, the latter association is much more prevalent: nostalgic rurality is primarily used to support their conservative form of nationalism.

The conservatism of these novels is often expressed through a focus on idealised, rural domestic scenes. Emphasising domesticity was a common cultural response to fears of the ‘evangelical revival, the French revolution, and the rise of radicalism’ in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁹¹ Women writers faced particular ‘pressure’ to conform to this trend.⁹² Anne McClintock argues that, in Britain, women, as well as the working classes, became ‘the conservative repository of the national archaic’.⁹³ The ‘familial’ became associated with the nation and its future, but was also seen as ‘beyond history’.⁹⁴ One way in which the relationship between the domestic and the national is explored in my corpus is through a focus on charity. These novels often depict the paternalistic relations of upper-class characters with their tenants, who often appear as deserving recipients. Barrell describes the compulsory attribution of ‘industry’, in the sense of hard work, to the rural poor in contemporary paintings.⁹⁵ This trope also appears in my corpus. As Britain was seen to be primarily represented by its rural spaces, positive depictions of rural characters function as a patriotic statement. While the novels in my corpus generally avoid describing the suffering of the rural poor, they do show acts of charitable giving by the upper-class characters. They contribute to a tradition of attempts to ‘convince the rural rich that it was in their commercial interest to provide for their inferiors’ by providing ‘inspiring models of country hospitality’,

⁸⁸ Helsinger, p. 7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

⁹⁰ Brewer, p. 519.

⁹¹ John Beckett, ‘Leisure, Recreation and Entertainment’, in *A Centenary History of Nottingham*, ed. by John Beckett and others (Chichester: Phillimore, 2006), p. 389.

⁹² Gary Kelly, *Women, Writing and Revolution, 1790-1827* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), p. 179.

⁹³ Anne McClintock, “‘No Longer in a Future Heaven’: Nationalism, Gender, and Race”, in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 264.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Barrell, p. 17.

including in fiction.⁹⁶ They build on depictions of charity in other novels, particularly Elizabeth Hamilton's *The Cottagers of Glenburnie* (1808): several of the novels in my corpus are similarly didactic rural tales, but many others show Hamilton's influence more implicitly.⁹⁷ The heroine often visits the poor, providing practical support based on her domestic qualifications. A typical example appears in Anna Maria Bennett's *Faith and Fiction, Or, Shining Lights in a Dark Generation* (1816), in which Ellen not only pays for a doctor for an old woman, but chooses to 'bestow as much of her own time as possible' caring for 'the aged nurse'.⁹⁸ This reflects the trend in my corpus for depicting rural education as creating the ideal woman. Contemporary discourse suggested that charitable work was not only women's Christian duty but also 'trained' them 'to be better wives and mothers'.⁹⁹ These novels also frequently depict paternalistic acts of generalised charity by the heroine's male relative or husband, such as the giving of a feast. The celebration of the heir's christening in Northamptonshire in Elizabeth Pinchard's *Mystery and Confidence* (1814) is a characteristic example: 'each family was [...] liberally supplied with bread, meat, clothing, and money'.¹⁰⁰ In keeping with their conservative politics, most of these novels celebrate models of charity which perpetuate the working classes' 'dependence' on landowners.¹⁰¹ They criticise the late eighteenth-century 'crisis of paternalism' in the face of 'agricultural investment' and growing 'aristocratic negligence', partly because they could leave a 'restless populace [...] with no reason to respect or submit to their social betters'.¹⁰² They celebrate an ideal, grateful rural community which poses no threat of revolution.

These novels' valorisation of the picturesque is also relevant to their conservative idealisation of paternalism. 'Critics of improvement' argued that society should return to a more 'natural' rural social order, represented by 'picturesque cottages with healthy loyal labourers'.¹⁰³ The visual appeal of rural settings is often described in generic terms. James

⁹⁶ Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), pp. 440-441.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Cottagers of Glenburnie: and other educational writings*, ed. by Pam Perkins (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2010).

⁹⁸ Anna Maria Bennett, *Faith and Fiction, Or, Shining Lights in a Dark Generation* (London: Minerva Press, 1816), iii, p. 21.

⁹⁹ F.K. Prochaska, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 6; p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ Pinchard, iii, p. 93.

¹⁰¹ Raymond Williams, p. 183.

¹⁰² Langford, p. 441, p. 389; Grenby, p. 158; p. 154.

¹⁰³ Brewer, p. 512.

Reed argues that, before Scott, fictional landscapes were often ‘little more than painted scenery’ in a kind of ‘topographical vacuum’.¹⁰⁴ The novels in my corpus show that this lack of specificity persisted throughout the 1810s. The terms ‘beautiful’ and ‘picturesque’ both appear frequently, as a kind of shorthand.¹⁰⁵ The concept of beauty in these novels relates to Edmund Burke’s theory in his *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), and their approach to the picturesque to William Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales*.¹⁰⁶ In my corpus, the beautiful landscape of ‘the country house and its intensively cultivated lands’ appears just as frequently as the ‘varied, asymmetrical’ picturesque.¹⁰⁷ The Burkean sublime is evoked more rarely, because it is more often related to the ‘wild peripheries of Britain’.¹⁰⁸ These novels’ rural settings are most commonly located on the ideal ‘boundary between cultivated and wild nature’.¹⁰⁹ They resemble David Fairer’s description of a traditional eighteenth-century landscape, with ‘foreground pastoral’, ‘middle-distance picturesque’, and ‘distant sublime’.¹¹⁰ The setting of Hatton’s *Cambrian Pictures* (1810) is a typical example: Dolgelly Castle is located near the sea, between ‘land in a state of the highest cultivation’ and ‘mountains of stupendous height’.¹¹¹ Good characters are drawn to rural scenery, while immoral characters betray their indifference to it, as is conventional in literature of this period. Austen’s portrayal of Fanny’s affinity with nature in *Mansfield Park* (1814) is a typical example: her ‘rhapsodizing’ positions her as morally superior to Mary, who, even when she is most attracted to Edmund, can only ‘suppose it pleasant to spend *half* the year in the country’.¹¹² The working classes are generally excluded from the enjoyment of scenery and from the implications of moral superiority which it reveals. For example, in Emma Parker’s *Fitz-Edward; or, the Cambrians* (1811), the narrator mentions ‘the *femme de chambre* and valet’

¹⁰⁴ Reed, p. 6.

¹⁰⁵ See, for example, Emily Clark, *The Esquimaux; Or, Fidelity* (London: Minerva Press, 1819), i, p. 60.

¹⁰⁶ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1757); William Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye, and several parts of South Wales, &c* [...] (London: Printed for R. Blamire, 1782).

¹⁰⁷ Brewer, p. 511.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 512.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 516.

¹¹⁰ Fairer, p. 192.

¹¹¹ Ann Julia Kemble Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures, or, Every one has errors* (London: E. Kerby, 1810), i, p. 36.

¹¹² Austen, *Mansfield Park*, pp. 244-5.

imitating their employers by ‘stopping when they stopped and pretending to examine the beautiful views’.¹¹³ This relates to these novels’ conservative attitude to class boundaries.

The generic rural ideal is also visible in my corpus by what it is defined against. Any image or theme which is not conducive to the nationalist, Tory, and Anglican ideal is generally excluded. It is for this reason that many of the features which might otherwise be used to create specificity in the representation of a region do not usually appear in these novels, for example, local industries or recent demographic changes. In their selection of particular elements which conform to their ideological purpose, these novels reflect the ‘limited’ scope and ‘conventions’ of earlier pastoral writing.¹¹⁴ Helsinger proposes that, in their particular role in representing the nation, rural spaces are especially prone to the ‘misrepresentation that abstraction necessarily involves’, including ‘ignoring local differences’.¹¹⁵ This involves defining rural space ‘against the competing claims of other contemporary images’, a phenomenon which is common in my corpus.¹¹⁶ These novels exclude Enlightenment scientific ideals, instead promoting an image of rural nostalgia and focusing on education only as it relates to the moral character of future wives. They also exclude dissenting religion, even in regions where it was prevalent, in order to associate the generic rural ideal with Anglicanism. Catholicism is also mostly excluded from portrayals of English and Welsh spaces in my corpus: it is generally only associated with non-British characters and is mostly evoked as a point of contrast to establish the superiority of Anglicanism.

By representing rural spaces significantly more frequently and extensively than urban ones, the novels discussed here do not reflect the reality of increasing British urbanisation in the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷ Rather than towns becoming the primary objects of artistic representation, urbanisation prompted renewed literary attention to the rural, as a retreat (see ‘Remoteness and retirement’, below).¹¹⁸ Where urban spaces do appear, they are often criticised as unhealthy, both morally and physically, as was

¹¹³ Emma Parker, *Fitz-Edward; or, the Cambrians* (London: A.K Newman & Co., 1811), iii, p. 107.

¹¹⁴ Fairer, p. 80.

¹¹⁵ Helsinger, p. 19.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹¹⁷ John Langton, ‘Urban Growth and Economic Change: From the Late Seventeenth Century to 1841’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 453-490.

¹¹⁸ Chandler and Gilmartin, p. 21.

conventional in novels of this period. This relates to ‘the widespread public perception that economic and demographic growth were inseparable from dirt, squalor, disorder and disease’.¹¹⁹ Different types of urban setting are represented in contrasting ways. They reflect the sense in this period that urban spaces could be divided into ‘the places where money was made and the few remaining centres of elegance and retirement’.¹²⁰ County towns were formerly ‘centres of fashionable leisure’, but their social role had declined in the late eighteenth century as the country gentry increasingly visited London, Bath, and other resorts, in their designated season.¹²¹ Resorts, regional urban sites associated with leisure and tourism, including spas and seaside towns, are the urban spaces which are portrayed the least negatively in my corpus. They benefit from symbolic proximity to the rural: their design reflected ‘the ideal of *rus in urbe*’, allowing the enjoyment of ‘picturesque’ landscape ‘views’ which ‘seemed to draw the rural world into the urban’.¹²² While any urban space associated with leisure, including these resorts and especially Bath (see Chapter Three) has connotations of immorality in my corpus, this association is particularly strong in the case of metropolitan spaces. London is the primary metropolitan site in these novels, often appearing as an explicit point of contrast to the generic rural, but sometimes regional centres are also associated with the same negative connotations (see discussion under ‘Romantic regionalism’, above). The metropolitan had, for centuries, been associated with ‘luxury’ in contrast to the ‘honest integrity of rural society’.¹²³ In moral-domestic fiction of this period, London is often ‘the seat of vice’ and even more frequently, a space of ‘discomfort’.¹²⁴ In my corpus, London generally appears to be as Fanny views it in *Mansfield Park*: ‘at war with all respectable attachments’.¹²⁵

Industrial urban spaces are generally excluded from my corpus. This reflects the way in which, in this period, ‘urbanisation and industrialisation were distinct but connected processes’, and industrial spaces became ‘seen as sources of social and economic

¹¹⁹ Joyce Ellis, ‘Regional and County Centres, 1700-1840, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 703.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 703.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 698.

¹²² Peter Borsay, ‘Health and Leisure Resorts 1700-1840’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 800.

¹²³ Langford, p. 424.

¹²⁴ Anthony Mandal, ‘Evangelical Fiction’, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English, Volume 2: English and British Fiction, 1750–1820*, ed. by Peter Garside and Karen O’Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 266.

¹²⁵ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 501.

problems'.¹²⁶ In Chapters Two to Four, I will discuss the rare representations of industry which do appear. These passages often constitute an unusual degree of local specificity, due to the regional character of particular industries. The novels in my corpus occasionally explore the 'social threat posed by rich but irredeemably vulgar industrialists', but they rarely acknowledge that even the established gentry often benefited from industrialisation due to their 'ownership of resources and capital'.¹²⁷ They include working class people in industrial occupations more rarely than the rural poor. This relates to their conservatism and exclusion of contemporary social problems: as Raymond Williams argues, urban spaces betray inequalities more clearly, because poverty is more 'evidently problematic' in cities, due to its 'concentration'.¹²⁸

The conventional focus of these novels on the upper classes decreases the regional specificity which is available for representation. In this period, 'the culture of the labouring classes was highly local', in contrast to that of the upper classes.¹²⁹ This regionally specific culture is excluded from these novels, leaving the generic tropes described above. An example is the general lack of engagement with geographical linguistic variation in my corpus. Many of these novels entirely exclude non-standard English. Where examples do appear, they mostly take the form of a stigmatised and stereotypical transregional working-class dialect characterised by 'generic rustic features'.¹³⁰ As Jane Hodson and Alex Broadhead argue, in literature of this period, 'it is often difficult to distinguish between a regional variety that is specific as to place and a social variety that indexes class alone'.¹³¹ I will discuss non-standard speech and outline the few examples of genuinely regional features in Chapters Two to Four. The limited regional dialect representation in this large corpus of novels from the 1810s demonstrates that Edgeworth's innovation in writing *Castle Rackrent* using a 'provincial' variant of English had not led to widespread dialect representation in novels published one to two decades later.¹³²

¹²⁶ Barrie Trinder, 'Industrialising towns 1700-1840', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 805-806.

¹²⁷ Ellis, p. 699; Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 9.

¹²⁸ Raymond Williams, p. 144.

¹²⁹ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 14.

¹³⁰ Jane Hodson and Alex Broadhead, 'Developments in literary dialect representation in British fiction 1800-1836', *Language and Literature* 22 (4), (2013), p. 328.

¹³¹ Hodson and Broadhead, p. 326.

¹³² Butler, p. 16.

Remoteness and retirement

The generic rural ideal is closely linked to remoteness, but the two concepts are subtly distinguishable. Remoteness is a key theme of these regional novels. Their settings are frequently either explicitly or implicitly portrayed as remote, a quality which is usually defined in relation to their distance from London. This distance can be physical space or travel time, or it can be a symbolic sense of cultural difference; this means that settings relatively close to London are sometimes portrayed as remote. In some novels, the concentration of generic rural tropes correlates with the emphasis on remoteness: the more remote the setting, the more generically rural it appears. However, in many other novels, the additional connotations of remoteness complicate the manifestation of the generic rural ideal. The associations of remoteness can be both positive and negative, even within the same novel. Many of these novels associate the settings which they label as remote with positive qualities including safety, but their plots also include many instances of female characters being persecuted there. This apparent contradiction relates to the association of remoteness with extremity and departure from the social norms of the metropolitan centre.

Remoteness is a feature of the conservative, idealised vision of rurality presented in the majority of the novels in my corpus. The confluence of the positive connotations of remoteness and of rurality creates an ideal of retirement, which appears frequently both as a term and a concept throughout these novels.¹³³ Retirement describes the valorisation of withdrawal to non-urban and non-metropolitan spaces. This ideal of removal from ‘the world’ developed out of novels of the eighteenth century to become an ubiquitous convention of the texts discussed in this thesis. For example, Samuel Richardson’s *Clarissa* (1747) emphasises ‘retreat’ and associates it with ‘virginity’.¹³⁴ This conservative association of remoteness with moral purity persists in these later novels; they often evoke the idea of ‘virtuous retirement’.¹³⁵ When remoteness is associated with the ideal of retirement, it has connotations of safety, in contrast to the conventional section in which the heroine suffers outside of this retreat. Urban spaces are portrayed as dangerous because they contain more people, and therefore more potential villains, who can evade repercussions due to anonymity.

¹³³ See, for example: Clark, *The Esquimaux*, i, p. 3; Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, i, p. 75; Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 19; p. 121.

¹³⁴ Raymond Williams, p. 65; Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (London: Printed for S. Richardson, 1747-1748).

¹³⁵ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, i, p. 226.

However, remoteness is also frequently associated with danger to female characters, including harassment and domestic violence. Abduction is a particularly common trope. The novels discussed here suggest that crimes in remote spaces could plausibly go undetected, due to their distance from civilisation. Austen's description in *Northanger Abbey* (1817) of Catherine's perception of the dangers of remoteness is emblematic of this attitude: the safety of the 'central part of England' cannot be doubted, but she 'dared not doubt beyond her own country, and even of that, if hard pressed, would have yielded the northern and western extremities'.¹³⁶ In some of the novels in my corpus, even rural spaces in 'central' England can be functionally remote and therefore dangerous. The ideal in these novels is remoteness in moderation, which relates to the idea of a mid-point between cultivation and wildness (as discussed above). Settings in my case study regions therefore sometimes have foils in settings which are even more remote, whether within or beyond Britain. These novels' portrayal of both remote, rural settings and central, urban ones as equally potentially dangerous for women relates to their conservative gender politics because it constitutes a warning that women need to restrict their behaviour, in any space (this is further discussed under 'Female freedom in regional spaces', below).

3. Female novelists

This thesis focuses on female-authored texts. It aims to contribute to the ongoing feminist 'recovery project' within literary history by shedding light on numerous 'long-ignored women's writings' and 'bring[ing] them into scholarly discourse'.¹³⁷ I hope to make these forgotten novels accessible for future scholarship through the plot summaries in the appendix. In this section, I will discuss my synoptic methodological approach and my justification for discussing women writers separately (see 'Methodology and structure', for a full explanation of my selection criteria for texts). I will contextualise my work in relation to the underrepresentation of women writers within discussions of regionalism in Romantic period literature. This disparity has persisted despite women having a distinctive relationship to regional space. I will then consider the generally conservative presentation of gender politics

¹³⁶ Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. by Barbara M. Benedict and Deirdre Le Faye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 205.

¹³⁷ Jean I. Marsden, 'Beyond Recovery: Feminism and the Future of Eighteenth-Century Literary Studies', *Feminist Studies* 28:3 (2002), pp. 657-9.

in my corpus and how this relates to these novels' portrayal of issues of female physical and intellectual freedom in regional settings. In the final part of this section, I will outline the role of Austen in this thesis and the ways in which I aim to build upon scholarship on her use of regional spaces.

Recovery

Recovery work on women writers has been underway for several decades, but the project is by no means complete. This is evidenced by the continued appearance of new scholarship on women writers and the genres and publishing houses in which they were most widely represented.¹³⁸ The assumptions behind the separate discussion of women's literary history are worth interrogating. These include the feminist issue articulated by Devoney Looser as 'how, when, and why we think words mean something different when they come from a man rather than a woman'.¹³⁹ In the case of the Romantic period, considering women's writing as a category has scholarly value because 'authorship was thoroughly gendered'.¹⁴⁰ Texts were approached, read, and discussed differently according to whether they were associated with a male or female author, whether this attribution was accurate or enabled by the common practice of maintaining anonymity (which I discuss further under 'Methodology and structure', below).¹⁴¹ The need for continued scholarship specifically on women's writing is demonstrated by the disproportionate lack of research about many '*highly successful women writers*' (by 'critical, popular, or commercial' criteria), in comparison to their male contemporaries, which this thesis aims to redress.¹⁴² Modern scholarship's incomplete revival of women's fiction of this period is particularly incongruous with the historical reality that

¹³⁸ See, for example, Morin, *The Gothic Novel in Ireland*, see also work on the Minerva Press, including Elizabeth Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics: The Politics and Poetics of Romantic Exchange, 1780-1820* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019) and Elizabeth Neiman and Christina Morin (eds.), 'The Minerva Press and the Literary Marketplace', special edition of *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840*, 23 (2020).

¹³⁹ Devoney Looser, 'Why I'm Still Writing Women's Literary History', *The Minnesota Review*, 71-72 (2009), p. 221.

¹⁴⁰ Kelly, *Women, Writing and Revolution*, p. vi.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.; Looser, 'Why I'm Still Writing Women's Literary History', p. 224; Anne K. Mellor, 'Feminism', in *Romanticism: An Oxford Guide*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 183.

¹⁴² Looser, 'Why I'm Still Writing Women's Literary History', p. 221.

women were ‘the primary consumers, experimenters, and producers of fiction’.¹⁴³ Drawing on the work of Peter Garside, Anthony Mandal has established that the 1810s saw female authorship that was ‘proportionately higher [...] than any decade before or since’, with women responsible for over half of the novels published every year.¹⁴⁴ This will be discussed further under ‘The 1810s’, below.

The discussion in this thesis of a wide range of previously overlooked texts should also be considered in the context of the twenty-first century scholarly tendency to ‘redefine middlebrow territory as worthy of serious study’.¹⁴⁵ The development of new ‘principles of selection and exclusion’ other than canonicity has imported an alternative set of ideological biases into scholarship.¹⁴⁶ There has been a propensity for literary recovery efforts to focus on writers whose work can be made to suit particular agendas; in the case of women’s writing, this has particularly manifested in interest in works with proto-feminist themes, often to the exclusion of more conservative texts.¹⁴⁷ This thesis aims to contribute to scholarship on conservatism in fiction, building on Grenby’s work.¹⁴⁸ The majority of the novels in my corpus are conservative. Alongside the tendency for recovering more liberal texts, there has also been a focus on novels which can be brought into conversation with those by better-remembered writers. I will discuss this below in relation to Austen in particular. I have attempted, as far as possible, to avoid selecting texts according to their ideological biases or similarities with Austen by discussing all of the novels which I could identify as fitting the selection criteria of being female-authored, published between 1810 and 1820, and making significant use of one or more of my case study regions. As Looser has proposed, new methodologies are needed for the study of women’s writing, in order to ‘see more clearly the full range of women’s writing and publishing in a given era’.¹⁴⁹ In taking a synoptic approach

¹⁴³ Anthony Mandal, ‘Fiction’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Women’s Writing in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Devoney Looser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 25. See also, Curran.

¹⁴⁴ Garside, ‘The English Novel in the Romantic Era’, pp. 73-74; Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, p. 27.

¹⁴⁵ Edwards, ‘Four Nations Fiction by Women [...]’, p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ Margaret J.M. Ezell, *Writing Women’s Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ 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 University Press, 1984), p. 245; Marsden; Grenby, p. 2; Fiona Price, ‘National identities and regional affiliations’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Women’s Writing in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Devoney Looser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 185.

¹⁴⁸ Grenby.

¹⁴⁹ Looser, ‘Why I’m Still Writing Women’s Literary History’, p. 222.

in this thesis, I aim to apply this ‘more capacious – and less selective and capricious’ approach to the 1810s.¹⁵⁰

Female-authored novels have been particularly neglected in work on Romantic regionalism (see above, under ‘Regional contexts’). At the same time, feminist recovery work on the Romantic period has ‘tended to reproduce rather than unsettle a normative anglocentricism’.¹⁵¹ Much significant scholarship on regional and national space in literature of the period excludes women writers, and especially women novelists.¹⁵² Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz demonstrate in their collection *Gender and Space in British Literature 1600-1820* (2016) that spatial ‘studies of the British [long] eighteenth century [...] do not yet fully account for gender’.¹⁵³ Some discussion of the settings chosen by better-remembered women writers such as Burney and Charlotte Smith has begun, including in the aforementioned collection.¹⁵⁴ However, little attention has been paid to the settings used by their numerous, currently neglected contemporaries. This thesis includes analysis of novels by Austen, Burney, and Shelley, but the majority of the authors it discusses have been overlooked by previous scholarship, both on regionalism and the Romantic period more broadly.

The need to redress the lack of attention to female-authored regional novels relates to the gendering of space.¹⁵⁵ Space and gender intersect because ‘patriarchal society regulates the relationship between women and their environment’.¹⁵⁶ Women’s relationship to national spaces in the Romantic period is recognised to have been distinctive, but the feminine relationship to regional spaces also deserves particular attention.¹⁵⁷ The longstanding

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁵¹ Ian Duncan, with Leith Davis and Janet Sorenson, ‘Introduction’, in *Scotland and the Borders of Romanticism*, ed. by Leith Davis, Ian Duncan, and Janet Sorenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 5.

¹⁵² For examples of this, see: Higgins, *Romantic Englishness*; Timothy Heimlich, “‘We Wed Not with the Stanger’”: Disjunctive Histories, Fluid Geographies, and Contested Nationalities in Romantic Fictions of Wales’, *Studies in Romanticism*, 2 (2016), 211-237; Bushell, Carlson, and Walford Davies (eds.), *Romantic Cartographies*.

¹⁵³ Mona Narain, and Karen Gevirtz, ‘Introduction’, in *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1600-1820*, ed. by Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ Narain and Gevirtz (eds.), *Gender and Space in British Literature* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 85-100; pp. 101-116; pp. 179-194; pp. 195-210; see also, for example, Emily Morrallis, ‘Charlotte Smith’s Aesthetic System and the Borders of Romanticism’ *Romanticism*, 24: ii (2018) 169-178 and Penelope Bradshaw, ‘Romantic Recluses and Humble Cottages: Charlotte Smith’s “Ethelinde” and the Literary Construction of Grasmere’, *Women’s Writing* 26: iv (2019), 381-399.

¹⁵⁵ Narain and Gevirtz, ‘Introduction’, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ Heather Ann Ladd, ‘Invaded Spaces in Charlotte Smith’s “The Banished Man”’, in *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1600-1820*, ed. by Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 180.

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, Price; see also, Colley, p. 281.

‘association between the feminine and the local’ relates to the assumption of a ‘public/private division’ in gendered terms.¹⁵⁸ This perception of women as local was pervasive in the Romantic period and is often reflected in their literary output.¹⁵⁹ I agree with Kelly that women writers used ‘the local and particular’ to covertly discuss national issues.¹⁶⁰ When women novelists write about regional spaces in this post-Revolutionary period, they do so in the context of a limited range of acceptable topics, due to the ‘increased pressure [...] to promote and conform to the domestic ideal’.¹⁶¹

Female freedom in regional spaces

Gender politics, particularly women’s ability to exercise physical and intellectual freedom, is a central theme of the novels discussed in this thesis. They conform to the general trend in fiction of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for exploring ‘female agency’ and, conversely, the dispossession and marginalisation of women.¹⁶² Their overwhelming conservatism (as discussed above) includes the ways in which they represent female characters’ liberty. Although all of the novels in my corpus were written by women, it is important not to assume that they call for extensions to women’s rights. Indeed, the tendency of some critics to focus on reviving texts which can more easily be labelled as proto-feminist (see above) may have contributed to the critical neglect of some of these novels. These novels present all types of space as potentially unsafe. They implicitly advise their female readers against behaving if they are free anywhere. Instead, they encourage self-restriction (as discussed under ‘Remoteness and retirement’, above). Their exploration of female freedom more frequently takes the form of freedom from violence than freedom to act. My corpus is representative of the increased policing of gender roles during the early nineteenth century, one of many periods in which ‘anxieties about the health of the nation’ have become manifested in ‘politics directed to and against women’.¹⁶³ Women arguably enjoyed

¹⁵⁸ Massey, p. 9.

¹⁵⁹ Curran, p. 182.

¹⁶⁰ Kelly, *Women, Writing and Revolution*, p. 178.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

¹⁶² Mandal, ‘Evangelical Fiction’, p. 260; Curran, p. 178.

¹⁶³ Geoff Eley, and Ronald Grigor Suny, ‘Introduction’, in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. by Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 26.

‘considerably more freedom of action in town than in the countryside’ in this period, because urban spaces allowed them to be more ‘mobile’ and to have ‘a variety of respectable occupations, and amusements and companions’.¹⁶⁴ These novels do not condone these freedoms. They connect even relatively respectable entertainments to potential dissipation. They reflect the concerns of some conservative moralists about the impact that the growth of urban spaces could have on ‘female manners and behaviour’.¹⁶⁵ Urban spaces are therefore portrayed as dangerous to women, presenting restrictions to their freedom in the form of danger, and therefore requiring further self-restriction in order to avoid harm. When the heroine finds herself in an urban space, she typically faces more unwanted male attention than in her rural home. This often escalates into threats and violence. Where these novels do occasionally explore potential increased freedom for women, it is primarily in their most remote settings. This allows their authors to avoid suggesting that they are advocating for a change to the status quo of gender roles in mainstream society. Wales is therefore more associated with female freedom than the other case study regions, as will be discussed in Chapter Two. Morally good female characters are sometimes able to behave in a remote, generic rural space in ways which would be dangerous elsewhere, such as riding and walking ‘to enjoy solitude’.¹⁶⁶ Exercise that contributes to women’s ‘health’ is a trope of the idealised generic rural (see above).¹⁶⁷ However, these novels also contradictorily explore danger to women in rural settings. They show that self-restriction is still necessary in these spaces. A typical example of this message appears in Ann Ryley’s *Fanny Fitz-York, Heiress of Tremorne* (1818).¹⁶⁸ At fourteen, Fanny is ‘as active as the mountain kid, and swift as a rein deer [sic]’, but after she is forcibly kissed by Gaskell when out with her governess, the pair are instructed ‘never to walk beyond the park, unaccompanied by a servant’.¹⁶⁹ The influence of earlier female novelists, such as Charlotte Smith, is evident in the ambiguous approach to female freedom in the novels in my corpus. They show a similar interest in ‘the potential

¹⁶⁴ Ellis, p. 695.

¹⁶⁵ Colley, p. 241.

¹⁶⁶ Amelia Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!* (London: Minerva Press, 1816), iv, p. 135.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ann Ryley, *Fanny Fitz-York, Heiress of Tremorne* (London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1818).

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, i, p. 39; p. 68.

emancipation and empowerment of women' in rural and remote spaces that is balanced by 'substantial risk in regards [sic] to physical virtue and female reputation'.¹⁷⁰

These novels also generally take a conservative approach to women's intellectual freedom, in their focus on female education as part of the generic rural ideal. Their condemnation of 'accomplishments' is typical of 'moral-domestic' fiction of the period.¹⁷¹ The rural ideal is instead associated with female characters' acquisition of Christian virtues including 'piety, charitableness, filial submissiveness, and moral sensitivity', developed through serious reading and through practice (see discussion of female education and charity in relation to the generic rural ideal, above).¹⁷² The heroines tend to embody Hannah More's model of female virtue, which includes 'intelligence' but also 'devotion to one's family' and 'active service on behalf of one's community' with the intention of making women 'good Christians and successful mothers and wives'.¹⁷³ This objective is evident because these novels rarely advocate for female rationality for its own sake. Like their representations of physical freedom in the form of safety, they represent idealised rural, regional settings as offering an intellectual freedom from the temptations of urban settings. They depict time spent in the countryside as an opportunity for women to become equipped to make good choices. As female novelists during a period in which gender-based freedoms were under negotiation, the writers discussed in this thesis show a persistent interest in these themes. Their overwhelmingly conservative approach leads them mostly to associate their regional settings with an ideal of self-restriction, rather than positive freedom. I will highlight the few exceptions to this. The particular manifestations of this theme of female freedom are regionally inflected, and appear differently in rural spaces than urban ones, so I will discuss these trends in each regional chapter.

¹⁷⁰ Zoë Kinsley, "'Ever restless waters": Female Identity and Coastal Space in Charlotte Smith's "The Young Philosopher"', in *Gender and Space in British Literature, 1600-1820*, ed. by Mona Narain and Karen Gevirtz (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 103; Kathleen M. Oliver, 'Seeking Shelter in Charlotte Smith's "Emmeline"', also in Narain and Gevirtz (eds.), p. 195.

¹⁷¹ Mandal, 'Evangelical Fiction', p. 267.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation: women's political writing in England 1780-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), p. 26; Mellor, 'Feminism', p. 189.

Jane Austen

The recovery of currently overlooked female novelists who published in the 1810s is complicated by the preponderance of Austen scholarship. Despite growing attention to non-canonical female-authored texts (as discussed above), the vast majority of new scholarship on the Romantic period novel continues to relate to Austen.¹⁷⁴ Austen's dominance dates from the gendered 'narrowing' of the canon which Clifford Siskin termed the 'Great Forgetting'.¹⁷⁵ She has persisted as the 'solitary feminine presence' in many critics' discussion of the period, and is treated as 'the representative' and 'acknowledged classic novelist of the Romantic period in Britain'.¹⁷⁶ Although the 'Great Forgetting' left 'much remembering to be done' of other women writers, this recovery work is irrevocably inflected by Austen's canonicity.¹⁷⁷ For example, Claudia Johnson suggested that the relative neglect of Mary Wollstonecraft, Ann Radcliffe, and Burney in the 1990s may have related to readers' expectations being influenced by 'standards' based on Austen's work.¹⁷⁸ Although these writers are now the object of relatively more attention, they are still less discussed than Austen, and many other novelists who published contemporaneously with her remain overlooked. The novels in my corpus exemplify this. The works of Catherine Hutton (which are key texts in this thesis) are undergoing a modest wave of scholarly interest, partly due to her having compared herself with Austen.¹⁷⁹ This recent revival began with an article by Cheryl A. Wilson in which she acknowledges the tension between using Austen's canonicity to attract attention to her contemporaries, and the risk of therefore 'privileg[ing] those elements of their fiction [...]

¹⁷⁴ Bysshe Inigo Coffey, Colette Davies, Ruby Hawley-Sibbett, Michael Falk, Elias Greig, and Miranda Kiek, 'XII Literature 1780–1830: The Romantic Period', *The Year's Work in English Studies*, 99 (2020) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ywes/maaa012>>, p. 620; Bysshe Inigo Coffey, Colette Davies, Ruby Hawley-Sibbett, Michael Falk, Shane Greentree, and Miranda Kiek, 'XII Literature 1780–1830: The Romantic Period', *The Year's Work in English Studies*, 100 (2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ywes/maab012>>, p. 679.

¹⁷⁵ Clifford Siskin, *The Work of Writing: Literature and Social Change in Britain 1700-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), p. 195.

¹⁷⁶ Curran, p. 169; Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 19.

¹⁷⁷ Siskin, p. 225; Claudia Johnson, *Equivocal Beings: Politics, Gender, and Sentimentality in the 1790s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 18.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ For recent scholarship on Hutton, see, Cheryl A. Wilson, "'Something like mine': Catherine Hutton, Jane Austen, and Feminist Recovery Work", *The Eighteenth Century*, 56:2 (2015), 151-164; Mary-Ann Constantine, "'The Bounds of Female Reach": Catherine Hutton's Fiction and her Tours in Wales', *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (2017), 89-100 and 'Consumed Landscapes: Coal, Air and Circulation in the Writings of Catherine Hutton', *Romanticism* (2021) 27:2, 122-134.

that we attend to in Austen's novels'.¹⁸⁰ I avoid this as far as possible by giving Austen's novels equal weight to the other thirty-eight primary source texts and not treating Austen's work as the standard from which other novels are seen to deviate.

I agree with Looser's observation that 'scholarship on Jane Austen and her contemporaries remains in a surprisingly fledgling state'.¹⁸¹ Austen is treated as an exceptional figure and is therefore mostly discussed alone. Where Austen is compared with other writers, they are often men, with whose work hers arguably has less in common than with contemporary female-authored moral-domestic fiction. Looser notes emerging trends for comparing Austen with the 'Big Six' Romantic poets, and with Scott.¹⁸² This tendency to compare Austen to male writers persists in scholarship relating to her use of space. For example, Janine Barchas sets out to 'resituate' Austen 'nearer to the stout historical novels of [...] Scott' and 'the encyclopaedic reach of modernist James Joyce', while Robert Clark compares Austen's settings to those of Henry Fielding.¹⁸³ These are valuable comparisons which recognise the scale of Austen's achievements, but which do not establish whether her use of 'historically suggestive names and locations' was unusual among her female contemporaries.¹⁸⁴ As Clark's comparison of Austen with Fielding exemplifies, she is also frequently 'dislocated from her historical period back a full generation or more' and associated with the eighteenth century.¹⁸⁵ Her novels, published in the 1810s, have been read as a 'reaction' to works of the 1790s, because she began writing them in this period.¹⁸⁶ This thesis aims to restore Austen to the contexts of her gender and period of publication, by situating her work among her contemporaries: other women who wrote novels published between 1810 and 1820.

Mandal's *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel* (2007) is a significant contribution to the contextualisation of Austen, in which he proposes that her later novels 'belong categorically to the 1810s', and that discussion of the 'fictional discourses' of that decade can

¹⁸⁰ Cheryl A. Wilson, p. 151.

¹⁸¹ Devoney Looser, 'Jane Austen and her contemporaries', *The Eighteenth Century*, 56:2 (2015), p. 147.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁸³ Janine Barchas, *Matters of fact in Jane Austen: history, location, and celebrity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), p. 1; Robert Clark, 'Introduction' in *Jane Austen's Geographies*, ed. by Robert Clark (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 2.

¹⁸⁴ Barchas, *Matters of fact in Jane Austen*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ Clark, p. 2; Curran, p. 170.

¹⁸⁶ Linda Lang-Peralta, 'Introduction', in *Women, revolution, and the novels of the 1790s*, ed. by Linda Lang-Peralta (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1999), p. xi.

give ‘a fuller picture of Austen’s aesthetic achievement’.¹⁸⁷ Where Mandal uses specific examples of Austen’s contemporaries to inform a reading of Austen’s work, this thesis discusses Austen and a wider range of her contemporaries on an equal footing, in order to shed light on the literary use of space in the period. My juxtaposition of these female novelists does not imply influence, or even awareness of each other, although in some cases there is evidence of this.¹⁸⁸ It is difficult to establish the extent to which Austen was influenced by her publishing contemporaries, as her published novels were the result of the ‘revision of material over a considerable period’ of as much as ‘twenty to thirty years’.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, concentrating on tracing influence both on and by Austen foregrounds her work and perpetuates the assumption of its superior value due to its current canonicity. I agree with Moore that recovery work ought to go beyond uncovering ‘forgotten writers who can be parlayed into a junior position in the canon’ on the basis of ‘their conforming to traditionally conceived categories, or their underestimated influence on the existing canon’.¹⁹⁰ This thesis aims to challenge the separation of canonical writers from their contemporaries, and the presumption that their works are of greater interest.

Austen scholarship not only affects the scholarly conversation around the revival of women’s fiction but is also predominant in work relating to the use of regional settings in novels of this period. This thesis aims to build upon on the existing rich tradition of research on Austen’s settings. One major field of spatial Austen criticism is based on ‘geographical exactitude’.¹⁹¹ Other work reads space in Austen’s novels in a more theoretical manner, discussing homes, landscapes, and their political and/or psychological implications.¹⁹² This scholarship generally discusses Austen alone, or sometimes alongside a handful of other

¹⁸⁷ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, p. 88; p. 5.

¹⁸⁸ See, for example, Cheryl A. Wilson, p. 151, re. Hutton and Austen; see also, Erin M. Goss, ‘Homespun Gossip: Jane West, Jane Austen, and the Task of Literary Criticism’, *The Eighteenth Century*, 56:2 (2015), 165-177, which discusses Austen’s aversion to West.

¹⁸⁹ Kathryn Sutherland, ‘Chronology of composition and publication’ in *Jane Austen in Context*, ed. by Janet Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 13-15.

¹⁹⁰ Moore, p. 953.

¹⁹¹ Ruta Baublyté Kaufmann, *The Architecture of Space-time in the Novels of Jane Austen*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 9; See, for example, Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: The World of Her Novels* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2002); Janet Todd (ed.), *Jane Austen in Context*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Barchas, *Matters of fact in Jane Austen*; Margaret Anne Doody, *Jane Austen's Names: riddles, persons, places* (London, England: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

¹⁹² See, for example, Alistair M. Duckworth, *The Improvement of the Estate: A Study of Jane Austen’s Novels*, rev. edn (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Barbara Britton Wenner, *Prospect and Refuge in the Landscape of Jane Austen* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2006); Robert Clark (ed.), *Jane Austen’s Geographies* (London: Routledge, 2017); Kaufmann.

writers who are often not her female contemporaries (see above). It therefore does not generally establish whether any observations about Austen's use of space are unique, or common to women novelists of the period. For example, Margaret Anne Doody proposes in *Jane Austen's Names* that Austen 'paid maximum attention to her choice and description of places' and that 'to name the place is to set the tone of the novel'.¹⁹³ This implies that Austen's use of space was unusually meticulous, but this thesis aims to demonstrate that many of her contemporaries engaged with space in a similarly purposeful manner. Relatedly, the lack of detailed contextualisation of Austen's use of settings means there is no scholarly consensus as to whether they are notably evasive, or particularly precise. For example, Barbara Britton Wenner proposes that 'Austen's landscapes are not detailed', whereas Robert Clark argues that her use of settings may seem 'very abstract', but also often appear to be 'very insistent and seemingly concrete'.¹⁹⁴ In this thesis, I aim to demonstrate that detailed readings of the work of her contemporaries can reveal where Austen's work conforms to the trends of the decade, and where it is notable in its departure from these trends.

This thesis aims to offer the first comparison of Austen's use of the West Country and the Midlands (and her limited engagement with Wales) with representations of the same regions in less well-remembered novels published in the same decade. My analysis in Chapter Three will contextualise Austen's extensive use of the West Country in *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, and *Sense and Sensibility*. I will suggest that although her focus on relatively urban settings is unusual, these novels otherwise reflect many of the trends I have identified in contemporary fictional depictions of the region. In Chapter Four, I will argue that the two faces of the Midlands represented in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* are to some extent characteristic of its representation in novels of the period. Derbyshire is often associated with wildness, and is often an unintentional tourist destination, while Northamptonshire is typically associated with prosperity and domesticity. Although Wales was popular with her contemporaries, Austen did not use it as a setting in her novels, only her juvenilia. The predominance of Austen in scholarship on the Romantic novel therefore conceals the popularity of Wales and limits scholars' awareness of how it was represented. The contextualisation of Austen's use of these regions is just one aim of this thesis. In my broader focus on women writers of the 1810s, I set out to restore scholarly attention to an

¹⁹³ Doody, p. 11; p. 234.

¹⁹⁴ Wenner p. 1; Robert Clark, 'Introduction', p. 2.

under-studied but richly informative body of work. I also aim to shed light on how women represented regional space, a theme with a complex relationship to female freedom.

4. The 1810s

This thesis covers novels published between 1810 and 1820 (inclusive). This allows me to discuss all of the significant uses of my case study regions by female novelists which I could identify. This is a more comprehensive approach than would be possible within a wider time period. In this section, I will discuss the temporal context of my corpus. Firstly, I will explain my choice to focus on the 1810s as a relatively understudied period in which female novelists were particularly prolific. I will then outline ways in which literature of this period was influenced by historical events and political and social movements, before discussing how the novels in my corpus generally respond to these trends. The developments in the novel form which unfolded across the 1810s provide a useful context for the interpretation of the key themes of the texts in my corpus, not only in terms of their treatment of regional spaces, but also in relation to their prevailing ideological use of these spaces. In their wide range of genres, themes, and politics, the novels discussed in this thesis are representative of the ‘variegated’ and ‘maturing’ novel market of the 1810s.¹⁹⁵

An overlooked period of significance for women’s writing

The 1810s are chronologically central years of the Romantic era, an arguably ‘disregarded’ decade falling between two periods which attract considerable scholarly attention.¹⁹⁶ The 1790s and the first decade of the nineteenth century have been widely discussed in relation to the birth of Romanticism, particularly regarding the impact of the French Revolution on the movement’s ‘imaginative concerns’.¹⁹⁷ These years have also attracted a ‘great deal of

¹⁹⁵ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, p. 22.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

¹⁹⁷ Pamela Clemit, ‘Preface’, in *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s*, ed. by Pamela Clemit (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. xv. For examples of this work, see, Sharon Ruston, *Creating Romanticism: Case Studies in the Literature, Science, and Medicine of the 1790s* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and Pamela Clemit (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Literature of the French Revolution in the 1790s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

attention' in scholarship on female writers and themes of women's rights in novels.¹⁹⁸ As Mandal has established, the predominance of the 1790s has meant that research on the development of the Romantic novel has 'tended to overlook the complexities of the broader period'.¹⁹⁹ The period following the 1810s has also, more recently, come into focus as a key area of scholarship. In anticipation of the bicentenaries of the 1820s, scholars have brought to light the previously 'neglected' transition between the Romantic and Victorian eras.²⁰⁰ In contrast to the prominence of these chronologically adjacent periods, novels of the 1810s have received relatively less attention outside of discussions of key canonical figures, particularly Austen and Scott, and notable texts, such as Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).²⁰¹ The recontextualisation of Austen among her publishing contemporaries is not the primary reason for my selection of the 1810s. I chose to focus on the decade because it has been relatively overlooked as a period of significance for women's writing, and because it saw several major developments in the novel form, which I will outline below. The period 1810-1820 saw high numbers of female authors, with women representing more than half of novelists.²⁰² I agree with Mandal that the 1810s were 'of at least equal significance as the 1790s for women writers' because they were 'particularly conducive to women's fiction', but they have received less scholarly attention.²⁰³ This thesis aims to redress this imbalance.

Historical, political, and social contexts

Alongside the preponderance of women novelists, the 1810s also saw emerging and changing literary genres in response to growing cultural interest in the internal geography of Britain. This interest related to collective concern about the nation's future, particularly during George IV's Regency (1811-1820), as his father, George III, had been made 'the focus for

¹⁹⁸ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, p. 5; For scholarship on 1790s novels, see, for example, the essays in Linda Lang-Peralta (ed.), *Women, revolution, and the novels of the 1790s* (East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University Press, 1999).

¹⁹⁹ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, p. 39.

²⁰⁰ Richard Cronin, *Romantic Victorians: English Literature, 1824-1840* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 2; See, for example, Angela Esterhammer, *Print and Performance in the 1820s: Improvisation, Speculation, Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2020) and Jon Mee and Matthew Sangster (eds.), *Remediating the 1820s* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming 2023).

²⁰¹ Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818 text), ed. by J. Paul Hunter (New York, USA: W.W. Norton & Company, 1996).

²⁰² Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era', pp. 73-74.

²⁰³ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, pp. 4-5.

sentiments of national unity' in the wake of the French Revolution.²⁰⁴ Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener argue that 'the Romantic novel is a genre in transition during an era of transition' caused by 'a great international cataclysm', which began in Europe and significantly influenced British politics and culture.²⁰⁵ This literary evolution as a reaction to national and international politics is visible in microcosm in the 1810s. 'Ideological debates' regarding the 'contractual nature of government', initiated by the French Revolution decades earlier, remained prominent.²⁰⁶ However, the significant changes to be ushered in by the Reform Bill of 1832, including the extension of the franchise, were still far in the future.²⁰⁷

Opposition to France was central to the definition of British national identity: the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815 were 'the most violent expressions of a much longer and many-layered rivalry'.²⁰⁸ As well as inviting national introspection, war in Europe 'directed travellers' attention in an unprecedented way' to spaces within Britain, inspiring a wave of interest in British geography, including in literature.²⁰⁹ This shift gave a boost to the domestic tourist economy which continued after the Battle of Waterloo (1815), because resorts had by then become established.²¹⁰ At the same time, increased literary attention to geography was also a response to the changing roles of Britain's urban spaces. The 'London season' became dominant 'within a generation' between the 1790s and 1820s, as county towns began to lose their role as the 'centre of leisured life' for their local upper classes.²¹¹ Ongoing industrialisation and related improvements to the roads and canals also reshaped the national landscape.²¹²

In the years following Waterloo, Britain experienced a period of 'post-war malaise and contention'.²¹³ 'Rising population and economic difficulties' also led to an 'increase of

²⁰⁴ Robin Jarvis, *The Romantic Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1789-1830* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 6.

²⁰⁵ Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener, 'Introduction', *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 5; p. 2.

²⁰⁶ Carmen Casaliggi and Porscha Fermanis, *Romanticism: A Literary and Cultural History* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 21.

²⁰⁷ Maxwell and Trumpener, p. 2.

²⁰⁸ Colley, p. 20.

²⁰⁹ Snell, 'The regional novel', p. 13

²¹⁰ Borsay, p. 781.

²¹¹ Everitt, p. 94

²¹² Casaliggi and Fermanis, p. 26.

²¹³ Colley, p. 322.

crime' and 'riots' during the 1810s, including the Luddite riots (1811-1816).²¹⁴ Radicalism, which had been 'effectively muted during the later 1790s and 1800s' by legal interventions, had begun to re-emerge.²¹⁵ Towards the end of the decade, the Peterloo Massacre (1819) demonstrated the violence with which the status quo would be defended. During this reactionary period, women writers faced greater scrutiny than their male peers, and more pressure to promote conservative values in their work (as discussed under 'Recovery' and 'Female freedom in regional spaces', above).

The literary response to a tumultuous decade

These significant historical events led to a noticeable preoccupation with different types of British urban and rural regional space in literature of this period. The increase of internal tourism caused by war on the Continent led to the proliferation of published tours of Britain. The novels in my corpus respond to similar contexts and share many of the features of this travel writing. Most of them contain travel and/or tourism and several of them refer to travel writing conventions. They sometimes include fictionalised versions of their authors' own experiences, drawing on the convention that travel writing is 'personal' and structured according to the 'author's own itinerary'.²¹⁶

The 1810s were a transitional period for spatially oriented novels. 'Themes of rural life, the opposition of town and country, and regional, provincial culture' became increasingly prominent and developed throughout the decade.²¹⁷ It was an intermediate stage in the 'major shift' which made 'rural locales' central to literature during the Romantic period, partly in response to the industrialisation and developing intellectual life of 'provincial' communities.²¹⁸ Several spatially inflected genres underwent key stages of their development during the 1810s. It is difficult to distinguish between regional and national fiction in this period, as I have discussed above (see 'Romantic regionalism' and 'The regional novel'). Trumpener defines national tales as reversing the previous tendency to

²¹⁴ Marie B. Rowlands, *The West Midlands from AD 1000* (London: Longman, 1987), p. 173; Alan Dyer, 'Midlands', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume ii: 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 213.

²¹⁵ Casaliggi and Fermanis, p. 24.

²¹⁶ Fay, p. 73.

²¹⁷ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 201.

²¹⁸ Bohrer, pp. 90-91.

describe regions ‘from the imperial perspective of the “center” [sic]’.²¹⁹ The novels in my corpus do not conform to this criterion. As well as the national tale, the regional novel is also sometimes considered to be ‘inseparable from the historical novel’, due to the influence of Scott.²²⁰ Trumpener argues that closely studying the 1810s allows scholars to observe the development of the national tale and birth of the ‘historical novel’ from within it.²²¹ My corpus includes several historical novels. However, the majority of the novels in my corpus appear to be set in a time that is approximately contemporary to the period in which they were published, but which is also quasi-historical due to the exclusion of recent historical events or current affairs.

The representation of the 1810s in my corpus

Scott’s advances in the nuanced depiction of the British landscape have long been recognised, but his were not the only innovative representations of regional space to come out of the 1810s.²²² As this thesis aims to demonstrate, the decade saw the publication of several female-authored novels which show notably sophisticated engagement with British regionality, such as the works of Catherine Hutton. However, a much larger number of novels which homogenise their regional settings were published in the same decade, reproducing a stereotypical template of rural space (as outlined above, under ‘The generic rural ideal’). The lack of regional specificity shown in the majority of the novels in my corpus is often complemented by the atemporality of their settings. Both of these factors are key to the generic rural ideal, facilitating the avoidance of discussions of industrialisation and creating a blank canvas on which to project a conservative vision of the nation.

While most the novels in my corpus do not engage with current events, only a small number of them have genuinely historical settings. A novel’s featuring a historical setting, even within the relatively recent past, was considered notable enough to be stated explicitly, for example in the title of Elizabeth Spence’s *A Traveller’s Tale of the Last Century*

²¹⁹ Katie Trumpener, ‘National Character, Nationalist Plots: National Tale and Historical Novel in The Age Of Waverley’, 1806-1830, *ELH*, 60 (1993), p. 698.

²²⁰ Bellamy, p. 73.

²²¹ Trumpener, ‘National Character, Nationalist Plots’, p. 688.

²²² See, for example, Reed.

(1819).²²³ Many more of the novels in my corpus draw on historical themes more subtly, whether through the inclusion of historical sites or through the evocation of nostalgia, which is key to the generic rural ideal. According to Kelly, ‘rural domesticity’ became ‘the basis of the “national tale” for England’, such as it can be said to exist.²²⁴ This is visible in my corpus, because many of these novels relate rurality to a conservative national ideal. They show the influence of the increased emphasis which was placed on ‘domesticity’ and ‘duty’ in the early nineteenth century.²²⁵ This shift was partly a response to cultural anxiety surrounding changing visions of nationality (in response to the factors discussed above, under ‘Historical, political, and social contexts’). The emphasis on the domestic in novels of the 1810s related not only to the home, but also to the nation. Mandal argues that both the historical novel and ‘Evangelically minded fiction’ genres which developed during the decade are domestic in that they are ‘introspective narratives predicated on an insulated, post-revolutionary Britain at war’.²²⁶ The regional fiction discussed in this thesis participates in this national introspection by highlighting certain spaces within the nation.

The majority of the novels in my corpus relate most closely to the genre of ‘domestic realism’ which has its roots in earlier ‘Sentimental tale[s]’, ‘novels of rural life’, ‘national tales’, and ‘anti-Jacobin novels’.²²⁷ Several of the novels discussed in this thesis participate in anti-Jacobinism; Grenby has demonstrated this phenomenon continued to appear in novels ‘up until and beyond Waterloo’, despite having become ‘ideologically obsolete’.²²⁸ Novelistic conservatism was ‘returning to old, pre-Revolutionary battles’ regarding gender roles and social mobility during the 1810s.²²⁹ Relatedly, the decade also saw the peak of the influence of evangelicalism in fiction.²³⁰ Although only a small number of the novels in my corpus are explicitly ‘didactic’, many of them are part of the ‘moral-domestic’ genre which Mandal categorises as part of the same evangelical ‘continuum’.²³¹

²²³ Elizabeth Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale of The Last Century* (London: Longman, Hurst, Reese, Orme and Brown, 1819).

²²⁴ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 87.

²²⁵ Beckett, ‘Leisure, Recreation and Entertainment’, p. 389.

²²⁶ Mandal, *Jane Austen and the Popular Novel*, pp. 22-23.

²²⁷ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 201.

²²⁸ Grenby, pp. 207-8.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ Anthony Mandal, ‘Evangelical Fiction’, pp. 255–272.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

Just as the majority of the novels in my corpus exclude regional features which would not be conducive to their Tory and Anglican ideal, they also avoid discussing recent historical events and demographic shifts. These trends are related. The significant changes brought about by industrialisation are rarely mentioned, so working-class industrial labourers are rendered invisible. The few working characters who appear in my corpus are mostly undeveloped figures, in a didactic, and overwhelmingly rural, context. Bohrer argues that the Romantic period saw the emergence of a new genre of ‘rural tales’, which were differentiated from their eighteenth-century predecessors by a ‘switch in perspective’, in which the rural is seen from ‘the village’ rather than ‘the country house’.²³² The vast majority of the novels in my corpus still centre the country house, showing the continued influence of the eighteenth-century paradigm. This relates to the slow widening of perspective in which working characters became increasingly visible in the regional novel genre (see ‘The regional novel’, above). As developments in industrial production are not acknowledged in these novels, they also overlook the related unrest which occurred throughout the decade. For example, the Luddite riots are not discussed in any of the novels in my corpus. As I will discuss in Chapter Four, only two novelists make even brief references to the riots of the 1810s. General awareness of this unrest is, however, visible in that the generic rural ideal is, at least in some cases, a symbol designed to reinforce the status quo in a period when the threat of a radical uprising was looming.

While many of the novels in my corpus attempt to bolster conservative efforts to prevent revolution in Britain, they do not directly discuss the French Revolution, which occurred just decades earlier. Several of the novels feature French émigrés, but the reasons for their exile are not discussed, with the notable exception of Frances Burney’s *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814).²³³ France does appear relatively frequently as a setting. It is often associated with danger, reflecting a general suspicion of Catholic Europe. As Colley argues, the British ‘defined themselves against the French’ during this period: this is visible in these novels’ exaggerated contrasts between the two nations.²³⁴ Britain was at war with France for the first half of the 1810s, the time when many of the novels in my corpus were published. Despite this, the conflict is rarely explicitly acknowledged, but is

²³² Bohrer, p. 92.

²³³ Frances Burney, *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1814).

²³⁴ Colley, p. 6.

implied to be an unremarkable aspect of British life. Even the British victory at Waterloo (1815), one of the most significant ‘turning-points’ in the nation’s history, is not directly discussed in the novels in my corpus that were published after it had taken place.²³⁵ Instead, like the French Revolution, the impact of Waterloo has an absent presence. The victory ‘allowed the ruling class to strengthen its hold on power’ in that it implied that the nation was strong, and effectively led.²³⁶ This conservative position is implicitly visible in many of the novels in my corpus. They do not acknowledge the ‘post-war malaise and contention’ which characterised the latter half of the 1810s.²³⁷ The generic rural ideal had to be promoted more insistently, as the real conditions of life in Britain worsened.

5. Methodology and structure

By drawing on a wide range of texts, this thesis aims to provide an alternative angle to the focus on single authors (particularly Austen) and/or a limited number of contextual examples which can often be found in scholarship on novels of this period. I follow the approach advocated by William St. Clair, who argues that scholars ‘ought to consider the print which was actually read, not some modern selection’.²³⁸ Research which considers a literary period and/or genre through the lens of canonical figures may overlook nuances in its development. I agree with Moretti that a more comprehensive methodology is particularly important when undertaking geographical analysis of nineteenth century fiction: it ‘cannot be understood by stitching together separate bits of knowledge about individual cases’ but requires attention to the ‘99 percent of all published literature that disappears from sight’.²³⁹ I take this synoptic approach in this thesis, by discussing forty-four female-authored novels published in the 1810s that make significant use of one or more settings in any of my three case study regions. This section explains these criteria, my methodology, and the structure of this thesis.

This thesis focuses on full length prose fiction, by which I mean works which constitute a minimum of one volume. I use the term ‘novels’, for brevity, based on the

²³⁵ Ibid., p. 231.

²³⁶ Jarvis p. 9.

²³⁷ Colley, p. 232.

²³⁸ William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 3.

²³⁹ Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models for a Literary History* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 4; Moretti, *An Atlas of the European Novel*, p. 5.

consensus that, in the Romantic period, the form's boundaries were not 'rigid' but 'still under negotiation'.²⁴⁰ The majority of the works in my corpus depict 'contemporary domestic' life, the typical focus of texts described as novels.²⁴¹ However, several of them are labelled by their authors or publishers as other forms of long-form fiction, such as tales. This was commonplace; Tim Killick notes that many 'longer works that would be categorised by a modern reader as novels' were called tales.²⁴² 'Tale' avoids the 'lingering Jacobin associations' of 'novel' and instead suggests 'moral intent' or a 'historical dimension'.²⁴³ One example discussed in this thesis is Elizabeth Appleton's *Edgar: A National Tale* (1816).²⁴⁴ In the preface, Appleton comments on her choice of the term 'tale', stating that its application to '*moral fiction*' is 'sufficiently authorized by general use', and inviting the reader to 'determine, whether these volumes are worthy of a higher rank in literature than that of a *Novel*'.²⁴⁵ On the other hand, some writers aspiring to moral authority deliberately labelled their works 'as "novels" in order to draw "novel readers" towards proper, pious material'.²⁴⁶ My corpus includes long form prose fiction across all genres, regardless of how it is labelled, because of this contention around terminology. The already large scope of this study did not allow for the inclusion of short fiction, but this could be an informative avenue for future research.

I identified my sources by searching in Peter Garside, Rainer Schöwerling and James Raven's *The English Novel. A Bibliographical Survey of Fiction published in the British Isles* (2000) and Gale's 'European Literature, 1790-1840: The Corvey Collection' digital corpus for texts published 1810-1820, inclusive.²⁴⁷ All but two of the novels in my corpus are listed in *The English Novel*; these exceptions are, however, included in the Corvey Collection.

²⁴⁰ James Raven, 'The anonymous novel in Britain and Ireland, 1750–1830', in *The Faces of Anonymity: Anonymous and Pseudonymous Publication from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Robert J. Griffin (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), p. 142; Tim Killick, *British Short Fiction in the Early Nineteenth Century: the rise of the tale* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), p. 17.

²⁴¹ Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era', p. 51.

²⁴² Killick, p. 17.

²⁴³ Ibid., pp. 17-19; see also, Mandal, 'Evangelical Fiction', p. 265.

²⁴⁴ Elizabeth Appleton [later known as Lachlan], *Edgar: A National Tale* (London: Henry Colburn, 1816); see also, Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era', p. 51 for discussion of this text as a tale.

²⁴⁵ Appleton, pp. vii-viii.

²⁴⁶ Mandal, 'Evangelical Fiction', p. 266.

²⁴⁷ Peter Garside, James Raven, and Rainer Schöwerling (eds.), *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Published in the British Isles, Volume II: 1800-1829* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); 'European Literature, 1790-1840: The Corvey Collection' digital corpus (Gale) <<https://www.gale.com/intl/c/ncco-european-literature-1790-1840-the-corvey-collection>> [accessed 1 December 2021]

Sophia F. Ziegenhirt's *Seabrook Village and its Inhabitants, Or, the History of Mrs Worthy and Her Family; Founded on Facts* (1811) is not listed by Garside, Schöwerling, and Raven as a novel, presumably because its title page declares it was 'written for the instruction and amusement of young people'.²⁴⁸ Although I do not otherwise discuss fiction for a juvenile audience, I include *Seabrook Village* because it is a full length work and it is similar to, and arguably as complex as, other didactic texts included in *The English Novel* and this thesis, such as More's *The Welsh Cottage*. I consulted it initially because Ziegenhirt is the author of another novel included in this thesis, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey* (1816).²⁴⁹ The other text included here which is not listed in *The English Novel* is Green's *The Fugitive, Or Family Incidents* (1815). It was published anonymously, leading *The Critical Review* to refer to the author as 'he'.²⁵⁰ However, *The Fugitive* is now attributed to Green on the basis that its title page advertises that it is 'by the author of *Private History of the Court of England*' and '*Romance Readers and Romance Writers*'.²⁵¹

This thesis discusses works attributed to a female author. This may be within the text, for example on the title page, and/or in the aforementioned bibliographies. Many of the novels under discussion were published under pseudonyms, as was conventional, so this thesis effectively considers authors who claim female identity. During the 1810s, 'more than half' of novels were published anonymously, in terms of direct attribution within the text or its title page, but this did not always mean that the identity of the author, or their gender, was unknown to the public.²⁵² Lists of other works by the same author have aided identification, and many texts implied that their author was of a particular gender, usually female, in their title page or prefaces.²⁵³ The author names used throughout this thesis correspond to those listed in *The English Novel*, with two exceptions. I discuss the author of *The Wanderer; or, Female Difficulties* (1814) as Frances Burney, according to convention, despite *The English Novel* listing this work under Burney's married name, Frances D'Arblay.²⁵⁴ I will refer to the

²⁴⁸ Sophia F. Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village and its Inhabitants, Or, the History of Mrs Worthy and Her Family; Founded on Facts* (London: Henry Colburn, 1811), p. iii.

²⁴⁹ Sophia F. Ziegenhirt, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey* (London: Minerva Press, 1816).

²⁵⁰ 'Art. 15. The Fugitive, or Family Incidents', *The Critical Review; Or Annals of Literature*, 1: 2, February 1815 (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1815), p. 208.

²⁵¹ Green, *The Fugitive*; Lisa M. Wilson, 'British Women Writing Satirical Novels in the Romantic Period: Gendering Authorship and Narrative Voice', *Romantic Textualities*, 17 (2007), p. 32.

²⁵² Raven, p. 151; pp. 143-4.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

²⁵⁴ Burney, *The Wanderer*; Garside, Raven, and Schöwerling, p. 395.

author of *Faith and Fiction* (1816) as Anna Maria Bennett, although the novel is listed in *The English Novel* under the pseudonym Elizabeth Bennett.²⁵⁵ I have included ‘Miss’ or ‘Mrs’ where these titles indicate the author is female, in the absence of a first name. Anonymous novels for which no attribution is given in *The English Novel* are not included in my corpus. 19.2 percent of novels published in the 1810s are the work of authors of unknown gender (an author is not named on the title page, has not been later identified, and is not implied by other textual clues).²⁵⁶ Even where gender is implied, it is important to note that ‘several male writers assumed “young lady” title-page identity, and a few young women pretended to be male’.²⁵⁷ My selection criteria therefore could potentially lead to the work of a male author under a female pseudonym (which has not yet been recognised) being included, or the work of entirely anonymous female author being excluded. However, Garside notes that there is ‘little evidence’ of the use of ‘pseudonyms and gender-implicit tags’ to conceal the author’s gender, in this period.²⁵⁸ Although further investigative work on the authorial identities behind the many neglected texts included in this thesis would be rewarding, it is not the aim of this project.

My methodology for searching for texts was as follows. I initially identified novels listed as regional in previous bibliographical work on Wales (see Chapter Two for further discussion).²⁵⁹ As this thesis aims to provide the first detailed research on the use of the Midlands and the West Country in novels of this period, no comparable sources were available for these regions. I identified further texts not listed in the Welsh scholarship and all of the texts for the Midlands and West Country chapters by reviewing titles listed in *The English Novel* and the Corvey Collection. Within the parameters outlined above, I initially searched for titles which suggested Welsh or English (particularly Midlands or West Country) regional interest, such as the use of place names. I then identified any titles which did not rule out these three regional settings. In other words, I excluded only those female-authored novels published 1810-1820 with titles which clearly ruled out these settings (such as those which signalled a location outside of England or Wales), or better-known texts

²⁵⁵ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*; Jennett Humphreys and Rebecca Mills, ‘Bennett, Anna Maria (d. 1808), novelist’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/2117>>; Garside, Raven, and Schöwerling, p. 427.

²⁵⁶ Garside, ‘The English Novel in the Romantic Era’, pp. 72-3.

²⁵⁷ Raven, p. 145.

²⁵⁸ Garside, ‘The English Novel in the Romantic Era’, p. 72, n. 99.

²⁵⁹ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*; Andrew Davies.

famously set in other regions, for example, Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818).²⁶⁰ I then reviewed each novel identified by these searches in order to establish which texts did feature settings in my case study regions (see Chapters Two to Four for my definition of these regions). This extensive process was necessitated by the general dearth of published research on the majority of these texts. I then consulted all of the novels identified by this review to confirm which locations were included. I removed from my list those texts where my case study regions did not appear or were not significant. I was left with a corpus of forty-four texts which made significant use of one or more of my case study regions. My definition of a significant use of a setting is that it is the location of either an important plot event (although this could be in relatively brief passage) or of at least one key section of the novel.

My analysis developed from these initial readings. I wrote plot summaries (see appendix) to aid the reader's comprehension of this thesis, as the overwhelming majority of the texts will be unfamiliar even to scholars of the Romantic period. I considered trends in the geography of the settings used; these findings are outlined in the earlier sections of Chapters Two to Four. This analysis originated from maps which I created. I engaged in the method of literary cartography pioneered by Moretti, in which mapping texts is the '*beginning*' of literary analysis.²⁶¹ These maps precede Chapters Two to Four and illustrate the trends I have identified. As Moretti argues, the researcher's ability to '*abstract*' their chosen 'elements' of the text creates a map with the potential to reveal 'relations that would otherwise remain hidden'.²⁶² The maps I created revealed trends which were not evident from simply reading the texts. Removing the settings from the 'narrative flow' revealed which areas of each case study region were particularly popular or underrepresented.²⁶³ Mapping allowed me to consider questions such as whether contiguous counties were represented similarly, where considering the counties named in each novel could not have revealed the same patterns. I used Google My Maps, a tool for making customised maps with Google Maps as a base. Due to its accessibility, this Google Maps technology has been widely used in digital humanities research for the past two decades.²⁶⁴ I selected points to label with the name of each novel, based on research into the novels' settings, for example by triangulating mentions of real-

²⁶⁰ Susan Ferrier, *Marriage* (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and John Murray, 1818).

²⁶¹ Moretti, *An Atlas of the European Novel*, p. 7.

²⁶² Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, p. 53; *An Atlas of the European Novel*, p. 3.

²⁶³ Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, p. 53.

²⁶⁴ Cooper, Donaldson and Murrieta-Flores, p. 12; Mitchell, p. 158.

world place names. Like all mapping methodologies, this technology has limitations. Firstly, using a modern base map for this project is not ideal due to changes in place names and county boundaries over the past two centuries. However, I did not find any instances where real historical place names were used in the novels but did not appear on my map. The impact of any minor differences is outweighed by the benefits of the technology. Future geographical work on this area of literature could consider maps from the period under discussion; this would require more specialised Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques and was not the focus of this thesis.²⁶⁵ Another difficulty I faced in my cartographical analysis is that many of the features of literature are often not ‘unambiguously mappable’, as David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson and Patricia Murrieta-Flores note.²⁶⁶ Literary cartography generally assumes that ‘a large part of fiction [...] refers to the physical/real world’.²⁶⁷ While some settings in these novels are ambiguous, the authors almost always anchor them within real counties. Many of them are ‘transformed settings’, ‘linked to’ a real place, but ‘alienated’ from it through the devices such as the use of a fictional name, and/or impossible triangulations of distances from real places.²⁶⁸ It is important to remember that ‘the literary representation even of a supposedly “real” place is always of a different order’.²⁶⁹ When mapping the settings of the novels in my corpus, I was able to ‘point out a likely position or zone on the map’ based on research into the possible ‘real-world counterpart’ of each place.²⁷⁰ In some cases, these are precise, such as a named town. In other cases, they are ambiguous, and I have represented them with a point in the most likely general area of a county. As the novels include multiple settings, I have mapped one setting in any given region, selecting the location which is most significant for my analysis. In cases where multiple settings are accorded equal prominence, due to a journey or tour, I have represented this using a line between these points. This ‘straight line methodology’ cannot precisely

²⁶⁵ The use of specialised GIS software and period maps would have required advanced training and/or collaboration with a dedicated cartographical researcher, which was not practicable within the scope of this thesis, but this would be a productive avenue for future research. For discussion of GIS, see Mitchell p. 160.

²⁶⁶ David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson and Patricia Murrieta-Flores, ‘Introduction’, in *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*, ed. by David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson, and Patricia Murrieta-Flores (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 13.

²⁶⁷ Piatti and Hurni, p. 220.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

²⁶⁹ Sally Bushell, ‘Mapping Fiction: Spatialising the Literary Work’, in *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age*, ed. by David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson, and Patricia Murrieta-Flores (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 133.

²⁷⁰ Piatti and Hurni, p. 220.

illustrate the smaller movements through space recorded in a text, but it is the best approximation for my purposes.²⁷¹ While an awareness of the limitations of my cartographical approach and any mapping methodology is important in order to contextualise the maps which it produces, these maps ‘make aspects visible which have been invisible before’, in a large corpus.²⁷² For example, they allow me to observe how the representation of settings relates to their contiguity and relative remoteness.

Chapters Two to Four each open by outlining the settings which are represented in each subregion, based on patterns identified in the mapping process. I then discuss the extent to which the region is represented distinctively. This includes outlining notable trends specific to each region, as well as considering the particular manifestation of key themes which are common to all three case study regions: remoteness and retirement, and female freedom. The first regional chapter, Chapter Two, discusses Wales. As Wales is the case study region associated the most strongly with remoteness, the most concentrated forms of the related themes of generic rurality and idealised retirement, but also danger, appear there. I will outline the way in which, in these novels, Wales is not only treated as an extension of England, but stereotyped and homogenised, and represented primarily by spaces near to tourist routes. In Chapter Three, I will discuss those novels which make significant use of the West Country, the case study region which appears the most frequently in my corpus. I will discuss their focus on spaces and amusements popular with tourists, including seaside and historical sites, which create narrative opportunities. This chapter will argue that the West Country is not homogenised to the same extent as Wales. The West Country’s more remote parts, such as Cornwall, are presented as wilder than its subregions nearer to London. Chapter Four discusses novels set in the Midlands, the most under-studied of my case study regions, despite appearing relatively frequently as a setting. I will outline the ways in which my corpus complicates the conventional image of the Romantic Midlands. These novels avoid engagement with the area’s Enlightenment or industrial connotations and instead create an image of the region which is more compatible with the generic rural ideal, by focusing on its historical appeal and role as a thoroughfare. In Chapter Five, I will present the conclusions which I draw from the previous discussions of my case study regions. I will make discursive comparisons between these three regions and discuss contrasts between them and with other

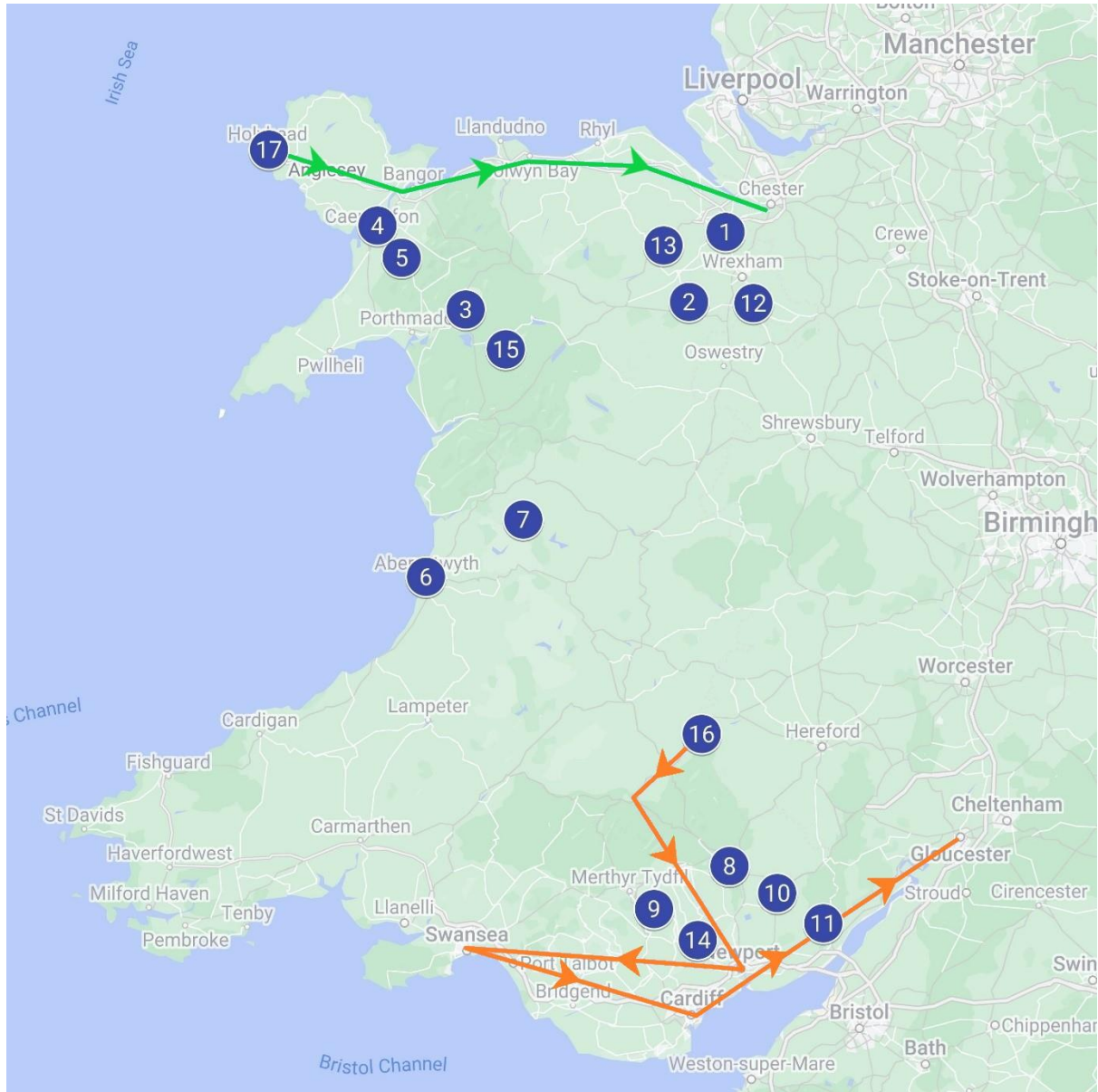
²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid., p. 222.

settings (within and beyond Britain). I have written plot summaries of all of the novels in my corpus, other than those by Austen, Burney, and Shelley (because these are already easily available elsewhere). These are placed in the appendix.

Chapter Two: Wales

Figure 1: Map of Welsh settings



Key to Figure 1

1. *The Welsh Cottage*
2. *Fitz-Edward; Eva of Cambria; The Prior Claim*
3. *The Welsh Mountaineer*
4. *Cambrian Pictures*
5. *Mystery and Confidence*
6. *The Miser Married*
7. *Llewellen*
8. *Owen Castle*
9. *The Vindictive Spirit*
10. *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey*
11. *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*
12. *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*
13. *Husband Hunters!!!*
14. *Helen Monteagle*
15. *The Foundling of Devonshire*
16. *Oakwood Hall*
 - The orange line represents Jane and Margaret's tour in South Wales
17. *Warwick Castle*
 - The green line represents the main characters' journey from Holyhead into England

N.B. arrows on lines indicate direction of travel

1. Introduction

Wales provoked particular interest as a tourist destination and subject of travel writing in the Romantic period, especially when conflict restricted European travel. This was because it was relatively easy to reach from England, yet ‘its attractions had an appealingly foreign context’ and aesthetic appeal.¹ The numerous Welsh travel accounts that were published included Thomas Pennant’s *Tours in Wales* (1778-1781), which John Davies argues ‘were a central factor’ in the spread of the idea that ‘the Welsh were intellectually interesting’.² A young Jane Austen satirised the ubiquity of these tours: in ‘A Tour through Wales – in a Letter from a young Lady’, the letter-writer provides the humorously basic information that Wales ‘is a principality contiguous to England and gives the title to the Prince of Wales’.³ Tourist interest in Wales led to a corresponding trend for representing it in fiction, which was primarily driven by women.⁴ Female-authored Welsh novels, published in ‘substantial numbers’ in the Romantic period, have been relatively overlooked by scholars, despite recent revivals of ‘four nations’ women’s writing.⁵ Aaron suggests that this could be due to their not being considered ‘Celtic enough’, because they address an English metropolitan audience, and were mostly written by either Englishwomen who had no significant connections to Wales, or ‘Welsh women who had turned away from their culture’.⁶ Elizabeth Edwards’ 2021 edition of Hatton’s *Cambrian Pictures* is a sign of a burgeoning revival of interest in these texts.⁷

This chapter is the first detailed study of the use of Wales as a setting in female-authored novels between 1810 and 1820. I will discuss a corpus of nineteen novels which have not been discussed together previously. This is a larger group of female-authored Welsh novels from this decade than have been included in previous scholarship. Seven of them are mentioned by Andrew Davies in his work on ‘Wales-related fiction’ in the Romantic period.⁸ My focus on female authors, within a specific decade, and the role of Welsh space

¹ John Davies, *A History of Wales* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), p. 347.

² *Ibid.*; Thomas Pennant, *Tours in Wales* (London: Printed for Benjamin White, 1784).

³ Jane Austen, *Juvenilia*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 224.

⁴ Jane Aaron and Sarah Prescott, *The Oxford Literary History of Wales Volume 3, Welsh Writing in English, 1536-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 116.

⁵ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 8.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁷ Ann Julia Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures, or, Every One Has Errors*, ed. by Elizabeth Edwards (Aberystwyth: Honno, 2021).

⁸ Andrew Davies, p. 12.

specifically, rather than ‘Welsh interest’ in fiction, allows me to cover more novels and to analyse them in more depth.⁹ Aaron’s *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales* centres on female writers, but it covers a wider period than this thesis and therefore considers only three novels from the 1810s.¹⁰ In this chapter, I aim to extend both Davies and Aaron’s work on Welsh fiction of the Romantic Period, specifically by considering the function of Welsh space in female-authored novels of the 1810s.

The Welsh novels discussed in this chapter represent a development from earlier examples of the genre. It went through an enormous growth in popularity in the late eighteenth century.¹¹ Anna Maria Bennett’s *Anna: or Memoirs of a Welch Heiress* (1785) inspired the publication of ‘copycat Welsh Romances’.¹² The ubiquity of Welsh settings in this period is illustrated by Austen’s decision to satirise it in four of her surviving juvenilia, written between 1787 and 1793.¹³ For example, Austen mocks the conventional emphasis on Wales’ rurality in ‘Jack and Alice’: Lucy’s father is ‘one of the most capital Taylors’ [sic] in North Wales’, where, in reality, as Peter Sabor notes, ‘tailors of any kind [...] would be hard to find’.¹⁴ Although Austen probably later visited Wales in 1803, she did not use it in her published novels.¹⁵ This absence, combined with the tendency of scholarship on female novelists of this period to focus on Austen, has concealed the importance of Welsh spaces for women writers.

Bennett’s *Anna* is an early example of the particular trend for Welsh settings being used to explore questions of female freedom. While this is a common theme of female-authored novels of the period, regardless of setting, Welsh spaces are used more often than English ones for the exploration of potential alternatives to gendered codes of behaviour. Wales is therefore sometimes associated with greater freedom for women. In this chapter, I will consider this phenomenon, and its links to these novels’ positioning of Wales as more remote from metropolitan social and cultural norms, both physically and symbolically, as a

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*.

¹¹ Aaron and Prescott.

¹² Anna Maria Bennett, *Anna: or Memoirs of a Welch Heiress* (London: William Lane, 1785); Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 9.

¹³ Peter Sabor, ‘Introduction’ in Jane Austen, *Juvenilia*, ed. by Peter Sabor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. xxiii- lxvii.

¹⁴ Austen, *Juvenilia*, p. 22; p. 390, n. 59.

¹⁵ Brian Southam, ‘Jane Austen beside the Seaside: Devonshire and Wales 1801–1803’, *Persuasions*, 33 (2011), p. 140.

distinct principality. Bennett's *Anna* also popularised the use of Welsh orphans as a symbol 'to indicate that woman is disinherited and exploited', a trope which also appears in Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline, or, The Orphan of the Castle* (1788).¹⁶ Caroline Franklin argues that Emmeline's Welsh and Scottish heritage gives the novel a 'Jacobite' tone, as the 'female Celt represents the disinherited subjects of the united kingdom' [sic].¹⁷ I agree with this assessment, however, many other novels of this period draw on an image of Wales as a remote, uncorrupted retreat which ultimately supports the conservative generic rural ideal. This remained prevalent into the 1810s. For example, Bennett's *Anna* follows its heroine from homelessness to inheritance, as a reward for the preservation of her reputation. This prefigures the plot frequently used in later Welsh novels, in which a woman marries and finds an ideal home in Wales after suffering persecution. A later example appears in Emily Clark's *Ianthé, or the Flower of Caernarvon* (1798): the heroine is rewarded by an inheritance which enables her to marry the man of her choice.¹⁸ Such plots remained prevalent into the 1810s; they appear in many of the novels which I will discuss in this chapter. By this decade, the conservative generic rural ideal became the primary association of Welsh spaces in female-authored novels. The radical possibilities for women mentioned above appear relatively less frequently, although this is still a notable way in which Wales is sometimes represented distinctively among my case study regions. The conservatism of most of these novels reflects the broader climate of the decade, in which female writers were generally less willing to associate themselves with more radical ideas, following the anti-revolutionary and anti-Wollstonecraft backlash.

While these novels draw on the peripheral status of Wales in order to portray it as remote, they simultaneously treat it as indistinct and homogenous, and often as no more than a particularly remote region of England. This is partly because many of the novels discussed in this chapter focus on the increasingly anglicised Welsh gentry. They represent and discuss the significant social change which took place in Wales in the 1810s; according to E.D. Evans, by 1815, 'the leadership of [Welsh] society' was changing, as 'the rise of a moneyed

¹⁶ Charlotte Smith, *Emmeline, The Orphan of The Castle* (London: T. Cadell, 1788); Caroline Franklin, 'Wales as Nowhere: the tabula rasa of the "Jacobin" imagination', in *Footsteps of Liberty and Revolt": Essays on Wales and the French Revolution*, ed. by Mary-Ann Constantine and Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013), p. 25.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Emily Clark, *Ianthé, or the Flower of Caernarvon* (London: Hookham & Carpenter, 1798).

class' challenged the primacy of 'lineage' in the upper classes.¹⁹ The idea of Wales as simultaneously foreign yet indistinct from England, and therefore ripe for the imaginings of fictional possibilities, permeates my corpus. This generalisation of Wales is also partly attributable to the English metropolitan perspective from which these texts are generally written. Andrew Davies notes that most 'Wales-related' Romantic-period Anglophone novels were written by English authors, while the few Welsh writers in this genre 'worked in the same publishing context and shared a similar implied reader', because the 'overwhelming majority' worked with London-based publishers.²⁰ By definition, Anglophone 'Welsh' novels were not written in the 'language of the majority' of the country.²¹ Davies' observation is confirmed by my corpus: all of these novels were published in London, except *The Welsh Cottage* and *Llewellen*, published in Shropshire and Edinburgh, respectively (as discussed in Chapter One). I have found that, by the 1810s, the vast majority of female novelists using Welsh settings were English. While several of these authors' nationalities are unknown, only one is apparently identifiable as Welsh: Emma Parker, who 'appear[s] to have been a member of the north Wales gentry'.²²

In this chapter, I will explain the trends which have emerged in the representation of Wales in my corpus, while also noting interesting counterpoints to these trends. I will begin by discussing the geography of the settings used in these novels, including their polarisation into North and South Wales, and the lesser use of urban or central Welsh settings. Next, I will discuss trends in the representation of Wales, with a focus on the extent to which Wales is homogenised and treated as indistinct from England, or as an internal colony. I will then explore the implications assigned to the remoteness of Wales, as well as female characters' relationships to Welsh spaces, including their freedom of movement within Wales, and potential intellectual freedom. Finally, I will discuss how Wales is contrasted with other settings.

¹⁹ E.D. Evans, *A History of Wales 1660-1815* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1993). p. 180.

²⁰ Andrew Davies, p. 6.

²¹ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in Wales*, p.11.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

2. The geography of Welsh settings

Many of the novels discussed in this chapter include multiple settings across Wales, England, and beyond. In keeping with the generic rural plot structure outlined in Chapter One, these novels generally feature a primary Welsh setting, usually the Welsh ‘home’ of the heroine, whether her birthplace or childhood home, or an inherited or marital home. These principal settings are almost entirely polarised between North and South Wales. This reflects the ‘acute north-south divide’ within Wales in the early nineteenth century, a barrier created by the central mountains.²³ In my corpus, both North and South Wales are overwhelmingly portrayed as rural, except for some brief visits to provincial towns. The settings which appear generally reflect established travel routes, and many of them are near to the border with England. In this section, I will first discuss the representation of rural North and South Wales. I will then consider the few examples of central or entirely ambiguously located Welsh settings, followed by urban Welsh settings. The homogenisation of Wales in my corpus means that dividing these novels into broad subregions is more appropriate than grouping them by county.

North Wales

Rural North Wales is the most commonly represented subregion of Wales in my corpus. It features in seven of the novels discussed in this chapter. These novels tend to draw on aesthetic images of North Wales’ rural landscape as beautiful and mountainous that had been rendered stereotypical by repetition in earlier literature and tours. A typical example is Dolgelly Castle in *Cambrian Pictures*, whose name appears to refer to the town of Dolgellau: it is situated between ‘mountains of stupendous height’ and ‘land in the state of the highest cultivation, ‘on a bold eminence, near the sea shore’, its ‘hanging woods’ surrounding the ‘road to the ancient and romantic town of Carnarvon [sic]’.²⁴ This setting combines multiple atmospheric features of the North Wales landscape, including Caernarvon’s connections to Wales’ conquest by the Romans and Edward I. As Edwards aptly summarises, here Hatton

²³ Colley, p. 15.

²⁴ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 36.

creates ‘a picturesque aesthetic that she exploits to the full’.²⁵ This Welsh setting is a shorthand for the picturesque and for historical interest, a technique which can be seen throughout my corpus. The description of Dolgelly brings together Wales’ wildness with its agricultural land and juxtaposes these with the relative proximity of the urban. It thus reflects the generic rural ideal of moderation between remoteness and civilisation which I discussed in Chapter One. The setting of *Mystery and Confidence* triangulates similar geographical features: the ‘little village of Llanwyllan’ is ‘at the foot of one of the most romantic mountains in North Wales, about a mile from the coast of Carnarvonshire [sic]’.²⁶ Austen satirises this method of describing settings in ‘A Tale’ in her juvenilia: a man finds a cottage ‘on the borders of an extensive forest and about three Miles from the Sea’, which matches, word for word, the requirements specified by his brother, just lines earlier.²⁷ While Austen’s story is set in Pembrokeshire, many of these novels set in North Wales similarly rely on the naming of specific distances to create a sense of relative remoteness. For example, in *The Welsh Cottage*, ‘Lanmere, the residency of Miss Owen’ is ‘about fourteen miles from Denbigh’.²⁸ Hutton similarly emphasises the remoteness of her heroine’s home in *The Welsh Mountaineer* (1817).²⁹ Dorothy has lived a secluded life near to Ffestiniog, in the ‘Merionethshire Mountains’, having ‘never been at Caernarvon, not even at Bala’.³⁰ In 1799, on visiting the area, Hutton observed that ‘the situation of Festiniog [sic] is beautiful’ and noted its distance from other settlements: ‘in a circumference of upwards of a hundred miles, there are nowhere so many houses assembled together’.³¹ It is therefore the ideal opening setting for a novel in which the heroine’s inexperience is both a key theme and a source of comedy.

Unlike Hutton’s use of Ffestiniog, most of the northern Welsh settings in my corpus would have been relatively accessible from the road between Holyhead and either Chester or Shrewsbury. This passed through Conwy, St. Asaph, Ruthin, Llangollen, and Oswestry, or Corwen and Llanrwst, and, from 1804, ‘the shorter line of road, through Capel Curig and

²⁵ Elizabeth Edwards, ‘Introduction’, in Ann Julia Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures, or, Every One Has Errors* ed. by Elizabeth Edwards (Aberystwyth: Honno, 2021), p. xii.

²⁶ Pinchard, i, p. 1.

²⁷ Austen, *Juvenilia*, p. 225.

²⁸ More, p. 50.

²⁹ Catherine Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1817).

³⁰ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 6-7.

³¹ Catherine Hutton Beale, *Reminiscences of a Gentlewoman of the Last Century: Letters of Catherine Hutton* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1891), p. 52.

Bangor' was also available.³² The novelists in my corpus rely on the imagery of remoteness while often describing relatively more accessible spaces; the same will be seen in their handling of the West Country and the Midlands. In Wales, this means that they use settings within reach of the English border particularly frequently. This shows that they have chosen Welsh settings to create a particular aesthetic affect, but they also want their settings to be compatible with the convention of depicting Anglo-Welsh gentry characters' regular and rapid travel between English and Welsh estates. For example, Hatton's *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* (1816) features a wide range of settings and concludes at 'Wrexham Abbey, the ancient family-seat of the Fitzaubins'.³³ Another benefit of using settings near travel routes is that they would have been more familiar to English readers than more inaccessible locations, either from personal experience or from reading about them in published tours.

The road from Holyhead also creates opportunities for plots involving Ireland. In Miss Prickett's *Warwick Castle* (1815), Frances gives a dramatic account of her urgent journey from Ireland to see her dying father in London, in inclement February weather: they left Holyhead amidst 'deep snow' and found that 'the roads were almost trackless'.³⁴ She describes the 'dangerous mountain pass' at 'Penman Mawr [sic]', emphasising the 'terrific horrors of the scene at this unfavourable season of the year'.³⁵ This passage exemplifies North Wales' association with wildness in my corpus. The reverse journey is significant in Amelia Beauclerc's *Husband Hunters!!!* (1816): Louisa is coincidentally reunited with Lucius at a church in 'the smoky village of R---n' as he travels to his Irish home via 'easy journeys, to visit the beauties of North Wales'.³⁶

The use of settings just inside Wales' border with England creates links with the English regional spaces with which they are contiguous. 'Bryn-Madoc', the Welsh setting in *Husband Hunters!!!* where Louisa is living when she meets Lucius, is situated 'between Denbigh and Wrexham'.³⁷ Beauclerc uses its location on the border to advance her plot: Hareville gets lost during a snowstorm when riding to Shrewsbury and is unexpectedly reunited with his sister, who has ended up living in Shropshire. Links to North-West England

³² Hugh Owen, *A History of Shrewsbury* (London: Harding, Lepard and Co, 1825), p. 518.

³³ Ann Julia Kemble Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House: or, The Peer, the Lawyer, and the Hunchback* (London: Minerva Press, 1816), v, p. 256

³⁴ [Miss] Prickett, *Warwick Castle* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1815), iii, pp. 126-7.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 127-8.

³⁶ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 136.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 145.

are also particularly significant in descriptions of North Wales settings nearer the border. For example, in *Eva of Cambria*, Barrington's castle is 'within the wilds of North Wales' but only 'about fifteen miles distant from the ancient city of Chester'.³⁸ Like many of these Welsh settings, it is evocatively remote but also has familiar connections. The location of Barrington's mansion is further specified when he offers to take tourists to 'Chirk Castle, Valla Crusis, and the aqueduct'.³⁹ The reference to the former two sites (a castle and an abbey) is typical of the tendency of these novelists to mention the historical landmarks which often appear in Welsh tours. The aqueduct is most likely the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. It also appears in *Fitz-Edward*, the setting of which is initially described as 'not many miles from the celebrated vale of Llangollen' but is further elucidated when the characters visit 'the aqueduct of Pont-cy-sulty' which is 'within five miles'.⁴⁰ These two mentions of Pontcysyllte are unusual in my corpus because they acknowledge a recent technological change, rather than the historical past. To mention the aqueduct, opened in 1805, is to foreground the impact of contemporary engineering technology in shaping the Welsh landscape. This group of novels usually avoids discussing the industrialisation of Wales, in order to maintain the generic rural ideal (further exceptions are discussed under 'Urban settings', below).

These references in *Eva of Cambria* and *Fitz-Edward* locate both novels near the Vale of Llangollen. The area was widely acclaimed as picturesque in this period. Pennant wrote: 'I know of no place in *North Wales*, where the refined lover of picturesque scenes, the sentimental, or the romantic, can give a fuller indulgence to his inclination'.⁴¹ It is also celebrated in the titular poem of Anna Seward's *Llangollen Vale* (1796).⁴² The novels set in or near the Vale draw on a shorthand of landscape beauty and historical associations created by previous writers. This is evident in Maria Iliff's *The Prior Claim* (1813): Mrs Fitzosborne's house is 'situated in the beautifully romantic vale of Llangollen', with a view of 'the lofty and majestic ruins of Dinas Braan Castle', which the characters visit.⁴³ In mentioning the Vale, these novelists also implicitly evoke the Ladies of Llangollen, the subject of half of Seward's poem.⁴⁴ Sarah Ponsonby and Eleanor Butler, whose home and

³⁸ Amelia Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria; Or, the Fugitive Daughter* (London: Minerva Press, 1811), i, p. 49; p. 1.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 57.

⁴⁰ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, i, p. 9; p. 18.

⁴¹ Pennant, p. 295

⁴² Anna Seward, *Llangollen Vale, with other poems* (London: Printed for G. Sael, 1796).

⁴³ Iliff, ii, p. 34; p. 51.

⁴⁴ Seward, *Llangollen Vale*.

garden at Plas Newydd in the ferme ornée style were ‘an object of pilgrimage to every traveller and tourist who passed’, were still at the height of their fame in the 1810s, when these novels were published.⁴⁵ Their famous lifestyle in their ‘rural idyll of tranquillity’ may have influenced depictions of retirement and femininity in these Welsh novels, as I will discuss later in this chapter.⁴⁶ References to Llangollen had associations not only of historical grandeur and the picturesque, but also domesticity and retirement; it is a microcosm of the typical image of rural Wales in these novels.

As well as sharing a geographical setting in Llangollen, *Eva of Cambria* and *Fitz-Edward* both feature a central character called Eva. This similarity caused problems at the Minerva Press, where both novels were published in 1811. In her preface, Emma Parker explains that ‘owing to a mistake, another manuscript, the production of *another* author, was sent to the press instead of *mine*’ and published under her originally-proposed title of *Eva of Cambria*, so it was ‘necessary to give a new title to the present work’.⁴⁷ That it was possible to confuse the two manuscripts and print one under the title of the other demonstrates not only the rapidity of publishing at the Minerva Press but also the similarities between these novels. It suggests that the conventions of Welsh novel subgenre led to them being seen as so generic that the publisher could treat them as literally interchangeable.

South Wales

The four novels in my corpus that are set in South Wales are mostly less geographically specific than those set in the North. They too overlook the industrialisation of Wales; depicting generalised rural spaces facilitates this. Mary Ann Sullivan provides very little local detail in describing the setting of *Owen Castle; or, Which is the heroine?* (1816), near Abergavenny in Monmouthshire.⁴⁸ Similarly, Sarah Wilkinson’s *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey, Or, the Mystery of the Blue and Silver Bag; A Romance* (1820) centres on the titular abbey and ‘Martimel Castle’, which are ‘situated in a most delightful part of

⁴⁵ Elizabeth Mavor, *The Ladies of Llangollen: a study in romantic friendship* (Ludlow: Moonrise Press, 2011), p. 134.

⁴⁶ Heather Williams, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, p. i.

⁴⁸ Mary Ann Sullivan, *Owen Castle; or, Which is the heroine?* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1816).

Monmouthshire’, with fictional place names concealing the exact location.⁴⁹ Even more vaguely, in *The Vindictive Spirit* (1812), Elizabeth Thomas describes Abergeley’s ‘splendid’ estate as ‘in South Wales’, but does not give any specific geographical references.⁵⁰

One novel in my corpus is set in a specific location in South Wales: in Ziegenhirt’s *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*, ‘Tintern Lodge’ is ‘an estate in Monmouthshire [...] on the banks of the Wye, near to Tintern Abbey’.⁵¹ It is telling that the only novel in my corpus with a specific South Wales setting is located with reference to an historical and tourist site with celebrated rural surroundings, maintaining the typical associations of Wales and the generic rural ideal. Gilpin dismissed Tintern Abbey from a distance (‘though the parts are beautiful, the whole is ill-shaped’), but stated that ‘on a *nearer* view’ it is ‘a very enchanting [sic] piece of ruin’.⁵² Tintern Abbey itself features prominently in the opening of the novel, as Belmont first visits as a tourist then chooses its environs for his ‘retirement’: ‘he often visited, to indulge in melancholy meditation within its mouldering aisle’.⁵³ In describing the surroundings of Tintern Abbey as encouraging reflection, Ziegenhirt draws on associations created by previous writers, including William Wordsworth.⁵⁴ As well as being a famous tourist site, this location on the banks of the Wye also situates the action of Ziegenhirt’s novel directly on the border with England, a trend which therefore appears in my corpus in both North and South Wales.

Mid Wales and ambiguous settings

As noted above, many of the Welsh settings in my corpus are relatively near to the border with England: in the north, the Welsh settings of *Eva of Cambria*, *Fitz-Edward*, *The Welsh Cottage*, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, and *Husband Hunters!!!*, and in the south, those of *Owen Castle*, *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey*, *The Vindictive Spirit* and *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*. Kirsti Bohata observes that ‘the lack of a dividing sea’ between Wales and

⁴⁹ Sarah Wilkinson, *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey, Or, the Mystery of the Blue and Silver Bag; A Romance* [1820], ed. by Franz Potter (USA: Zittaw Press, 2007), p. 26.

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Thomas, *The Vindictive Spirit* (London: Minerva Press, 1812), i, pp. 1-2.

⁵¹ Ziegenhirt, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*, i, p. 4.

⁵² Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye [...]*, pp. 32-33.

⁵³ Ziegenhirt, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*, i, p. 23.

⁵⁴ William Wordsworth, ‘Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour’, in William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (London: Printed for J. & A. Arch, 1798), pp. 201-209.

England means that the ‘borderland becomes imbued with enormous significance’.⁵⁵ This phenomenon can be seen in these novels. Their use of borderland settings, which are portrayed both as remote and as having relatively easy links to England, supports their construction of Wales as exotic, yet indistinct from England. This focus on spaces near the border means that Central Wales appears very rarely in these novels. This may be because relatively few Anglophone writers or their readers would have been familiar with this area, as it was not on the common tourist route, partly due to its topography.

Only two novels in my corpus include settings in rural Central or Mid Wales. In *Warwick Castle*, a secondary character, Margaret, is sent to stay with her mother’s ‘widowed sister living in Montgomeryshire’, until the ‘*bruit* of her indiscretion’ (attempting to elope from London with a military companion of her brother) ‘had in some degree subsided’.⁵⁶ This setting is portrayed as a space of ‘solitude’, and ‘seclusion’, extremely remote from the metropolis.⁵⁷ This implies that the location of Margaret’s exile may be in western Montgomeryshire, at the heart of Wales, rather than within reach of the English border. However, this is not certain, due to these novels’ tendency to construct remoteness symbolically. Central Wales appears more prominently in *Llewellen, or the Vale of Phlinlimmon*, which opens in a ‘picturesque spot’ ‘at the foot of the lofty Phlinlimmon [sic]’.⁵⁸ This appears to mean Plynlimon (anglicized from Pumlumon), situating the novel in Mid Wales, in the Cambrian Mountains.⁵⁹ This is another setting with historical associations with which some readers may have been familiar: Pennant reports that Owen Glyndwr ‘posted himself on *Plinlimmon* [sic] hill, a lofty mountain, the limits of *Cardiganshire* and *Montgomeryshire*’.⁶⁰ Although the Central Wales setting of *Llewellen* is unusual in my corpus, Stevens uses it to represent the risks and benefits of Welsh remoteness in a way that is entirely conventional (see ‘Remoteness’, below).

While many of the novels in my corpus represent their Welsh settings in a deliberately nonspecific way, just two of them feature settings in Wales which are entirely ambiguously

⁵⁵ Kirsti Bohata, *Postcolonialism revisited: writing Wales in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), p. 7.

⁵⁶ Prickett, iii, p. 178.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 217.

⁵⁸ Stevens, i, p. 1.

⁵⁹ ‘Plynlimon’, *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2016) <<https://www.britannica.com/place/Plynlimon>> [accessed 7 June 2019].

⁶⁰ Pennant, p. 342.

located. The first such setting appears in *The Foundling of Devonshire* (1818) by Miss C.D. Haynes, in which Mrs Selwyn's story of having fallen in love 'on the beautiful Welch mountains' is reported as an embedded narrative.⁶¹ Haynes uses this generic setting to satirise tropes of the Welsh novel: Mrs Selwyn was the daughter of a widowed Welsh clergyman and frequently visited the mountains to 'apostrophize her imaginary complaint to the passing breeze'.⁶² On being 'attacked by a goat', she was 'saved from falling by being caught in the arms of a young man', 'an English traveller', whom she married.⁶³ By using a completely nonspecific setting, Haynes reproduces and exaggerates the homogenisation of Wales common in other novels of the period, although it is also possible that she decided that geographical detail was not necessary in the comedic backstory of a secondary character. A more significant example of an entirely ambiguous Welsh setting appears in Alicia Lefanu's *Helen Monteagle* (1818). The principal Welsh setting, the area around the Caerlaverock estate, is vaguely described as in 'the Principality of Wales'.⁶⁴ Lefanu appears to have taken inspiration for this name from Caerlaverock castle in Scotland, but she describes it as 'a beautiful seat in Wales'.⁶⁵ There are some possible indications of the area to which Lefanu is referring, but these are inconclusive. The Rosstrevor family's 'ancient castle of Rock-Trevor' could be inspired by the village of Trevor in the Vale of Llangollen, or nearby Trevor Hall.⁶⁶ In his description of Llangollen, Pennant describes 'Trevor house' and observes that Dinas Bran, the ruined castle, was once 'inhabited by a celebrated beauty, descended from the house of *Tudor Trevor*'.⁶⁷ Lefanu appears to have used this name to create a general sense of Welshness rather than to refer to a specific location, because other references in her novel suggest Rock-Trevor could instead be in South Wales. Rosstrevor receives 'a sudden summons to Swansea, upon business', but believes 'his stay would not be prolonged many days'.⁶⁸ Also, when Helen and Monteagle elope, they 'cut across to the village of Caerwylly', 'avoiding the open road while they remained in Wales'.⁶⁹ This could be a reference to

⁶¹ [Miss] C.D. Haynes, *The Foundling of Devonshire; Or, "Who is She?"* (London: Minerva Press, 1818), ii, p. 117.

⁶² *Ibid.*, ii, p. 126.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, ii, pp. 126-7.

⁶⁴ Alicia Lefanu, *Helen Monteagle* (London: Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, 1818), i, p. 1.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. 4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. 51.

⁶⁷ Pennant, p. 294; p. 298.

⁶⁸ Lefanu, *Helen Monteagle*, i, p. 123.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 155-156.

Caerphilly, and the implication that they have a long distance to travel within Wales also suggests they may be in South Wales. Lefanu deliberately uses ambiguous settings throughout *Helen Monteagle*, not only in Wales: she denotes the name of one town in the North of England using a dash and describes another as a place it is the ‘novelist’s privilege to distinguish by the name [...] of Everleigh’.⁷⁰ However, Lefanu also uses the specific settings of London, Edinburgh, and Brighton. This demonstrates that she chooses ambiguous settings when this complements her narrative; within Wales they create a sense of mysterious remoteness. This is typical of the function of Wales in my corpus, although this atmosphere is much more commonly created through references to specific famous locations than the representation of entirely ambiguous spaces.

Urban settings

Most of the novels in my corpus treat Wales as entirely rural. This is keeping with their presentation of a generic rural ideal, as outlined in Chapter One. The exclusion of urban spaces in Wales relates to an image of the principality which was outdated by the early nineteenth century: although Wales was urbanising less rapidly than England, ‘industrial towns were starting to emerge, particularly in the south’.⁷¹ In this section, I will discuss the few examples of urban Welsh settings in my corpus. Most of these instances relate to the social or commercial function of these urban spaces for the upper-class characters, rather than depicting the industries associated with these spaces. Passages set in urban Wales are usually brief and not descriptive. This is in contrast to the more extensive depictions of London which appear in my corpus (see ‘Wales contrasted with other settings’, below).

Several of the novels set in North Wales include references to Caernarfon, but the town is not described extensively in any of them. It is mentioned in *Cambrian Pictures* as the place where Captain Seymour’s regiment is quartered. In *The Prior Claim*, Emily makes a short visit to Caernarfon ‘to make preparations and purchase ornaments for a masqued [sic] ball’.⁷² This association of Caernarfon with shopping also appears in *Mystery and Confidence*: when Ellen and Joanna visit, they find it has become more fashionable ‘since

⁷⁰ Ibid., i, p. 316.

⁷¹ Peter Clark, ‘Small towns 1700-1840’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain II, 1540-1840*, ed. by P. Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 735.

⁷² Iliff, ii, p. 82.

they had seen it some years before'.⁷³ They are 'quite surprized at the carriages, and smartly drest people'.⁷⁴ However, Joanna tells Ellen that when she is married and moves to England, 'you will see so many fine houses and great cities, you will wonder how you could ever fancy Carnarvon [sic] a great place'.⁷⁵ Although these novels associate Caernarfon with commerce, they also emphasise its provinciality. This maintains the contrast which they establish between Welsh spaces and London.

The expanding industrial urban spaces in South Wales are rarely represented in this corpus. In *The Vindictive Spirit*, Celestia goes 'to take the benefit of new scenes [...] in the port of Swansea', but Thomas gives no descriptive detail.⁷⁶ Although Swansea was a suitable 'winter residence' for genteel characters and 'a fashionable resort', it was also 'developing as an industrial town'.⁷⁷ It therefore could not be depicted extensively without challenging the image of Wales as generally rural on which these novels rely. This may explain Hatton's choice to set *Cambrian Pictures* in North Wales despite her own residence in Swansea. Furthermore, as Edwards suggests, 'Hatton may have been trading on contemporary trends for domestic travel', as North Wales was more 'fashionable' than Swansea.⁷⁸ Like many of the other authors of novels in my corpus, Hatton appears to have carefully chosen her Welsh settings, and the level of detail with which she describes them, in order to evoke an image of rurality and remoteness. This can also be seen in her use of Wrexham as the title and implied location of a fictional abbey in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* without making any mention of the town itself.

Catherine Hutton's unusually detailed depictions of Swansea and Aberystwyth in *Oakwood Hall* (1819) and *The Miser Married* (1813) are the exceptions to this trend for rural generalisation. Although both novels are mainly set in England, Hutton creates an unusually nuanced image of Wales in the passages where characters visit the principality. Hutton's novels are epistolary and contain descriptions of both rural and urban Wales which show traces of her non-fiction travel writing, such as her 'Letters from a Tour in North Wales'

⁷³ Pinchard, i, p. 169.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., i, p. 170.

⁷⁶ Thomas, iii, p. 126.

⁷⁷ Ibid.; Evans, p. 203.

⁷⁸ Edwards, 'Introduction', p. xii.

published in *The Monthly Magazine* from 1815 to 1818.⁷⁹ For example, in *Oakwood Hall*, when travelling through South Wales, Jane reflects that her description of seeing ‘villages where every house is of a dazzling white’ and ‘every abode of competence [has] its spreading roses and jessamines, its twining honey-suckles and creepers’ may ‘sound like romance’.⁸⁰ This appears to reflect Hutton’s own concerns as a travel writer, aware of repeating stereotypical observations on the beauty of rural Wales. In contrast to this, in the same novel, Hutton also acknowledges the industry and trade in Swansea, including noting the ‘four booksellers [...] two of whom are printers’.⁸¹ Hutton even condemns industrial pollution through Jane: ‘I would rather be without copper tea-kettles, and even without copper money, and let the ore rest quietly in its bed, than raise such poisonous effluvia’.⁸² Copper-works were responsible for the dangerous release of ‘tens of thousands of tons of sulphuric acid’ each year.⁸³ Hutton’s acknowledgement of this industrialisation and its negative effects reflects her tendency to challenge the conventions of the Welsh novel genre. Jane’s attention to industrial sites reflects the experience of the many tourists who ‘visited and described’ such places in Wales.⁸⁴ The other novels in my corpus tend to represent only rural tourism, as outlined above.

Hutton’s descriptions of Aberystwyth in *The Miser Married* are the most detailed images of a Welsh town to be found in my corpus. Hutton was aware that the definition of a town was subjective. She stated in a letter:

The country people for twenty miles round call Aberystwith [sic] town. I laughed at this, but why should I laugh? True it is a poor, a petty place, but comparison makes all things small or great, and this is great compared with the villages of the country.⁸⁵

⁷⁹ Catherine Hutton, ‘Letters written during a Tour in North Wales by Miss Hutton, of Bennett’s Hill, near Birmingham 1815-1818’, *The Monthly Magazine and British Register*, 39-45 (London: Printed for Richard Phillips, 1815-1818), pp. 39-45.

⁸⁰ Catherine Hutton, *Oakwood Hall* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819), iii, p. 17.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ John Davies, p. 353.

⁸⁴ Mary-Ann Constantine ‘Consumed Landscapes: Coal, Air and Circulation in the Writings of Catherine Hutton’, *Romanticism*, 27.2 (2021), p. 128.

⁸⁵ Hutton Beale, p. 52.

She uses this insight to shape contrasting responses to Aberystwyth by Charlotte, who has lived in London, and her servant Ralph, a working-class Englishman from the Wye Valley. Charlotte's letter shows the influence of Hutton's own experience:

We walk on the shore; but it is neither a commodious or extensive promenade, being composed of loose pebbles, and bounded, at the distance of about half a mile, by a most magnificent promontory of dark rock.⁸⁶

This passage evidently draws on Hutton's personal observation that 'the beach at Aberystwith [sic] is covered with loose stones; the cliffs are bold, black rocks'.⁸⁷ Alongside this, Hutton provides an alternative, comedic description in Ralph's voice:

I has sin the gret salt sey. Bot Gods marsy, what a thing it is! I oost to think as how it must be like unto hour big fishpond, only moor bigger [...] ustid o being in a holler as watter oost to be, Ile be burnd uf it did not ryse up lik a hil [...].⁸⁸

Ralph's Wye Valley dialect is discussed in Chapter Four. His surprise in the above passage demonstrates his naivety. These contrasting descriptions allow Hutton to demonstrate the subjectivity of perceptions of the same space. By repeatedly describing the beach, Hutton focuses on the least obviously urban element of Aberystwyth. However, the function of Aberystwyth in the novel is as an urban resort, chosen as an alternative to Brighton: the characters visit it as part of a plan to challenge the titular miser's behaviour. Although not as established as Brighton, Aberystwyth was popular for sea bathing by the late eighteenth century; it became so busy 'in the summer season that many visitors had to sleep in their carriages'.⁸⁹ As a seaside resort, Aberystwyth acts as 'a space where normal social boundaries may be infringed', as Mary-Ann Constantine has highlighted.⁹⁰ A carriage accident leads to Charlotte meeting her love interest's father, who is aware of rumours connecting her to two other men. This coincidence, although 'unexpected', is described as 'not improbable, as of all tours, those in Wales are the most frequent'.⁹¹ Hutton's Aberystwyth also presents moral temptations, a typical association of urban space. Having

⁸⁶ Catherine Hutton, *The Miser Married* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1813), iii, p. 13.

⁸⁷ Hutton Beale, p. 51.

⁸⁸ Hutton, *The Miser Married*, iii, pp. 14-15.

⁸⁹ Evans, p. 203.

⁹⁰ Constantine, "'The Bounds of Female Reach'", p. 95.

⁹¹ Hutton, *The Miser Married*, iii, pp. 51-2.

retired from London to the English banks of the Wye, aware of her tendency to dissipation, Charlotte is tempted by the ‘adoration’ of the two aforementioned ‘admirers’ at Aberystwyth.⁹² Meanwhile, Ralph is tempted to gamble and fight, and nearly joins the Methodists (see ‘Religion and superstition’, below). Hutton portrays this experience as a moral lesson; Ralph requests, ‘wan I [...] think miself a fine fellor, do you tel me o aberisty’.⁹³ Hutton’s use of Aberystwyth as a site of urban temptation reverses the usual image in this group of novels of Wales as a place of moral retirement. She represents Aberystwyth in a way which resembles the negative connotations of larger towns, including resorts such as Bath (see Chapter Three), or even London. Like her acknowledgement of industrial pollution, this is an example of Hutton’s tendency to invert tropes of the Welsh novel subgenre, creating a more distinctive image of Wales.

3. Welsh trends

In this section, I will discuss trends which emerge in the depictions of Wales in my corpus. These novels show a preoccupation with Wales’ marginal status as a principality; I will consider the extent to which they treat Wales as distinctive from, or as a part of, England. The majority of them acknowledge Wales’ distinctiveness in several minor ways, which are consistent with the generic rural ideal, while not mentioning many of the real differences between Wales and England. I will first discuss the ways in which these novels often treat Wales as a particularly remote or unusual part of England. I will consider their general acceptance of an internal colonial dynamic between England and Wales, as well as outlining some key exceptions to this. I will then discuss two key themes which are emblematic of these novels’ treatment of Wales: firstly, their general exclusion of the Welsh language and replacement of it with an exaggerated dialect, and, subsequently, their exclusion of nonconformist religion and their depictions of superstition.

⁹² Ibid., iii, p. 20; p. 26.

⁹³ Ibid., iii, p. 45.

Wales as part of England, or an internal colony

Wales is explicitly categorised as part of England in *Helen Monteagle*, in which it is stated that Mrs Temple, who lives in Wales at this point, ‘had a passion common to many people in England’ for visiting houses.⁹⁴ This is in keeping with this novel’s ambiguous geography, but many of the other novels in my corpus also implicitly treat Wales as part of England, reflecting its legal status following the Laws in Wales Acts of 1535 and 1542. One exception to this is a conversation in *The Vindictive Spirit* in which the characters mock the ignorant Sir Felix: he claims, when in Wales, ‘I was never out of England’, so they ask him ‘where are you now?’ and say he must think he is ‘in Lapland’.⁹⁵ This is a joke rather than a serious assertion that Wales is a separate nation.

A rare example of a somewhat more serious treatment of Welsh distinctiveness appears in Hutton’s *The Welsh Mountaineer*. On travelling in England, the Welsh-born heroine Dorothy describes how she ‘quitted [her] country’ and ‘seemed like an adventurer in a foreign land’.⁹⁶ Dorothy states ‘I do not like the kingdom of England so well as the principality of Wales’.⁹⁷ Hutton acknowledges the distinction but does not suggest that Wales is its own nation. Dorothy voices sentiments which draw on ideas from late eighteenth-century Welsh patriots. She expresses pride in being descended from the ‘founder of one of the fifteen tribes of North Wales’ with ‘not a drop of Saxon blood in my veins’, and even describes ‘the Norman conquerors [...] as a band of robbers’, who ought to have ‘restored Britain to its rightful owners’, the Celts.⁹⁸ Although Dorothy is presented elsewhere as a naïve character, Hutton lends a seriousness to her expressions of national pride by evoking a discourse of emancipation promoted by figures such as Iolo Morganwg and the Gwyneddigion, the society of Welsh patriots who took ‘inspiration’ from the French Revolution’ for their ‘vision [...] of a Welsh nation being reborn in freedom’.⁹⁹ For example, Dorothy sees the English as oppressing the Welsh: ‘there is as much difference as between the man who owns a purse, and the one who forcibly takes it from him with a pistol in his

⁹⁴ Lefanu, *Helen Monteagle*, i, p. 45.

⁹⁵ Thomas, ii, pp. 70-71.

⁹⁶ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 26.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, i, p. 27.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 65-66.

⁹⁹ John Davies, pp. 338-340.

hand'.¹⁰⁰ *The Welsh Mountaineer* was published in 1817, so Hutton was able to refer to these radical patriotic arguments with the retrospective knowledge that their 'hopes' and 'vitality [...] had been almost totally extinguished', denaturing a once fraught issue.¹⁰¹ Hutton's presentation of the subject at times appears somewhat detached or comedic. However, at the same time, she does seriously acknowledge and invite the reader to remember Wales' status as 'England's first colony'.¹⁰² For example, when Dorothy argues with a Lord who says the English could 'improve [...] the Chinese', she retorts: 'the only way to prevent the English from usurping power is to keep them out of a country'.¹⁰³ Hutton's acknowledgement that England's relationship with Wales can be seen as exploitative is unusual in my corpus.

Bohata argues that the lack of a maritime border dividing Wales from England makes their colonial relationship 'more complex' because the 'distinction between colonization and "national" expansionism and annexation generally relies upon' separation by sea.¹⁰⁴ Although this should not now 'undermine the case of considering Wales through the prism of postcolonial theory', it facilitates the argument that Wales was 'conquered and assimilated into the nation-state', rather than colonised.¹⁰⁵ Many of the novels in my corpus appear to promote this view. Michael Hechter defines Wales according to the 'internal colonial model' in which 'the core is seen to dominate the periphery and to exploit it materially'.¹⁰⁶ This domination led to 'the anglicization of the Welsh gentry' by the seventeenth century.¹⁰⁷ The novels in my corpus generally implicitly or even explicitly accept the treatment of Wales as an internal colony and its domination by this 'increasingly anglicised' gentry class who 'had lost touch with the Welsh language and traditions'.¹⁰⁸

Although some of these novels feature families with Welsh heritage, their plots usually centre on either English or anglicised Welsh gentry families moving between their estates across England and Wales. Just over half of the novels with Welsh settings in my corpus feature English characters moving to or visiting Wales. The rest either depict Welsh

¹⁰⁰ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 229.

¹⁰¹ John Davies, p. 339.

¹⁰² Bohata, p. 4.

¹⁰³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, p. 233.

¹⁰⁴ Bohata, p. 7.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Hechter, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 111.

¹⁰⁸ Gareth Elwyn Jones, *Modern Wales: A Concise History*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), p. 158.

characters visiting or moving to England or are more static in their setting. *The Miser Married*, *Oakwood Hall*, *Llewellen*, *The Welsh Cottage*, *Warwick Castle*, *Husband Hunters!!!* and *The Prior Claim* all feature English protagonists who move to Wales, or travel into it or through it. *Eva of Cambria* and *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey* include heroines who are half-English, half-French. *Eva of Cambria* also includes a protagonist born in Wales to parents in the Anglo-Welsh gentry, Helen. *Cambrian Pictures*, *Helen Monteagle*, *The Vindictive Spirit*, and *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey* feature heroines who are part of the Welsh gentry, and *Grace of Owen Castle* is related to a member of the Welsh nobility. However, these upper-class Welsh families are presented as anglicised, or sometimes as explicitly Anglo-Welsh, as they own estates in both England and Wales. As is typical in my corpus, the vast majority of the protagonists depicted are members of the upper classes. Only two or three of the heroines in this group of novels are Welsh but not part of the anglicised gentry class. The Welsh woman in *The Foundling of Devonshire* (who becomes Mrs Selwyn on her marriage) is only a very minor character. *Fitz-Edward's* Celia appears to be half-Welsh on her mother's side, because they move to her 'native place', Llangollen Vale, although it is also possible her mother is of English descent.¹⁰⁹ The only protagonists in my corpus who are presented as entirely Welsh, below gentry level, and unfamiliar with English culture are the patriotic Dorothy Penrose of *The Welsh Mountaineer* and the innocent farmer's daughter Ellen Powis of *Mystery and Confidence*.

The working-class majority of the Welsh population usually only function as atmospheric decoration in these novels. This generalisation of the peasantry into a compliant mass is typical of the generic rural ideal (as discussed in Chapter One). This trope is inflected by the particular role of the Welsh gentry. These novels often refer to celebratory banquets which represent the tendency of the Welsh gentry to have their 'birthdays [...] celebrated with food and drink they provided' as part of their efforts for 'the welfare of the community'.¹¹⁰ The celebration of Belmont junior's return in *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey* is a characteristic example: 'about two hundred and fifty neat Welsh farmers and cottagers, with their wives and children' dine in the barn.¹¹¹ The internal colonial dynamic is often reproduced in these novels' depictions of working class Welsh people. They often explicitly

¹⁰⁹ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, i, p. 9.

¹¹⁰ Gareth Elwyn Jones, p. 34.

¹¹¹ Ziegenhirt, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*, ii, p. 177.

highlight the ostensible need for English influence and suggest that Wales' treatment as an internal colony is necessary. A typical example appears in *Mystery and Confidence*:

Ross and his wife, who were both English [...] had introduced a degree of neatness and comfort in both the houses and apparel of their parishioners, which gave Llanwyllan the appearance of a comfortable English village, and rendered it totally distinct from those near it; where, as is often the case in Wales, extreme poverty, and its too frequent concomitants, a total carelessness of comfort abound [sic].¹¹²

The trope of Wales as 'dirty' is also present in *Fitz-Edward*, in which the title character thinks the 'little dirty town of Llangollen' is 'preferable' to London.¹¹³ While Wales is generally portrayed as beautiful, these suggestions that its settlements are unclean and therefore uncivilised serve as a justification for the internal colonialism which plays out in these novels. The Welsh gentry often funded their fashionable lifestyles 'by squeezing all that was possible out of their property'.¹¹⁴ These novels suggest that the landowners provide essential discipline: Welsh peasants are regularly described as unable to manage their own lives. For example, in *Eva of Cambria*, 'the necessitous peasantry' are given 'cloaks and linen', rather than a feast, because their English benefactor Helena 'hated drunkenness, and knew the failing of the Welsh'.¹¹⁵ Barrington later has to 'put a stop to' the 'riotry' caused by 'his liberality', which creates an image of the Welsh as in need of English control.¹¹⁶ This resembles Romantic-period defences of colonialism, as well as reflecting a more general stereotype of the working class as morally weak used to justify inequalities of wealth within Britain. One of the most striking examples of this dynamic appears in *The Welsh Cottage*: Miss Owen manages and leads the residents of Lanmere, demonstrating how 'morality and comfort might be diffused through a village'.¹¹⁷ She is of English descent, despite her Welsh name, apparently chosen by More to give her novel more of a 'Welsh' atmosphere. Andrew Davies compares Miss Owen, who has 'settled' in Denbighshire 'as an evangelical missionary', to the 'community clergyman' often found in 'Wales-related moral domestic

¹¹² Pinchard, i, p. 169.

¹¹³ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, ii, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ Evans, p. 186.

¹¹⁵ Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria*, i, p. 48.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. 79.

¹¹⁷ More, p. 96.

novels’, who has moved from England to Wales.¹¹⁸ Her longstanding position in the community allows her to assist the locals, a relationship which also resembles contemporary narratives of colonialism, in which longer-term residents attempt to use their status to mediate with the colonised peoples.

While the majority of these novels support the English domination of Wales, whether directly or indirectly, my corpus also includes several significant exceptions, where comparisons are drawn between the economic domination of Wales by England and female characters’ subjugation at the hands of Englishmen. Hutton makes Dorothy stand for Wales and speak against English colonialism (as discussed above). The domination of Wales is also questioned in *Cambrian Pictures*. Hatton directly links Sir Edward’s intention ‘to have sold’ his daughter Rosa to Lord Clavering for ‘ten thousand pounds’ and his ‘mortgage’, to ‘the slave question’: her uncle Jenkins declares it is ‘as if [Rosa] had been a negro slave in a West-India plantation’.¹¹⁹ Jenkins’ objection to this transaction also demonstrates that his Welsh pride is justified by superior morality, in comparison with Sir Edward, whom he accuses of being ‘ashamed’ to be Welsh.¹²⁰ Hatton invites the reader to sympathise with Jenkins, who is ‘more at home in [Welsh] than in English’, in his conflict of class and national identity with the Lords.¹²¹ As Aaron has argued, to compare the situation of Welsh women with slavery was to criticise ‘the buying up of people and of lands by English wealth and influence’.¹²² Hatton also condemns Englishmen attempting to use their power over Welsh women to seduce them, through Maitland’s thwarted liaison with his friend’s ‘very handsome dairymaid’, and Clavering’s ‘pretences of love’ to Jessy Jones, whom he abandons during her pregnancy.¹²³ I agree with Aaron and Edwards that Hatton’s own experiences of sexual exploitation – she had been married to a bigamist and may have engaged in sex work – appear to have inspired her depiction of female characters’ suffering as explicitly caused by English patriarchal society.¹²⁴ However, it is important to note that Hatton also shows women

¹¹⁸ Andrew Davies, p. 180.

¹¹⁹ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, iii, pp. 33-34; ii, p. 276; Jane Aaron, ‘The Rise and Fall of the “Noble Savage” in Ann of Swansea’s Welsh Fictions’, *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (2017), p. 84.

¹²⁰ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, ii, p. 260.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 38.

¹²² Aaron, ‘The Rise and Fall [...]’, p. 84.

¹²³ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 76; iii, p. 188.

¹²⁴ Edwards, ‘Introduction’, p. vii – viii; p. xvi; Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 39.

who break out of this model, which is exceptional in my corpus (see ‘Alternative gender performance’).

The trope of drawing parallels between seduced women and the suffering caused by the British Empire has its roots in earlier ‘Welsh’ novels, particularly Bennett’s *Anna*. In this novel, Gorget uses colonial-derived wealth to persecute the Welsh-born Anna: his ‘hideous passion’ for her leads him to forget he is not still in India, ‘where rape[s] and murders are tolerated acts’.¹²⁵ Similarly, in Clark’s *Ianthé*, the heroine’s kidnapping by her parents’ landlord is facilitated by, and draws attention to, the English ownership of Welsh land. Highlighting internal colonialism through comparisons to the British Empire was common in this period. This association between women and ‘colonized spaces’ like Wales was frequently used in sentimental literature; Franklin argues that it was ‘usually’ evoked in order ‘to call for paternalist protection’, although in some cases it represented a ‘desire to move into modernity’.¹²⁶ The former message appears more frequently in my corpus, in which dangers to women appear in all regions, often in order to demonstrate the possible consequences of failures of propriety and self-restriction (see ‘Female freedom’, below).

The Welsh language and dialect

One particularly noticeable manifestation of the tendency of many of these novels to treat Wales as a part of England is that most of them do not acknowledge the Welsh language. They overlook the fact that the majority of people in Wales in the early nineteenth century spoke Welsh.¹²⁷ This is a trend in Romantic-period novels more broadly. Hodson and Broadhead argue that Anglophone novels had ‘a tendency to gloss over’ the Welsh language ‘because of the difficulties inherent’ in its representation.¹²⁸ It is very unlikely that any of these novelists would have understood Welsh, and they did not expect this of their readership. They may also have avoided representing the Welsh language because it was stigmatised ‘as handicapping the development of civilisation’.¹²⁹ This relates to its class associations: most Welsh people ‘below gentry level’ would have spoken the Welsh language.¹³⁰ The

¹²⁵ Bennett, *Anna*, i, p. 146.

¹²⁶ Franklin, p. 28.

¹²⁷ Hechter, p. 168.

¹²⁸ Hodson and Broadhead, p. 318.

¹²⁹ Gareth Elwyn Jones, p. 199.

¹³⁰ Colley, p. 13.

conventional focus of this group of novels on upper-class characters partly justifies their use of English. However, even in the rare examples where lower-class characters speak, this is commonly represented using a stereotypical ‘Welsh’ dialect, which I will describe below.

More’s portrayal in *The Welsh Cottage* of an apparently entirely Anglophone village in a remote part of Denbighshire is a typical example of the avoidance of the Welsh language. More overlooks Welsh in order to facilitate her narrative of an Englishwoman saving the locals. The narrator comments that Miss Owen was ‘intimately acquainted with the familiar phraseology best adapted to the understanding of the labouring poor’ and her ‘plain simple style’ ensured her language was ‘comprehended by the most ignorant’.¹³¹ Here More shows an awareness of class-based dialect differences, but her Welsh cottagers appear to speak English exclusively. As the novels in my corpus are overwhelmingly set in rural areas in North or South rather than Central or urban Wales, the local peasantry would have been likely to have spoken Welsh, but this is rarely acknowledged.¹³² When the Welsh language occasionally does appear, it is mentioned briefly and exclusively associated with the lower classes. For example, in *Mystery and Confidence*, on the arrival of an English traveller, Farmer Powis ‘said something to [the servant girl] in Welsh, which she answered in the same language’, and gave orders ‘in Welsh’ to the boy.¹³³ By not translating what is said, Welsh is portrayed as incomprehensible, in keeping with the perspective of the English traveller character, and the intended Anglophone readership. Welsh is treated similarly in *Cambrian Pictures*, when it is stated that Delamere ‘rode up to ask what had happened’ in a carriage accident ‘but as the language was all Welch [sic], he could obtain no information’.¹³⁴ Hutton’s *Oakwood Hall* is unusual in its more accurate depictions of the Welsh language, but they are, nonetheless, brief. Hutton acknowledges the existence of monolingual Welsh speakers, such as the ‘boy and girl, who understood our money, but not our language’ who ‘were the keepers of the gate’.¹³⁵ Hutton also states through her character Jane that, in urban centres, in this case Swansea, the Welsh people ‘spoke English [...] in general with a proper

¹³¹ More, p. 70.

¹³² Colley, p. 13.

¹³³ Pinchard, i, pp. 6-7.

¹³⁴ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, iii, p. 207.

¹³⁵ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, ii, p. 246.

pronunciation’, rather than exaggeratedly describing their accent or dialect.¹³⁶ Hutton generally acknowledges the distinctiveness of Wales more readily than her contemporaries.

As an alternative to acknowledging the Welsh language, many of these novels show working-class characters speaking in Welsh English dialect. Hodson and Broadhead note that the representation of this Welsh dialect speech in Romantic period novels ‘tends to be highly stereotypical’.¹³⁷ Although a similar pattern can be observed in my corpus, Hodson and Broadhead’s assumption that this stereotyping was the result of English writers having ‘comparatively little interest in Wales during this period’ is belied by the numerous Welsh novels, tours and other writings published at this time.¹³⁸ Instead, these novelists’ choice to represent Welsh dialect using exaggerated features is an example of their tendency to construct Welsh difference without specificity. The novels in my corpus commonly construct comedy based on regional dialect to highlight class differences, not only in Wales but in the regions of England (as will be discussed in Chapters Three and Four). Non-standard English was increasingly associated with ‘social stigma’ in this period, following the proliferation of ‘prescriptive grammars’ in the eighteenth century.¹³⁹ As discussed in Chapter One, the novels in my corpus usually represent dialect speech using various stereotypical features, some of which are associated with a given region, but many of which are transregional class markers.

The most common signifier of Welsh dialect speech in novels of this period is the devoicing of stopped consonants. Hodson and Broadhead note the appearance of this feature, in which ‘[b] becomes [p], [d] becomes [t] and [g] becomes [k]’ in Thomas Love Peacock’s *Headlong Hall* (1816).¹⁴⁰ This trope appears in several of the novels in my corpus, which suggests that it was a stereotypical device. Andrew Davies observes that in *Llewellen*, Winifred’s dialect is marked by ‘the hardening of G to C’ in this way, and this is typical of the speech of ‘many Welsh domestics found in fiction of this period’.¹⁴¹ My findings confirm Davies’ observation and I have identified further examples. In *Husband Hunters!!!*, the Welsh maid says ‘Got pless’ (God bless) and ‘tancing’ (dancing).¹⁴² The devoicing of

¹³⁶ Ibid., iii, p. 8.

¹³⁷ Hodson and Broadhead., p. 326

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Jane Hodson, ‘Introduction’, in *Dialect and literature in the long nineteenth century*, ed. by Jane Hodson (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 2.

¹⁴⁰ Hodson and Broadhead, p. 326; Thomas Love Peacock, *Headlong Hall* (London: Printed for T. Hookham, Jun. & Co., 1816).

¹⁴¹ Andrew Davies, p. 317.

¹⁴² Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 184.

stopped consonants can also be seen in my corpus in the speech of Welsh people outside of Wales: in *The Foundling of Devonshire*, Mrs Selwyn's Welsh servant, Winifred, speaks in a dialect which conforms to the stereotypical model of the above examples. For instance, she repeatedly says 'Cot' for God.¹⁴³ Winifred's dialect is portrayed as significantly different from standard English: the Irish fruitseller with whom she has a dispute commands her not to 'splutter your *Wilch* at me', and the two women's dialects are described as 'their respective languages', although both are speaking English.¹⁴⁴ This is typical of these novels' tendency to use Welsh dialect to portray Wales as 'foreign', despite their limited representation of the features which distinguish it from standard English. This stereotypical representation of Welsh English dialect replaces representation of the Welsh language.

Another characteristic example of a Welsh English dialect speaker with an exaggerated accent represented by the devoicing of stopped consonants appears in Hatton's *Cambrian Pictures*. Gwithlean says to her English would-be suitor: 'Got pless hur, hur cout not come before, was afrait to come at all, for the peoples sait that the tefil haunted the parn'.¹⁴⁵ Hatton called herself 'Anne of Swansea', capitalising on her own residence in Wales, but her depiction of Welsh dialect panders to her English readers' assumptions rather than representing her own experience. All of the aforementioned Welsh dialect speakers are working class; the reader appears to be invited to find them amusing, and implicitly, inferior to the educated Anglo-Welsh gentry. However, Hatton's condemnation of the exploitation of the Welsh (as discussed above) suggests she would be unlikely to deliberately imply their inferiority. She implicitly does so, however, by reproducing the established stereotypical features commonly used to represent Welsh English.

Religion and superstition

These novels also portray Wales as a part of England by overlooking the differences in their religious demographics. They generally exclude nonconformist religion, preserving the association of the generic rural ideal with Anglicanism (as discussed in Chapter One). They do not reflect the reality that 'nonconformity was prevalent' in Wales in the early nineteenth

¹⁴³ Haynes, ii, p. 106.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., ii, p. 107.

¹⁴⁵ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 77.

century, except in ‘particularly anglicised areas’.¹⁴⁶ *The Welsh Cottage* exemplifies the tendency of these novels to ‘superimpose polite evangelical society on to a Welsh backdrop’.¹⁴⁷ As Andrew Davies argues, this trend ‘demonstrates the unwillingness of a number of English authors to [...] acknowledge the emergence of a new national religious culture [...] which would undermine their notions of the picturesque.’¹⁴⁸ An exception appears in *The Miser Married*, in which Hutton briefly mentions Methodism in Aberystwyth (as discussed under ‘Urban settings’, above). However, it appears briefly as part of a comic subplot, in which Ralph faces temptations including gambling and fighting. Methodism is implicitly equated with these failings.

Aaron argues that Romantic-period novelists tend to ‘overemphasize and exaggerate aspects of Welsh difference’.¹⁴⁹ She associates this trend with depictions of Methodism, but, as these do not appear in my corpus, these novels instead construct Welsh ‘otherness’ by different means. These include associating Wales with superstition. Wales is the case study region of this thesis in which superstition appears most frequently and extensively, because it is the most strongly linked with remoteness. This association between Wales and superstition is a tradition of the Welsh novel genre. For example, in Annabella Plumptre’s *Montgomery; or, Scenes in Wales* (1796), when Sophia is frightened by the noise made by a kitten, Caroline says:

It is the unfortunate weakness of this country to find an omen or prodigy in every thing [sic] that is not instantly accounted for, and Sophia has from her infancy imbibed so much of this superstition, that [...] I fear she will never get the better of it.¹⁵⁰

This suggests that superstition is not only a Welsh trait but is also somehow contagious to those who spend time in Wales. This association remains present in the 1810s. Superstition is presented as an illness associated with Welsh space in *Llewellen*: on moving to Central Wales from England, the Dalziel family see ‘a figure’, which Mrs Dalziel believes is ‘a spirit’.¹⁵¹ Her ‘weak and wavering mind’ is ‘overcome by superstitious dread’ and she thinks that it is

¹⁴⁶ Gareth Elwyn Jones, p. 273.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Davies, p. 182.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 198.

¹⁴⁹ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁰ Annabella Plumptre, *Montgomery; Or, Scenes in Wales* (London: Minerva Press, 1796), i, p. 34.

¹⁵¹ Stevens, i, p. 9.

‘a warning sent from heaven’.¹⁵² Their Welsh servant, Winifred, believes that it was ‘the grim white woman’ and means that Mrs Dalziel ‘will die’.¹⁵³ Mrs Dalziel does die, but the narrator makes it clear that this is the result of her ‘superstitious fears’, which ‘preyed on her broken constitution’, rather than any supernatural cause.¹⁵⁴ Her daughter, Clara, is later shown to be at risk of imbibing Welsh superstition herself: on seeing ‘a female figure, that glided’ which resembles a ‘corpse’, she ‘fell senseless on the earth’.¹⁵⁵ As Clara is less naturally prone to superstition than Mrs Dalziel, she is able to recover from this incident. It later emerges that both apparently supernatural scenes were ‘only [...] the ravings’ of Colonel Llewellyn’s wife.¹⁵⁶ As this example demonstrates, in my corpus, English characters are often susceptible to superstition when in Wales. Aaron’s theory that Welsh novels perpetuate the stereotype of the ‘backwardness of Wales’ in order to allow the English reader to enjoy feeling comparatively ‘sophisticated’ is therefore not universally applicable.¹⁵⁷ Superstition is generally associated with Welsh space, due to its connotations of remoteness, rather than only with Welsh people. Welsh servants in these novels, are, however, especially prone to superstition. This relates to the trope of ignorant rural working-class characters which appears throughout my corpus and across my case study regions. For example, in *Husband Hunters!!!*, a Welsh maid informs her mistress that she has seen ‘the fairies tancing’ (dancing), which she interprets as a ‘warning’.¹⁵⁸ Whether the superstitious character is an upper-class protagonist or a working-class servant, they are almost exclusively female. This relates to these novels’ exploration of the impact of different spaces on female characters’ minds (see ‘Intellectual freedom’, below). Hatton amusingly reverses this stereotype of Welsh people, and especially women, as superstitious in *Cambrian Pictures*: the Welsh locals trick Captain Maitland into believing that the ‘terrific black figure’ who ‘stuck him up to his neck in a dunghill’ was ‘the devil’ when really it was Gwithlean’s future husband.¹⁵⁹

As the only gothic novel in my corpus, *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey* makes the most extensive use of Welsh superstitions. The narrator asks, ‘where is there an ancient building,

¹⁵² Ibid., i, p. 10.

¹⁵³ Ibid., i, pp. 11-12.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., i, p. 15.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., i, pp. 238-9.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., ii, p. 269.

¹⁵⁷ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 29.

¹⁵⁸ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 184.

¹⁵⁹ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 78; p. 86.

especially in Wales, that has not its horrors or its spectres?'.¹⁶⁰ Many of the ghostly apparitions which appear are revealed to be the result of superstitious fear, for example Sir Edward's guilty conviction that the 'ghost' of Mary and 'all evil spirits have joined in a league to torment me'.¹⁶¹ Even Charlotte, whose mind has been 'till now free of the trammels of superstition' is overcome with 'forebodings of evil' after seeing 'a tall figure drest in white'.¹⁶² Wilkinson includes one apparently real ghost in the novel: the villain Alderton receives an 'awful visitation' from the 'shade of the murdered Albert' (whom he killed), to prevent him stabbing Charlotte.¹⁶³ Given the tone of the rest of the novel, it is possible that this is simply the result of his own guilty imagination; the narrator's comment that Charlotte 'had been spared the sight of the spectre' is ambiguous.¹⁶⁴ *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey* exemplifies the association in my corpus between the remoteness of Welsh settings and danger to characters, whether imagined or real.

4. Remoteness

Wales is the case study region in this thesis which is most frequently and extensively associated with remoteness. This is sometimes symbolic rather than literal. Many of the settings in Wales which appear in these novels would have been relatively accessible from England (as outlined above, under 'The geography of Welsh settings'), but these novels also simultaneously portray Wales as extremely remote. Wales' remoteness from the metropolis, both physically and as a separate principality, is one of the main reasons why this group of writers use it as a setting: it facilitates their plots and allows them to invoke the positive associations of retirement. Wales seemed 'remote' to the English in the early nineteenth century in the sense of being both relatively difficult to access and less urbanised.¹⁶⁵ The plots of many of these novels follow the relationships between a limited circle of households, brought together by shared isolation in a Welsh setting, which, it is implied, is a necessary consequence of Wales' geography. This implication relies on an image of Welsh inaccessibility that was somewhat outdated by the 1810s: in the mid eighteenth century, the

¹⁶⁰ Wilkinson, p. 36.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 37-38.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 77.

¹⁶³ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Gareth Elwyn Jones, p. 199.

poor condition of Welsh roads made some of the gentry's 'stay on their estates virtually an exile'.¹⁶⁶ My corpus of novels, published decades later, continues to promote this idea that the upper classes become isolated into smaller communities when in Wales. Although, in reality, the condition of Welsh roads had generally improved by this point, the idea that travel within Wales is difficult persists in these novels. This is because it justifies a focus on a restricted cast of characters and facilitates plot points based on the dangers of this restriction (see 'Risk', below). The scene in *Warwick Castle* in which the roads from Holyhead are 'almost trackless' due to a snowstorm is a typical example.¹⁶⁷ As outlined in Chapter One, in my corpus, the idea of remoteness has both positive and negative connotations, which are often also generic rural tropes. Both the positive impacts of remoteness (which relate primarily to retirement) and its attendant dangers are more concentrated in Welsh spaces, because Wales is portrayed as more extremely remote than my other case study regions.

Retirement

In my corpus, the theme of retirement is evoked particularly strongly and frequently in Wales, whether characters go into Wales to enjoy it or have experienced its benefits during their upbringing. Retirement is a positive removal from society, usually facilitated by remoteness (see discussion in Chapter One). In the Romantic period, Wales was popularly associated with the ideal of retirement because of its physical and cultural distance from the metropolis. For example, the Ladies of Llangollen embodied the concept of retirement as 'a life of virtue and simplicity' which was popularised in the late eighteenth century by writers including Jean-Jacques Rousseau.¹⁶⁸ Ponsonby and Butler were inspired by 'Rousseau's conception of nature' in their realisation of a 'rural idyll'.¹⁶⁹ Wales is frequently depicted in this corpus as a place of retirement from the fashionable world, primarily for English people, due to its rurality. A typical example is Sir Owen's decision in *Cambrian Pictures* to retire to North Wales 'from the tumultuous scenes of high life'.¹⁷⁰ Images of Welsh retirement rely on a contrast between rural Wales and urban spaces, particularly London, which is often made

¹⁶⁶ Evans, p. 170.

¹⁶⁷ Prickett, iii, p. 127.

¹⁶⁸ Mavor, p. x.

¹⁶⁹ Heather Williams, p. 75.

¹⁷⁰ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 12.

explicit (see ‘Wales contrasted with other settings’, below). For example, Belmont of *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey* chooses ‘to seek relief from his sorrows in retirement’ in Wales because of its ‘extreme distance from the metropolis’.¹⁷¹ *Helen Monteagle* includes characters who seek Welsh retirement for a variety of conventional reasons which reflect the positive associations of the generic rural ideal (see Chapter One). For example, Cordelia enjoys country air as ‘prescribed by the physicians’ at Caerlaverock and Mrs Temple attempts ‘a life of regular occupation and rural retirement’ there, shortly before her death.¹⁷² The particularly strong association between rural Welsh retirement and morality also appears in *Warwick Castle*: after Margaret’s period of disgraced exile in Montgomeryshire, her mother thinks she has an ‘altered disposition’ and ‘some portion of shame and sorrow’.¹⁷³ However, the more cynical Mrs Aylmer attributes her ‘apparent amendment rather to the want of a more extensive field of action [...] to pursue her former follies’.¹⁷⁴ Retired spaces present fewer opportunities for immorality. As the opposite of the dissipated metropolis, Wales is also particularly associated with economical living. For example, in *Llewellen*, the Dalziel family, ‘after spending the best half of their lives in the gaieties of London, were compelled to seek retirement, in hopes of saving a small portion of their fortune for their daughter’.¹⁷⁵

As well as presenting fewer temptations, retired settings are also conventionally associated with characters’ enjoyment of picturesque scenery, which itself is associated with moral goodness (see Chapter One). For example, in *Mystery and Confidence*, St. Aubyn’s suitability to become the Welsh heroine’s husband is demonstrated by his admiration of the view from the mountain in Caernarvonshire, ‘to which no descriptive powers short of Mrs. Radcliffe’s could do justice’.¹⁷⁶ By referring to Radcliffe’s landscapes, often in continental Europe, Pinchard invokes the sense of the sublime explored in her work. Positive comparisons between Wales and Europe are common (see ‘Wales contrasted with other settings’, below). Where the novels in my corpus invoke picturesque imagery when describing Wales, they show the influence of Gilpin’s writing. Andrew Davies observes that Gilpin’s ideas are explicitly visible in the ‘many titles’ in the Welsh novel genre ‘which

¹⁷¹ Ziengenhirt, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*, i, p. 3.

¹⁷² Lefanu, *Helen Monteagle*, ii, p. 227; iii, p. 352.

¹⁷³ Prickett, iii, p. 217.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 218.

¹⁷⁵ Stevens, i, p. 1.

¹⁷⁶ Pinchard, i, p. 12.

invoke images associated with the picturesque'.¹⁷⁷ *Cambrian Pictures* exemplifies this connection: Hatton references artistic imagery through this choice of title. The stereotypical link between enjoyment of the natural world and characters' personal morality is particularly clear in this novel. The cruel Lord Dungarvon shows his contempt for Welsh scenery when he commands his grandson Henry: 'Go, sir, return to the mountains where you have hitherto vegetated'.¹⁷⁸ Henry replies that he will indeed go, 'to enjoy [...] the bliss of tranquillity'; his preference for retirement demonstrates his stronger morals (at this point in the novel).¹⁷⁹

Risk

In keeping with the conventional associations of remoteness, Wales is also frequently associated with danger in these novels. Just as characters in Wales are removed from temptations, they are equally removed from the social structures of England. Although this often has positive connotations, it simultaneously contributes to an image of Wales as potentially lawless. Isolated spaces are harder to escape, and wrongdoers are further from legal centres. The particular association between the margins of Wales and potential danger was reinforced by the French landing at Fishguard in 1797, which 'showed how unprotected the Welsh coast was'.¹⁸⁰ Although 'insignificant in itself', the real fear created by the incident spread, and a sense of peril associated with Wales' marginality continued to be used in literature long after this specific threat.¹⁸¹ In the Romantic period, Wales is often used as a generic remote setting where bloody crimes could go undetected in gothic novels, for example Frances Peck's *The Welch Peasant Boy* (1809).¹⁸² As William Hughes states, the 'literary Gothic' has, since the eighteenth century, been associated with 'the geographically provincial and the culturally peripheral', including within the British Isles.¹⁸³

The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey, the most overtly gothic novel in my corpus, illustrates the existence of a Welsh gothic. In the novel, a series of violent incidents and tragedies, including murder, abduction, and suicide, take place in Wales. The Welsh settings are

¹⁷⁷ Andrew Davies, p. 70.

¹⁷⁸ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 123.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 125.

¹⁸⁰ Evans, p. 226.

¹⁸¹ David Williams, *A History of Modern Wales*, rev. edn (London: John Murray, 1965), p. 174.

¹⁸² Frances Peck, *The Welch Peasant Boy* (London: Minerva Press, 1809).

¹⁸³ Hughes, p. 1.

appropriately evocative of fear: the titular Lanmere Abbey is ‘a gothic edifice’, and nearby Martimel Castle has ‘gothic turrets’, including one which is apparently haunted.¹⁸⁴ Wilkinson uses intertextual references to show an awareness of her participation in the gothic tradition: at the end of the novel *Amelia* (a minor character) observes that the events could be ‘the subject of a romance [...] I want nothing but the pen of Mrs Radcliffe to give it descriptive effect’.¹⁸⁵ Franz Potter notes that Wilkinson ‘uses the names of several Gothic novel characters and writers’; she also makes broader literary references in her choice of names, including Agnes Bennet (Anna Maria Bennett) and Elizabeth Darcy (*Pride and Prejudice*).¹⁸⁶ This self-awareness suggests that Wilkinson’s extensive and frequent use of gothic tropes is, at least partly, ironic, but the novel’s plot is also entirely reliant on them. These include multiple appearances of ghosts, real or otherwise (as discussed above, under ‘Religion and superstition’). As well as hauntings, the novel also features terrestrial dangers: there are multiple abductions, similarly facilitated by the remoteness of the Welsh setting. Charlotte is twice kidnapped in Wales: she is ‘seized’ and ‘lifted into a coach’ by ‘two men’, and later Alderton recaptures her before ‘immuring her in the deserted turret of Martimel Castle’.¹⁸⁷

Although none of the other novels discussed in this chapter are overtly gothic, many of them also include similar abductions. In my corpus, the remoteness of Wales is often shown to facilitate threats of imprisonment, usually for female characters. A typical example appears in *Cambrian Pictures*: Rosa is ‘lifted [...] from the ground’ at a masquerade ball and taken to ‘an old-fashioned farm-house’ guarded by a ‘huge mastiff’, where she is imprisoned in a ‘chamber [...] with no adornments’.¹⁸⁸ Clavering attempts to trick her into marrying him by suggesting that Montgomery ordered her imprisonment. Female characters are often abducted and/or imprisoned with a view to forced marriage, which was a conventional plot point in novels of this period. One such scheme is successful in *Owen Castle*. Grace marries Sir Matthew because he has her aunt falsely imprisoned and, in doing so, she becomes his ‘prisoner’ herself, metaphorically ‘shackled’ to him and literally unable to leave his castle.¹⁸⁹ It is important to note that, given the conventional associations in this genre between London

¹⁸⁴ Wilkinson, p. 27; p. 35.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 108, n. 23.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79; p. 130.

¹⁸⁸ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, iii, p. 94; pp. 119-121; p. 138.

¹⁸⁹ Sullivan, iii, p. 3.

and immorality, and continental Europe and risk, gothic tropes and instances of imprisonment also frequently appear outside of Wales (see ‘Wales contrasted with other settings’). As discussed in Chapter One, although dangers to women correlate to some extent with remoteness in my corpus, every setting is potentially dangerous. This is an important context in which to consider the role of the theme of female freedom, which will be discussed below: the positive possibilities for women that are associated with Wales are tempered by these novels’ overwhelmingly conservative social politics. The majority of them suggest that female characters and readers alike ought to restrict themselves, physically and intellectually, wherever they are. As the case study region that is most associated with remoteness, and therefore distance from metropolitan social norms, Wales is simultaneously the most strongly associated with the dangers of remoteness and the positive possibilities it presents for retirement (and related alternative lifestyles).

5. Female freedom

One of the most prominent trends in the use of Welsh space in my corpus is the exploration of female freedom, which is associated more strongly with Wales than my other case study regions. These novels often imply that Wales’ remoteness and rurality enable greater physical freedom of movement, which itself is linked with increased intellectual freedom for women. In this section, I will discuss both of these forms of freedom, as well as two trends which are strongly associated with Wales, specifically: female-only households and alternative gender performance. As Aaron argues, some women writers depicted Wales as ‘a Romantic zone in which women would enjoy a more natural lifestyle’, in comparison with the ‘artificial social proprieties’ which restricted women in England.¹⁹⁰ This is not a reflection of a real development in gender equality in Wales in this period; in fact, Aaron contends that the spread of Methodism may even have contributed to ‘a more stringent patriarchal ethos’.¹⁹¹ Instead, the explorations of female freedom in these novels rely on their construction of Wales as a space outside of metropolitan social norms, an ‘other’ space, but one which is still relevant to England despite its marginality. This relates to the image of Wales as ‘an inspiring political, topographical, and cultural alternative to England’ developed by many other

¹⁹⁰ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 12.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Romantic writers.¹⁹² However, the majority of the novels in my corpus ultimately use Wales to perpetuate conservative norms and values; in keeping with the generic rural ideal, it is the heroines who preserve their virginity and Anglican faith who are often rewarded with good marriages and homes in Wales.

Physical freedom

Wales is particularly associated in my corpus with a sense of freedom, especially for female characters. Being in Welsh space is liberating, not only because it allows characters freedom from socially imposed restrictions, which are felt less strongly away from the metropolis, but also because of physical characteristics of the Welsh landscape. For example, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy states ‘I have breathed the free air of my native mountains, and my actions have been as free as that’.¹⁹³ Hutton suggests that open landscapes encourage a desire for freedom of action, and intellectual freedom (see below). This is typical of these novels’ use of this imagery and relates to the established ‘trope of Welsh mountain liberty’.¹⁹⁴ The novels in my corpus emphasise the healthfulness of Welsh air, in keeping with the generic rural trope of healthy air discussed in Chapter One, but they also create an additional particular association between Welsh air and a desire for freedom. An illustrative example is Miss Owen’s statement in *The Welsh Cottage*: ‘in the wild regions of Wales, I had inhaled a love of liberty with the air I breathed’.¹⁹⁵ More suggests that Miss Owen’s upbringing in Wales inoculated her against accepting the unnecessary restrictions of polite society in England. This is attributed to a physical quality of the Welsh atmosphere, not just the feeling of freedom created by remoteness. This theme leads Aaron to declare the novel ‘overtly feminist’, but More’s condemnation of the limitations placed on women should be read in the context of the conservatism of the novel’s wider evangelical message and emphasis on female duty, which tempers its impact.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹² Walford Davies and Pratt, p. 4.

¹⁹³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 158.

¹⁹⁴ Constantine, “‘The Bounds of Female Reach’”, p. 97.

¹⁹⁵ More, p. 129.

¹⁹⁶ Aaron, *Nineteenth-Century Women’s Writing in Wales*, p. 36.

As well as suggesting that the atmosphere of Wales inspires women to want freedom, these novels also regularly suggest that Wales offers tangible opportunities for freedom of movement. This is illustrated by Helen's statement in *Eva of Cambria*:

if I wish to go out [in London], I must wait for the carriage and travel at least a mile before I breathe the fresh air: at home [in Wales], I dash out at all hours, without troubling either servants or horses, scamper where I please without controul [sic]¹⁹⁷

There is a convention in Romantic-period novels that female characters generally do not walk or otherwise travel unaccompanied, in most settings, whether urban or rural, unless they are being exposed to danger as part of the plot. It is therefore notable that, in my corpus, women in Wales are often shown walking, and frequently do so alone. For example, in *Fitz-Edward*, Celia 'would scramble over mountains with an activity almost equal to that of the goats'.¹⁹⁸ This animal imagery suggests that this movement is natural, despite her not having grown up in Wales, implicitly calling into question the social restrictions which prevent such physical freedom in English society. Horse-riding is another symbol of women's freedom in Wales: Clara in *Llewellen* rides 'a small Welsh poney' and Dorothy of *The Welsh Mountaineer* rides from Snowdonia to London.¹⁹⁹ Dorothy declares: 'I never was in a carriage'; Hutton suggests that her resistance to this mode of transport results from her experience of physical freedom during her Welsh upbringing.²⁰⁰ Riding gives women the ability to travel further than walking, thereby allowing them more physical freedom, whereas travelling in a carriage means entering a physically restricted space of which they are not in control. The association between Wales and exuberant female walkers and horsewomen was well established by time of these novels' publication. For example, Austen satirises it in her juvenilia: in 'A Tour through Wales – in a Letter from a young Lady', a mother tours Wales on a single 'poney' while her daughters 'walked by her side or rather ran'.²⁰¹ Although the female travellers in my corpus make more plausible journeys, they are almost universally depicted as more able to move in Wales, by whatever means they choose, than in other settings, even in the same novel, and as benefitting from this both physically and mentally.

¹⁹⁷ Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria*, i, p. 118.

¹⁹⁸ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, i, p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ Stevens, i p. 4.

²⁰⁰ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 8.

²⁰¹ Austen, *Juvenilia*, p. 224.

However, in several of these novels, women's choice to travel independently in Wales exposes them to the dangers conventionally associated in this genre with female travel, in any space. Female walkers, in particular, often face assaults on both their reputation and their person, even within the supposedly civilised boundaries of the estate. The idea of lone walking as dangerous is conventional in novels of this period, but where it appears in Wales it is intensified by the association between remoteness and danger (as discussed above, under 'Risk'). This threat tempers Wales' association with female freedom. A typical example of a woman enjoying a false sense of physical freedom in Wales appears in *Llewellen*: Clara takes the opportunity to 'enjoy a walk, and traverse alone the pleasure grounds belonging to the castle', but finds herself accosted by Colonel Llewellen when she is occupied in gathering leaves.²⁰² Although Clara thought she was physically free, she is still in a space which belongs to him: he 'suddenly caught her hand', declares his unwanted love, and tells her to 'remember you are in my power'.²⁰³ As well as this threat, Clara's freedom is further restricted by Matilda's malicious accusation that her 'solitary walks are a little mysterious, - if not worse' and that 'she must [...] have expected the gentleman whom I saw follow her into the shrubbery'.²⁰⁴ This scene and the many other similar incidents in my corpus suggest that women only have physical freedom in Wales to the extent that the space is free from the patriarchal dynamic of English society, which is replicated within the Anglo-Welsh gentry's estates. Natural spaces, such as mountains, are therefore generally shown to be more conducive to female freedom, although they also sometimes conversely expose women to the dangers of remoteness.

Women's freedom from physical threats in Wales is often shown to be contingent on their financial security. A sense of restriction imposed by the fear of homelessness is explored in *Owen Castle*: Sir Matthew uses his power as the owner of the castle over his cousin Mrs Milbourne and her niece Grace. He repeatedly threatens that this 'roof no longer shelters you' unless Mrs Milbourne forces Grace into marrying him, and they are compelled to 'take shelter at a poor cottager's in the forest, three miles from the castle'.²⁰⁵ This obliges Grace to take a dangerous walk through snow to teach music, a reversal of the usual sense of freedom associated with walking in Wales. Themes of potential homelessness are common in

²⁰² Stevens, i, p. 151.

²⁰³ Ibid., i, pp. 152-3.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., i, p. 157.

²⁰⁵ Sullivan, ii, p. 132.

novels of this period. In my corpus, these threats determine the extent of the physical and intellectual freedom women are ultimately able to exercise, even in Wales, a space which is particularly conducive to it. Female characters often only enjoy the potential benefits of Wales' remoteness if they have either their own estate or access to the property of a benevolent husband. This is illustrated in *Fitz-Edward*: Celia is elevated by marriage to the Squire, Henry, whereas her friend Mary-Ann, a farmer's daughter, marries a cruel drunk and is left widowed in Ireland. Mary-Ann has to walk from Holyhead to Llangollen Vale. On meeting her, Celia is struck by the 'extreme contrast between her fate at this moment, and that of the miserable object before her, who had once been her near associate'.²⁰⁶ Celia is travelling comfortably in a carriage. Although this form of transport is sometimes shown to constrain women (as discussed above), in this instance it represents the way in which Celia's financial freedom allows her to enjoy the Welsh landscape. In contrast, Mary-Ann's dependence means she has to walk. Although pedestrianism often symbolises freedom, this does not apply to characters who lack financial resources. The fates of less affluent characters show that sometimes Welsh spaces, even outside of estate walls, continue to replicate the exploitative patriarchal power dynamic and class hierarchy which these novels otherwise tend to suggest that characters can avoid in Wales.

Women-only households

The trope of female characters constrained by their access to financial security has its counterpoint in the trend for depicting women-only households in Wales. Several of the novels in my corpus depict this kind of living arrangement. They appear significantly more often in Wales than in my other case study regions, due to Wales' greater association with female freedom and departure from the social norms of the metropolis. Female-only households often provide women with a degree of personal freedom and mutual support, for example in *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey*, when the young Charlotte is taken in by Mrs Drew and then Mrs Stockley (who turns out to be her mother). Such arrangements are usually formed at times of crisis. For example, in *Owen Castle*, when Grace and Mrs Milbourne are made homeless by Sir Matthew, Omphale goes to join them in the cottage in the woods. She has been abandoned by her fiancé Augustus, so 'she clung to the two unfortunates,

²⁰⁶ Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, iii, p. 110.

determined to assist and endure with them all the miseries that poverty threatened'.²⁰⁷ A similar women-only cottage household is formed in *Llewellen*: after Isabella is deserted by her husband, she and Clara initially take up residence in London before establishing themselves at the Welsh cottage where Clara used to live with her father. The pair invite Isabella's aunt Miss MacGruther, who would otherwise be effectively homeless, to 'take up her abode with them' and she reacts 'with unbounded exultation'.²⁰⁸ Although this household is broken up, it continues to facilitate Miss MacGruther's independence because Clara 'ensured to her the Cottage as her own property'.²⁰⁹ Female-only living arrangements in these novels are always temporary. The women living together are typically either separated by the heroine's marriage at the end of the novel, or further personal tragedy, such as in the case of Mrs Irwin's providing 'an asylum' for the dying Laura in Llangollen in *The Prior Claim*.²¹⁰

These representations of women living together in Romantic period Wales invite comparisons with the famous Ladies of Llangollen. As Nicole Reynolds states, 'the Ladies presented to women a viable alternative to the impositions of patriarchal domestic arrangements'.²¹¹ They had escaped together from Ireland, where Ponsonby faced unwanted attentions from Sir William Fownes and Butler feared being forced into a convent.²¹² These circumstances resemble the dangers faced by female characters in my corpus, and are a reminder that such threats were not confined to fiction. The Ladies had a relationship that, in Elizabeth Mavor's words, 'in modern terms we would consider a marriage'.²¹³ They 'insisted' that their 'true reason of wanting to live together' was their 'ideal manner of living', in which they chose to 'devote hearts and minds to self-improvement; to eschew the vanity of society; to beautify their surroundings and to better [...] the lot of the poor'.²¹⁴ Mavor notes the similarity between this lifestyle and the feminine Utopia portrayed in Sarah Scott's novel *A Description of Millenium [sic] Hall and the County Adjacent* (1762), and

²⁰⁷ Sullivan, ii, p. 137.

²⁰⁸ Stevens, iii, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., iii, p. 260.

²¹⁰ Iliff, i, p. 123.

²¹¹ Nicole Reynolds, 'Cottage Industry: The Ladies of Llangollen and the Symbolic Capital of the Cottage Ornée', *The Eighteenth Century*, 51 (2010), p. 212.

²¹² Mavor.

²¹³ Ibid., p. x.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 49.

suggests that the Ladies may have taken inspiration from it.²¹⁵ Several comparable elements can be seen in the female households in the corpus of Welsh novels discussed in this thesis. According to Mavor, ‘the symptoms of romantic friendship’ included “‘retirement”, good works, cottages, gardening, impecuniosity, the intellectual pursuits of reading aloud [...] sensibility and often [...] the single state’.²¹⁶ The female-only household in my corpus which most closely resembles this model is Eliza’s extended stay with Miss Owen in *The Welsh Cottage*. Eliza admires Miss Owen’s ‘exertion and example’ as a ‘benevolent individual’, and they enjoy her Welsh home and the landscape together.²¹⁷ They ‘often took their books and their works to a favourite seat under the walnut trees’ which becomes ‘a most delightful retreat’.²¹⁸ Their relationship and their freedom to move and act independently from men in this rural Welsh setting are shown to benefit the women themselves and their community, in a manner comparable to the Ladies of Llangollen’s lifestyle. However, the evangelical tone of More’s novel precludes any implication that, like the Ladies, these characters may share a relationship that is romantic in the modern sense. The trend for women-only households in this group of novels exemplifies their suggestion that women could enjoy increased freedom in Wales. However, the temporary nature of these potentially radical arrangements also represents the ultimate tendency of these novels to uphold more conservative gender norms.

Intellectual freedom

In my corpus, Wales is particularly often used as the setting of explorations of female education and rational thought. This relates partly to the conventional connection between female intellectual capacity and rurality, as well as the way in which Wales is strongly associated with retirement. In Wales, there are fewer frivolous distractions than in the metropolis, or spaces nearer to it, just as there are fewer temptations to vice. It is implied that the aesthetic and physical qualities of the natural landscape of Wales inspire deeper thought. The increased opportunities for female solitary walking are also associated with reflection. Wales’ particular association with female intellectual freedom has its roots in earlier novels.

²¹⁵ Ibid.; Sarah Scott, *A Description of Millenium Hall and the County Adjacent* (London: Printed for J. Newberry, 1762).

²¹⁶ Mavor, p. 80.

²¹⁷ More, p. 96.

²¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 97-98.

For example, Mary Barker's *A Welsh Story* (1798) uses a Welsh setting to explore alternative courses of female education: Charlotte has intellectual strength because she has been 'educated by a woman, who considered it is the natural privilege of a human being to be governed by its own reason'.²¹⁹ Mary Chadwick argues that *A Welsh Story* uses Welsh space to fictionalise Wollstonecraft's 'idealistic hopes'.²²⁰ This trend for associating Wales with female rationality and education continued throughout the 1810s, as my corpus demonstrates. There are several favourable comparisons between Welsh girls and their English counterparts. For example, in *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey*, Charlotte is Letitia's 'superior in every branch', having enjoyed 'extensive tuition' in Wales, and similarly, in *Mystery and Confidence*, Welsh-born Ellen 'is more serious' than her English friend Joanna, who is 'content to skim the mere surface'.²²¹ However, the benefits of Welsh intellectual freedom are not always restricted to Welsh women. Increased female intellect is attributed to the freedom which they enjoy in Welsh spaces. For example, Clara, who moves to Wales with her English parents in *Llewellen*, improves her mind when removed from London: 'in the calm retirement of the country she soon began to unfold qualities and to display a mind of no ordinary cast'.²²² As well as improving their education, female characters are also shown to make more rational decisions when in Wales, for example, Eva in *Fitz-Edward* is able to decide that she could not love Sir Stanley.

The exception to this trend of female rationality is the implication in many of the novels in my corpus that women in Wales are at more risk of falling prey to superstitious fears. As discussed above, under 'Religion and superstition', the association of Wales with superstition is much more commonly explored through female rather than male characters. Almost all of the credulous or fearful characters are women, with the significant exception of Captain Maitland in *Cambrian Pictures*: Hatton constructs his gullibility as a reversal of the association of superstition primarily with Welsh people, the lower classes, and, especially, women. The prevalence in these novels of images of women as potentially prey to what they position as intellectual weakness tempers their depiction of female rationality in Wales. This relates to their generally conservative social politics. As well as suggesting that women ought

²¹⁹ Mary Barker, *A Welsh Story* (London: Hookham & Carpenter, 1798), i, p. 106.

²²⁰ Mary Chadwick, 'Making Space for Wollstonecraft: Mary Barker's "A Welsh Story"', *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780–1840*, 22 (2017), p. 21.

²²¹ Wilkinson, p. 64; p. 31; Pinchard, i, p. 39.

²²² Stevens, i, p. 3.

to restrict their behaviour and movement for their own physical safety, many of these novels warn women that they are vulnerable to dangerous ideas, and that overrating their own judgement could expose them to ridicule.

Alternative gender performance

While the majority of these novels temper their images of female freedom in Wales with conservative messages, which ultimately perpetuate traditional gender roles, Wales' potential as 'oppositional terrain' is sometimes used to experiment with these norms in a more radical manner.²²³ Wales is much more strongly associated with alternative gender performance than other settings, including my other case study regions and London. This tendency of the novels in my corpus to associate Wales with gender nonconformity may have been influenced by Mary Robinson's *Walsingham; or, the Pupil of Nature* (1797), a Welsh novel in which a girl is passed off as a son over an extended period.²²⁴ Examples of alternative gender performance in my corpus are mostly limited to short episodes. For example, in *Eva of Cambria*, a 'pretty boy of sixteen' is 'dressed in the habiliments of Miss Barrington' and sent to Captain Cachot in her place, to put an end to his unwanted attentions: the boy explains that 'when [Cachot] would have kissed me' he got out his 'dog whip'.²²⁵ Brief, comedic scenes of male to female cross-dressing are not particularly unusual in novels of this period, such as Lydia's amusement in *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) at having 'dressed up Chamberlayne in woman's clothes, on purpose to pass for a lady'.²²⁶ However, my corpus also includes a more extensively described and therefore notable scene of female to male cross-dressing, in Hatton's *Cambrian Pictures*. Eliza dresses as a 'young gentleman' in order to impersonate her fiancé's cousin and challenge her unwanted suitor Morgan to a duel.²²⁷ She shoots him but leaves him 'terribly wounded with fear only'.²²⁸ It is only retrospectively revealed to the reader that Lionel Seymour is in fact Eliza herself, when her father eventually recognises her voice. Hatton's use of female to male cross-dressing is especially significant

²²³ Davies and Pratt, p. 4.

²²⁴ Mary Robinson, *Walsingham; or, the Pupil of Nature* (London: T.N. Longman, 1797).

²²⁵ Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria*, i, p. 89; p. 94.

²²⁶ Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 245.

²²⁷ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i p. 244.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

because it was a particular taboo in the Romantic period. According to Colley, by the 1780s, ‘women wearing pseudo-masculine dress’ was seen by some as ‘symbol of all that seemed disturbing and subversive’, because it had revolutionary associations.²²⁹ Like the descriptions of female households discussed above, this scene in which a woman adopts masculine dress in Wales evokes the Ladies of Llangollen. They ‘dressed in men’s clothes’ during their elopement and a 1790 article titled ‘Extraordinary Female Affection’ reported that ‘Miss Butler is tall and masculine [...] appears in all respects as a young man, if we except the petticoat’, with the intention of suggesting that they were lesbians.²³⁰ Reynolds argues that the Ladies ‘arguably had a much more material role in revising mainstream constructions of female gender and sexuality’ than has been widely recognised.²³¹ Their influence can arguably be seen in the association between Wales and alternative gender performance in my corpus.

As well as taking on masculine dress, Eliza does not act or speak in a traditionally feminine way. After the shooting, she says to her father: ‘I hope you will allow me some credit for my generalship’ and, although her mother is ‘incensed’, she is soon ‘reinstated in her father’s favour’, as he admires her ‘spirit’.²³² Eliza’s ‘vivacious’ tendencies culminate in her elopement with Captain Seymour, which is foreshadowed by her declaration early in the novel that it will be ‘a run-a-way match for me – a jump from two pair of stairs window, a journey to Gretna Green – off we go, helter sketler’.²³³ Eliza is physically exuberant and brave. Hatton also suggests that the physical freedom of her Welsh upbringing has made Eliza ‘wild’.²³⁴ After the duel, Morgan declares:

Miss Tudor is far too wild for me [...] the city, big as it is, would not be wide enough for her to cut capers in; so she had better stay here among the mountains, where she will have range enough for them there frolics.²³⁵

This draws on the association of Wales with female exuberance, as discussed above. The implication that Welsh women are particularly fearless may show the influence of the

²²⁹ Colley, p. 242.

²³⁰ Mavor, p. 26; p. 77; ‘Extraordinary Female Affection’, *General Evening Post*, 8862, 20-22nd July 1790 (London: 1790), p. 2.

²³¹ Reynolds, p. 222.

²³² Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 253; p. 261; p. 263.

²³³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 91.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 260.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. 260.

folkloric tale of Jemima Nicholas at Fishguard: she ‘won fame by capturing twelve Frenchmen single-handed armed only with a pitch-fork’.²³⁶

Cambrian Pictures includes the most significant and extensive challenges to conventional gender roles that appear in my corpus. Hatton uses Wales to explore ‘deviation from the heavily polarised patterns of gender difference expected in more sophisticated English circles’.²³⁷ However, Hatton also explores gender nonconformity in other settings. For example, both *Cambrian Pictures* and *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* include insinuations which occur outside of Wales where lustful older women force their attentions on young men, coincidentally both called Henry. Eliza’s crossdressing in *Cambrian Pictures* also has its counterpart in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*: Lady Elizabeth Plastic, from Wiltshire, who ‘is masculine in her manners’ and ‘adopted a masculine dress’.²³⁸ Hatton’s presentation of alternative gender performance in Wales should therefore be considered in the context of her broader interest in the theme. However, as Eliza is a rare example of a woman whose unfeminine behaviour goes unpunished, this shows that alternative gender performance has fewer negative consequences in Wales than in other spaces (see ‘Female freedom’ in Chapter Three for discussion of Hatton’s portrayal of Lady Elizabeth’s downfall). Overall, while explorations of increased freedom of gender expression and women’s rights do not exclusively take place in Wales, these ideas are particularly strongly associated with the space in many of the novels in my corpus.

6. Wales contrasted with other settings

The particularly strong association created in my corpus between Wales and moral retirement often involves contrasts with other spaces. For example, in *Mystery and Confidence*, St. Aubyn worries about removing his future wife from Wales: ‘great indeed must have been his risk in transplanting so fair a flower from the wildest part of Wales into the polished interior of England’.²³⁹ This metaphor of Wales as a good ‘soil’ for the growth of female morality is also used in *The Vindictive Spirit*. On seeing Celestia in London, Abergeley ‘longed to tear her from a soil so uncongenial to her virtue’ and ‘transplant her [...] to scenes of pure and

²³⁶ Evans, p. 226.

²³⁷ Aaron, ‘The Rise and Fall [...]’, p. 83.

²³⁸ Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, i, p. 230; p. 236.

²³⁹ Pinchard, i, p. 159.

unfading felicity'.²⁴⁰ These examples illustrate the tendency of these novels to construct their Welsh settings in opposition to dangerous English spaces, particularly London. Paul O'Leary argues that, in this period, 'we must see London as the de facto capital city of Wales', because towns in Wales were relatively small.²⁴¹ This is illustrated by the novels discussed in this chapter: as Wales is generalised as rural, or, at the very least, provincial, it is frequently presented as the opposite of London. Contrasts with London are part of the generic rural ideal (as discussed in Chapter One), but Wales is the case study region in this thesis which these novels position as the most strongly opposed to the metropolis, due to its remoteness. Novels in my corpus often place particular emphasis on the restrictiveness of London, in comparison to the freedom enjoyed by characters in Wales. For example, to the characters in *Eva of Cambria* who have never been there before, 'one of the best houses in the street' 'seemed like a nut-shell'.²⁴² London is presented as 'hot and dusty' with 'overpowering noise that never ceases', and this is associated with a lack of physical and intellectual freedom.²⁴³ These physical contrasts with Wales are combined with moral contrasts: London is 'the centre of gaiety and dissipation' and the backdrop to bad experiences for many of the heroines.²⁴⁴ For example, Grace in *Owen Castle* associates London with the death of her mother: she went there to follow her English husband who abandoned her, and died after losing her son. These novels also construct London as the opposite to Wales in terms of the social restrictions placed on characters. Miss Owen's speech in *The Welsh Cottage* exemplifies this sense of confinement: 'in the metropolis, I found myself a melancholy prisoner; confined within the stated circle of perambulation which the votaries of fashion had marked out'.²⁴⁵ This imagery stands in contrast to these novels' presentation of Wales, in particular, as a place of both physical and intellectual freedom for women. Perhaps the most striking example of a contrast between Wales and London can be found in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. Hutton highlights the restrictions of English society from the perspective of Dorothy, whose upbringing in Wales was free from them. Dorothy has 'breathed the free air of [her] native mountains, and [her] actions have been as free as that', so she notices that London customs 'destroy every spark of

²⁴⁰ Thomas, i, p. 55.

²⁴¹ Paul O'Leary, 'Revolution, Culture, and Industry, c. 1700-1850', in *The Cambridge History of Welsh Literature*, ed. by Geraint Evans and Helen Fulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 254.

²⁴² Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria*, i, p. 108.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., i, p. 120.

²⁴⁵ More, p. 129.

independence'.²⁴⁶ In London, women 'are not to move without' men, but Dorothy is used to having the freedom to ride alone.²⁴⁷ This cultural difference is strikingly illustrated when Dorothy is arrested in London on suspicion of stealing lace, because her being a 'young woman [...] on horseback, alone, at the unusual hour of half past five in the morning' is regarded as suspicious.²⁴⁸

There are some exceptions to this tendency to use London as a negative foil for Wales. Occasionally, London and Wales are presented as morally ambiguous spaces, depending on the characters who reside there. For example, although London is initially presented as unwholesome for Celestia in *The Vindictive Spirit*, she is later rescued out of Wales to live with her guardians in London. Celestia's Welsh home becomes corrupted by her mother's immoral conduct: her household at the Monastery (an ironic choice of residence) is debauched, with characters openly living with their extramarital lovers. Similarly, in *Owen Castle*, Grace is safer in London than in Wales with her cruel husband. These exceptions ultimately reinforce the association between Wales and good moral conduct; when the association is reversed, this is presented as an aberration.

These novels also frequently juxtapose their Welsh settings with spaces in continental Europe. Such comparisons, like contrasts with London, are a conventional part of the construction of idealised English and Welsh settings. These European spaces are often described with a similar lack of specificity to Wales. They are often used to create a morally and physically dangerous setting for exciting plot developments, particularly scenes of imprisonment. While similar incidents sometimes also occur in Wales due to its remoteness (see 'Risk', above), Wales is also often contradictorily portrayed as a place of relative safety. For example, the subplot of murder and intrigue in *Mystery and Confidence* take place in Spain, whereas Wales is the safe home from which Ellen is dangerously removed. These images of continental Europe as threatening usually rely on religious difference, as is typical of the anti-Catholic generalisations commonly used in novels of this period. Europe is therefore presented as a moral contrast to Wales. My corpus includes several examples of characters who bring European immorality into Wales, which is portrayed as a good Anglican space, despite the growing tradition of nonconformity, which these novels largely overlook

²⁴⁶ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 158.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., ii, p. 30.

(as discussed above). A particularly striking example of this is Hatton's portrayal of the corrupting influence of Italy seeping into Wales in *Cambrian Pictures*. Delamere has an affair with a married woman in Sicily and brings this moral transgression back into Wales, where he has a liaison with Adeline, another married woman, with fatal consequences. His seduction by the hypersexualised Marchesa della Rosalvo, whose 'beauty' and 'voluptuous air' are 'too powerful assailants to be withstood', establishes a precedent for his succumbing to his 'dangerous' 'passion' for the innocent Adeline.²⁴⁹ Adeline dies of guilt, demonstrating that immorality is not compatible with her nature, having grown up in the moral haven of Wales.

Many of the novels in my corpus include settings in the West Country and/or the Midlands as well as Wales. Chapters Three and Four will therefore include discussions of these examples, and I will draw further direct comparisons in Chapter Five. While many of the Welsh novels discussed in this chapter conclude with an image of an ideal home in Wales, several others end with their characters settling in other provincial settings, which are portrayed equally as positively. The novels which follow the Anglo-Welsh gentry often show their characters enjoying multiple estates, not only in Wales but also in English provincial spaces, to which they show an equally strong attachment. While many of the features associated with Wales in my corpus, such as remoteness and retirement, are also evoked in other spaces, Wales' association with generic rural tropes is particularly strong, as the subsequent chapters will demonstrate.

7. Conclusion

One of the most universal trends which emerges in the representation of Wales in my corpus is the generalisation of Wales. It is depicted as an 'other' space, because these novels share an English, metropolitan intended audience. Simultaneously, however, they largely overlook the extent to which Wales was distinct from England, particularly with regard to the Welsh language and the prevalence of nonconformist religion. This propensity to generalisation both facilitates and necessitates their creation of an image of Wales as especially and ideally rural and remote. This is despite their frequent use of spaces which are relatively accessible from England. In many cases, a focus on the Anglo-Welsh gentry, and their movement across

²⁴⁹ Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, ii, p. 159; iii, p. 291.

Wales and England, justifies the use of these settings. In the novels in my corpus, the domination of Wales by England is usually implicitly, or even explicitly, accepted. However, while Wales is shown to need the ‘improving’ influence of the English, it is simultaneously used as a morally superior foil to other settings, particularly London.

Many of the major trends in the use of Welsh space in these novels show the continued influence of the late eighteenth century origins of the genre. They often portray Wales as a space away from metropolitan social norms, which often leads to female characters being exposed to physical threats. However, while the construction of Wales as a potentially gothic space is not uncommon, Wales is more usually positioned as a relatively safe moral retreat, away from metropolitan or Catholic temptations. The remoteness of Wales is also frequently used to explore alternatives to contemporary gender norms. Both the physical geography of Wales and its distance from the social restriction of the fashionable world are shown to give female characters greater freedom not only to walk and ride, but also to improve their minds. However, the majority of these physically and intellectually empowered heroines exist within ultimately conservative plots, in which their social compliance and Anglican virtue is rewarded by an affluent marriage. Female freedom in Wales is also tempered by the physical dangers associated with remoteness, as well as the intellectual threat of superstition.

Catherine Hutton and Ann Hatton’s novels are notable for their subversion of many of the common trends in the representation of Wales, including their exceptional condemnation of the exploitation of Wales. Ann Hatton’s exploration of alternative gender performance in Wales is the most extreme portrayal of female freedom in my corpus, but this is partly attributable to her wider interest in radical ideas and gender deviance, rather than unique to her use of Welsh space. Catherine Hutton is the writer in my corpus who subverts the conventions of the Welsh novel genre and the wider generic rural ideal the most frequently. This allows her to create an unusually distinctive and nuanced image of Wales, informed by an awareness of the power dynamic created by internal colonialism. However, even Hatton and Hutton conclude their novels with conventional marriage plots and didactic messages. In the *Welsh Mountaineer*, Hutton promotes marital duty: the apparently free Dorothy’s travel is ultimately sanctioned by her fiancé Owen, because it ‘will store your mind with entertainment’ for their long marriage.²⁵⁰ She concludes that ‘happiness [...] is found in one’s

²⁵⁰ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 103.

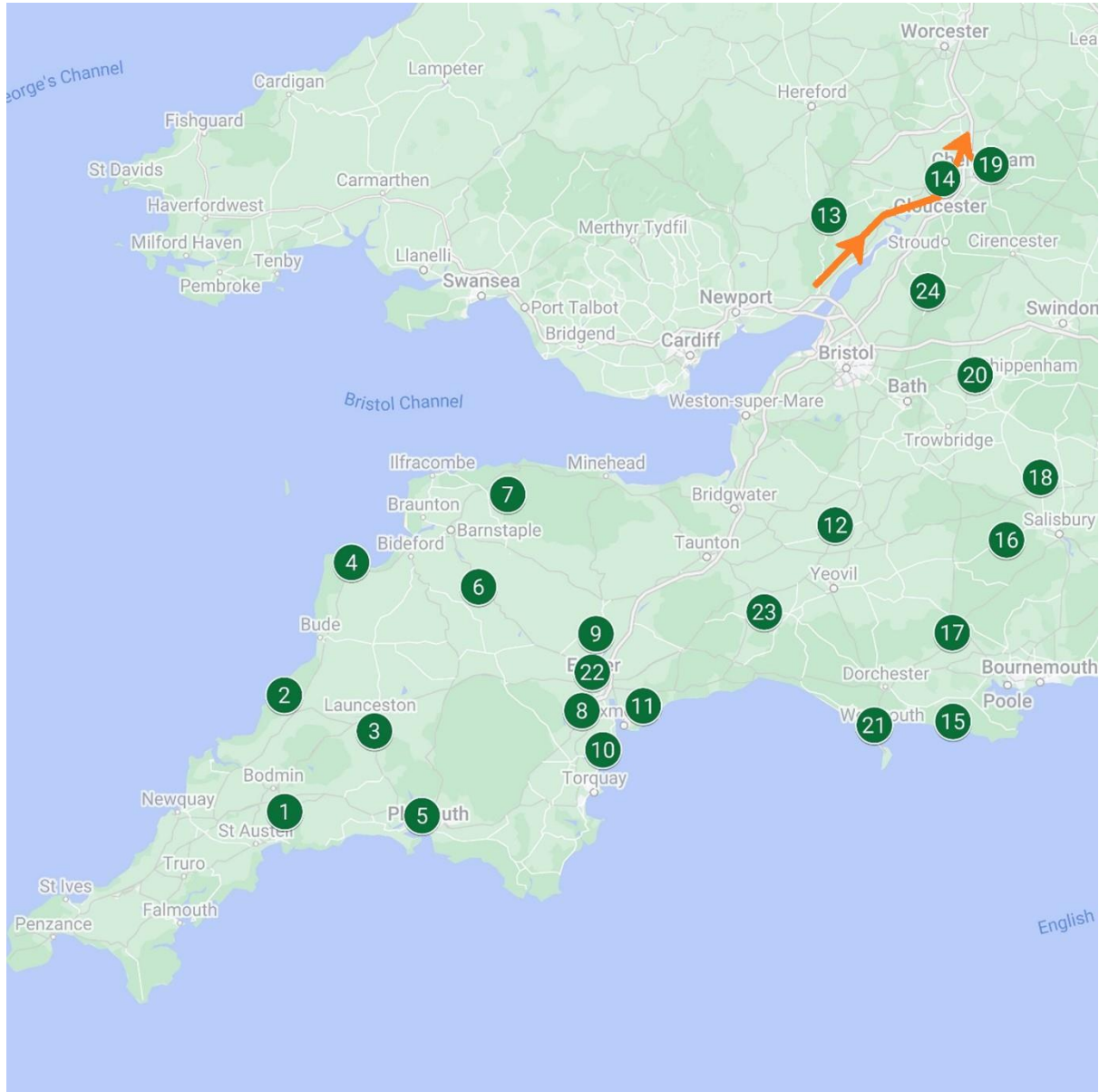
family, or not at all'.²⁵¹ Despite her radical sentiments and exploration of female freedom, Hatton ends *Cambrian Pictures* with an instruction to the 'lady' reader to 'stifle the first symptom of lawless inclinations' and the moral of the novel is that 'innocence is happiness'.²⁵² These conservative social messages combined with explorations of freedom demonstrate the tension at the heart of the Welsh novel genre; Wales is often used as a place to explore alternative social models, but it also simultaneously represents a fictional moral ideal. Among my case study regions, Wales is associated with the most extreme manifestations of generic rural tropes, due to its role as a space outside of England. This otherness defines its difference from the English regions with which it shares a border, which will be the subject of the subsequent two chapters.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 293.

²⁵² Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, iii, p. 448.

Chapter Three: The West Country

Figure 2: Map of West Country settings



Key to Figure 2

1. *Edgar*
2. *The Curate and His Daughter*
3. *Trecothick Bower*
4. *A Traveller's Tale*
5. *The Castle of Tariffa*
6. *The Refusal; Warwick Castle; The Foundling of Devonshire; The History of a Clergyman's Widow; Faith and Fiction*
7. *The Vindictive Spirit*
8. *Fanny Fitz-York*
9. *The Ballad Singer*
10. *The Wanderer*
11. *The Esquimaux*
12. *Incident and Interest*
13. *The Miser Married*
14. *Oakwood Hall*
 - The orange line represents the continuation of Jane and Margaret's tour marked with an orange line in Figure 1, on their leaving Wales
15. *Seabrook Village*
16. *Dudley*
17. *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt*
18. *Husband Hunters!!!*
19. *Strathallan*
20. *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*
21. *Emma*
22. *Sense and Sensibility*
23. *Persuasion*
24. *Northanger Abbey*

N.B. arrows on lines indicate direction of travel

1. Introduction

The West Country was an even more popular setting than Wales among female novelists of the 1810s. However, many of these texts have received little or no scholarly attention, despite recent ‘four nations’ revivals. This chapter brings together, for the first time, a corpus of twenty-eight female-authored novels from the 1810s which make use of settings across the West Country. Previous criticism has neither discussed these novels as West Country texts, nor compared them as a group. This is despite the fact that a large number of novels were set in the region, and it was already recognised as having a distinctive identity. The term ‘West Country’ was in use in the Romantic period and appears in two of the novels in my corpus. It is part of the subtitle of Regina Maria Roche’s *Trecothick Bower; Or, The Lady of the West Country* (1814), and the Cornish heroine is identified as ‘*the lady of the west country*’ at the end of the novel.¹ It is also used to refer to Somerset in *Incident and Interest; Or, Copies from Nature* (1810) by Miss Squire: Clarissa’s ‘charioteer’ is described as ‘clever in the *west country*’, in contrast to his poor driving in London.²

Roe’s collection *English Romantic Writers and the West Country* was instrumental in increasing scholarly recognition of the importance of the region, where research had conventionally focused on the Lakes and London.³ This work represents only one possible perspective because it focuses on male poets. Just as Austen predominates in other scholarly conversations, she is the female novelist whose representations of the West Country in this period are the most regularly and extensively discussed. The impression of the West Country one may receive from reading Austen’s novels alone is of a relatively urbanised region. As Pat Rogers has highlighted, Austen’s West Country settings are largely ‘urban or on the verge of’ becoming so, which does not reflect the region’s reputation as a ‘backwater’.⁴ In this chapter, I aim to provide additional perspectives on the region by discussing a large corpus of novels. Even Austen’s rural West Country settings are relatively close to urban spaces, such

¹ Regina Maria Roche, *Trecothick Bower; Or, The Lady of the West Country* (London: Minerva Press, 1814), iii, p. 263.

² [Miss] Squire, *Incident and Interest; Or, Copies from Nature* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1810), ii, p. 70.

³ Roe (ed.).

⁴ Pat Rogers, ‘Wessex Tales: The West Country Background to Jane Austen’, in *Jane Austen’s Geographies*, ed. by Robert Clark (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 95.

as Barton, ‘within four miles northward of Exeter’, in *Sense and Sensibility* (1811).⁵ Austen’s focus on less remote settings is not typical of my corpus: her contemporaries tend to use very remote, rural settings in the region. Scholarly discussions of female-authored novels set in West Country have traditionally centred on the role of Bath, which was a key setting for Austen. While Bath does appear in many of the novels in this corpus, it is not usually the primary West Country setting, nor is it characteristic of the representation of the wider region. The West Country is much more extensively associated with rural spaces and with the generic rural ideal. While its constituent parts, including its urban spaces, do have particular associations, which I will outline below, reading these texts alongside one another as West Country novels reveals a coherent image of the region as a whole.

Many of the West Country’s associations in my corpus relate to its equivocal role as a part of England which contains one of Britain’s Celtic peripheries. The marginality of this periphery is tempered by its situation within England. At the same time, in my corpus, the West Country is represented as both geographically and symbolically distant from London due to the region’s distinctive landscape and history. As well as conventional tropes of the generic rural, images of the sea and of leisure are especially prominent in depictions of the region. This relates to the way in which Romantic-period interest in the West Country correlated with its receiving ‘greater visibility with the emergence of holiday destinations’.⁶ As well as the developing spa and seaside resorts, this tourism was partly driven by interest in the region’s prehistoric monuments, influenced by Burkean aesthetic principles.⁷ Several of the novels discussed in this chapter associate the West Country, especially Cornwall, with historical images. These novels often emphasise the West Country’s distinctive qualities, particularly its geographically and historically marginal situation within England and Britain. However, at the same time, their representation of the region is so general as to not require any personal experience of it; the majority of these writers have no proven connection to the West Country, others visited it as tourists. These novels construct the region from a metropolitan perspective, in a comparable manner to the representation of Wales discussed in the previous chapter.

⁵ Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, ed. by Edward Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 29.

⁶ Rogers, p. 95.

⁷ Joanne Parker, “‘More wondrous far than Egypt’s boasted pyramids’: the South West’s megaliths in the Romantic Period”, in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 15-36.

This chapter analyses the representation of settings in the counties of the South-West of England, namely Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. I will discuss the novels within geographical groupings before considering trends in the representation of the West Country as a whole. In the latter part of this chapter, I will discuss the overall image of the West Country, with a focus on the prominence of the sea and leisure. I will then consider the particular ways in which the common themes of remoteness and female freedom are represented in the West Country. Finally, I will outline the ways in which the West Country's proximity to the generic rural ideal and its equivocal relationship to remoteness are further established through contrasts with other settings.

2. The geography of West Country settings

The subregions of the West Country have their own characteristics, but they combine to create the overall image of the region. First, I will consider Cornwall, which is represented in a particularly distinctive manner due to its remoteness. I will then discuss Devon and Dorset together, because they are treated similarly. My discussion will then turn to Gloucestershire, Somerset, and Wiltshire, each of which appears relatively less often in this corpus than the aforementioned counties. Bristol and Bath are discussed together, in a separate section, because they appear more frequently than, and are treated different from, their rural hinterlands.

Cornwall

Almost completely separated from the rest of England by the river Tamar, Cornwall is sometimes regarded as a space 'between region and nation'.⁸ As the most physically remote subregion of the West Country, many of Cornwall's associations in this corpus are more extreme or concentrated forms of those of the West Country more broadly. These include many of the features of the generic rural ideal, combined with the additional connotations of remoteness. For example, Cornwall is primarily associated with idealised domesticity, despite its simultaneous association with wildness. Trecothick Castle in Roche's *Trecothick Bower* exemplifies this dichotomy: it is 'awful' and 'magnificent', but also the seat of 'domestic

⁸ Moore, p. 953.

happiness'.⁹ These dualistic implications of extreme remoteness mean that Cornwall is the subregion of the West Country which most resembles the depictions of Wales discussed in the previous chapter. However, there are some distinctive elements in these novels' representations of Cornwall; as I will outline below, this mostly relates to its geographical location as a margin of Britain, and its particular history. I have identified three novels which make significant use of Cornwall, and a further three in which it appears briefly. These writers appear to have been drawn to Cornwall because it offered 'Celtic depth without inconvenient breadth', as a distinctive region but not a separate nation.¹⁰ The presentation in my corpus of Cornwall as simultaneously peaceful and wild draws on the contrasts within its landscape. For example, in *The Beauties of England and Wales* (1801-1816), John Britton and Edward Wedlake Brayley note the 'abundant fertility' of Cornwall's 'sea-shores and valleys', but also describe it as 'one of the least inviting of the English counties'.¹¹

In my corpus, Cornwall mostly has positive associations, as a space which is associated particularly strongly with both remoteness and rurality. It is used notably often to stand not only for the virtues of the rural West Country, but also for Britain more broadly. For example, the majority of *Edgar* takes place abroad, with Britain largely represented by Appleton's idealised descriptions of Cornwall, primarily Edgar's childhood home, 'Restormal Castle' in 'Lestwythiel' (i.e. Restormel in Lostwithiel).¹² She describes a version of the real Restormel, accurately reproducing its setting between the town, 'the river Fowey and the Ocean'.¹³ This Cornish space is physically and symbolically separated from the sphere of battle which Edgar later enters on the continent. This contrast is emphasised by Cornwall's remoteness within Britain. Appleton returns to this idealised domestic scene at the end of the novel, describing Edgar's courtship with his future wife. Cornwall is similarly idealised in Spence's *The Curate and His Daughter; A Cornish Tale* (1813).¹⁴ As the subtitle

⁹ Roche, i, p. 50; p. 66.

¹⁰ Ella Westland, 'The passionate periphery: Cornwall and romantic fiction', in *Peripheral Visions: Images of Nationhood in Contemporary British Fiction*, ed. by Ian A. Bell (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), p. 158.

¹¹ John Britton and Edward Wedlake Brayley, *The Beauties of England and Wales* (London: Printed by Thomas Maiden, 1801-1816), ii, p. 317.

¹² *Edgar*, i, p. 26.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter; A Cornish Tale* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown, 1813), <<https://chawtonhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/The-Curate-and-His-Daughter-a-Cornish-Tale.pdf>> [accessed 01/03/2022]. N.B. references to this text refer to the pagination in this digitised edition.

suggests, this novel romanticises the county in a manner that might be expected of the celebration of a nation in a national tale. Matilda's childhood home in the 'remote village' of Boscastle is situated between 'the sea' and 'the surrounding mountains', 'which gave the spot an air at once wild and romantic'.¹⁵ This dichotomy encapsulates the image of Cornwall which emerges from this corpus, but Spence associates her Cornish setting more strongly with the latter quality than the former. This is in keeping with the area's reputation: in 1801 Britton and Brayley noted Boscastle's 'highly romantic' situation.¹⁶ Their description of the village as 'washed by a small inlet of the sea' and surrounded by 'mountainous eminences' is noticeably similar to Spence's language in *The Curate and His Daughter*, so it is possible that Spence was inspired by it, whether directly or indirectly.¹⁷ As in *Edgar*, the scene of the protagonist's happy childhood is revisited in the denouement. Matilda goes to live with her husband at her father's Cornish castle, and she is given another Cornish mansion as her marriage portion. Her close association with Cornwall by birth and residence is used as evidence of her virtue: she is a 'child of nature'.¹⁸ Roche makes a similar connection between a heroine and her Cornish home in *Trecothick Bower*. At Trecothick Castle, near Launceston, 'all is pure, simple, and lovely', and Emmeline takes on these qualities.¹⁹ Edmund's happiness at marrying 'the lady of the west country' suggests that she embodies the virtuous associations of the wider region.²⁰

The quality of wildness noted by Spence in her description of Boscastle appears across all of the novels set in Cornwall. It seems contradictory to their presentation of Cornwall as primarily a domestic setting, but often complements it: domesticity can be emphasised by juxtaposition with wild scenery. For example, Appleton describes Cornwall as the 'wild skirts' of Britain, with 'bold rocks and wild nature'.²¹ Edgar proves he has become capable of taming Cornwall's wildness when he returns as a hero, marries, and inherits his father's castle. This is symbolised by his successful crossing of the river Tamar on his homecoming. Earlier in the novel, he nearly drowned when crossing the river, during his implausibly long night-time ride from 'the harbour of Seton, in Devonshire' to Restormel,

¹⁵ Ibid. ii, p. 66.

¹⁶ Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 523.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 10.

¹⁹ Roche, i, p. 60.

²⁰ Ibid., iii, p. 263.

²¹ Appleton, i, p. 55; p. 132.

and back again.²² In her descriptions of the ‘forked lightning’ and ‘thunder’ in this scene, Appleton draws on Cornwall’s association with ‘frequent and severe storms’ to demonstrate Edgar’s bravery.²³ Cornish wildness is mostly represented positively in my corpus, partly due to its recuperation as sublimity. I agree with Ella Westland’s assessment that Cornwall’s reputation was transformed when ‘rocky shores and surging seas’ became accepted as ‘approved sights for Romantic sublimity’.²⁴ Spence’s description of the ‘awfully sublime’ scene at Tintagel is a typical example of this:

The ruin of the castle spread wide its high and broken ramparts, on a bold promontory jutting into the sea; and, frowning in gloomy majesty, seemed to defy the approach of any bold invader.²⁵

Like Spence’s description of Boscastle (see above), this passage also bears a striking resemblance to the place’s entry in *The Beauties of England and Wales*, which notes its ‘wildly sublime’ appearance.²⁶

According to Westland, in the early nineteenth century, Cornwall was losing its image of ‘craggy grandeur’ and was more likely to be associated with ‘packet boats and warships in the busy port of Falmouth’, ‘tin and copper mines’, and ‘the respectable attractions of towns like Truro and Penzance’.²⁷ This is not the case in my corpus: in keeping with the generic rural ideal, these novels overlook the industrialisation of Cornwall, including its shipping and mining industries, and mostly ignore its towns. The majority of the Cornish settings which appear are rural, often extremely so. For example, in *Warwick Castle*, Frances worries about Marianne’s wellbeing, as she is ‘buried in the deep solitude of a country mansion, situated near the sea side in one of the wildest and most distant parts of Cornwall’, namely ‘Merazion’ (Marazion), in the south-west of the county.²⁸ This is an unusually negative portrayal of Cornwall’s wildness, in contrast to the above examples. Urban settings in Cornwall only ever appear briefly in my corpus. Mrs Edgeworth (not to be confused with Maria Edgeworth) uses Falmouth in *The Ballad Singer* (1814) as the port from which the characters sail to Lisbon.

²² Ibid. i, p. 148.

²³ Ibid., i, p. 152; Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 317.

²⁴ Westland, p. 154.

²⁵ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 95.

²⁶ Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 522.

²⁷ Westland, p. 155.

²⁸ Prickett, ii, p. 232; iii, p. 61.

However, she still emphasises Cornish wildness, as the Falmouth coast is the ‘hostile shore’ where Lady Emmeline is ‘shipwrecked’, and her fiancé has previously drowned.²⁹ *Warwick Castle* includes a mention of Penzance. Marianne has had ‘a monthly assembly at Penzance, as the uttermost boundary of her expectations’.³⁰ Penzance had a ‘respectable’ image, but this is called into question in Ryley’s *Fanny Fitz-York*, in which it is mentioned that the wicked Mrs Gaskell and her corrupted daughters plan to rehabilitate their reputation ‘in the little world about Penzance’.³¹ These brief portrayals of urban settings are in keeping with the general trend in this corpus for representing urban spaces in a negative light.

Cornwall’s mining industry is only mentioned once in this corpus: in *The Curate and His Daughter*, Matilda is described, metaphorically, as ‘precious ore’, ‘picked up [...] in some of the mines in Cornwall’, leading her to mistakenly believe that ‘she was taken from the habitation of some poor miners’.³² The lack of attention to mining in these novels is a notable omission, given that Cornwall’s mines were acknowledged to be ‘the most important objects in the history of this county’ in the early nineteenth century.³³ This exclusion relates to the generic rural ideal: a lack of engagement with working-class people or their occupations is the norm. Where working people do appear, they are generally fishermen or farmers, occupations which are more in keeping with the generic rural ideal (see discussion of *The History of a Clergyman’s Widow* and *Seabrook Village* in ‘Devon and Dorset’, below). The lack of attention to Cornwall’s industries and urban areas relates to the county’s primary function as a prototypically rural and remote setting, which is made into the backdrop for a conservative ideal of domesticity. In a similar manner to the use of Wales discussed in the previous chapter, Cornwall’s remoteness facilitates its use as a fantasy space.

Rather than focusing on Cornwall’s industrial present, these novels foreground its historical associations. Gilpin described the county’s particular appeal to the ‘antiquarian’ and ‘the historian’, who ‘might trace the various scenes of druid rites, and of Roman and Danish power’.³⁴ The former association appears briefly in *Edgar*: the hero and his future

²⁹ Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, iii, p. 24; p. 30.

³⁰ Prickett, iii, p. 233.

³¹ Westland, p. 155; Ryley, iii, p. 232.

³² Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, pp. 40-41.

³³ Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 333.

³⁴ William Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty. To which are added a few remarks on the picturesque beauties of the Isle of Wight* (London: Printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798), pp. 192-193.

wife visit ‘the druid’s monument’, ‘on the base of the vast Logan stones’.³⁵ These ‘rocking’ stones were associated with Druids at the time of Appleton’s writing; she explains in the notes that she believes the name comes from ‘L’Hogen stones, the vile stones, alluding to such practices of the Druids there’.³⁶ *Edgar* is one of two West Country historical novels set earlier than the eighteenth century that I have identified, both of which are set in Cornwall, in the late medieval period. The other such novel is *Trecothick Bower*. Having withstood invasion where the rest of England did not, Cornwall was an apposite setting for early nineteenth-century English novelists wishing to make a statement about the future of their nation based on a selective idealisation of its past. In *Edgar* and *Trecothick Bower*, Cornwall is used to represent Britain (see discussion of England standing for Britain in Chapter One). The main action of *Trecothick Bower* takes place circa 1482-5: Edmund regains his family estates following the ascension of Henry VII. I agree with Christina Morin that this constitutes a comment on early nineteenth-century Britain, ‘a cautionary, if superficially optimistic’ call for the Prince Regent to secure ‘international peace’.³⁷ Roche uses Edmund’s Cornish estate, Lestwithiel Castle, to represent the nation’s fate: after a conflict, it is restored to greatness with the help of the monarch, as she hopes Britain will be. Leswithiel is an archaic spelling of Lostwithiel, a real town. The ‘half-roofless halls of [Edmund’s] native towers’ may therefore have been inspired by Restormel Castle, which Britton and Brayley describe as ‘a fortress magnificent in ruin’.³⁸ The novel could be interpreted as an alternative history for Restormel, in which it is restored to glory, rather than falling into ruin by the sixteenth century, in order to support Roche’s warning about Britain’s future. It is also possible that Roche is referring to ‘the Palace’ in Lostwithiel, a former residence of the Dukes of Cornwall.³⁹ However, Roche describes Lestwithiel Castle as ‘on the banks of the Tamar’, whereas the real Lostwithiel is on the Fowey.⁴⁰ Roche’s use of the name Lestwithiel therefore appears to be more of a general Cornish allusion than a fictionalisation of a particular castle. Emmeline’s home, Trecothick Castle, appears to be partly based on the real Launceston Castle, described by Gilpin as having been ‘one of the strongest fortresses in the

³⁵ Appleton, iii, p. 253.

³⁶ Joanne Parker, p. 21; Appleton, iii, p. 276.

³⁷ Morin, p. 51.

³⁸ Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 409; Roche, i, p. 84.

³⁹ Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 408.

⁴⁰ Roche, i, p. 17.

west'.⁴¹ Roche reimagines this 'mouldering' castle as Trecothick, with 'noble battlements' and 'rich amphitheatre of woods'.⁴² These imposing castles ascribe an enduring quality to British power.

Cornwall is similarly used to comment on Britain in Appleton's *Edgar*, the action of which takes place circa 1356-1364. Edgar leaves Cornwall to fight under Edward of Woodstock (the Battle of Poitiers occurs early in the novel) and returns eight years later. Appleton's choice to portray victory over France is apposite to the post-Waterloo moment in which *Edgar* was published. Trumpener describes *Edgar* as a 'didactic celebration of British nationality'.⁴³ This takes the form of nationalism and pro-colonial discourse. For example, Edgar complains of the Cypriots' cowardice: 'Dastardly race! oh ye are, indeed, unlike to Britons'.⁴⁴ Appleton refers to England much more often than Britain. England is exaggeratedly praised throughout the novel and its notes. For example, the first book opens with the line 'Hail, my Country! thou England, greatly superb [...]'.⁴⁵ England is portrayed as superior to the rest of the world; Edgar exclaims 'Oh, England! England! what country is alike to thee, in beauty, in honour, in love?'.⁴⁶ Richard Maxwell argues that the historical novel and the national tale are 'closely adjacent' genres, which 'shape and reshape each other' in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁷ *Edgar* exemplifies this relationship, and shows the influence of Scott's *Waverley*, published two years earlier, in 1814. *Edgar*'s subtitle labels it a 'national tale'; it functions as such both for Britain as a whole, and for England, specifically. This is possible due to the polyvalence of Cornwall's role as a part of England which was a stronghold of the ancient Britons. *Edgar* and *Trecothick Bower* complicate Kelly's theory that such English national tales did not exist because the margins of Britain 'defined the centre'.⁴⁸ In these two novels, a margin of England and of Britain (the remotest part of the West Country) defines both England and the wider nation.

⁴¹ Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 190; Britton and Brayley, ii, p. 359.

⁴² *Ibid.*; Roche, i, p. 50.

⁴³ Katie Trumpener, 'National Character, Nationalist Plots', p. 723, n. 21.

⁴⁴ Appleton, iii, p. 144.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. 1.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 74.

⁴⁷ Richard Maxwell, 'The historical novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the Romantic Period*, ed. by Richard Maxwell and Katie Trumpener (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 76.

⁴⁸ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 92.

Claire Conolly states that early nineteenth-century national tales ‘draw attention to the cultural specificity’ of their settings, ‘in the context of a centralizing British state’.⁴⁹ This definition applies to *Edgar*: Appleton emphasises that her hero’s home life represents an ideal of Englishness, but it is situated in a framework of Britishness. Edgar’s name is a reference to both King Edgar the Peaceful (943/4-975) and Edgar Aetheling (c. 1052-1125).⁵⁰ The former allusion is confirmed by a song at a banquet, which includes the line ‘Fleets King Edgar had four’.⁵¹ The latter connection is made more frequently; it is explained that Edgar is descended ‘from the family of Edgar Atheling’.⁵² Sebastian I. Sobecki mistakenly conflates Appleton’s Edgar with Edgar the Peaceful, who lived centuries earlier. On this basis, Sobecki argues that, by the early nineteenth century, the figure of Edgar the Peaceful ‘was no longer an expression of Englishness but had been naturalised as British’.⁵³ This reading overlooks the novel’s complex engagement with Englishness and the fact that Appleton’s Edgar is an original character. By making her title character a descendant of Aetheling, the last Wessex King, who was never crowned, Appleton evokes an Anglo-Saxon kingdom prior to the Norman invasion. Appleton’s Edgar’s namesakes and fictional lineage symbolise an historical Britishness that is defined by England, specifically by the West Country.

Cornwall’s history is further evoked in my corpus by references to Arthurian legend. In *Trecothick Bower*, the ‘minstrels [...] sang of the valour of Arthur, the witcheries of Merlin’, and this ‘kindled’ their ‘national enthusiasm’.⁵⁴ Similarly, in *Edgar*, the hero tells an allegorical tale of the figure of Britannia being defended by ‘Arthur, whose valiant deeds she herself loves to recount’.⁵⁵ As the location of Tintagel, Cornwall is particularly associated with Arthur. In *The Curate and His Daughter*, Matilda’s childhood home is near to ‘Tintagall [sic] Castle, of which many legends were told, from being the residence of the famous King Arthur’.⁵⁶ Matilda later visits Tintagel, in a scene in which Spence emphasises the transience

⁴⁹ Claire Conolly, ‘The National Tale’, in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English*, ii, ed. by Peter Garside and Karen O’Brien (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 216.

⁵⁰ Ann Williams, ‘Edgar [called Edgar Pacificus] (943/4–975), king of England’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2014) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8463>>; Nicholas Hooper, ‘Edgar Ætheling (b. 1052?, d. in or after 1125), prince’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/8465>>

⁵¹ Appleton, i, p. 72.

⁵² Ibid, ii, pp. 218-9.

⁵³ Sebastian I. Sobecki, *The Sea and Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2008), p. 28.

⁵⁴ Roche, i, p. 68.

⁵⁵ Appleton, ii, p. 211.

⁵⁶ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 93.

of time: ‘shortly the very hero, who, in this her day, struck terror and desolation throughout the land, would, like the great Arthur, be seen no more’.⁵⁷ Spence appears to suggest here that contemporary military campaigns, such as the Napoleonic Wars (the novel was published in 1813), would be forgotten. Katie Garner argues that women writers used Arthurian references particularly often because this material was ‘more readily available’ to them ‘as a source of inspiration than other cultural myths’.⁵⁸ In my corpus, women writers engage with a wide range of historical material, of which Arthurian legend forms a small part, as demonstrated by the Cornish novels discussed above.

Devon and Dorset

Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* closes with an image of ‘constant communication’ between Dorset and Devon.⁵⁹ Elinor and Marianne, living ‘almost within sight of each other’ in Delaford, maintain close ties with their former home, Barton.⁶⁰ This is emblematic of the similar treatment of the two counties in my corpus, which relates to their contiguity and shared southern coastline. Devon and Dorset are depicted as the prototypical West Country counties; they are closely associated with the features which I will discuss below, under ‘West Country trends’. They typify the particular West Country manifestation of the generic rural ideal: both counties are primarily represented as rural and associated with happy childhoods and marriages. Where their towns do appear, they are generally characterised negatively. Less remote than Cornwall, they are less associated with the evocations of wildness and historical interest particular to that most inaccessible subregion of the West Country. While some Devon and Dorset rural spaces, such as castles and abbeys, are associated with danger, this moderate additional connotation of threat is also in keeping with the common associations of remoteness in this corpus. Settings in Devon and Dorset allow these novelists to balance remoteness from the metropolis with relative accessibility (this is similar to the use of Welsh settings nearer the border with England discussed in the previous

⁵⁷ Ibid., ii, p. 95.

⁵⁸ Katie Garner, *Romantic Women Writers and Arthurian Legend: the Quest for Knowledge* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 5.

⁵⁹ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 431.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

chapter). In this section, I will discuss Devon first, before moving on to consider Dorset, which appears much less frequently.

Devon is by far the most popular West Country setting in this corpus. Over half of the novels discussed in this chapter include settings in Devon, and in most cases these settings have a significant role in the plot. Devon's popularity can partially be explained by its size: Devon was the second largest English county, after Yorkshire.⁶¹ It can also be attributed to its landscape, which is 'exceedingly varied and irregular', giving writers a choice of scenery on which to draw.⁶² Richard Polwhele observed of Devon: 'Perhaps this Island affords, no where [sic], such a variety, so nobly contrasted'.⁶³ As the largest county and most popular setting in the West Country, Devon typifies the trends which emerge across the region in this corpus. Devon homes reflect the ways in which the county and the rural West Country more broadly are used in this corpus: parsonages and cottages represent its idyllic associations, and castles and abbeys its gothic side. As well as its close association with the generic rural ideal, Devon is especially strongly linked to romantic love. It is often the site of courtship and proposal scenes, as well as images of marital happiness. The majority of the Devon novels that can be specifically located are set in the south of the county, so I will discuss these first, then settings in North Devon, and finally those settings which are ambiguously located within the county.

Ryley's *Fanny Fitz-York* is typical of the use of Devon settings in a manner which embodies the generic rural ideal. Tremorne, the fictional village named in the novel's subtitle, 'Heiress of Tremorne', is implied to be a short distance from both Exeter and Teignmouth, in 'one of the most romantic valleys in this charming county'.⁶⁴ The Fitz-York family's 'ancient seat', the Tower of Tremorne, is the location of Fanny's happy childhood and later married life.⁶⁵ This typical rural setting supports the correspondingly conventional plot. A similarly happy childhood in rural South Devon appears in Edgeworth's *The Ballad Singer*: the location of the 'living of – in the South of Devonshire' is initially ambiguous, but it is later stated that the 'messenger' is 'daily dispatched to Tiverton, to enquire for letters'.⁶⁶ Angeline

⁶¹ Britton and Brayley, iv.

⁶² Ibid., iv, p. 6.

⁶³ Richard Polwhele, *The History of Devonshire* (Exeter: Trewman and Son, for Cadell, Johnson, and Dilly, London, 1793-1806), ii, p. 5.

⁶⁴ Ryley, i, p. 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., iii, p. 243.

⁶⁶ Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, i, p. 3; ii, p. 109.

lives alternately at the ‘peaceful’ and ‘picturesque Vicarage’ and nearby Trelawney Lodge.⁶⁷ The novel includes the conventional period of urban suffering which forms a contrast with the heroine’s happy childhood: Edgeworth describes Angeline’s later difficulties in London, including nearly becoming entrapped into prostitution. Although, unlike Fanny, Angeline does not return to Devon, she is revealed to be heiress to the ‘Bristol-house’ estate, described earlier in the novel as ‘a perfect paradise, situated in the most romantic and beautiful part of the south of Devonshire’.⁶⁸ Austen’s depiction of Barton in *Sense and Sensibility*, a ‘pleasant fertile spot’, ‘within four miles northward of Exeter’, is also characteristic of the positive representation of rural South Devon in my corpus.⁶⁹ Although Elinor and Marianne grew up in Sussex, their trip to London after settling in Devon is another manifestation of the conventional period of urban tribulation for rural heroines.

Rural South Devon’s positive associations are similarly portrayed in two further novels in which it is a more minor setting. In Adelaide O’Keeffe’s *Dudley* (1819), Sir Elliot describes meeting his wife there: he visited a village ‘within a few miles of Honiton’, where he found ‘every thing [sic] that constitutes beauty in landscape’.⁷⁰ O’Keeffe draws on the reputation of the area surrounding Honiton; Polwhele notes that it was ‘remarked as extremely picturesque’ and Gilpin describes having heard its ‘picturesque beauties’ ‘much commended’.⁷¹ The beauty of the same area is noted in Spence’s *The Curate and His Daughter*. During a tour, Matilda is ‘enchanted with the beauty of its sylvan valley, its clear rivulets’ and ‘the arcadian appearance of the cottages’.⁷² These examples demonstrate the especially strong association between rural South Devon and the generic rural ideal, particularly in terms of childhood happiness, romance, and the picturesque.

Emily Clark’s *The Esquimaux; Or, Fidelity* (1819) is exceptional in that its depiction of rural South Devon is not entirely positive. Treharne Hall is in the fictional ‘large romantic village of Fairfield’, ‘three miles from the sea’ and near to the river Ex.⁷³ Clark associates this ‘retired’ location, ‘five miles distant from any town’, with both supernatural and terrestrial

⁶⁷ Ibid., ii, p. 135; p. 15.

⁶⁸ Ibid., i, p. 73.

⁶⁹ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 33; p. 29.

⁷⁰ Adelaide O’Keeffe, *Dudley* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819), i, p. 268; pp. 275-276.

⁷¹ Polwhele, ii, p. 227; Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 269.

⁷² Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 90.

⁷³ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, i, p. 33; p. 113.

dangers.⁷⁴ A smuggling operation runs beneath Treharne, but supernatural fears distract the residents from the crime. Rose and Kamira hear ‘pistols’ and ‘the clashing of swords’ and ‘examine the cellars’, which they find ‘filled with ancient implements and weapons of war’.⁷⁵ The ‘ancient solitary mansion’ has castle-like features including ‘four turrets’, a ‘deep moat’, and a ‘drawbridge’, which complement the semi-gothic plot.⁷⁶ When Rose and Kamira are abducted by the smugglers, they are taken to a ‘ruinous-looking house’ ‘on the sea beach’.⁷⁷ Clark implies that these events could go undetected in this remote Devon setting. She draws on a generalised image of West Country coasts as lawless. The real presence of smugglers there was well known: George Lipscomb observed that, in Cornwall, ‘smuggling seems to constitute a regular trade’, ‘seldom meeting with any interruptions from the Excise officers’.⁷⁸ Clark depicts these crimes as literally threatening the domestic ideal when Treharne is partially destroyed by arson. This image has added significance because the Hall represents British colonial power. Early in their return journey from North America to Treharne, General Douglas’ family meet the ‘Esquimaux’ Kamira in Newfoundland. Evoking a common pro-colonial discourse, Clark portrays Kamira as grateful to be removed from her own culture. When they save her after her husband’s lover attempts to murder her, she asks the Douglas family to ‘take Kamira to your country, where the great king lives. Let her be your servant [...]’.⁷⁹ Although she is the subject of the novel’s title, Kamira is a minor character; her function is to make the Douglas family, and the British state, appear benevolent and cultivated. The contrast Clark draws between Newfoundland and Devon makes it clear that the appropriately named Fairfield represents the virtues of Britain. Unlike the rest of the novel, the plot resolution resembles the generic rural ideal: it sees the surviving characters ‘happy’ and ‘resid[ing] near each other’, apparently in Devon.⁸⁰ The guiltiest of the smugglers are stated to be foreigners, rather than local Devon people. When they drown, Devon’s Britishness is reinstated, and it is re-domesticated. Clark’s message in support of the British state and colonialism is evident throughout the novel. It is typical of the conservative

⁷⁴ Ibid., i, p. 3.

⁷⁵ Ibid., i, pp. 265-6; ii, p. 133; p. 136.

⁷⁶ Ibid., i, p. 3; pp. 30-31.

⁷⁷ Ibid., ii, p. 145.

⁷⁸ George Lipscomb, *A Journey into Cornwall, through the counties of Southampton, Wilts, Dorset, Somerset & Devon: interspersed with remarks, moral, historical, literary, and political* (Warwick: H. Sharpe; and F. & C. Rivington, London, 1799), pp. 227-8.

⁷⁹ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, i, p. 21.

⁸⁰ Ibid, iii, p. 266.

ideology usually associated with the use of the generic rural ideal in this corpus. Despite making the unusual choice to depict danger in rural South Devon, Clark also includes the typical period of urban suffering and rural homecoming. She presents London as at least as dangerous as her remote rural settings (see ‘The West Country contrasted with other settings’, below).

A small number of novels in my corpus portray urban settings within South Devon itself, including Plymouth, Exeter, and some of the smaller coastal resort towns. The image of Plymouth in Beauclerc’s *The Castle of Tariffa* is the most extensive representation of any urban setting in Devon. The titular ‘large half-ruined castle’ with ‘the whole of Plymouth Sound and Cawsand bay within a near view’, is purchased by an Admiral.⁸¹ As ‘one of the largest maritime towns in England’, closely associated with the navy, Plymouth is an apt choice for the new home of Sir Harbottle Dareall, who has been ‘the very life and soul of sea-side bathing places’.⁸² Beauclerc’s unusual setting supports her unconventional plot. For example, her choice to show the heroine marrying twice stands out as unusual for this period, particularly as the first marriage is not entirely unhappy; Monomia’s feelings for the Admiral are compared to the ‘tenderness of a dutiful and affectionate daughter’.⁸³ *The Castle of Tariffa* is also distinctive because Beauclerc includes heightened comic descriptions alongside the dramatic incidents. The Admiral’s servants are all sailors who ‘were wounded one way or another’ with him, and he continues to call them his ‘ship’s crew’.⁸⁴ Despite her comedic depiction of the servants as ‘amphibious animals’, Beauclerc also uses them to take a moral stance against ‘drunkenness’, when the Admiral replaces them with ‘a more sober crew’.⁸⁵ This image of inebriety in Plymouth is typical of the association which these novels commonly create between urban settings and dissipation. In 1799, Plymouth was described by Lipscomb as having ‘very little internal advantage’, with its ‘dirty’ markets and ‘disagreeable’ streets’.⁸⁶ Plymouth’s reputation makes it suitable for use as the scene of incident, rather than the peaceful retirement associated with its rural hinterlands. For

⁸¹ Amelia Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa; Or, the Self-Banished Man* (London: B. Crosby and Co., 1812), i, p. 31.

⁸² Britton and Brayley, iv, p. 145; Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa*, i, p. 32.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, iv, pp. 290-1.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 8; p. 59.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. 44; p. 65.

⁸⁶ Lipscomb, p. 209.

example, the Admiral's granddaughter unexpectedly appears on the beach at Tariffa, and he later dies there.

While Beauclerc's extensive use of an urban Devon setting is unusual, a negative image of Plymouth also appears, albeit much more briefly, in *Fanny Fitz-York*, when the immoral characters Mrs Gaskell and her daughters move there. Other South Devon towns are also featured in the novel: Fanny's guardians choose not 'to plant her in the metropolitan garden', but only show her some of the 'intermediate parterres', meaning local towns.⁸⁷ The locations which they visit on this tour are only mentioned briefly. The differences between Sidmouth, Exmouth, and Teignmouth are presented as unimportant, as Ryley focuses on Fanny's social experiences. Exeter also appears, as the site of female corruption: Julia, who was 'innocent, even to childishness' in her rural home, 'by a six months' residence at Exeter [...] became a gay, flighty, good-humoured coquette', and eventually turns to sex work.⁸⁸ Ryley draws on Exeter's status as a 'crowded' 'garrison city', associated with 'profit' and 'pleasure'.⁸⁹ She replicates the conventional association of rural settings with good characters and urban ones with immorality.

In contrast to these examples, South Devon towns, including Exeter, are presented in a more neutral manner in *Dudley*. Having followed Miss Powis to Sidmouth, Sir Elliot 'watched the variety of company on the parade', looking for her.⁹⁰ Sidmouth is not described extensively, as he soon tails her to Exeter. He recounts how, once there, he 'examined' the cathedral, 'walked about the streets, and went into several of the shops'.⁹¹ This is an example of how O'Keefe describes both towns in a detached manner, in Sir Elliot's voice, because his focus is on finding Miss Powis. The resolution of this retrospective love-story takes place near Dawlish, an area described by Polwhele as 'beautiful and romantic'.⁹² Sir Elliot recounts how he met her on 'the beach', 'searching for shells and sea-weeds', and proposed to her.⁹³ O'Keefe associates her rural South Devon settings, including this beach as well as the Honiton area (see above), with romantic love. Although this is an aspect of the generic rural ideal, in my corpus it appears especially commonly in coastal spaces, particularly those in

⁸⁷ Ryley, i, p. 83.

⁸⁸ Ibid., ii, p. 111.

⁸⁹ Robert Newton, *Eighteenth-Century Exeter* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1984), p. 123; p. 104.

⁹⁰ O'Keefe, i, p. 300.

⁹¹ Ibid., i, p. 303.

⁹² Polwhele, ii, p. 151

⁹³ O'Keefe, i, p. 340.

Devon. An engagement scene on a South Devon beach also appears in Frances Burney's *The Wanderer*. The denouement takes place in Teignmouth. Burney emphasises that the town is 'full of company, as it was the season for bathing'.⁹⁴ Mirroring the rest of the novel, in which Juliet has to stay on the move, she avoids the 'company on the sands', and 'turn[s] another away', to a 'charming spot' where she can enjoy 'the stupendous expansion of the ocean'.⁹⁵ Juliet and Harleigh later get engaged there, in the 'beautiful verdant recess, between two rocks'.⁹⁶ Hester Davenport argues that the Teignmouth section of *The Wanderer* is Burney's 'tribute' to the place, showing her 'vivid recall' of her own visit.⁹⁷ Although this passage may appear to be an unusually positive use of an urban setting, Burney focusses on the beach and the sea, rather than on the town itself. I will further discuss the importance of the sea in these novels under 'West Country trends', below. While the inclusion of some urban settings complicates South Devon's association with happiness and romantic love, these instances are significantly less frequent and less extensive than the positive portrayals of rural South Devon settings.

Only two novels in my corpus are set in North Devon. Both of them focus on rural settings. In *The Vindictive Spirit*, Thomas presents the North Devon coast as an alternative destination for a character seeking retirement, but who needs to leave Wales. Abergeley 'set[s] off for Bristol, without having fixed on any decided plan', then gets into a coach 'bound to the north of Devonshire'.⁹⁸ He goes to 'search out [...] a retirement suited to his wishes', in the 'many beautiful and picturesque locations in the vicinity'.⁹⁹ This rural setting is treated similarly positively to those in the south of the county. It is a conventional image of a rural beauty: 'embowered woods, murmuring rivulets' and 'a snow-white cottage here and there'.¹⁰⁰ Thomas uses rural North Devon to create an image of domestic contentment and morality with which to contrast Abergeley's Welsh home, which has lost its own happy associations. As in the South Devon novels, the setting is associated with romance, as Abergeley begins to fall in love with his host's daughter Eleanor, despite being married.

⁹⁴ Burney, v, p. 213.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, v, pp. 219-220.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, v, p. 262.

⁹⁷ Hester Davenport, 'Fanny Goes Dipping—Evelina does not: Burney's Attitude to the Pursuit of Sea-bathing in her Life and Writing' in *A Celebration of Frances Burney*, ed. by Lorna J. Clark (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007) p. 168.

⁹⁸ Thomas, iii, pp. 98-9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 110.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 111.

However, the landscape ultimately takes on another quality of the generic rural ideal: moral virtue, as Abergeley ultimately makes the right decision to assist Eleanor's marriage with her cousin.

North Devon is depicted very differently in Spence's *A Traveller's Tale of the Last Century*, which, as the title suggests, is set in the mid-eighteenth century. Spence uses a conventionally described ideal Devon setting, but in an entirely atypical manner. She states in her dedication that her use of Clovelly was inspired by Lady Hamlyn Williams' real improvements to the 'remote and sequestered fairy spot'.¹⁰¹ Spence repeats this image in the novel, describing how the 'sequestered village, embowered in woody eminences, rests in the bosom of grotesque rocks [...]'.¹⁰² However, while beautiful settings such as these are usually the sites of domestic happiness, Spence associates the 'remote seclusion' of her primary setting, Granville Abbey, with 'gloomy horrors'.¹⁰³ The introduction claims that the narrator obtained the manuscript of the 'Tale' near 'an antique Abbey, fallen into decay'.¹⁰⁴ This device, common in gothic and historical novels, creates tension throughout the ensuing narrative, because the reader knows Granville will be abandoned. Unlike the conventionally idealised childhood homes depicted in the other rural Devon novels, 'Granville Abbey had rather been a place of imprisonment to [Deletia], than a happy home'.¹⁰⁵ After escaping it, Deletia marries an Earl with a Warwickshire estate (see Chapter Four), willingly relinquishing her name and therefore her right to the Abbey, which falls into ruin after it is inherited by a French relation. Unusually for a rural Devon setting, Granville Abbey is neither a happy childhood home nor a marital one.

In contrast to her positive description of Cornwall in *The Curate and His Daughter*, Spence portrays the North Devon landscape as disappointing in *A Traveller's Tale*, both inherently and because Deletia is unable to enjoy it due to her mental state. Her negative experiences extend beyond the Abbey: on a visit to Lundy, Deletia is initially keen 'to look at the ruins of St. Morisco and St. Helen's chapel', having heard that the 'island was infested by pirates'.¹⁰⁶ Deletia's interest, arising from 'often gazing' on the island, may reflect Spence's

¹⁰¹ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, i, p. vi.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, i, p. 11.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 150; p. 101.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. ix.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 252.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, i, p. 49; p. 56.

own curiosity on seeing it. In her *Summer Excursions*, Spence mentions seeing ‘the isle of Lundy rising out of the ocean’, from the opposite coast, when in Wales.¹⁰⁷ Deletia is disappointed to find it a ‘desolate scene’, a ‘huge mass of uninteresting rock’.¹⁰⁸ This is another instance where Spence appears to draw on Britton and Brayley’s descriptions (as discussed above, in relation to Boscastle and Tintagel in Cornwall): they note that ‘the visitor [to Lundy] is obliged to climb over various craggy masses’.¹⁰⁹ Deletia’s party move on to Hartland Abbey, but find it equally underwhelming, surrounded by ‘rude and uncultivated’ country.¹¹⁰ This scene is strikingly different to Spence’s celebratory description of the cliff-top scenery further down the same coast at Tintagel. In the scene at Hartland, Deletia’s disappointment reflects her feeling oppressed in Lord Valville’s company. Spence uses Devon and Cornwall scenery in contrasting ways, creating different effects from physically similar settings. Spence tends to use West Country settings in a more nuanced way than many of her contemporaries, as evidenced by this contrast, and her acknowledgment of internal differences within Devon. At the start of the tour, Deletia is ‘disappointed, at not finding ‘pastoral scenery embellished with rural cottages’ but instead:

the most miserable huts composed of mud, and roofed with turf [sic]. The children [...] were ragged, squalid, and dirty, and appeared more like the inhabitants of a close manufacturing town, than natives of so healthful and open a country as North Devonshire.¹¹¹

It is significant that the inhabitants are compared to those of a town, evoking a conventional association between the urban, poverty, and associated immorality. Spence’s portrayals of Devon towns are unusual due to the novel’s historical setting in the mid-eighteenth century; the narrator comments that ‘the simple inhabitants of these little remote towns were not then corrupted by the influx of visitors from large cities’.¹¹² Spence is therefore able to bypass these towns’ contemporary associations of fashionable popularity. This helps to maintain the

¹⁰⁷ Elizabeth Spence, *Summer Excursions through parts of Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire, Derbyshire, and South Wales* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809), p. 100.

¹⁰⁸ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 56.

¹⁰⁹ Britton and Brayley, iv (1803), p. 240.

¹¹⁰ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 57.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 87-8.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, i, p. 102.

sense that Deletia is helplessly alone with her persecutors, for example, in the ‘gloomy solitude of Ilfracombe’ (see ‘Risk’ and ‘Female freedom’, below).¹¹³ Valville repeatedly harasses Deletia during the tour: one such scene is heightened by the ‘savage grandeur’ of ‘Morthoe [sic] Bay’.¹¹⁴ He takes advantage of the ‘lonely desolation’ of the coast to declare his love.¹¹⁵ As a contemporary reviewer stated, Spence’s detailed descriptions in the tour sections are not ‘introduced merely as gratuitous embellishments’ but are ‘as necessary [...] as the illusion of theatrical scenery to a dramatic exhibition’.¹¹⁶

The five novels with settings that could be either in North or South Devon treat the county similarly to the novels with more specific locations: they often associate their rural and/or coastal settings with tropes of the generic rural ideal. In *Warwick Castle*, Frances spends much of her childhood at Wilton Abbey, her mother’s ‘seat in Devonshire’, which is ambiguously located but has a ‘fine view of the sea’.¹¹⁷ It provides an asylum when her father’s mistreatment of her mother and demands for money become unbearable. Conventional happy childhoods in ambiguous Devon settings also appear in Haynes’ *The Foundling of Devonshire* and Bennett’s *Faith and Fiction*, and in both of these novels the county is further associated with a happy homecoming. *The Foundling of Devonshire* has a similarly itinerant quality to that of Burney’s *The Wanderer*: after leaving Devon, Laura has to move from situation to situation, often effectively homeless. However, Haynes’ title reminds the reader to associate Laura with her home county, rather than emphasising her travels, as Burney’s title does. Although the Devon parsonage in which Laura grew up with her benefactress is described as ‘delightfully situated’, Haynes does not specify its location, perhaps in order to increase the mystery surrounding Laura’s origins.¹¹⁸ As is typical in my corpus, Haynes contrasts her heroine’s happy childhood with the difficulties and dramatic incidents which she faces when living in and around London, then returns her to her ‘native place’ for a happy ending.¹¹⁹ This homecoming is more literal than most: Laura’s husband surprises her by buying her the parsonage ‘which was the abode of [her] infant days’.¹²⁰ The

¹¹³ Ibid., i, p. 89.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., i, p. 105.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., i, p. 106.

¹¹⁶ ‘Spence’s Traveller’s Tale, of the last Century’, *The European Magazine, and London Review*, 75 (London: Printed for James Asperne, 1819), pp. 440-441.

¹¹⁷ Prickett, i, p. 9; p. 147.

¹¹⁸ Haynes, i, p. 58.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., v, p. 236.

¹²⁰ Ibid., v, pp. 243.

trajectory of *Faith and Fiction* is similar. Bennett's descriptions of Ellen's childhood in 'peaceful retirement' and her fears of 'a world which they tell me is full of dangers' are similarly conventional in this corpus, and in Devon novels especially.¹²¹ The village of Glenross is situated in 'a luxuriant valley in one of the most fertile parts of Devonshire', the location of which is not specified.¹²² Bennett contrasts 'the neat white' parsonage with 'the lofty turrets of Glenross Abbey, now almost a ruined pile'.¹²³ The Abbey has gothic associations. There are rumours of an historical murder, and the earl persuades a clergyman's daughter to meet him in 'the ruined tower' and later forces her to marry him 'in the ruined chapel', which is appropriately 'dark, dreary, and forlorn'.¹²⁴ Bennett's juxtaposition of village domesticity with a ruined Abbey resembles the effect created by Spence in *A Traveller's Tale* (see above). However, while Granville Abbey in *A Traveller's Tale* is left to fall into ruin, Glenross Abbey in *Faith and Fiction* is restored and becomes the scene of a more conventional happy ending. Despite Glenross' gothic associations in the earlier part of the novel, its domesticity is recuperated as it is physically repaired at the end of the novel. Ellen and her husband 'live with [her] father, at Glenross, near the friends of [her] youth'.¹²⁵

The trope of the happy rural period followed by difficulties in the wider world also appears in West's *The Refusal*, but there is no happy homecoming for the heroine in this conservative tale of how indiscretions ruin lives. The novel opens with Emily moving to Mandeville Castle, 'the magnificent abode of her ancestors, situated in a romantic part of Devonshire', to which she is heiress.¹²⁶ Emily was 'bred in retirement' and brought up by her aunt at Lime Grove, which is even more ambiguously located.¹²⁷ The majority of the novel takes place outside of Devon, after Emily goes to London and marries the Earl of Avondel. Although *The Refusal* is not the only Devon novel without a happy return to the county, it is unusual in that there is no happy ending at all for the heroine. Avondel dies and Emily's grief is stated to permanently mar her life. This reinforces West's didactic message about the importance of marital fidelity, which she portrays as a British value: the woman who distracts Avondel from his marriage is a conventionally immoral Italian.

¹²¹ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, ii, p. 37.

¹²² *Ibid.* i, p. 7.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, i, p. 97; p. 113.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* i, p. 183

¹²⁶ West, i, p. 63.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, i, p. 164.

Barbara Hofland's *The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her young family* (1812) also promotes a moral message using an ambiguous Devon location.¹²⁸ It is unusual in that it focuses on relatively lower-class characters, and it has a single setting. Hofland wrote several similar tales of 'ordinary human beings pulling themselves together'.¹²⁹ Dennis Butts outlines their formula: the father dies or becomes unable to lead the family, 'leaving the mother to become the guiding force [...]'.¹³⁰ In *The History of a Clergyman's Widow*, Mrs Gardiner has to leave her deceased husband's parish in a village called Whitechapel. She takes her family to 'S—', the 'nearest market-town', 'to endeavour to get some employment'.¹³¹ It would seem possible that Whitechapel could be a reference to the real village of the same name in North Devon, but Hofland also mentions a nearby village called Normanton, for which there is no equivalent in that area. If Whitechapel is supposed to be in North Devon, the town of S— could be a version of South Molton. However, as Hofland does not specify the setting further, it is just as likely it is entirely fictional. The setting therefore remains ambiguous, which enables Hofland to suggest that her moral is universally applicable. Her portrayal of S— is an unusually positive image of an urban setting: although the Gardiners prefer their village home, the town is not specifically associated with immorality. The 'poor' locals of Whitechapel village are described as having been 'uniformly ill-bred' and 'ignorant' before Mr Gardiner improved them.¹³² This resembles Spence's observation of the particular 'poverty' in Devon in *A Traveller's Tale* (see above).¹³³ The village is transformed into a more typically idyllic Devon setting by the time of Gardiner's death, as the 'simple and affectionate people' give his widow what they can.¹³⁴ The Gardiners' receiving gifts from the locals demonstrates their proximity to the lower classes. Hofland describes the family's temporary experience of working-class life, including millinery, glove-making, and farm work. However, they are soon elevated by others' recognition of their goodness: by the end of the novel, Mrs Gardiner's children are a respected London artist (wife of another artist), a

¹²⁸ Barbara Hofland, *The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her young family* (London: Minerva Press, 1812).

¹²⁹ Dennis Butts, 'Finding and Sustaining a Popular Appeal: The Case of Barbara Hofland', in *Popular Children's Literature in Britain*, ed. by Julia Briggs, Dennis Butts, and M.O. Grenby (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 112.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹³¹ Hofland, pp. 35-6; p. 42.

¹³² *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

¹³³ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, i, p. 89.

¹³⁴ Hofland, p. 12.

clergyman's wife, a mercer's wife, a surgeon, a fellow, and a trainee mercer. *The History of a Clergyman's Widow* is unusual among Devon novels because of Hofland's representation of working and middle-class characters in an urban setting, but it is typical in that she associates the county with virtue and morality. This demonstrates that these geographical associations were seen as persisting across class boundaries, at least to some extent.

A similar single-volume moral tale about a model family led by a widowed mother is set over the border in Dorset: Ziegenhirt's didactic *Seabrook Village*, which takes place in a rural coastal village, as its title suggests. It is the only text in my corpus which is primarily set in Dorset. Like Devon, Dorset contains contrasting landscapes, noted for being 'uneven' and 'irregular', which facilitate a range of rural associations.¹³⁵ The county was mainly rural at this time; 'the greater proportion' of its land was used for 'pasture', making it an appropriate setting for the generic rural ideal.¹³⁶ As a tale of a benevolent woman improving a rural community, *Seabrook Village* is also comparable to *The Welsh Cottage* (see Chapter Two). These three novels share a further similarity in that their settings are partially ambiguous, thereby avoiding tainting the reader's image of these perfect communities with their knowledge of any real place. The fictional village of Seabrook appears to be situated somewhere between Weymouth and Bournemouth. It is stated to be 'three miles to W— by the footpath', and the characters later mention Weymouth.¹³⁷ Visitors arrive having slept at 'B—', 'twenty miles' away.¹³⁸ If W— is Weymouth, this distance would suggest that the second town is Bournemouth. Seabrook House is 'in a delightful situation', 'about half a mile from the sea-shore'.¹³⁹ It is also secluded, 'sheltered by a range of high hills', and Ziegenhirt emphasises that it is 'above a hundred miles from London'.¹⁴⁰ This creates an isolated community in which Ziegenhirt can advocate for her charitable model. The aptly named Mrs Worthy finds that the residents of Seabrook live in extreme poverty, for example:

the first dwelling she entered, surpassed in wretchedness every idea she had formed upon the subject. The walls alone remained of a large house that had once been a mansion of some consequence, but now only a miserable hovel.¹⁴¹

¹³⁵ Britton and Brayley, iv, p. 322.

¹³⁶ Ibid, iv, p. 322.

¹³⁷ Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village* p. 32.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p. 110.

¹³⁹ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 5; p. 3.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 10-11.

The initially ‘desolate appearance’ of the Seabrook estate is attributed to a lack of attention from the owner of Seabrook House and its previous tenant.¹⁴² Therefore, Ziegenhirt does not suggest that this poverty is particularly associated with village’s location in Dorset, but that such scenes could occur in any isolated community which has been neglected by the upper classes. Ziegenhirt condemns this and promotes a paternalistic charitable model which is typical of the generic rural in this corpus (as discussed in Chapter One). Several indolent and drunken villagers are contrasted with idealised working-class characters, including industrious fishing families. Mrs Worthy helps a family whose son is not only ‘a fisherman’ but also works ‘heaving out coals’, and another who lost their eldest sons at sea in a ‘hurricane’ (which, a footnote explains, is a reference to a real event in 1779).¹⁴³ The simple narrative of *Seabrook Village* is interspersed with stories of these working-class characters, presented as if they were written by them and read aloud by the Worthys for moral instruction. Ziegenhirt associates her Dorset setting with her moral message: she implies that rural communities can be better than towns because they can be transformed by a small number of good residents. This is the reverse of the association of urban settings with immorality due to their large population (see discussion of Bristol and Bath, below). The narrator of the novel, closely associated with Ziegenhirt herself, states that she hopes *Seabrook Village* will inspire the reader to act as charitably as Mrs Worthy, ‘if any of them should find a village or hamlet in the same deplorable state’.¹⁴⁴ By the end of the novel Seabrook embodies the rural ideal.

Dorset settings appear in eight more novels, but only briefly. Several of them use ambiguously located rural settings in the county, as Ziegenhirt does. In *Sense and Sensibility*, Colonel Brandon’s Delaford estate, described as ‘very good property in Dorsetshire’, but not further specified, is the site of the marital homes of both Elinor and Marianne, in the parsonage and the house itself, respectively.¹⁴⁵ Another ambiguously located Dorset estate is introduced in the early part of *Dudley*. Oakland Park is vaguely ‘near the coast’, but there is a small clue to its location: Sir Elliot is high sheriff of Dorchester.¹⁴⁶ However, in the opening

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p 26; p. 73.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 228.

¹⁴⁵ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 253.

¹⁴⁶ O’Keeffe, i, p. 17.

of the novel, Sir Elliot abandons Oakland Park and moves to Tenerife. The Dorset estate which appears in *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt: or, Who is my Father?* (1813), by Mrs Ross, is apparently more specifically located, although this interpretation is not certain.¹⁴⁷ For part of the novel Eglantine is ‘enclosed, with no other companion than’ her ‘violent’ uncle, in ‘the retired walls’ of Blandford Priory, a name which suggests it is near Blandford Forum.¹⁴⁸ Here Ross uses Dorset as a shorthand for the kind of remoteness which can restrict women’s freedom (see below for further discussion). In contrast to this, a more positive image of rural Dorset appears in *The Curate and His Daughter*. On their tour, Matilda is initially unimpressed by the county:

[...] it had not sufficient diversity to suit her taste. The unbounded downs covered with flocks of sheep, or whitened by long lines of chalk, had nothing inviting in their aspect.¹⁴⁹

However, when they reach ‘the romantic village of Charmouth’, the ‘view of the sea’ inspires Matilda to such effusions on its sublimity that Lady Seyntaubyne assumes that she must have been influenced by ‘reading some of Mrs. Radcliff’s [sic] glowing descriptions’ of landscapes.¹⁵⁰ Spence emphasises the difference between Dorset’s rural interior and its coast, which is also evident in the other novels which use settings in the county. Its interior is suitably remote for novelists whose plots rely on a sense of seclusion, but, as the examples above demonstrate, they mostly appear to have deemed it to be insufficiently interesting to describe in detail.

Dorset’s coastal towns, on the other hand, could be exciting. In *Fanny Fitz-York*, the characters visit the ‘small, but pleasant’ town of Lyme-Regis.¹⁵¹ In keeping with the style of the rest of the tour, Ryley focuses on the characters’ arrival into Lyme, and the people they meet, rather than the town itself. Although ‘each street and avenue [...] was explored’, the sights are not described.¹⁵² Ryley’s use of Lyme therefore forms a contrast with Austen’s evocative and uncharacteristically lengthy descriptions of it in *Persuasion* (1817). For example, Austen informs her reader of:

¹⁴⁷ [Mrs] Ross, *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt: or, Who is my Father?* (London: Minerva Press, 1813).

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. 206; p. 239.

¹⁴⁹ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 89.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Ryley, i, p. 154.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water, the walk to the Cobb, skirting round the pleasant little bay [...] the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs stretching out to the east of the town [...]¹⁵³

The visit in *Fanny Fitz-York* also differs from that in *Persuasion* because, in the former, Lyme is ‘crowded with visitors’, while in the latter, the characters ‘come too late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer’.¹⁵⁴ Ryley associates the town with people, whereas Austen concentrates on its landscape and that of the surrounding ‘neighbourhood’ including ‘Charmouth’, ‘Up Lyme’ and ‘Pinny’.¹⁵⁵ Lyme’s role in *Persuasion* is unconventional for an urban space; it is associated with a small cast of characters and a picturesque landscape, which allows for a contrast with the later appearance of Bath (see below).

Austen’s brief mention of Weymouth in *Emma* (1815) is more in keeping with its conventional function as a resort. As a ‘celebrated and fashionable bathing place’, its role in these novels is very different from that of rural Dorset.¹⁵⁶ Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill’s ‘secret’ engagement is ‘formed at Weymouth’, where they were ‘very much in the same set’.¹⁵⁷ This fits Weymouth’s association with illicit romance which can be seen elsewhere in my corpus. In *The Castle of Tariffa*, it is explained that Lady Harriet ‘forced’ ‘some casual attentions’ from Belville, ‘by her advances toward a flirtation with him while they were at Weymouth’.¹⁵⁸ The town is explicitly associated with seduction in *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt*: Walsingham’s corruption of Julie begins at Weymouth, where he also duels over her with Weytwyn. While Blandford Priory, the rural Dorset setting mentioned in the novel (see above), is shown to be too remote for a female character’s safety, Weymouth is associated instead with dangerous society. Ross connects Weymouth with ‘purer air, and excursions on the sea’ to aid an invalid’s health, but also with the ‘public amusements’ for

¹⁵³ Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, ed. by Janet Todd and Antje Blank (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 102.

¹⁵⁴ Ryley, i, p. 157; Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 102.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁶ Britton and Brayley, iv, p. 341.

¹⁵⁷ Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 430; p. 216.

¹⁵⁸ Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa*, i, p. 184.

which the town was known.¹⁵⁹ The range of associations of Devon and Dorset settings in my corpus often relates to their proximity to the generic rural ideal. As is conventional, rural spaces are portrayed primarily positively, although sometimes their remoteness is correlated with danger, while urban spaces are more typically associated with immorality.

Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire

The remaining West Country counties, Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire, each appear less often in this corpus than the more remote subregions discussed above. This may relate to their being perceived as less secluded, as they are closer to London and central England. Somerset, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire each appear in several novels, mostly with generic rural connotations. However, there is some degree of distinctiveness in their representation, particularly in the cases of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, as I will discuss below.

The image of Somerset which emerges from the four novels in my corpus in which it appears is relatively indistinct; Somerset settings are often characterised by their relationship or proximity to other spaces, such as Bristol and Devon. The novel in which a Somerset setting is the most prominent is *Incident and Interest*, but the location is not described in detail. Squire defines Somerset in opposition to Clifton and Bath, which she associates with immorality (see below). At the beginning of the novel, Clarissa lives in ‘the obscure village of C—’, which is later stated to be in Somerset, for ‘one half of the year’, and spends the rest of her time in Clifton.¹⁶⁰ As Glenrose abducts Clarissa from Somerset, this setting represents the happiness which she loses as a consequence of her forced marriage. Although Clarissa later returns to live in C— without Glenrose during her pregnancies, she is unable to enjoy it, ‘since the most agreeable parts of [Somerset] teemed only with unpleasant recollections’.¹⁶¹ Despite portraying Somerset as tainted for Clarissa during her marriage to Glenrose, Squire creates a happy return for her after his death. Clarissa’s second marriage to her childhood sweetheart symbolically returns her to her Somerset home. Squire also suggests a literal return: it is implied that they live in C—because they inherit property there and, when they

¹⁵⁹ Ross, i, p. 226; Britton and Brayley, iv, p. 359.

¹⁶⁰ Squire, i, p. 43; p. 13.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 217.

visit London, it is stated that their ‘charioteer’ was ‘clever in the *west country*’.¹⁶² As the location of the heroine’s happy childhood and happy second marriage, contrasted with, and temporarily tainted by, urban immorality, Somerset in Squire’s work therefore strongly resembles the generic rural ideal.

Although significant passages of both *Persuasion* and *Sense and Sensibility* take place in Somerset, it is not the primary setting of either novel. The locations within the county, are, characteristically for Austen’s novels, difficult to ascertain. ‘Somersetshire’ is first mentioned in *Sense and Sensibility* as the location of Willoughby’s ‘little estate’, Combe Magna, but it only becomes a setting when Elinor and Marianne go to Cleveland with the Palmers.¹⁶³ The estates being in the same county causes Marianne distress: ‘it is in Somersetshire. – I cannot go into Somersetshire’.¹⁶⁴ Cleveland is stated to be ‘within a few miles of Bristol’, but it is not described at length, as the action is confined to the house and its ‘pleasure-grounds’.¹⁶⁵ Kellynch, the opening setting of *Persuasion*, is ‘in Somersetshire’, and so too, apparently, is Uppercross, ‘a moderate-sized village’, ‘only three miles off’.¹⁶⁶ Rogers argues that Kellynch is likely to be ‘in the heartland of the shire’ because it is stated to be fifty miles from Bath and seventeen from Lyme, while Uppercross may be ‘notionally in the vicinity of Chard’, in the south-west of the county.¹⁶⁷ This would mean that Kellynch and Uppercross are relatively close to the borders with Devon and Dorset.

Somerset is brought into opposition with nearby Devon in *A Traveller’s Tale*. During the tour section, Spence describes a ‘luxuriant valley’ near Porlock, in which the ‘cornfields [...] bespoke the smiling abundance of the country’.¹⁶⁸ This is the kind of scenery which Deletia was disappointed not to see as they travelled through Devon (see above). Furthermore, Spence’s description of Devon poverty is contrasted with a later positive image of Somerset cottagers: in Minehead, the ‘habitations of the peasants’ show ‘neither extreme poverty nor disgusting dirt’, and the inhabitants are praised for their ‘simple demeanour’.¹⁶⁹ Deletia also admires the ‘Upper Town [which] partook of all the sylvan charms of rural

¹⁶² Ibid., ii, p. 70.

¹⁶³ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 53.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 317.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 317; p. 342.

¹⁶⁶ Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 3; p. 38; p. 33.

¹⁶⁷ Rogers, p. 111.

¹⁶⁸ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 137.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., i, p. 139.

landscapes'.¹⁷⁰ These positive associations of simplicity resemble those typically associated with rural Devon, but, because Spence depicts Devon in an atypical manner in *A Traveller's Tale*, when she idealises Somerset, she brings the counties into contrast. Spence also evokes Somerset's history. The characters visit Dunster Castle, 'a magnificent pile of a building, romantically situated, and of great antiquity', 'the ancient cathedral' at Wells, and 'the picturesque ruins' of Glastonbury Abbey.¹⁷¹ However, these attractions are not described in detail. Given that the Cornish novels make much of the region's Arthurian connections, we might expect Glastonbury Abbey, associated with the burial of Arthur, to appear more frequently in these novels. Gilpin wrote that 'to this day it bears the name of *the Isle of Avelon*'.¹⁷² Glastonbury Abbey may not have been a popular reference point for this group of novelists because its mythological associations seem incongruous in a setting that is far less remote than Cornwall.

Depictions of Gloucestershire in my corpus are often inflected with themes associated with Wales. The border is significant both in Hutton's *Oakwood Hall* and in Roche's *Trecothick Bower*, although in the former it is associated with tourism, and in the latter, with danger. This reflects the varying associations of Wales itself, as discussed in Chapter Two. The primary setting of Hutton's *The Miser Married* in the Wye Valley could be in either Gloucestershire or Herefordshire. I discuss it as a Midlands setting in Chapter Four, alongside the Herefordshire passages of the *Oakwood Hall* tour. Hutton refers to specific locations in Gloucestershire as part of Jane's detailed epistolary travel account in *Oakwood Hall*, which shows the influence of Hutton's own travel writing style. For example, Jane recounts their arrival in the West Country:

We quitted the county of Monmouth, and entered that of Gloucester, by crossing the Wye at Chepstow, on a crazy bridge of narrow planks, which sounded under my horses [sic] feet like a drum.¹⁷³

They enjoy views of 'the Severn on one hand, and the forest of Dean on the other', and ride 'from Newnham to Gloucester', 'through villages and shady orchards hung with apples'.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., i, p. 138.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., i, p. 140; p. 147.

¹⁷² Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 133.

¹⁷³ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, iii, p. 30.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., iii, pp. 31.

This imagery is typical of the picturesque beauty associated with other rural West Country spaces, but Hutton also makes her portrayal of Gloucestershire specific by including both Gloucester and Tewkesbury. Jane admires the ‘clean and spacious’ streets’ and ‘ancient’ buildings of Gloucester.¹⁷⁵ She focuses on the ‘pride of the city’, the cathedral: although she declares it to be undeniably ‘inferior to that of York’, she describes it in great detail.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, Jane reports that ‘Tewkesbury is a handsome town’, and notes its ‘ancient houses and wide streets’, as well as describing its ‘abbey church’.¹⁷⁷ These passages are notable for showing women successfully enjoying the West Country as tourists, in contrast to the many other female characters who are unable to, due to persecution (see ‘Female freedom’, below). Hutton portrays these towns as interesting historical sites, in contrast to the prevalence in other novels of images of urban spaces as sites of vice. Hutton’s positive representation of Gloucester and Tewkesbury shows her ability to acknowledge the nuances of female spatial experience in her writing, as was previously discussed in Chapter Two, but it also relates to these towns’ differing reputation from nearby resort towns. For example, Cheltenham is linked with immorality in its only appearance in my corpus, in Lefanu’s *Strathallan* (1813). It is associated with the dishonest and selfish Countess, who ‘got her physician to prescribe Cheltenham’ to escape the retired Derbyshire estate which she hates (see Chapter Four), and her dissipated son, Fitzroy, who twice takes ‘the Cheltenham waters’.¹⁷⁸

Gloucestershire’s contiguity with Wales is used to very different effect in *Trecothick Bower*. When Agnes assists Emmeline’s escape from the convent, she invites her to ‘my mother’s, in Gloucestershire’.¹⁷⁹ Emmeline initially regards Lady Cheney’s ‘old moated mansion’ as a place of safety, but soon learns she is not ‘permitted’ to leave:

all the country in that direction being just then in such a state of tumult, owing to the landing of the earl of Richmond in Wales, or rather the expectation there was of his rival marching thither to give him battle in that quarter.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., iii, p. 32.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., iii, p. 34.

¹⁷⁸ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 424; p. 38; p. 427.

¹⁷⁹ Roche, iii, p. 156.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., iii, pp. 161-162.

Roche associates this Gloucestershire location with a sense of danger, caused by its proximity to Wales. However, the reader is aware that the expected battle will ultimately take place at Bosworth in Leicestershire. Roche replaces this threat with personal danger to Emmeline: she realises she is being used as a political hostage and fears for her life. She escapes but is soon recaptured by Catesby (see Chapter Four). In *Trecothick Bower*, Gloucestershire is dangerous, close enough to Wales to be exposed to invasion, and rural enough for the mansion to be isolated, making escape difficult.

Gloucestershire is also dangerous, although in a different sense, in Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. The Abbey is ambiguously located within the county; Mrs Allen 'cannot recollect' exactly 'what part of Gloucestershire' the Tilneys are from, and the reader is not informed.¹⁸¹ Catherine's expectation of a gothic setting with 'long, damp passages', 'narrow cells' and a 'ruined chapel' is disappointed, and her 'dreadful' 'suspicions' about the General are proved to be irrational.¹⁸² The Abbey instead resembles the idealised estates associated with the generic rural in many of the other novels in my corpus. At Henry's parsonage in Woodston, a 'populous village, in a situation not unpleasant', this ideal is even more strongly evoked.¹⁸³ Catherine 'preferred it to any place she had ever been at'.¹⁸⁴ However, Gloucestershire becomes a place of danger for her when she is 'turned from the house' on the General's orders: 'a journey of seventy miles, to be taken by post [...] alone, unattended!'.¹⁸⁵ It is stated that Catherine would not have had 'even the means of getting home' had Eleanor not thought to provide her with money.¹⁸⁶ Although Catherine is 'too wretched to be fearful', the reader is aware this incident represents the real risk which a woman faces when her safety is entrusted to a capricious and powerful man, whom she has known for a short time.¹⁸⁷ Austen does not explicitly evoke the Welsh border in the novel, so it appears to be irrelevant to Gloucestershire's association with danger in this case.

Wiltshire is also depicted as particularly dangerous in my corpus, although this is just one of its varied connotations. The inconsistent image of Wiltshire reflects its equivocal situation on the borders of the West Country, and as the only landlocked county within it.

¹⁸¹ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 65.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 143; p. 203.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 233.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 238.

Stonehenge, Savernake Forest, and Salisbury Plain emerge as liminal spaces. Due to its closer proximity to central England, dangers which are explored in Wiltshire take on an additional threat. As Ruth Heholt argues, ‘the spaces of uncertainty, ambivalence and difference that are nearest to “us” always pose the greatest threats and instabilities’.¹⁸⁸ As Wiltshire is not the primary setting of any of the novels in my corpus, its most extensive appearance is in the penultimate section of *The Wanderer*. In this passage, the county is represented by its tourist sites, which are associated with threat and fear. Ingrid Horrocks notes that this journey taken by Juliet ‘approximately follows the itinerary Burney herself took on her “Tour for Health” in August 1791’.¹⁸⁹ In Wiltshire, as well as the New Forest, Burney shows ‘the domestic tour as a nightmare version of itself’.¹⁹⁰ Juliet escapes to Salisbury, at random, from London:

she wandered some time in this fruitless research; too much self-occupied to mark the buildings, the neatness, the antiquities, or the singularities of the city which she was patrolling.¹⁹¹

Juliet cannot admire the ‘famous cathedral’, even though ‘to have visited the antiquities and curiosities of this celebrated city [...] might have solaced [her] anxiety’.¹⁹² When she does happen to see the cathedral, it is ‘nearly lost to her sight, from the [...] pre-occupation of her mind’.¹⁹³ She therefore misses out on the only part of Salisbury deemed by Gilpin to be ‘worth the attention of the picturesque eye’.¹⁹⁴ Horrocks’ description of Juliet as a ‘failed or frustrated tourist’ is illuminating, because it summarises the contrast Burney creates between what Juliet could be seeing and her real experience.¹⁹⁵ I will discuss this notion of unsuccessful tourism further below (see ‘Leisure and tours’). A similar short visit to Salisbury appears in *The Curate and His Daughter*. Matilda is ‘delighted’ by its ‘air of

¹⁸⁸ Ruth Heholt, ‘The Hammer House of Cornish Horror: The Inversion of Imperial Gothic in “The Plague of the Zombies” and “The Reptile”’, in *Gothic Britain: Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles*, ed. by William Hughes and Ruth Heholt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), p. 197

¹⁸⁹ Ingrid Horrocks, *Women Wanderers and the Writing of Mobility, 1784-1814* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 184.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁹¹ Burney, iv, p. 229.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, iv, pp. 240-241.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, iv, p. 244.

¹⁹⁴ Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 54.

¹⁹⁵ Horrocks, p. 184.

uniformity and neatness', a quality also noted in *The Wanderer*.¹⁹⁶ Matilda, like Juliet, cannot admire the 'interior' of the Cathedral, because Lady Seyntaubyne refuses to delay their departure.¹⁹⁷ *Northanger Abbey* also features an image of a heroine unable to take pleasure from Salisbury Cathedral: during her unhappy return journey, Catherine 'rather dreaded than sought for the first view of that well-known spire which would announce her within twenty miles of home'.¹⁹⁸

The motif of Juliet's inability to enjoy tourist sites in *The Wanderer* is further developed on her return to Wiltshire from the New Forest. Juliet cannot enjoy seeing the 'grand collection of statues' at Wilton House which, according to Gilpin, 'entitle it very deservedly to the attention of every traveller'.¹⁹⁹ The narrator states that, although Juliet is usually 'awake to the tender strokes of art', she enters Wilton House 'not as Juliet', but 'as one to whom everything was indifferent'.²⁰⁰ This is caused by her having to pretend to be nursery maid to Sir Jaspar's grandchildren; always on the run and in disguise, Juliet's identity begins to fracture. Her traumatised blindness to her surroundings peaks when Sir Jaspar takes her to Stonehenge. She does not realise where they are until it is named, although she would have known 'in almost any other frame of mind', based on 'various descriptions, joined to the vicinity of Salisbury'.²⁰¹ Unlike at Salisbury and Wilton, Juliet does not miss out on a sight praised by Gilpin: he described Stonehenge as 'totally devoid [...] of every idea of picturesque beauty'.²⁰² Stonehenge is sublime rather than picturesque, or, as Burney puts it, 'terrific rather than attractive'.²⁰³ As Silvia Mergenthal argues, Burney 'establishes a set of dichotomies between beauty (Wilton) and sublimity (Stonehenge)'.²⁰⁴ At Stonehenge, Juliet's surroundings are finally 'congenial to her distress'.²⁰⁵ They also encourage Sir Jaspar's erratic behaviour: he climbs on the stones and offers Juliet 'fairy gifts' of clothes.²⁰⁶ Another image of Wiltshire as sublime appears in *Trecothick Bower*, when Morcar rides through the

¹⁹⁶ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 89; Burney, iv, p. 229.

¹⁹⁷ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 89.

¹⁹⁸ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 240.

¹⁹⁹ Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 102.

²⁰⁰ Burney, v, p. 119.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, v, p. 136.

²⁰² Gilpin, *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, p. 81.

²⁰³ Burney, v, p. 133.

²⁰⁴ Silvia Mergenthal, 'The Architecture of the Devil: Stonehenge, Englishness, English Fiction', in *Landscape and Englishness*, ed. by Robert Burden and Stephan Kohl (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2006), p. 128.

²⁰⁵ Burney, v, p. 134.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, v, p. 138.

‘dusky forest of Savernake’.²⁰⁷ As he approaches it, the ‘open and silent tracts of country [...] ‘impress him with a feeling of melancholy’, a typical instance of a sublime landscape influencing a character’s state of mind.²⁰⁸ Once inside the ‘gloomily savage’ forest, he sees a ghost, with ‘the ghastly visage of his lamented sire’, which warns him that ‘ruin awaits’.²⁰⁹ As this is the only unexplained paranormal incident in the novel, it strongly associates Wiltshire with supernatural danger. In *The Wanderer*, the pattern of Juliet’s Wiltshire ordeals is broken when she ‘absolutely refuse[s]’ to visit Milton Abbey with Sir Jaspar.²¹⁰ She does not fail to see the celebrated seat, which Lipscomb argued ‘everyone should see who makes a tour of this part of the country’, she actively chooses not to try.²¹¹ This development signals the end of this period of involuntary travel; Juliet soon takes control of her own movement and goes to Teignmouth (see above).

Wiltshire is not always depicted as excitingly dangerous or frightening in my corpus, however. The rural parts of the county are also sometimes portrayed as markedly dull, which may relate to its lack of an evocative sense of remoteness. The most prominent example of this is *Northanger Abbey*. Fullerton, Catherine’s home village in Wiltshire, is approximately ‘nine’ miles from Salisbury.²¹² Austen ironically comments upon the trope of the heroine leaving her secluded rural home, which is ubiquitous in my corpus: ‘if adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad’.²¹³ Nothing significant occurs in Catherine’s life until she leaves for Bath, and, when she ultimately returns from Northanger, her mother accuses her of being ‘out of humour with home’ due to preoccupation with the two destinations she has visited.²¹⁴ Wiltshire is also characterised as boring in *The Curate and His Daughter*: in contrast to her admiration of Salisbury itself, Matilda finds the ‘country around’ it ‘cheerless and uninteresting’.²¹⁵ A similar quality of frustration is associated with the county in two other novels, in which Salisbury Plain is the scene of unrewarding journeys. In Beauclerc’s *Husband Hunters!!!*, Lucius follows a woman his

²⁰⁷ Roche, i, p. 39.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., i, pp. 38-9.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., i, p. 41.

²¹⁰ Burney, v, p. 151.

²¹¹ Lipscomb, p. 100.

²¹² Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 21.

²¹³ Ibid, p. 9.

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 250.

²¹⁵ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 89.

servant mistakes for Louisa to a fictional place called Belford on Salisbury Plain. After his hopes are disappointed, they return to London. It is also the location of a brief scene in *The Castle of Tariffa*, in which Belville, already in ‘a state of disquietude’, is caught in ‘a violent thunderstorm’, when travelling to London.²¹⁶

In addition to these polarised associations of excitement and boredom, Wiltshire is also sometimes depicted as a standard image of the generic rural ideal, like the other subregions of the West Country. Wiltshire is depicted positively in this way in *Dudley*, although it only appears at the periphery of the narrative. Bloomfield Rectory, in Wiltshire, the idealised Clonmore family home, is ‘an obscure clerical roof, within a few miles [...] of a provincial town, but a considerable distance from London’.²¹⁷ Although O’Keeffe does not describe the rectory in detail (partly due to the novel’s epistolary form), it is associated with happy and virtuous family life. A generically positive image of Wiltshire also appears in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*. Elmwood, Emily’s home, is an ‘ancient seat between Wiltshire and Gloucestershire’, but most likely inside the borders of the former; although it is ‘on the verge of the county of Gloucester’, the characters travel ‘the heart of Wiltshire’ to reach it.²¹⁸ Elmwood is associated with the conventional ideal of ‘calm seclusion’ and is described in formulaic terms:

[it] reared its venerable front on a gentle acclivity, at whose base wandered the mazy Severn, fertilizing a wide tract of cultivated land rich in flocks and herds.²¹⁹

The county is also associated with a generic plot: Henry eventually has the nearby Wiltshire seat Laurel Grove restored to him, after discovering that he is not, in fact, the son of a ‘cobbler’ who ‘lived in a hut at the edge of the village of Hannington in Wiltshire’.²²⁰

Bristol and Bath

The similar presentation of Bristol and Bath in my corpus, which relates to their proximity and their role as provincial urban centres, contrasts strongly with the images of their

²¹⁶ Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa*, pp. 163-164.

²¹⁷ O’Keeffe, ii, pp. 272-273.

²¹⁸ Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, i, p. 96; pp. 162-163.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., i, p. 44.

hinterlands. Their individual distinctiveness remains visible, however: Bristol is particularly associated with the mercenary, and Bath with the hedonistic. They are both associated with public life and therefore often linked to immoral behaviour. At best, they are sometimes presented neutrally. This is because urban settings in these novels often take on the traits of the characters associated with them, whereas the qualities of rural settings relate to the landscape. The generally negative associations of these urban settings reflect the fact that, while rural landscapes allow writers to create abstract ideals, urban settings necessitate greater engagement with contemporary issues (as discussed in Chapter One).

I have identified two novels that feature settings in Bristol, and four that use nearby Clifton: two of these six portrayals are relatively neutral, but the rest portray the area in a negative light. In this period, Bristol was ‘the second City in England for trade, magnificence, number of shipping, [and] inhabitants’, and it was ‘a magnet for much of the social and economic activity’ of the rural West Country, as well as parts of the West Midlands and South Wales.²²¹ This explains why these novels often represent Bristol as a regional metropolis, with the connotations of vice more commonly associated with London. In the wider cultural imagination, Bristol was particularly associated with trade and slavery. For example, Robert Lovell’s *Bristol: A Satire* (1794) describes a city where ‘trade, mighty trade, [...] holds resistless sway’, and he explicitly links this to the city’s implication in ‘oppression’ and slavery.²²² Similar images of Bristol as corrupted by greed are visible in the novels in my corpus; the city is the setting of several instances of selfishness triumphing over morality. In her *Summer Excursions*, Spence commented of Bristol: ‘almost every person there is occupied with either business or religion, the latter is carried to such a height as borders on fanaticism among the different sectaries’.²²³ These novels draw on the city’s association with business and Clifton’s reputation for leisure. However, the latter occupation noted by Spence, religion, is not mentioned in these novels in relation to Bristol. Other than Thomas’ brief and indirect reference to radicalism in *The Vindictive Spirit*, this group of novels does not directly engage with Bristol’s association with either radicalism or the ‘rich tradition of West Country Dissent’.²²⁴ This is in keeping with the general exclusion of these

²²¹ E. Shiercliff, *The Bristol and Hotwell Guide* (Bristol: Printed by Bulgin and Rosser, 1789), p. 1; Ellis, p. 675.

²²² Robert Lovell, *Bristol: A Satire* (London: Printed for the author, 1794), p. 10; p. 14.

²²³ Spence, *Summer Excursions*, p. 69.

²²⁴ Timothy Whelan, ‘S.T. Coleridge, Joseph Cottle, and Some Bristol Baptists, 1794-96’, in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 99.

topics, as part of the construction of the generic rural ideal (as discussed in Chapter One and below, under ‘Anglicanism’).

When central Bristol appears in these novels, it is associated with characters of lower class-status than those who frequent nearby Clifton. For example, in *The Vindictive Spirit*, central Bristol is the scene of the transgressions of a former servant. Lister’s niece Polly is pregnant by a ‘rake’, and hopes to marry him, but he marries Lister instead, to obtain the diamond necklace that she extorted from her mistress.²²⁵ This associates the city with both lust and greed. Thomas links Polly’s predicament to her having ‘read the charming works of dear celestial Mary Wolstonecroft [sic], and her delightful husband, Mr Godwin’.²²⁶ Their ideas are condemned as dangerous; Thomas suggests that Polly’s reading of Wollstonecraft encourages her to consent to sex before marriage. Bristol was strongly associated with ‘radical political discourse’ in this period.²²⁷ It is therefore an appropriate setting for Thomas’ condemnation of such ideas; she replicates conventional criticism of Wollstonecraft in her portrayal of Polly. In contrast to this, a more neutral image of relatively lower-class characters in Bristol appears in Ziegenhirt’s *Seabrook Village*, when the aptly named Worthy family spend ‘four days in seeing all that was worthy of their notice in Bristol and its environs’.²²⁸ Mrs Worthy is an officer’s widow, living on a small jointure, so they are not of the same class as the characters who are associated with Clifton in the examples I will discuss below. As an idealised moral family, they are not tainted by Bristol’s immorality. This shows that Bristol’s image depends on the characters with which it is associated, as is typical for an urban setting in this corpus.

When this group of novelists use the Bristol area to comment on upper-class vice, they focus on nearby Clifton, a spa described in *The Bristol and Hotwell Guide* (1789) as ‘one of the most agreeable, healthy, and pleasant villages in the Kingdom’.²²⁹ In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine’s choice not to join a day trip from Bath to Clifton is vindicated. Although Maria claims it was the ‘most delightful scheme in the world’, it is quickly revealed to have been severely limited by lack of time:

²²⁵ Thomas, iv, p. 4.

²²⁶ Ibid., iii, p. 193.

²²⁷ Whelan, pp. 99.

²²⁸ Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village*, p. 223.

²²⁹ Shiercliff, p. 62.

they had driven directly to the York hotel, ate some soup, bespoke an early dinner, walked down to the Pump-room, tasted the water, and laid out some shillings in purses and spars; thence adjoined to eat ice at a pastry-cook's, and hurrying back to the Hotel, swallowed their dinner in haste [...].²³⁰

Catherine's non-attendance symbolically separates her from the ambitious and selfish Thorpe siblings, whose desire to go to Clifton evokes its association with dissipation. Two further novels in my corpus also make ironic use of Clifton's pleasant reputation for leisure in order to criticise immorality among the relatively affluent. In *The Vindictive Spirit*, Celestia dies in Clifton. This associates the space with her mother's evil scheme against her, which caused her decline. Clifton is associated more directly with immorality in *Incident and Interest*: it is the location where Clarissa first meets Glenrose, who later abducts her, forces her to marry him, and abuses her. The novel opens with Glenrose, 'a straggler, newly arrived at Clifton', noticing Clarissa's beauty while she sketches, leading to an incongruous and dramatic scene:

fearful of alarming her, [he] gently retreated a few paces: but disdainng to take a survey of his retrograde path, lest he should lose a movement of the fair one, was soon precipitated over the cliff. A distant shriek caught Miss Mortimer's attention [...].²³¹

The nature of Glenrose's introduction to Clarissa foreshadows their turbulent relationship and his eventual suicide. Squire states that, before Glenrose interrupted her, Clarissa was gazing 'in admiration on the luminous rays that shed their softened light through St. Vincent's wood'.²³² The 'delightful views' in this area were widely celebrated at this time.²³³

Glenrose's attraction to Clarissa spoils her appreciation of this landscape, prefiguring his disruption of her time at Clifton, and his later tainting of her Somerset home (see above). His later cruelty makes the narrator's statement that he was 'fearful of alarming her' appear ironic: Squire makes it clear that his motivation was selfish.²³⁴ Glenrose prevents Clarissa enjoying the typical Clifton amusements which she attends: 'a gypsy party at St. Vincent's rocks' and a 'rustic ball [...] at the tea garden at Rood-ashton' [sic].²³⁵ During this 'gay exhibition', Glenrose challenges Nugent to a duel over her, which takes place on Clifton

²³⁰ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 118.

²³¹ Squire, i, p. 1; p. 3.

²³² Ibid., i, p. 2.

²³³ Shiercliff, p. 1.

²³⁴ Squire, i, p. 3.

²³⁵ Ibid., i, p. 85.

Down, cementing the area's association with vicious behaviour among the upper classes.²³⁶ In contrast to these negative portrayals, a relatively neutral image of Clifton appears briefly in *Dudley*. It is stated that Lady Alford lives there with her mother-in-law when newly widowed. Although she is sometimes foolish, Lady Alford is not an immoral character. O'Keefe uses Clifton as a shorthand for fashionable life, rather than as a moral comment.

Dudley's Lady Alford is also associated with Bath, which is commonly portrayed in a fairly similar manner to Clifton, because of their shared association with leisure and the attendant possibilities of immorality. Bath appears in many of the novels in my corpus but, appropriately for a town which was usually visited for a season, it is mostly a minor, temporary setting. Although several characters ostensibly visit Bath for their health, this association is much weaker than that of leisure. Austen's relatively detailed depiction of Mrs Smith in *Persuasion*, a 'cripple' who is genuine need of medical assistance and use of the 'hot-baths', is highly unusual.²³⁷ Austen's novels include some of the most extensive depictions of Bath in this corpus; *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* are 'virtual glossaries of Bath buildings, landmarks, and geography'.²³⁸ In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine's naivety allows her to innocently enjoy the town, and wonder 'who can ever be tired of Bath?'.²³⁹ However, Austen reveals a dark side to Bath, through the social-climbing Thorpes. Isabella's 'shallow artifice' conforms to the trope of the Bath 'pretender' who often appeared in novels of this period.²⁴⁰ In *Persuasion*, the more experienced Anne's 'very determined [...] disinclination for Bath' colours Austen's descriptions of it: '[she] caught the first dim view of the extensive buildings, smoking in rain, without any wish of seeing them better'.²⁴¹ In this novel, the socially ambitious characters are aiming higher, but are just as contemptible: Elizabeth and Sir Walter's desire to advance their connection with Lady Dalrymple also conforms to the trope of Bath hypocrisy. That 'Bath more than answered their expectations in every respect' is a sign of their inferiority to Anne, as Austen reproduces the conventional association between preference for the rural and moral character.²⁴² However, by also situating Anne and Wentworth's reconciliation in Bath, Austen subtly rehabilitates its image.

²³⁶ Ibid., i, p. 98; p. 94.

²³⁷ Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 166.

²³⁸ Hill, p. 37.

²³⁹ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 77.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 224; Hill, p. 48.

²⁴¹ Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 147.

²⁴² Ibid., p. 148.

During their conversation on ‘Union-street’ and subsequently ‘the comparatively quiet and retired-gravel walk’, they are ‘heedless of every group around them’, so the urban setting is irrelevant.²⁴³ In both *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, despite Bath’s association with the potential for immorality, it can be a positive or negative space for a character, depending on their own morality and behaviour.

Similarly equivocal images of Bath as reflecting the morals and attitudes of the characters depicted there appear in several other novels in this corpus. For example, in *A Traveller’s Tale*, the characters visit Bath at the end of their West Country tour. Deletia does not like it, just as she was unable to enjoy the tour (see above), because of Valville’s persecution of her. She finds ‘the publicity of Bath imposed a restraint’, beyond that which she already experienced in Devon, and she is forced to dance only with Valville.²⁴⁴ While the urban nature of Bath is unpleasant to Deletia, Spence makes it clear that this reflects Deletia’s own feelings rather than a negative quality in the town itself. She is equally unhappy in rural Devon. Other depictions of morally good characters in Bath demonstrate that those with strong principles can sometimes safely enjoy urban spaces, which reflects the conservatism of many of these novels. For example, in *Dudley*, the unambiguously good Clonmores go to Bath so their daughters can learn to dance. A similar brief example of an idealised family innocently visiting Bath appears in *Seabrook Village*: the Worthys spend ‘one night at Bath, which was in its full meridian of gaiety’, after their short visit to Bristol (see above).²⁴⁵

In contrast to these mixed depictions of Bath, my corpus contains several instances where it is strongly associated with immoral characters and their actions. One of the most extensive examples of this association appears in *Incident and Interest*: Bath is the setting of much of Clarissa and Glenrose’s unhappy married life. Glenrose shows Clarissa ‘all the curiosities of that elegant town’, then falls into ‘the stream of dissipation’, including gambling and affairs.²⁴⁶ During their second residence in Bath, his abusive behaviour escalates. When he returns from ‘one of his midnight revels’ to find Clarissa with ‘the babe in her arms’, and therefore unable to get up ‘to meet him, as usual’, he becomes aggressive:

²⁴³ Ibid., p. 261.

²⁴⁴ Spence *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 153.

²⁴⁵ Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village*, p. 223.

²⁴⁶ Squire, i, p. 130; p. 198.

his rage exceeded all bounds; and stamping, and swearing upon the offending culprits, he seized the sword that hung suspended over the mantle-piece, and threatened to terminate them both.²⁴⁷

From this point on, he sleeps ‘with the sword underneath his pillow, that he might be sure to have it ready to inflict terror [...]’.²⁴⁸ Bath is linked to Clifton, as the couple met there, but Squire associates Bath more closely with gambling and vice. It is the setting of the worst periods of Clarissa’s life. This draws on Bath’s particular cultural association with urban dissipation, rather than the quasi-rural leisure pursuits available at Clifton, such as sketching and outdoor parties (as mentioned above). The commentary on Bath in *The Vindictive Spirit* is characteristic of its general reputation in these novels; Abergeley hears his companions in the stagecoach condemning it. The elderly woman says ‘Bath, I’m told, is a very wicked place, full of mortal sins [...]’.²⁴⁹ Another woman admits that Bath is a ‘fine place’ but she prefers ‘Devonshire, its more *natural*er [sic]’.²⁵⁰ Bath can be the setting of scenes of pleasure and happiness, sometimes even for good characters, but never the seriously moral or idyllic home associated with the rural.

3. West Country trends

In this section, I will discuss trends in the representation of the West Country as a whole in my corpus. I will consider the importance of the sea, leisure (particularly tourism), and West Country dialects. These are the ways in which the West Country is represented distinctively, as a region, alongside its strong association with the generic rural ideal. I will consider the extent to which the West Country emerges as a coherent region, which will reveal whether these novels demonstrate the ‘distinct, West Country appeal to the Romantic imagination’ noted by Roe, which has not previously been considered in relation to fiction.²⁵¹ I have identified several trends which relate to the West Country, specifically. Jonathan Barry uses the West Country as an example of the ‘regional specialisation’ which had emerged in

²⁴⁷ Ibid., i, pp. 200-201.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., i, p. 204.

²⁴⁹ Thomas, iii, p. 107.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., iii, pp. 104-105.

²⁵¹ Roe, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

England by the early nineteenth-century.²⁵² He describes the West Country as particularly ‘associated with maritime life, leisure, and agriculture’.²⁵³ All of these domains are prominent in the novels discussed in this chapter. This shows that these writers were, at least to some extent, responding to the West Country’s particular role in Britain. However, they generally overlook the region’s demographics. The much more frequent and extensive representation of rural rather than urban settings in these novels does not reflect the reality that the West Country was, like the rest of England, becoming increasingly urbanised in this period. West Country towns ‘grew dramatically’ in the early nineteenth-century, the population balance having ‘shifted decidedly away from the smallest settlements’.²⁵⁴ There is also a notable lack of engagement with the ‘rich tradition of West Country Dissent’, both political and religious, in my corpus.²⁵⁵ In this period, Methodism ‘took root and flourished in Cornwall’ in particular, as many people were physically ‘isolated’ from ‘the influence of church and vicar’.²⁵⁶ These novels exclude dissent from their portrayals of the West Country. This reflects the way in which many of them uphold the generic rural ideal, idealising the West Country as the home of Britishness and Anglicanism.

The importance of the sea

The sea appears in many of these West Country novels. It is not only a setting, but also a significant motif, supporting both action and reflection. It is used to discuss and promote an image of Britishness (through the navy), and to demonstrate characters’ emotions, as well as to drive plots, through associations of danger and travel, but also romantic love. The West Country is a particularly coastal region: all of the counties discussed in this chapter have a coastline, except Wiltshire. It is unsurprising that the novels set in Cornwall and Devon mention the sea particularly frequently, because they have the largest and second largest ‘proportion of coastline to area’ of the English counties, respectively.²⁵⁷ Dorset’s coast also

²⁵² Jonathan Barry, ‘England: South-West’, in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Volume ii: 1540-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), ed. by P. Clark, p. 80.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²⁵⁵ Whelan, p. 99.

²⁵⁶ Philip Payton, *Cornwall*, rev. edn (Fowey: Cornwall editions, 2004), p. 215.

²⁵⁷ W.G. Hoskins, *Devon* (London: Collins, 1954), p. 13.

appears very often; this is another way in which it is treated similarly to Devon. In contrast, none of these novels refers to the Gloucestershire coast. The only appearance of the Somerset coast is a brief mention of the sight of ‘the Bristol Channel’ at Minehead in *A Traveller’s Tale*.²⁵⁸ The lack of coastal settings in Somerset and Gloucestershire is partly attributable to there being so few novels set there and partly to their being associated more closely with their inland, rural landscapes.

The particular place of the sea in the British national consciousness during the 1810s is reflected in my corpus through the inclusion of many naval characters. Because the majority of these novels follow courtship plots and focus on female protagonists, most of these naval men are the heroines’ love-interests. As Samuel Baker argues, in the early nineteenth century, ‘more than ever, a maritime dynamic of expansion and insularity informed the idea of British nationhood’.²⁵⁹ Therefore, depicting female characters’ relationships with men in the navy was one way in which women writers could comment on ‘political domains otherwise considered unsuitable for them’; this relates to the strategy which Kelly refers to as ‘the extension of the suitably feminine topic of domesticity’.²⁶⁰ For example, patriotism is often indirectly discussed through the heroine’s marriage. In several of these novels, the heroine falls in love with a man in the navy and has to bear the uncertainty of his return. In the final sentence of Austen’s *Persuasion*, it is stated that Anne:

gloried in being a sailor’s wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm, for belonging to that profession, which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance.²⁶¹

A similar, though less explicit, suggestion that it is the duty of a sailor’s wife to live with this anxiety appears in Spence’s *The Curate and His Daughter*. Matilda ‘gratefully enjoyed the present good, nor repined when Clairville returned to take his command at sea’.²⁶² When these novels show their heroines happily marrying into the navy, they show support for Britain’s national defence system, but also, indirectly, for the expansion of the British Empire. These usually implicit messages are expressed more clearly in *Edgar*: Appleton

²⁵⁸ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 138.

²⁵⁹ Samuel Baker, *Written on the Water: British Romanticism and the Maritime Empire of Culture* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2010), p. 1.

²⁶⁰ Kelly, *Women, Writing and Revolution*, p. 7; p. 178.

²⁶¹ Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 275.

²⁶² Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 195.

represents Britain's navy not only as a defence against France, both in the medieval period and in the early nineteenth-century, but also as a means of promoting Britain's international influence. Through her male protagonist and historical setting, Appleton is more able than the other novelists in my corpus are to engage explicitly with the trope of Britain's naval power representing its national superiority, which was conventional in literature of this period. For example, Edgar rhapsodises about a British person's 'pride' on seeing 'her superb navy'.²⁶³

The second major role of the sea in these novels is to reveal characters' heightened emotions, through their reactions to it. Several of the West Country novels in my corpus engage with the sea's status as 'one of the key sites or tropes for the sublime'.²⁶⁴ Burney explicitly describes the sea as 'sublime in its sameness' in *The Wanderer*.²⁶⁵ Characters gaze on the sea in the West Country in several other novels. For example, in *Trecothick Bower*, Emmeline's 'imagination was at once awed and excited', 'as her eyes wandered over the restless deep'.²⁶⁶ This reflects the changing cultural role of the sea in the early nineteenth century, as it became 'for tourists, a huge psychic resource' and 'a place of pilgrimage, pleasure and wonder'.²⁶⁷ This attitude is exemplified in Austen's comment in *Persuasion* that 'all must linger and gaze on a first return to the sea, who ever deserve to look on it at all'.²⁶⁸ Sublimity creates sensations more powerful than a sense of admiration, however. In describing the sea as 'awful', in *Trecothick Bower*, Roche associates it not only with heightened thoughts, but also with the physicality of 'savage wildness', and by extension, danger.²⁶⁹ Similar images appear in several more novels in this corpus. For instance, in *The Castle of Tariffa*, Beauclerc describes how 'the waves broke in dread explosion amongst the rocks' during a 'stormy' night when Monomia is distressed.²⁷⁰ The sublimity of the sea is often evoked alongside gothic imagery. A characteristic example appears in *The Esquimaux*: the narrator states that 'the mournful scream of the sea-birds inspired pensive ideas, and seemed to presage horrible events', when Rose and Kamira are imprisoned on the beach.²⁷¹

²⁶³ Appleton, i, pp. 74-5.

²⁶⁴ Baker, p. 14.

²⁶⁵ Burney, v, p. 220.

²⁶⁶ Roche, iii, p. 30-31.

²⁶⁷ Borsay, p. 800.

²⁶⁸ Austen, *Persuasion*, p. 103.

²⁶⁹ Roche, iii, p. 28.

²⁷⁰ Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa*, ii, p. 49.

²⁷¹ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, ii, p. 153.

Clark's novel centres on smuggling, one of the real dangers associated with the sea, especially in the West Country. Her coastal setting is essential to her plot, not just atmospheric. This is also the case in several other novels in my corpus in which the sea is associated with action and travel.

Sailing is essential to several of the novels that use West Country settings. Characters who make journeys by sea are mostly male, and especially members of the navy. A major exception to this appears in *Trecothick Bower*: Emmeline sails round from Cornwall to London, 'unaccompanied', but for the man she pays to take her (see 'Female freedom' below for further discussion of this).²⁷² Travel by sea facilitates the plots of several of these novels. For example, the denouement of *The Wanderer* relies on characters arriving by sea: Juliet learns that her husband is dead, and the Bishop arrives from France. This section of *The Wanderer* also demonstrates the particular association of beaches in Devon with romantic love, which also appears in *Dudley* (see 'Devon and Dorset') and in *Warwick Castle*: Frances and Montague enjoy 'frequent rambles upon the sea shore' in Devon early on in their engagement.²⁷³ This trend reflects the overwhelmingly positive associations of Devon in my corpus, as well as the particular role of beaches as liminal spaces. This relates not only to their physical geography but also to the way in which 'the seaside offered a more informal ambience' than inland resorts.²⁷⁴ Burney makes use of this in *The Wanderer*, in the comic image of 'a bathing machine; in which the [English] Admiral was [...] labouring to hold discourse with the [French] Bishop'.²⁷⁵ Seaside settings physically as well as symbolically mediate between nations, and break down social barriers, which opens up plot possibilities.

Leisure and tours

The West Country's resorts, including seaside and spa towns, appear frequently in these novels. Peter Borsay argues that coastal and inland resorts 'should be seen as complementing one another' in this period, as the former 'aped the facilities, daily routine and architecture of their inland counterparts'.²⁷⁶ In my corpus, when larger urban spaces such as Clifton and Bath

²⁷² Roche, iii, p. 47.

²⁷³ Prickett, i, pp. 163-164.

²⁷⁴ Borsay, p. 788.

²⁷⁵ Burney, v, p. 374.

²⁷⁶ Borsay, p. 787.

are associated with leisure pursuits, characters often fall into dissipation or are physically put at risk. However, more minor urban settings such as smaller tourist destinations and coastal towns are also associated with leisure, often with less negative implications. Recreation is among the primary reasons why characters move between settings, for example for excursions or tours.

Several West Country tours appear in my corpus. Spence's account of the tours in *The Curate and His Daughter* and *A Traveller's Tale* is far more descriptive than Ryley's in *Fanny Fitz-York*. However, these three tours do have other similarities: they all feature heroines who live in the West Country travelling in different parts of the same region. Brewer argues that many of the 'sites visited by the picturesque tourist were as much places to see from as places to be seen'.²⁷⁷ This tendency is illustrated by the narrative style of the tour in *Fanny Fitz-York*: people and social occasions are described in far more detail than the sights. While Ryley does not describe what Fanny sees in great detail, her experience of tourism is positive. This is in contrast to the 'failed or frustrated tourist' motif which Horrocks noted in *The Wanderer*, and which appears in several more of these novels.²⁷⁸ It is always female characters whose tourist experiences are frustrated, either because they are persecuted by men or because they are subject to the whim of their guardians. A typical example is when Lady Seyntaubyne refuses to let Matilda visit Salisbury Cathedral in *The Curate and His Daughter*. This trope makes male characters' autonomy as tourists even more notable, such as Abergeley's sojourn in Devon in *The Vindictive Spirit*, and Sir Elliot's having 'sauntered' to examine the 'in and exterior' of Exeter Cathedral in *Dudley*.²⁷⁹ Hutton subverts the motif of female characters' inability to enjoy tourism in *Oakwood Hall*. Jane and Margaret have a pleasant tour, including visits to cathedrals (see Gloucestershire section, above). This is typical of Hutton's tendency to complicate the norms of regional novels. She chooses to show unusually independent female characters travelling successfully, as part of her own idealised vision of the regional space. This differs from the generic rural image of women in the idealised rural home. Although the West Country is associated with leisure, this active sort of pleasure seeking is not usually shown to be successful in these novels, as characters have to

²⁷⁷ Brewer, p. 503.

²⁷⁸ Horrocks, p. 184.

²⁷⁹ O'Keefe, i, p. 300.

seek virtuous rural settings in order to know true happiness. This is in keeping with the conservative message of prudence and self-restraint that is promoted in many of these novels.

Dialect

Several of the novels in my corpus include examples of West Country dialect, across multiple subregions. While certain characteristics appear to be particularly associated with the West Country, ‘generic rustic features’ appear more frequently than specific regional ones.²⁸⁰ Only working-class characters speak nonstandard English. West Country speech appears most extensively in *The History of a Clergyman’s Widow*: its unusual focus on the working classes involves significant and sustained attempts to reproduce the author’s impression of a Devon dialect. Although the principal characters speak standard English, the local people, with whom they associate, do not. For example, the miller states that Mrs Gardiner ought to go in the chaise, ‘being az how mare properer for you’.²⁸¹ As well as representing accent, this example also shows grammar being used to indicate the miller’s class. Hofland also represents features specifically associated with the West Country, most notably the replacement of ‘S’ with ‘Z’. For example, Farmer Gooch says ‘zammut’ (something) and ‘zure enough’, while his wife says ‘I be zo glad to zee yo [sic]’.²⁸² Although Hofland depicts this Devon dialect extensively, her disapproval of non-standard English is made clear: when William goes to live with the Gooch family, he is said to be ‘in danger of being ruined’ by having ‘naturally contracted their dialect’.²⁸³ This comment reflects the ‘increased sense that non-standard forms of language carried social stigma’ that developed in this period and can be seen throughout this corpus.²⁸⁴

The use of ‘Z’ for ‘S’ also appears in several more of the novels with Devon settings. In *A Traveller’s Tale*, a servant tells Dorrington: ‘no living purson do ever zee the Abbey [...] the ghosts do walk about they do zay [...]’.²⁸⁵ In *The Ballad Singer*, Patty twice uses the phrase ‘zure and zartain’, which appears to have been particularly associated with Devon.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁰ Hodson and Broadhead, p. 328.

²⁸¹ Hofland, p. 40.

²⁸² Ibid., p. 37; p. 107.

²⁸³ Ibid., p. 81.

²⁸⁴ Hodson, p. 2.

²⁸⁵ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 185.

²⁸⁶ Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, iii, p. 176; p. 179.

It also appears in *The Vindictive Spirit*, when Abergeley overhears his companions in the coach to Devon, although Thomas uses ‘s’ for both words (‘sure and *sartain*’).²⁸⁷ Thomas also represents the dialect indirectly: Abergeley ‘could scarcely understand a word that was spoken’, and a man asks him ‘do you understand *aur* Devonshire dialect?’.²⁸⁸ Similar metacommentary appears in *Dudley*: Sir Elliot recounts meeting some boys who spoke ‘in the broad Devonshire dialect, which I can neither write nor imitate’.²⁸⁹ This allows O’Keeffe to avoid demonstrating it directly. Sir Elliot and Miss Powis later bond over ‘imitating the broad dialect of the country’ during the courtship scene, which, joined with Sir Elliot’s description of the ‘horrible’ ‘nasal twang’ of the accent, shows O’Keeffe perpetuating contemporary ideas about the superiority of standard English.²⁹⁰

Several examples of dialect which appear in the Devon novels are less geographically specific. In *The Wanderer*, the chambermaid at the Teignmouth lodging-house says ‘it ben’t I as husselled zomat into my work-bag, in zuch a peck o’troubles, vor to hide it’.²⁹¹ Davenport argues that Burney ‘convincingly presents a Devon accent’ and that this demonstrates her ‘vivid recall’ of the place.²⁹² However, although Burney uses the ‘Z’ for ‘S’ feature commonly associated with Devon, the contractions used alongside it appear to indicate class rather than place. Similarly, Dolly’s dialect in *The Esquimaux*, such as her lament of being ‘lonely ever sin ye left, Miss, for Lunnun’, appears more associated with her class than the Devon setting.²⁹³ In *The Ballad Singer*, Patty’s speech is described by the narrator as ‘a broad Devonshire dialect’, but it is mostly represented by generic non-standard contractions such as ‘be’n’t’.²⁹⁴ It is difficult to tell which features appearing in these examples, other than the use of ‘Z’ for ‘S’, are intended to be regionally specific, and which are markers of class (because all of these speakers of non-standard English are working class).

The ‘Z’ for ‘S’ feature is also used in a Somerset servant’s speech in *Incident and Interest*. This suggests that this sound is associated with the West Country region in general, although it does appear in Devon particularly often in my corpus. When Clarissa is abducted,

²⁸⁷ Thomas, iii, p. 104.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., iii, pp. 102-3.

²⁸⁹ O’Keeffe, i, p. 270.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., ii, p. 342; p. 279.

²⁹¹ Burney, v, p. 225.

²⁹² Davenport, p. 168.

²⁹³ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, ii, p. 68; iii, p. 230.

²⁹⁴ Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer*, iii, p. 176.

the ‘farm servant’ reports having ‘zee’d’ the coach, ‘with vower harses all vleeing along the lee-an as thof ‘twere druv by the ould un’.²⁹⁵ Nearly every word of his speech is non-standard. While some of these features appear to be attempts to represent a South-West accent, the overall effect is to mark the speech as that of a servant.

Seabrook Village includes several speakers of Dorset dialect due to its focus on working-class characters, similarly to *The History of a Clergyman’s Widow*. A reviewer complained that ‘much incorrect English, that is put into the mouths of the poor villagers, might have been omitted with advantage’.²⁹⁶ This reviewer would have objected to most of the speech by the poor cottagers. For example, one of the women whom Mrs Worthy visits says: ‘I ax pardon; children [...] doant you see the laady’.²⁹⁷ This is an attempt to represent her accent. However, several of the examples of non-standard English also signal the character’s lack of education, and therefore their class status. For example, when Mrs Worthy asks Sarah to become the schoolteacher, she ironically replies ‘I be’ent much of a scholar’.²⁹⁸ Although several passages of *Seabrook Village* are stories told in the voices of the villagers themselves, they are mediated by having been supposedly ‘collected’ in a ‘manuscript’ by Mrs Worthy.²⁹⁹ They therefore do not feature a significant amount of the non-standard English which appears in the villagers’ direct speech.

The speech of Wilshire locals is included in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, but without significant regional specificity. Parkins, the cobbler’s son, uses generic working-class contractions alongside idioms which are implied to be local, such as ‘I shall be ater you in a pig’s wimper’.³⁰⁰ Hatton also attempts to represent the Wiltshire accent of Sally, the housemaid at Elmwood: the narrator indirectly reports her ‘wondering at the impurence of a little pigermey [Mullins]’ trying ‘to get the better of her vartue’.³⁰¹

Overall, the representation of West Country dialects in my corpus is limited. As is typical of portrayals of any region of England in this period, speakers of non-standard English are uniformly working class, and primarily portrayed negatively. Although a number

²⁹⁵ Squire, i, pp. 157-158.

²⁹⁶ ‘Art. 24. Seabrook-Village and its inhabitants’, *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal, 1752-1825*, 67 (London: Hurst, Robinson, and Co., 1812), p. 322.

²⁹⁷ Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village*, p. 19.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

³⁰⁰ Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, i, p. 117.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 239.

of nonstandard features are used, most of these represent class-based dialect. None of the subregions of the West Country are strongly associated with a particular dialect in these novels. The most prominent feature associated with the West Country is the use of ‘Z’ for ‘S’, which appears in novels set across the South-West.

4. Remoteness

The majority of these novels portray the West Country as remote, drawing on its situation at a distance from London and the Home Counties and at the periphery of both England and Britain. A typical example is Austen’s emphasis in *Sense and Sensibility* on the remoteness of ‘Barton, in a county so far distant from Sussex as Devonshire’, further highlighted by Edward’s also using the phrase ‘so far’.³⁰² The theme is particularly emphasised in the novels set in Cornwall, as the most remote subregion. The word ‘remote’ appears frequently in these novels, although not quite as frequently as in the Welsh novels. Despite much of the West Country and Wales being equally physically distant from London, in my corpus, the West Country is associated with a lesser degree of symbolic remoteness, because it is still part of England. The novels with West Country settings reproduce the conventional polarity between the positive and negative associations of remoteness: the region’s peripheral locations are associated with domesticity, morality, and retirement, but also with physical danger and gothic fear. In my corpus, West Country remoteness is more strongly associated with the former, positive qualities. The role of remoteness in the region primarily conforms to the generic rural ideal. Characters mostly enjoy retirement in the West Country at the beginning and/or end of a novel and, if they leave, they often experience a conventional period of suffering in an urban space. However, the West Country is not universally presented as particularly remote, nor is it always the most remote setting in any given novel (see ‘The West Country contrasted with other settings’, below).

Retirement

These novels frequently link West Country remoteness with the positive and largely transregional concept of retirement, including explicitly labelling their settings as ‘retired’.

³⁰² Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 27; p. 29.

This largely correlates with their remoteness: settings in rural areas further from London are more extensively associated with retirement. Abergeley's discovery of a 'retirement suited to his wishes' in Devon in *The Vindictive Spirit* is a typical example of the word's positive connotations.³⁰³ *The Esquimaux* opens with an unusually literal example of retirement as withdrawal from society, as the General takes his family to live in an appropriately 'retired valley', having decided 'to retire' from his military career.³⁰⁴ The term is also often used in a more general sense, to describe quiet places. My corpus includes many examples of plots driven by characters choosing to relocate for retirement in the West Country. Their motivations for doing so are conventional and not specific to the region; they represent features of the generic rural ideal. Retirement is associated with recuperation. For example, in *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt*, the insane Henrietta is sent to a 'retired and healthy village in Devonshire'.³⁰⁵ These novels also contain many descriptions of children being brought up in 'virtuous retirement'.³⁰⁶ Retirement is closely associated with safety, forming a contrast with the parallel dangers of remoteness which are sometimes simultaneously evoked in depictions of the same spaces (see below). While urban settings are shown to be defined by their population (see 'Bristol and Bath', above), remote rural settings derive their positive associations from the lack of other humans. There are some exceptions to this overall trend of rural West Country settings being associated with a positive image of retirement. *Dudley* reverses the trope as Sir Elliot retires from Dorset to Tenerife when grieving. Also, two unusual instances of possible objections to retirement being raised appear in *Faith and Fiction*, when characters describe retirement as not 'suited' to the young.³⁰⁷ However, the risk that Ellen will 'waste' her 'youth' is revealed to be less significant than the real dangers which she faces in 'the world'.³⁰⁸ Despite these exceptional cases, the overall trend in these novels is that West Country settings, which are mostly rural, are generally also associated with a positive image of remoteness, and therefore of retirement.

³⁰³ Thomas, iii, p. 110.

³⁰⁴ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, i, p. 3.

³⁰⁵ Ross, iii, p. 179.

³⁰⁶ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, i, p. 222.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 222; i, p. 225.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

Risk

Although positive associations predominate, the West Country is also sometimes associated with the dangers conventionally linked to remote settings. In my corpus, these threats appear to a similar extent in the West Country as in Wales. However, the West Country is not portrayed as lawless in the same manner as Wales. This reflects the West Country's different image as a part of England, and therefore a less clearly 'other' space for these writers and their metropolitan intended audience. None of these West Country novels is primarily gothic in genre. There are two instances in my corpus where it is implied that supernatural occurrences in the West Country could possibly be real. In *Fanny Fitz-York*, Mrs Leigh dreams about Julia being in danger shortly before her husband attempts to murder her, corroborating Miss Simpkin's belief that 'ghosts [...] often appear, either to prevent or revenge crimes'.³⁰⁹ A ghost appears more explicitly in *Trecothick Bower*, when Morcar receives a warning from a figure with the face of his dead father (see Wiltshire section, above). Although he wants to believe it is 'an illusion of his senses', the incident is implied to be genuinely supernatural, because no rational explanation ultimately appears, unlike the other appearances of ghosts in the novel.³¹⁰ However, the vast majority of the supernatural fears mentioned in these novels are shown to be unfounded, and even ridiculous. Belief in ghosts or magical creatures is primarily expressed by working-class characters, who are portrayed as unintelligent in contrast to the rational protagonists (see 'Intellectual freedom', below). For example, in *Trecothick Bower*, the servants at Ruthin are easily persuaded that 'wizards' have put a 'curse' on a locked door, in to order to stop them discovering the real intrigue.³¹¹ A strikingly similar instance occurs in *The Esquimaux*: the servants believe the house to be 'haunted by evil spirits', which helps to conceal the presence of the smugglers.³¹² Clark explicitly associates this superstition with the locals:

the lower class [sic] people in Devonshire, and even the farmers, tradespeople, and others of respectability, were very superstitious, and believed in spirits, witches, and fairies.³¹³

³⁰⁹ Ryley, iii, p. 320.

³¹⁰ Roche, i, p. 43.

³¹¹ Ibid., iii, p. 203.

³¹² Clark, *The Esquimaux* iii, p. 180.

³¹³ Ibid., i, pp. 46-47.

However, some settings provoke fear particularly often, even among the upper classes. For example, while a similar image of ‘superstitious’ Devon locals appears in *A Traveller’s Tale* (they mistake a real woman for a ‘spirit’ that ‘haunted’ the Abbey), Lady Valville herself also mistakes Deletia for a ‘terrific spectre’.³¹⁴ An Abbey is similarly the subject of superstition in *Faith and Fiction*: the ‘surrounding cottagers [...] all agreed in the belief that it was now the resort of some unquiet spirit’.³¹⁵ However, this Abbey is not haunted, but a place of terrestrial danger, as Ellen’s mother was forced into marriage there. This is typical of the tendency of this group of novelists to create interest using superstitions, but ultimately to dismiss them as irrationality caused by distance from the metropolis. In many of these novels, alternative tension is created by reminding the reader that the real dangers of remote spaces are physical.

Terrestrial threats represent the vast majority of the dangers depicted in the West Country in my corpus. These include multiple instances of violence, forced marriage, smuggling, robbery, and a large number of abductions. The victims of these crimes are overwhelmingly female, so I will discuss them more extensively below, in relation to the restriction they impose on women’s freedom. In several novels, supernatural rumours are spread to conceal real danger, for example in *The Esquimaux*, as was mentioned above. In contrast to Clark’s dramatic tale of organised crime, the majority of the physical threats in these novels are on a smaller scale. They often relate to domestic violence. Many of these novelists use the remoteness of their settings to make the persecution of their heroine by despotic individuals more plausible, because it enables them to avoid detection. Austen draws on this convention in *Northanger Abbey*: while Catherine’s suspicion that events more at home in a typical gothic novel have taken place is unfounded, she ultimately is exposed to real danger by the General when he suddenly forces her to leave (as discussed above, in the Gloucestershire section). West Country remoteness is also shown to facilitate physical dangers. For example, in *A Traveller’s Tale*, it is stated that ‘the remote seclusion of Granville Abbey was particularly calculated to favour’ Valville’s plan to kidnap Deletia.³¹⁶ Some degree of association between remoteness and physical danger is conventional in my corpus; it is not exclusive to the West Country. As is also conventional, characters often face dangers outside of the region, particularly in London and Europe (as will be discussed under

³¹⁴ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 1; p. 13.

³¹⁵ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, i, p. 73.

³¹⁶ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, i, p. 150.

‘The West Country contrasted with other settings’). Overall, although the West Country’s remoteness is sometimes used to explain dangerous incidents or support exciting plots, it is primarily represented as a positive quality, with associations of retirement in contrast to urban settings.

5. Female freedom

Female freedom is an equally prominent theme in the West Country as in Wales. However, these novels do not suggest that women are especially free in the West Country. They include similar dangers associated with remoteness as the Welsh novels in my corpus, but without the same benefits for women. Female characters are sometimes shown to have more freedom in rural areas in the West Country, but it is the limited freedom to avoid the dangers associated with urban spaces, or to gain an education with the sole purpose of becoming a properly virtuous future wife. While Wales is sometimes associated with the possibility of alternative gender performance, any comparable examples in the West Country are more equivocal. For example, in contrast to her portrayal of a woman in Wales successfully embodying masculinity to achieve her ends in *Cambrian Pictures* (see ‘Alternative gender performance’ section in Chapter Two), Hatton depicts gender deviance in the West Country as having negative consequences through Lady Elizabeth Plastic in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*. Elizabeth, a Wiltshire native, ‘chose to drop the mask’ of her ‘gentle disposition’ on ‘becoming heiress to [her] grandmother’s wealth’.³¹⁷ As part of attempt to ‘outdo’ her friends ‘in whimsicality’, she ‘adopted a masculine dress, affected rudeness and defiance in all forms’, and even ‘inured her person to robust exercises’ including ‘diving and pugilism’.³¹⁸ She enters a loveless marriage, then dies after hitting her head in a struggle in which her husband, a gambler, attempts to force her to sign a new will in his favour. Her fate appears as a punishment for transgressing social norms, which would have kept her safe. In other novels, any instances of alternative gender performance are less extreme and do not pose a threat to conventional femininity. In *Trecothick Bower*, Emmeline shows unusual levels of ‘courage’ when she sails ‘unaccompanied’ to London from Cornwall and also when she approaches

³¹⁷ Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, i, pp. 217-8.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, i, p. 219; p. 237.

Ruthin Castle instead of her father.³¹⁹ However, this does not show unfeminine assertiveness, but idealised compassion, because Emmeline is motivated by ‘filial duty and anxiety’, ‘determined’ that her father ‘should incur no risk she could save him from’.³²⁰ Kamira in *The Esquimaux* shows ‘great bodily strength’ in the West Country: she gives a ‘violent blow’ to Courtenay to protect her mistress and swims to freedom when they are kidnapped.³²¹ However, Kamira’s physical exuberance is not associated with West Country space, but with Clark’s reductive portrayal of her ethnicity, of which the reader is constantly reminded by the novel’s title. Clark uses Kamira to create a contrast with Rose, whose conventional femininity is typical among West Country heroines. This reflects the conservative social values associated with the generic rural ideal.

Another way in which the West Country is less positively associated with female freedom than Wales is that there are fewer happy female-only households there. The most extensive example appears in *Seabrook Village*, in which Mrs Worthy and her daughters are presented as a model family. Other examples appear only briefly or are reported rather than taking place during the main action of the novel, such as Laura’s upbringing with Mrs Mansell in *The Foundling of Devonshire*. Female-only households are also often unsuccessful due to the dangers of remoteness, which often relate to threats posed by men. For example, when the female residents of Treharne Hall are left alone but for servants in *The Esquimaux*, they face significant physical risk from their unwanted suitors and from the smugglers.

Physical freedom

As in Wales, the novels set in the West Country explore the tension between women in remote, rural settings simultaneously having more space in which to move and being exposed to particular dangers in this space. Emily in *Chronicles of an Illustrious House* ‘walks and rides’ in a manner comparable to the Welsh heroines discussed in Chapter Two, undertaking at least one ride of ‘twelve miles’.³²² Fewer such examples appear in the West Country than in Wales, however. In the West Country, the theme of female freedom is particularly often

³¹⁹ Roche, iii, pp. 47-8.

³²⁰ Ibid., iii, p. 48; p. 187.

³²¹ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, ii, pp. 107-8.

³²² Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House*, i, p. 211; p. 172.

explored through travel, because the region is strongly associated with tourism. Jane and Margaret's West Country tourist experiences in *Oakwood Hall* are unusually successful, partly because they visit at the end of their tour in Wales, a space which Hutton associates with freedom (see Chapter Two). Hutton's depiction of a successful female-only tourist experience is also typical of her tendency to disrupt the conventions of the rural ideal.

Women's travel is more typically associated with danger. As Horrocks argues, in novels of this period, 'movement is frequently construed as the opposite of freedom'.³²³ This tendency is visible in *A Traveller's Tale*: Deletia initially feels 'like a newly escaped bird' during her tour with the Valvilles, having previously been 'commanded never to pass the boundary of their own park'.³²⁴ However, they soon control her; for example, Lady Valville declares that Deletia's 'rambles [...] shall only be taken under the escort of my son'.³²⁵ This is an example of the 'imposed journey' trope noted by Horrocks, demonstrating that female characters can lack freedom even when they are physically mobile.³²⁶ Juliet experiences a similar lack of freedom while moving in *The Wanderer*. Her plan 'to avoid' the 'risks' of 'travelling wholly alone' is thwarted; she has to spend the majority of the novel wandering and unprotected, including in the West Country.³²⁷

However, the trope of physical restriction appears far more frequently than enforced travel in these novels. As well as Deletia in *A Traveller's Tale* and the titular heroine of *Fanny Fitz-York*, another heroine who is 'seldom' permitted 'to walk abroad' appears in *The Curate and His Daughter*: Lady Seyntaubyne 'detain[s]' Matilda 'in the house' in order to protect her 'complexion'.³²⁸ Deletia, Fanny, and Matilda are all kept indoors by their female guardians, but this restriction is intended to protect their value as future wives, whether by maintaining their beauty or their virginity. This is conventional in my corpus and this genre: restrictions on women's freedom relate to their sexual appeal to men. A more explicit instance of this appears in *Trecothick Bower*: while Emmeline's father is away, she 'reluctantly' has to 'acquiesce' to Morcar 'being allowed to see her whenever he pleased', due to her fear of him.³²⁹ Ryley addresses the theme of restrictions on women's behaviour

³²³ Horrocks, p. 20.

³²⁴ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, i, p. 92.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, i, p. 113.

³²⁶ Horrocks, p. 111.

³²⁷ Burney, i, p. 73.

³²⁸ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 92.

³²⁹ Roche, i, p. 50.

and movement unusually directly through Maria's comparison of herself with her brother in *Fanny Fitz-York*. She states that she could travel into Devon, 'If I were of his independent sex', 'but, as I wear a petticoat, -, alias, a badge of slavery, - I must yield'.³³⁰ This resembles Hatton's use of the metaphor of slavery to represent men's control of women in *Cambrian Pictures* (as discussed under 'Welsh trends', in Chapter Two).

In addition to these social restrictions, my corpus also includes many examples of female characters being more explicitly deprived of freedom by men through physical threats, imprisonment, or violence in the West Country (see 'Risk', above). Abduction is a similarly prominent trope in the West Country as in Wales, demonstrating its link with remote spaces in general. For example, in *The Curate and His Daughter*, Anna is 'forcibly lifted' into a carriage and, in *Incident and Interest*, Clarissa is similarly 'placed' in a carriage, having fainted.³³¹ Both of these abductions lead to forced marriage. A similar instance is barely prevented from taking place in *Trecothick Bower*: Emmeline is 'seized in the arms of a ruffian', because a powerful man intends to marry her.³³² Several novels in my corpus include examples of domestic violence in the West Country. Clarissa's husband threatens her with a sword in *Incident and Interest* (see Bath section). An attempted murder of a wife by her husband appears in *Fanny Fitz-York* when Corbett pushes Julia into the river. In all of these instances, the novelists are exploring how men can restrict women's freedom in remote settings, whether the violence takes place or is only threatened.

The prominence of these restrictions on women's freedom in the West Country begins to challenge the positive associations of remoteness (discussed above). Dangers are associated with remoteness generally, rather than a specific region. This is linked to the conservatism of these novels' social messages: many of them generally recommend prudent behaviour, which is itself restrictive, to their female readers. Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* and *Persuasion* include two women whose physical exuberance in the West Country has near-fatal consequences. Marianne's heedlessness of the weather in her desire to walk leads to her injury and her ill-fated meeting with Willoughby near Barton. Similar behaviour later causes her dangerous illness at Cleveland. The former incident is 'a false step' both literally and metaphorically, and the latter is described by the narrator as 'imprudence'.³³³ Louisa's

³³⁰ Ryley, i, p. 131.

³³¹ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 68; Squire, i, p. 124.

³³² Roche, i, p. 78.

³³³ Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*, p. 50; p. 346.

fall on the Cobb in *Persuasion*, caused by her over-liveliness, leads to a permanent personality change which is emblematic of these novels' general endorsement of a more placid form of femininity. These incidents resemble Hatton's depiction of the negative consequences of Lady Elizabeth's sporting prowess and masculine manners (see above). The West Country, unlike Wales, does not emerge as a haven in which women's physicality is celebrated, but as combining the behavioural standards expected in English society with the dangers of remoteness.

Intellectual freedom

In contrast to the lack of physical freedom for women, these novels do suggest that there are increased opportunities for female education in the West Country, which allow women to become virtuous and rational. This relates to the generic opposition of rural spaces and the metropolis and is particularly evident in the West Country due to its strong association with the generic rural ideal and the positive moral associations of remoteness. The particular connection between West Country space and female education appears in *The Castle of Tariffa*, when Monomia resolves that she will find lessons for Emma in 'the fields, the gardens, the sea, and the sky', rather than 'shut her up in a room'.³³⁴ The theme is addressed more extensively in *The History of a Clergyman's Widow* and *Seabrook Village*. The former narrates the successful education of all of Mrs Gardiner's children, but Hofland focuses primarily on her daughters. Maria has 'acuteness and strength of mind to an uncommon degree', Sarah receives drawing lessons and becomes a celebrated artist, and Betsy goes to the local school.³³⁵ The education of Mrs Worthy's daughters is similarly a major theme of *Seabrook Village*. Her decision that 'a town life was incompatible with the plan she had laid down for the education of her children' makes explicit the generic association between rurality and learning.³³⁶ Ziegenhirt emphasises the moral element of this education: Mrs Worthy's charity work in the village makes her a role model. Although these novels suggest that women receive a good moral education in the West Country, this is not intellectual freedom in the sense of exercising one's own will. Rather, the development of virtue leaves

³³⁴ Beauclerc, *The Castle of Tariffa*, i, p. 90.

³³⁵ Hofland, p. 30.

³³⁶ Ziegenhirt, *Seabrook Village*, p. 3.

these female characters free in the sense that they will not fall prey to the temptations of urban settings; they are equipped to make better choices. This resembles the conservative recommendation of prudence which is often evident in the portrayals of physical danger in these novels.

The positive influence of West Country space on the female intellect is more clearly visible in the fact that heroines who live there are shown to be rationally minded. This is despite superstition persisting among the locals (see 'Risk', above). While superstition is also explored in Welsh settings (see Chapter Two), West Country heroines are more strongly, and sometimes actively, resistant to it. Their rationality is linked to their class; the space does not imbue it on all residents. For example, in *Faith and Fiction*, it is stated that Ellen's 'mind was untinged by superstition'; she would happily 'wander alone amid the deserted walls' of the Abbey, because her 'superior understanding taught her to disregard' the warnings of her servant, Margaret.³³⁷ Similarly, in *The Curate and His Daughter*, Matilda scolds the maid who fears 'ghosts', declaring: 'I have always observed, the most ignorant are the most superstitious'.³³⁸ This suggestion of class-based intellect also takes on a racial dimension in *The Esquimaux*: Kamira is described as being 'overwhelmed' by her supernatural 'terrors', while her mistress Rose looks for the 'probably very simple' and 'natural' explanation.³³⁹ Catherine in *Northanger Abbey* is initially an exceptional West Country heroine in this regard. The freedom of reading afforded to her during her time in Bath leaves her primed to fall prey to 'dreadful' 'suspicions' in Gloucestershire.³⁴⁰ However, Henry's rebuke is as beneficially educational as his other guidance, reforming her superstitious ways. In general, West Country heroines are overwhelmingly shown to be able to resist superstition.

Overall, although female characters in the West Country are free to become well-educated, often rationally as well as morally, their lives are shown to be significantly restricted, despite their access to rural space. They are exposed to the same risks as the female characters in Welsh novels, but West Country novels contain fewer positive examples of unconventionally feminine behaviour. This demonstrates that the West Country is primarily used to promote a conservative social message, recommending virtuous and prudent behaviour to the female reader.

³³⁷ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, i, pp. 216-217.

³³⁸ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 96.

³³⁹ Clark, *The Esquimaux*, ii, p. 132; p. 2; p. 4.

³⁴⁰ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 203.

6. The West Country contrasted with other settings

As the West Country is closely associated with the generic rural ideal, when it is brought into contrast with other spaces within a novel, this is most frequently a positive comparison. My corpus contains many examples of the use of mainland Europe to demonstrate by contrast the virtuous associations of the West Country as English rural space. These novels often represent Catholic countries and characters as villainous. This is the reverse of their portrayal of the West Country as the home of specifically Anglican virtue. An example of this conventional association of Catholic countries with crime appears in *Trecothick Bower*: Sir Roland tells the story of a murder which took place in France, which relates to the wickedness of an Italian family. In addition to these contrasts with Europe, the West Country's proximity to the generic rural ideal also means that it is commonly brought into contrast with London's conventional associations of urban immorality and danger. Although the 'amusements' of London are sometimes praised in these novels, characters from the West Country find physical and moral dangers there more often than harmless pleasures.³⁴¹ *Fanny Fitz-York* is a key example of this: Lady Anne correctly predicts that 'nothing but mortification' awaits Fanny in London.³⁴² Fanny's suffering is epitomised by her losing her party at Vauxhall, and being left alone with Corbett, only for him to be seized for debt. Ironically, given that she read 'Miss Burney's interesting *Evelina*' back in Devon, Fanny's situation resembles that of a Burney heroine.³⁴³ At the same time, the West Country's positive moral associations are reinforced by more general negative depictions of London as a site of dissipation, 'idleness and folly'.³⁴⁴ The virtue of the West Country heroine is often demonstrated by her preference for her rural home, as is conventional in novels of this period. While the West Country itself is sometimes associated with danger due to its remoteness (as discussed above), it is simultaneously also portrayed as a space of safety in comparison to Europe and London. For example, in *Trecothick Bower*, Trecothick is imprisoned in the Tower of London, and his daughter Emmeline is also detained, in Richard's home, after she travels there to rescue him. This draws on the West Country's association with retirement: the

³⁴¹ Haynes, ii, p. 2; Parker, *Fitz-Edward*, i, p. 36.

³⁴² Ryley, i, p. 244.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*, i, p. 60.

³⁴⁴ Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter*, p. 33.

implication is that it is a safer space during times of upheaval because it is removed from the political centre.

The West Country is also often combined with other British regional settings; these contrasts demonstrate its specific role. Several novels which are primarily set in the West Country also feature settings in the North of England, or in Scotland, which are portrayed as more remote. For example, in *The Castle of Tariffa*, Belville experiences retirement in Harrogate and Cumberland, while Monomia leaves Plymouth to stay on the Isle of Mull in order to retreat from the world when she believes her marriage to have been invalid. In *The Curate and His Daughter*, Anna retreats to the ‘wild solitudes’ of ‘far distant’ Cumberland for a similar reason.³⁴⁵ The Cornish setting of *Trecothick Bower* is contrasted with the ‘antiquity’ and ‘grandeur’ of the North of England.³⁴⁶ Morin argues that, because Roche presents the North as ‘backward’, Trecothick is a ‘more modern realm’.³⁴⁷ While the settings are polarised, I do not agree that Trecothick is associated with modernity, because it is explicitly stated that, ‘the impressive grandeur of former ages was [...] conspicuous’ there.³⁴⁸ Roche associates Cornwall with ancient history, but a more positive, domesticated connotation of antiquity than that which she associates with the North. As these examples demonstrate, several of these writers represent the West Country as equivocally remote: it can function as an extremely or moderately remote setting according to the novelists’ requirements for their plot.

7. Conclusion

Despite its close association with the generic rural ideal, and its internal subregional variation, there is some coherency to the image of the West Country which emerges from this corpus. These novels demonstrate that the ‘distinct, West Country appeal to the Romantic imagination’ noted by Roe can be seen in fiction, not only in poetry.³⁴⁹ While the region’s relationship to remoteness is somewhat equivocal, this reflects its particular geographical and historical situation. In many of these novels, the West Country’s relative remoteness from

³⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 71.

³⁴⁶ Roche, i, p. 147; p. 155.

³⁴⁷ Morin, p. 48.

³⁴⁸ Roche, i, p. 50.

³⁴⁹ Roe, ‘Introduction’, p. 4.

London, and its role as a periphery of Britain which is nonetheless part of England, are key to its representation. Several themes are prominently associated with the West Country in particular, primarily coastal settings and the sea, and leisure and tourism, including urban dissipation at resorts. The region's extensive coast is key to its role in this corpus, in contrast to the relatively more minor role of the Welsh coast in the novels discussed in Chapter Two.

The portrayals of the West Country in my corpus are generally closely aligned to the tropes of the generic rural ideal. The region takes on the positive associations of remoteness, namely retirement, but also sometimes the connection of remoteness to danger. The West Country is primarily depicted as rural despite its urbanisation. This relates to the fact that the West Country is often used to represent the nation in these novels, and British national identity is strongly linked to the landscape (as discussed in Chapter One). Just as the West Country's overall associations relate to its location, the qualities of each subregion depend on their geography, such as their proximity to other key spaces. For example, Gloucestershire is often linked to Wales due to the border, and therefore shares some of its associations. As the most remote part of the region, Cornwall is treated the most distinctively, with strong polarised associations of wildness and domesticity. The presentation of Bristol and Bath is primarily defined by their particularly urban associations of commerce and leisure, rather than their West Country location. Other large urban spaces receive very little attention, and the smaller resort towns are treated largely indistinguishably. In general, urban settings in the region are portrayed as potentially dangerous: while not always inherently negative, they take on the character of their residents.

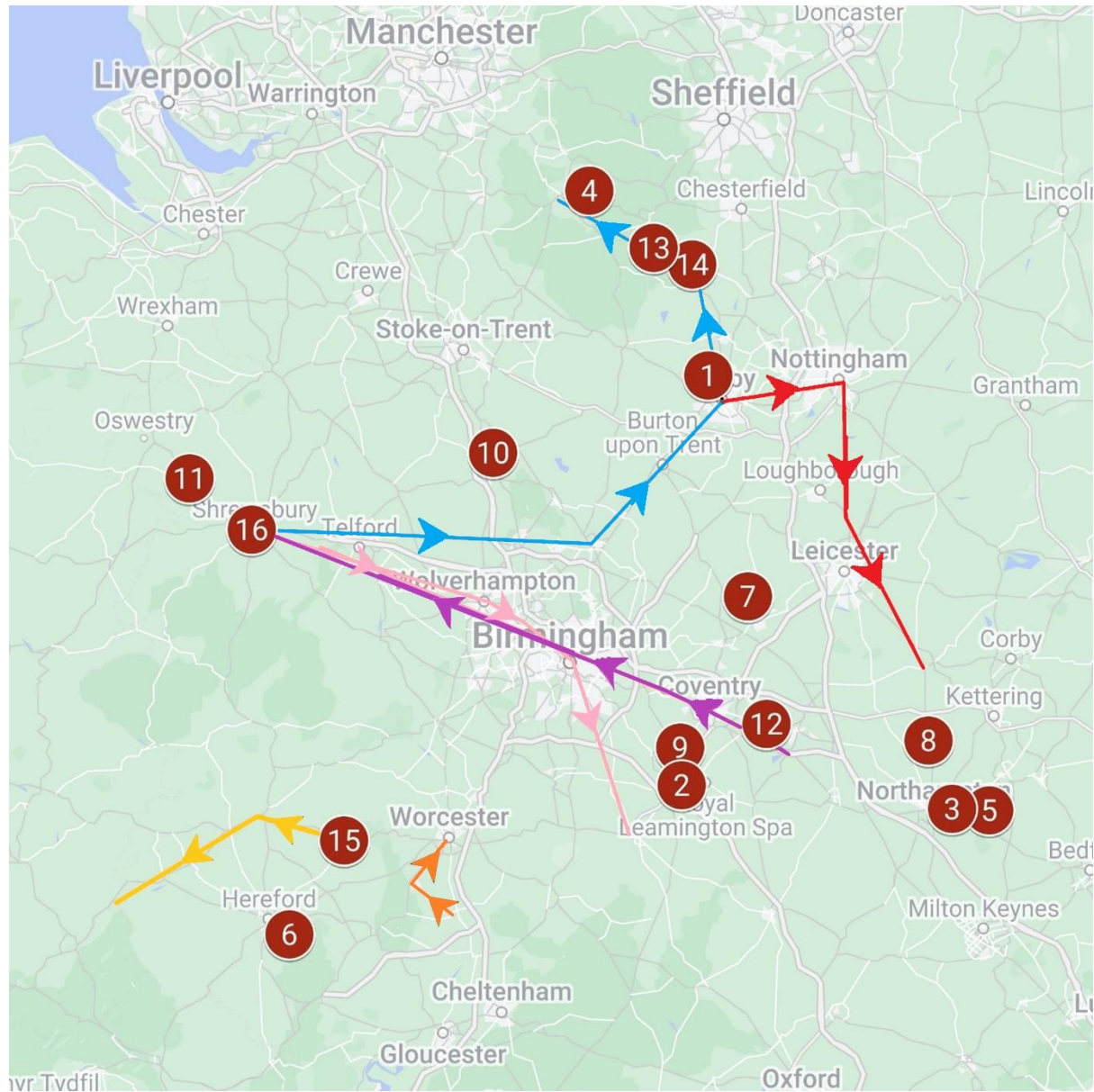
The close relationship between the West Country's association with the generic rural ideal and its role in national representation explains the notable absence of themes of dissent in these novels. This is keeping with the conservatism of the generic rural and its association with Anglicanism. Although these West Country novels foreground the theme of female freedom, they do so through themes of restriction and danger for female characters. They explore how contemporary English social structures enable men, often motivated by desire, to deprive women of their freedom. Unlike the Welsh novels, they do not explore alternatives to this dynamic, because although the West Country is remote, it is a part of England. Their emphasis on moral education preparing heroines to become virtuous wives suggests that they are promoting strict adherence to Anglican ethics, and physical self-restriction. However, West Country heroines often face danger even when they behave impeccably. The West Country is strongly associated with risk even while it is explicitly described as a positive space of retirement. This tension between retirement and danger appears in many of the

novels in my corpus; it is associated with rural and remote spaces in any region. A further tension is visible in these novels' contradictory emphasis on both the remoteness of the West Country and its relevance to the metropolitan reader. In the majority of the novels in my corpus, these contradictory themes are deployed in the service of a socially conservative moral.

The West Country's proximity to the generic rural ideal leads to it frequently appearing as a fairly generic background setting in many of these novels. Several of them use settings which are not specifically located but are stated to be in a named West Country county, mainly in order to evoke a shorthand of remoteness. Furthermore, while there is some limited specific dialect representation, many depictions of nonstandard English in the West Country often simply mark characters as working class, rather than being regionally specific. Although this lack of nuance is the norm, several of the authors, particularly Spence, Burney, and Hutton use the region in a more developed way. Spence makes especially varied use of the West Country across her two novels discussed in this chapter and uses different landscapes to highlight contrasting emotional states. In *The Wanderer*, Burney uses English regional space, and the West Country in particular, in an especially evocative manner, to dramatize Juliet's psychological and physical journey. Hutton's use of regional space is unusually sophisticated (as also noted in Chapter Two in relation to Wales): she complicates the moral associations of rurality, and her depiction of successful female tourism sets out a positive vision of female freedom which is highly unusual among these West Country novels.

Chapter Four: The Midlands

Figure 3: Map of Midlands settings



Key to Figure 3

1. *The Prior Claim*
2. *Warwick Castle*
3. *The Fugitive*
4. *Strathallan*
5. *Mansfield Park*
6. *The Miser Married*
7. *Trecothick Bower*
8. *Mystery and Confidence*
9. *Edgar*
10. *Faith and Fiction*
11. *Husband Hunters!!!*
12. *A Traveller's Tale*
13. *Pride and Prejudice*
14. *Frankenstein*
15. *Oakwood Hall:*
 - The **yellow** line represents Jane and Margaret's journey into Wales, N.B. this then becomes the tour marked with an orange line in Figures 1 and then 2
 - The **orange** line represents Jane and Margaret's subsequent tour of the Worcester area, having left Wales and the West Country, N.B. this is a continuation of the tour marked with an orange line in Figures 1 and 2
16. *The Welsh Mountaineer*
 - The **pink** line represents Dorothy's initial journey from Wales towards London
 - The **purple** line represents Dorothy's return journey towards Wales
 - The **blue** line represents Dorothy's subsequent journey north via Derby
 - The **red** line represents the old soldier's moving in his youth from Derby, to Nottingham, and south via Leicestershire (which he reverses later in life)

N.B. arrows on lines indicate direction of travel

1. Introduction

Discussions of the Midlands in scholarship on Romantic-era literature often centre on the ‘intellectual importance of the Midlands Enlightenment [...] for understanding the emergence of British Romanticism’.¹ Desmond King-Hele outlined the impact of Erasmus Darwin’s ‘ideas, images and words’ on William Blake, William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Shelley, and John Keats.² The role of Midlands Enlightenment thinkers, including the Lunar Society of Birmingham, particularly Darwin and Joseph Priestley, is now widely recognised. Jenny Uglow’s *The Lunar Men* demonstrates that ‘it is impossible to read Romantic poetry in quite the same way’ once we understand this group’s importance.³ However, the need for further exploration of ‘the role of women’ in the Midlands Enlightenment, as outlined by Felicity James and Rebecca Shuttleworth, is evident.⁴ There is also a lack of scholarship on the Midlands novel, by both men and women. This chapter is the first specific discussion of the female-authored Midlands novel in the Romantic period. It is therefore also the first analysis of the role of the Midlands Enlightenment in the corpus of novels covered by this thesis. I have found that the Midlands Enlightenment was not a creative influence on female novelists in a way that is comparable to its legacy among male Romantic poets. There are very few references to the Midlands Enlightenment in my corpus and, where they do appear, they are brief and indirect. I wish to suggest that further insights into the Midlands can be gained when it is not only viewed through the perspectives offered by the framework of the Midlands Enlightenment. This chapter will present another image of the Midlands, one which emerges from reading female-authored novels.

The absence of discussion of the Midlands Enlightenment in these novels relates to their tendency to promote an implicitly Tory and Anglican rural ideal, a position which I have found to be typical of the female-authored regional novel more broadly. As I discussed in the previous chapters, this generalising fantasy involves the overwhelming prioritisation of rural settings over urban ones. These novels therefore present the Midlands as primarily rural.

¹ Budge, p. 160.

² Desmond King-Hele, *Erasmus Darwin and the Romantic Poets* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1986), p. 1.

³ Jenny Uglow, *The Lunar Men* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002).

⁴ Felicity James and Rebecca Shuttleworth, ‘Susanna Watts and Elizabeth Heyrick: Collaborative Campaigning in the Midlands, 1820-34’, in *Women’s Literary Networks and Romanticism: A Tribe of Authoresses*, ed. by Andrew O. Winckles and Angela Rehbein (Oxford: Liverpool University Press, 2017), p. 47.

They ignore the reality that, in the last four decades of the eighteenth century, the region's population had increased 'by around 60 per cent compared with 45 per cent in the country as a whole' and, early in the nineteenth century, it was undergoing 'an efflorescence of urban growth'.⁵ Industrial activity, religious dissent, liberal politics, and Enlightenment thought rarely appear in my corpus, because they represent the antithesis of the nostalgic and conservative ruralism which many of these novels prioritise. All of these movements were, to a greater or lesser extent, seen as culturally interrelated. This was because of their association with urban spaces, as well as the 'supposed affinity of Nonconformists for trade, industry, and experimental science' and their affiliation with 'political reform campaigns'.⁶ In this chapter, I will discuss the few references to these themes which do appear. None of these novels explicitly acknowledges the Midlands' dissenting traditions. As a Unitarian, Catherine Hutton is unusual among this group of novelists, but even she does not openly discuss the Midlands' religious diversity in her fiction. The Midlands Enlightenment is similarly mostly an absent presence in my corpus. There is, however, more acknowledgement of industrial activity in these Midlands novels than in those set in Wales and the West Country. This suggests that the Midlands was more strongly associated with industry, regardless of how its development compared with other regions. Nevertheless, industrial activity is still excluded from the majority of these novels, and it remains a peripheral theme in those in which it does appear. This relates to these novels' portrayal of the Midlands in a less distinctive manner than Wales and the West Country, because its regional identity was less in keeping with the conservative rural ideal. The Midlands also appears to have fewer other specific regional associations, due to its central location in England and not having a separate cultural history or language (in contrast to Wales and the West Country).

The Midlands' unique position at the geographical centre of England but outside of its metropolitan heartlands also results in an equivocal relationship to remoteness: it can be used as either centre or periphery. In my corpus, the Midlands is liminal in that it can function as a 'transitional' space between the North and South, England and Wales, and the margins and

⁵ Rowlands, p. 96.

⁶ Peter Jones, *Industrial Enlightenment: Science, Technology and Culture in Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), p. 162; Paul A. Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers: Science and Culture in British Urban Society 1700-1850* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), p. 88.

the metropolis.⁷ The prominent travel routes through the Midlands justify its inclusion in a range of plots. The region also contains the locations of several key moments in the nation's history, including Bosworth battlefield, Warwick Castle, and Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon (all of which are discussed in this chapter). Just as the Midlands is central to the nation geographically, these novels represent it as central to its history. The Midlands is more often used to reflect on the nation as a whole, than to provide a peripheral alternative. It is therefore represented in an even more conservative manner than the regions discussed in the previous chapters. The Midlands' liminality also means it can be represented as both wild and domesticated. These polarisations correlate partly with the differences between the areas of the Midlands that are further from London, mostly in the North Midlands, and those nearer the metropolitan centre, in the South Midlands. The two sides of the region represented in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park* are therefore to some extent characteristic of the way in which the Midlands was represented in this period. Both novels focus on grand rural estates, but there is an evident difference between the representation of Derbyshire and Northamptonshire: the former is wilder and encourages more social freedom than the latter. However, this chapter will demonstrate that there are nuances in the broader representation of the Midlands in this period, beyond Austen, which have been overlooked due to the primary focus of scholars of the Romantic novel on her work.

The weaker cultural identity of the Midlands, in comparison to Wales and the West Country, means that the history of its recognition as a region is ambiguous. J. Stobart and N. Raven argue that 'the term "Midlands" can be traced back to at least the seventeenth century'.⁸ However, Peter Jones observes that 'it is doubtful whether' people who lived during the Romantic period 'would have even acknowledged an area of the country called "the Midlands"', because there is little evidence of the use of the term.⁹ The term 'Midlands' does not appear in my corpus. The closest approximations are a reference to 'the beauteous and luxuriant middle counties' in Appleton's *Edgar* and Prickett's description of

⁷ Hazel Andrews, and Les Roberts, 'Introduction: Re-mapping liminality', in *Liminal Landscapes: travel, experience and spaces in-between*, ed. by Hazel Andrews and Les Roberts (London: Routledge, 2012), p. 1.

⁸ J. Stobart and N. Raven, 'Introduction: industrialisation and urbanisation in a regional context', in *Towns, Regions and Industries: Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, c. 1700-1840*, ed. by J. Stobart and N. Raven, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 10.

⁹ Peter Jones, p. 22.

Warwickshire as ‘the interior of the kingdom’ in *Warwick Castle*.¹⁰ However, these labels were not applied exclusively to the region now traditionally regarded as the Midlands: in *Northanger Abbey*, Gloucestershire is implicitly grouped with ‘the midland counties of England’ and ‘the central part of England’.¹¹ The definition of the Midlands remains contentious: ‘there is a noticeable lack of consensus over its boundaries’ among historians.¹² Therefore, when seeking to identify novels set in the Midlands, I considered all of the counties contained in the broadest common definitions of the region. I then refined this based on the settings which appear in my corpus. The subregions discussed in this chapter, in the order of their inclusion in the geographical section, are Shropshire, Herefordshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire, Birmingham, Warwickshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, and Northamptonshire. My definition of the Midlands is therefore relatively similar to the one used by Alan Dyer.¹³ I agree with him that ‘to some extent [the Midlands] amounts to an area which is left when more distinctive provincial blocks are removed’, namely the ‘fringe of London’s primary commercial region’, the West Country, Wales, the North of England, and the East of England.¹⁴ I have found that the representations of the subregions of the Midlands in my corpus are often influenced by the nearest external region, particularly Wales but also the North of England and even London. The exception to this rule concerns the East of England: the novels surveyed for this project show no interest in this region, and Lincolnshire, which would have met my criteria for inclusion in the Midlands, does not appear at all. It has many elements which usually make a setting popular in these novels: Lincoln is a cathedral city, and the county is rural and peripheral. However, Lincolnshire’s coastline means that it is geographically an edge-land rather than a midland. This partially explains its absence from these novels: the use of a coastal county would contradict their representation of the Midlands as the centre of England. As a ‘poor, thinly inhabited’ and ‘isolated backwater’, Lincolnshire lacked the exotic appeal of other remote settings in, for example, Wales and the West Country, or the geographical centrality of the Midlands.¹⁵

¹⁰ Appleton, i, p. 142; Prickett, ii, p. 74.

¹¹ Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 205.

¹² Stobart and Raven, p. 10.

¹³ Dyer, p. 93.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

Based on this definition of the Midlands, I identified six novels which make it their primary setting, and another ten which use it as a secondary one. As with Wales and the West Country, most of the novelists using Midlands settings have no known connection to the region. However, there are two unusual instances of authors writing about the specific subregion which is their home. Prickett is the only writer who uses her Midlands home county as her primary setting: in the preface to *Warwick Castle*, she explains that she was ‘reared and resident for years upon the spot’.¹⁶ Hutton is from Birmingham and uses the Midlands extensively in her novels, setting *The Miser Married* in the Wye Valley and featuring journeys through the Midlands in both *Oakwood Hall* and *The Welsh Mountaineer*. However, she only uses her home city of Birmingham very briefly in the latter of these, because she came to ‘hate’ it after her family were targeted in the riots against Unitarians in 1791 (see ‘West Midlands’ for further discussion).¹⁷ Using local knowledge, both Prickett and Hutton represent their native region in a more nuanced manner than is typical in my corpus, in comparison to the few other novelists who came from the region where they set their novels, such as Emma Parker in Wales (see Chapter Two).

As in the previous chapters, I will begin my discussion by outlining these novels’ geographical representation of the Midlands’ subregions. The next section will explore the trends which mean that my corpus creates a less distinctive image of the Midlands than of Wales and the West Country. I will discuss the prominence of the generic rural ideal, then the role of the few urban Midlands settings which do appear, firstly those which have a leisure-related function, and subsequently those which are associated with industry. I will then discuss these novels’ exclusion of the Midlands’ dissenting traditions and scientific culture and their limited representations of its regional dialect. Subsequently, I will outline the regional distinctiveness which does emerge through the Midlands’ particular role as an historical and tourist destination. The penultimate part of this chapter will outline the Midlands’ equivocal relationship to remoteness and its weaker association with female freedom than appeared in the other case study regions. The final section will discuss comparisons between the Midlands and other settings.

¹⁶ Prickett, p. x.

¹⁷ Hutton Beale, p. 111.

2. The geography of Midlands settings

In this section, I will discuss each Midlands county in turn, as well as Birmingham, moving from West to East, first across the West Midlands and then the East Midlands (considering the northernmost county first where they are approximately parallel, for example, Shropshire is discussed before Herefordshire). It is important to note that the terms West and East Midlands ‘had yet to be invented’ in the early nineteenth century.¹⁸ However, as Peter Jones has argued, ‘there existed a clear functional contrast’ between the two halves of the Midlands in this period.¹⁹ This was due to their differing industries, and the domination of Birmingham in the West Midlands and the textile industry centres of Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester in the East. Dividing my discussion of the West and East Midlands allows me to consider the extent to which there is a meaningful distinction between the ways in which they are represented in my corpus.

West Midlands

The western and northern peripheries of the Midlands are portrayed as more remote than the counties closer to London. They are therefore particularly associated with the contradictory themes of wildness and peaceful retirement, in line with generic rural tropes. This is similar to the representation of more physically remote regions and shows the influence of the Welsh border. Beauclerc’s use of Shropshire in *Husband Hunters!!!* as the setting of a sub-plot about the redemptive powers of domesticity exemplifies this. She uses the typical rural device of contrasting a humble rectory with a grand house. ‘The rectory of Llansillan’ appears to be located between Oswestry and Shrewsbury: Georgina and the Wights travel towards the former in a coach, but remove into a chaise to the latter after Georgina is accidentally injured.²⁰ When they have travelled ‘sixty’ out of the ‘eighty’ miles to Shrewsbury, they have to stop at Wilmot Hall, the setting of the majority of the Shropshire passages.²¹ Beauclerc links Shropshire closely with Wales: characters travel across the border in both directions. Contiguity with Wales leads to increased associations of remoteness and the attendant

¹⁸ Peter Jones, p. 24.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iii, p. 215.

²¹ Ibid., iii. p. 240.

possibilities of danger. For example, Hareville becomes lost on the way to Shrewsbury (from his Welsh home) and arrives at Wilmot Hall ‘covered in snow’, having dismounted his pony due to ‘extreme cold’.²² Another depiction of Shropshire as inclement appears in *The Welsh Mountaineer*: Dorothy mentions being ‘confined by bad weather, at an inn under the Wrekin’.²³ Like Beauclerc, Hutton links the county to Wales, as Dorothy travels through Shropshire when leaving and returning towards her home in Merionethshire. However, Hutton also highlights the differences between the two spaces. From Dorothy’s perspective as the titular mountaineer, Shropshire’s Wrekin ‘is of no great magnitude’ but she admires it as ‘the only hill in this wretched flat country’.²⁴ Having not yet seen the cities she will later encounter, Dorothy declares Shrewsbury a ‘grand’ and ‘large town’.²⁵ Shropshire also appears briefly in Iliff’s *The Prior Claim*, in which it embodies the generic rural ideals of beauty and safety. In a sentence describing a wider Midlands tour, it is mentioned that Emily ‘admired the romantic beauties of Leasowes’, an ‘*adorned farm*’ praised by Gilpin.²⁶ She later visits ‘the country seat of Lady L— in Shropshire’ as a place of safety during her fiancé’s mourning period for his first wife.²⁷ The images of Shropshire in these three novels demonstrate its equivocal status as a county on the periphery of a liminal region: it can be represented as remote, and therefore as potentially wild, or equally as relatively cultivated and safe.

The Welsh border is also a defining factor in the representation of Herefordshire. It only appears in two novels, both of which are by Hutton and feature characters crossing into Wales. The principal setting of *The Miser Married* is on the English side of ‘the banks of the Wye’, which could refer to either Herefordshire or Gloucestershire.²⁸ I discuss it in this chapter because a longer section of the Wye is located in Herefordshire, but, as Hutton visited both counties, it is possible that the novel could be set in either of them.²⁹ The only textual clues are that Winterdale Hall has a view ‘extending over the distant country to the Welsh

²² Ibid., iv, p. 44; p. 57.

²³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 14.

²⁴ Ibid, i, p. 30.

²⁵ Ibid., i, p. 28.

²⁶ Iliff, ii, p. 33; William Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772, On Several Parts of England; Particularly the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (London: Printed for Blamire, 1786), i, p. 52.

²⁷ Iliff, ii, p. 211.

²⁸ Hutton, *The Miser Married*. i, p. 22.

²⁹ Hutton Beale.

hills' and there is apparently a large town nearby; Martha states she has been there 'often' (often) and 'many be the housens in it [sic]'.³⁰ Walford Davies describes the Wye Valley as 'an uncanny frontier land and borderspace'.³¹ In *The Miser Married*, it functions as a liminal space between Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands. This makes it an appropriate setting for Hutton's unconventional plot: order is reversed, because a miser's ways are challenged, and spendthrifts have to retrench. The space around the South Wales border also appears in Hutton's *Oakwood Hall*: when Jane enters Wales, she arrives in Brecon via Herefordshire, through the border at the Hay. Through Jane, Hutton represents the area using imagery typical of the generic rural, including praise of the 'land and husbandry', but she also inserts metacommentary on rural aesthetics: 'if beauty consists in waving lines, the country between Bromyard and Leominster is most beautiful; for there is not a straight line in it'.³² *The Miser Married* and *Oakwood Hall* demonstrate the permeability of definitions of the Midlands and the West Country (see Gloucestershire section in Chapter Three), in addition to the influence of Wales on the region.

The images of Staffordshire in these novels are influenced not only by its location on the Northern periphery of the Midlands, but also by its urban spaces. Rural Staffordshire appears only in *Faith and Fiction*, in which Dorville Hall is ambiguously located near the fictional 'village of Denham' or 'Derham'.³³ Bennett represents Dorville Hall as worldly, containing 'gayer scenes' than Ellen's generically rural Devon home.³⁴ At the same time, she also emphasises the remoteness of her North Midlands setting for dramatic effect, when Ellen faces persecution there (see 'Physical freedom', below). Elsewhere, Staffordshire is represented by Lichfield and Wednesbury. In *A Traveller's Tale* it is briefly reported, as part of a list of Midlands destinations, that the characters 'visited [...] Litchfield [sic]' and, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy mentions having been 'delighted' by Lichfield Cathedral having three steeples.³⁵ The lack of direct references to Lichfield's intellectual culture, including Anna Seward and 'the Lichfield coterie', despite her being buried in the cathedral in 1809, is a counterpoint to current scholarly perceptions of the importance of the

³⁰ Hutton, *The Miser Married*, i, p. 199; iii, p. 237.

³¹ Damian Walford Davies, 'Romantic Hydrography: Tide and Transit in "Tintern Abbey"', in *English Romantic Writers and the West Country*, ed. by Nicholas Roe (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 220.

³² Hutton, *The Miser Married*, ii, p. 236; p. 234.

³³ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, ii, p. 96; p. 292.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 122.

³⁵ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, iii, p. 106.

Enlightenment in the Romantic Midlands (see ‘Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture’, below).³⁶ Hutton’s inclusion of Wednesbury in *The Welsh Mountaineer* is in keeping with her unusually nuanced approach to urban industrial spaces. The town is key to her message about the dangers of industrialisation: Dorothy reports that ‘now and then a house drops in’ to the ‘coal-pits [which] run under the town’ and describes the ‘ground smoking’ due to ‘subterraneous fires’.³⁷ The contrast between Hutton’s representations of Lichfield and Wednesbury is characteristic of the different treatment of urban settings according to whether they are associated with industry.

The varying treatment of urban settings according to their economic role is also visible in the three minor appearances of Worcestershire in my corpus. In *Oakwood Hall*, on leaving Wales, Jane praises the Malvern area. She extols ‘the beauty and extent’ of the views from the ‘parade’ entered through ‘the Well House’ and the ‘indescribably beautiful’ grounds of ‘the mansion of Little Malvern’.³⁸ Here Hutton uses generic tropes of rural description, but also draws on her own experience: her niece Catherine Hutton Beale reported that Hutton ‘liked the place [Malvern] and company so much that she went there annually for thirty-two years’ from 1802.³⁹ At Worcester, Jane ‘gazed on the handsome streets, the fine shops, and the elegant women, till the china arrested my attention’.⁴⁰ This encapsulates the city’s commerce, sociability, and industry (see ‘Industrial settings’ for further discussion). Hutton once again draws on personal experience in Jane’s description of Worcester Cathedral, which she compares negatively to that of Gloucester, as smaller and ‘far less striking’.⁴¹ This passage appears to be coloured by Hutton’s having visited Worcester Cathedral in 1802 with her brother, who was unenthusiastic due to his disdain for the Anglican establishment ‘since the devastation of our property in the name of Church and King’.⁴² A further minor mention of urban Worcestershire appears in Lefanu’s *Strathallan*: Mrs Stockwell’s deceased husband ran a ‘carpet manufactory, at Kidderminster’.⁴³ Lefanu’s use of an urban industrial space as

³⁶ Teresa Barnard, *Anna Seward: A Constructed Life: A Critical Biography* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 122; p. 148.

³⁷ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 31; p. 33.

³⁸ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, iii, pp. 38-40.

³⁹ Hutton Beale, p. 133.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 40.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 41.

⁴² Hutton Beale, p. 137.

⁴³ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 43.

the disdained source of an unlikeable character's money is more typical of these novels' representation of such matters than Hutton's more nuanced approach.

Although it was already by far the largest city in the Midlands, Birmingham only directly appears in two of these novels. It was associated in the popular imagination with trade and industry, but the gentry 'came to visit in increasing numbers' in the early nineteenth century.⁴⁴ The minimal representation of Birmingham reflects the gentry's perception of it as a 'parvenu industrial rival' to the 'traditional Midland county towns'.⁴⁵ This attitude is visible in Austen's *Emma*, in which Mrs Elton states: 'One has not great hopes from Birmingham. I always say there is something direful in the sound'.⁴⁶ This condemnation from an 'unlikeable' character has been interpreted by Barchas as evidence that Austen herself 'approved of' the city.⁴⁷ I disagree: Austen's opinion is not clear, her reference to Birmingham simply serves as a typically ironic revelation of Mrs Elton's hypocrisy. She condemns the city when criticising her brother's upwardly mobile neighbours the Tupmans, forgetting her own comparable background and the similarly commercial image of her native Bristol (see Chapter Three). Birmingham is linked to trade and industry in its two appearances as a setting in my corpus. In the brief passage in Prickett's *Warwick Castle* in which Frances relates having travelled through Birmingham on their way to Leamington, she focuses on the city's 'superb shops' and its role 'as one of the most considerable towns of this great commercial empire'.⁴⁸ In *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy comments when riding 'from Wolverhampton to Birmingham that the whole air was impregnated with smoke, and the trees and hedges were died with soot'.⁴⁹ Hutton dedicates just a few pages to the city itself: Dorothy remarks it is 'prodigiously large' but is indifferent to its landmarks, including its recently-erected 'statue of the great Nelson'.⁵⁰ Hutton's satire of the statue's 'emblematical' symbolism, through Dorothy's confusion, subtly demonstrates her opposition to nationalism, setting her politics apart from the majority of the other novelists discussed in

⁴⁴ John Money, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 80.

⁴⁵ Dyer, p. 104.

⁴⁶ Jane Austen, *Emma*, ed. by Richard Cronin and Dorothy McMillan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 336.

⁴⁷ Janine Barchas, 'How Celebrity Name-Dropping Leads to a New Location for Pemberley', in *Jane Austen's Geographies*, ed. by Robert Clark (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 212.

⁴⁸ Prickett, ii, pp. 45-6.

⁴⁹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 31.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, i, pp. 35-36.

this thesis. Hutton's choice not to include her home city more extensively in her novels contrasts strongly with Prickett's enthusiastic praise of her native Warwickshire (see below). It is explained by Hutton's having come to 'hate' Birmingham so 'fervently' that she 'forever quitted it as a home' after her Unitarian family were targeted in the Birmingham riots of 1791.⁵¹ Her letters record the 'destruction' of their townhouse and the 'burning' of their country house, how her 'father's life was threatened', and the family's subsequent years of anxiety due to the rioters' anger at having to pay them compensation.⁵² As Hutton Beale concluded, 'we cannot wonder that she ever afterwards spoke in a cynical manner of her native town'.⁵³ Hutton portrays urban settings with greater range and nuance than her contemporaries, but her hatred of Birmingham means there is no comparably evocative representation of her home city in her novels. Hutton's motivation for not depicting Birmingham more extensively differs from that of the other novelists in my corpus. The city which defined the industrial character of the West Midlands is mostly an absent presence in this group of novels because its use as a setting would not be in keeping with the generic rural ideal (this is discussed further below under 'Industrial settings').

Conversely, neighbouring Warwickshire is the West Midlands setting which appears the most frequently and extensively in my corpus. This is partly because it is easily associated with the positive aspects of the generic rural, particularly domesticity, due to its location at the centre of England and on the southern border of the Midlands. Where other subregions are associated with more remote spaces, Warwickshire is sometimes treated as part of the South of England. For instance, in *Warwick Castle*, when Lord Montague is instructed to leave Cumberland for his health and 'return to the south', he goes to Leamington.⁵⁴ Settings in the southern parts of the Midlands are generally idealised, because most of the conventionally negative associations of the rural in these novels actually relate to remoteness. For example, in *A Traveller's Tale*, Oakley Park, Deletia's future husband Dorrington's 'noble estate in Warwickshire', is associated with domesticity and safety.⁵⁵ Spence describes the 'stately mansion' with conventional rural imagery, including its 'noble woods', 'ancient

⁵¹ Hutton Beale, p. 111.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁵⁴ Prickett, ii, p. 42.

⁵⁵ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, i, p 190.

oak-trees’, and ‘rich pastures’.⁵⁶ Spence’s positive depiction of the county is based on her opinion of Warwickshire as ‘one of the pleasantest parts of England’ which she encountered on her travels.⁵⁷ She locates the otherwise generically rural Oakley Park with reference to historic towns: it is ‘situated between the towns of Warwick and Kenilworth’, and the characters go on ‘excursions’ to the castles, as well as Stratford-upon-Avon.⁵⁸

Warwickshire’s many historical sites are another reason for its appearance in so many of these novels and the positivity of these portrayals. Although *Warwick Castle* appears to be named after its setting, the Warwickshire passage is merely an extended interlude during which the characters await the recovery of the man with whom Montague has duelled, before re-entering London society. A large proportion of this section is a lengthy historical account of the Earls of Warwick. As Prickett explains in her preface, *Warwick Castle* takes the unusual form of a novel containing a travel narrative and history. It is intended to function as a guidebook for the ‘gayer visitant of Leamington’, but also includes extensive historical accounts, ‘concentrating whatever was interesting’ from several sources, which ‘unless it were read in the shape of a novel would never be read at all’ (see ‘Historical references’ for further discussion).⁵⁹ Although Prickett’s characters’ visit is motivated by Leamington’s spa waters, they find the town busy, so relocate to a lodge in the grounds of Warwick Castle. Descriptions of this ‘fairy dwelling’ allow Prickett to draw on generic rural tropes despite her characters’ unusual circumstances.⁶⁰ Warwick Castle also appears briefly as a haven of domesticity in Appleton’s *Edgar*, when the hero goes to meet the Earl of Warwick’s family, including his own future wife (see ‘Intellectual freedom’, below). Edgar also admires the ‘vast castle of Kenelworth [sic]’ and ‘Guy’s Cliff’, sites which also appear in tourist passages in several other novels.⁶¹ Stratford-upon-Avon, ‘the birth-place of the immortal Shakespeare’, is the object of tourist visits in *Warwick Castle*, *A Traveller’s Tale*, *The Welsh Mountaineer* and *The Prior Claim*.⁶² The representation of Warwickshire is discussed further below, under ‘Spa towns, tourist destinations, and cathedral cities’ and ‘Historical references’.

⁵⁶ Ibid., iii, p. 12.

⁵⁷ Spence, *Summer Excursions*, i, pp. 99-100.

⁵⁸ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, iii, p. 11; p. 20.

⁵⁹ Prickett, i, pp. vii-ix.

⁶⁰ Ibid., ii, p. 95.

⁶¹ Appleton, i, pp. 142-143.

⁶² Iliff, iii, p. 33.

East Midlands

Derbyshire, the most widely used setting in the East Midlands, is often represented in these novels in terms of its historic ‘remoteness until the 18th century’, rather than the reality of its increasing accessibility due to improved travel networks.⁶³ This is similar to the representations of Wales as remote discussed in Chapter Two. In keeping with the generic imagery of rural remoteness, Derbyshire is sometimes associated with wildness, but this primarily has positive connotations of domestic happiness, rather than danger (see ‘Remoteness’, below). For example, *The Prior Claim*’s Woodville and Blandford Hall are situated in ‘one of the wildly romantic valleys of Derbyshire’.⁶⁴ The location of this valley is ambiguous: references to the ‘village of D—’, ‘the village of S—’, and the ‘road leading to N—’ are not sufficiently precise to identify a real-world counterpart.⁶⁵ Iliff’s emphasis on ‘the wildly beautiful’ but ‘rude’ scenery is typical of the reputation of what Gilpin referred to as ‘the wilds of Derbyshire’.⁶⁶ The name Woodville refers to the county’s sylvan reputation. The similarly named Woodlands estate appears in *Strathallan*. The Countess refers to its location as ‘the Peak of Derbyshire’, which could mean the High Peak region; this suggests that the town of ‘S—’ where characters attend a ‘subscription ball’ could potentially be Stocksbridge.⁶⁷ However, the neighbouring estate called the Rocks, named after another celebrated feature of the Derbyshire landscape, is owned by the Melbourne family, who share their name with a town in South Derbyshire. The Rocks is a ‘sylvan residence’ and ‘ferme ornée’, surrounded by ‘woods and mountains’.⁶⁸ Derbyshire settings are particularly frequently described as hilly and wooded. This motif appears in Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, in the repeated references to the ‘hills’ and ‘wood’ in Pemberley’s ‘very large park’.⁶⁹ Pemberley is another example of the idealised estate where wildness is associated with happiness: Elizabeth has ‘rarely seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste’.⁷⁰ As Alistair M.

⁶³ Joy Childs, *A History of Derbyshire* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1987), p. 14.

⁶⁴ Iliff, i, p. 13.

⁶⁵ Ibid., i, p. 44; p. 84; p. 81.

⁶⁶ Ibid., i, p. 48; p. 14; Gilpin, ii, p. 220.

⁶⁷ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 5; p. 79.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 13; p. 19; p. 121.

⁶⁹ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 271.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

Duckworth argues, ‘the aesthetic good sense that is evident in the landscape of Pemberley [...] permits the reader to infer the fundamental worth of Darcy’s social and ethical character’.⁷¹ This relates to a model of a good estate as paternalistically benefiting the community (further discussed below, see ‘The Midlands rural ideal’). This imagery of simplicity also disproves the once popular theory that Austen ‘intended Pemberley to be identified as Chatsworth’.⁷² As Doody has argued, the naturalness of Pemberley suggests it is in fact ‘a rebuke and contrast’ to all that is ‘pretentious’ about Chatsworth.⁷³ Rather than basing Pemberley on a single Derbyshire estate, Austen appears to have drawn on the county’s Hardwick and Haddon Halls, as well as Wentworth Woodhouse in South Yorkshire.⁷⁴ Although the Derbyshire estates in *The Prior Claim*, *Strathallan*, and *Pride and Prejudice* are not precisely located, these novels generally equate Derbyshire with the Peak District, which facilitates the extensive use of the tropes of rural remoteness.

Derbyshire is also particularly associated with tourism. For example, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy describes her enjoyment of many of the county’s most famous sites, both natural and man-made, including ‘Keddleston [sic]’, Willersley Castle, ‘Lover’s Leap’, ‘Poole’s Hole’, ‘Chee Tor’, and the cavern at Castleton.⁷⁵ Dorothy’s positive accounts of Matlock and Buxton demonstrate that her indifference to urban spaces elsewhere in the novel relates to their industrial character (see ‘Industrial settings’, below). However, as a native of North Wales, she is dismissive of the landscape: ‘the country between Matlock and Buxton is a succession of hilly moors, which have less grandeur than mountains, and less beauty than plains’.⁷⁶ Here Hutton draws on her own observation that the ‘country around Buxton [...] affords little variety’.⁷⁷ *The Welsh Mountaineer* exemplifies the equivocality of the image of Derbyshire created by these novels: although they present the county as remote, they often juxtapose it with spaces even further from London. Derbyshire is sometimes portrayed as a stepping stone to the North of England, and is therefore compared with it, for example in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*. The Midlands passage is the shortest section of Victor’s journey to Scotland: his stay in Matlock is described in a single paragraph. In contrast to the South of

⁷¹ Duckworth, p. 38.

⁷² Donald Greene, ‘Pemberley Revisited’, *Persuasions* 1 (1979), p. 12.

⁷³ Doody, p. 298.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; Barchas, ‘How Celebrity Name-Dropping Leads to a New Location for Pemberley’.

⁷⁵ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 108; p. 134.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 133.

⁷⁷ Hutton Beale, p. 41.

England, Victor notes that Derbyshire's landscape is more similar to 'the scenery of Switzerland', albeit 'on a lower scale'.⁷⁸ When he leaves after becoming distressed by the recollection of his homeland provoked by the 'cabinets of natural history', he finds Cumberland and Westmoreland still more similar to Switzerland.⁷⁹ Derbyshire is similarly presented as subordinate to more northern spaces in *Pride and Prejudice*. It is a compromise destination when Elizabeth and the Gardiners are 'obliged to give up the Lakes, and substitute a more contracted tour'.⁸⁰ Elizabeth is 'excessively disappointed' not to be travelling further north.⁸¹ Shelley and Austen's depictions of Derbyshire as a liminal space at the entrance to the North of England are typical of the county's role in this corpus (for further discussion, see 'Incidental tourism', below). This liminality relates not only to the county's location but also its topography: Derbyshire is 'centred [...] on the great divide separating Highland and Lowland Britain'.⁸² This allows novelists to represent the county as offering a compromise between genuine remoteness and the domesticated rural.

The city of Derby appears only in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. The extent to which the county town was viewed differently to its rural hinterlands is demonstrated by Dorothy's ironic comment that 'at Derby I recollected that I was in Derbyshire'.⁸³ Her brief observations on the city are disparaging, and show Hutton's habitual focus on ecclesiastical architecture: 'at Derby the steeple has worn out the church', 'If I were the steeple, I am afraid I should be ashamed [...]'.⁸⁴ Hutton acknowledges the area's industrial character. This is highly unusual in my corpus and exemplifies her more nuanced approach to representing urban spaces. Dorothy 'visited the silk-mills' in Derby, an example of industrial tourism which is rare in these novels but was not uncommon in reality; tourists were known to visit the textile mills.⁸⁵ Dorothy's interest is inspired by the 'history of an old soldier' she met in Shropshire.⁸⁶ Hutton includes the soldier's life story as it was related to Dorothy: his childhood is almost identical to that of her father, William Hutton, as recorded in his

⁷⁸ Shelley, p. 111.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 265.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Childs, p. 13.

⁸³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 107.

⁸⁴ Ibid., iii, p. 106.

⁸⁵ Ibid., iii, p. 107; Childs, p. 95.

⁸⁶ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 17.

autobiography. Both men were born in Derby and went to work in the silk-mill aged seven, although William Hutton reports that this was officially ‘too young’.⁸⁷ Aged ten, the soldier went to work for his ‘uncle, a stocking-maker at Nottingham’, just as William Hutton did, although at fourteen.⁸⁸ Hutton uses her father’s childhood in Derby and Nottingham as the foundation of a moral lesson about ‘retributive justice’.⁸⁹ The soldier’s father, who treated him with ‘great indifference’ (reflecting the ‘indifference’ shown by William Hutton’s own father) ‘died [...] in great poverty and misery’.⁹⁰ The soldier also reports the deaths of the cruel uncle who gave him a ‘severe beating’ and his aunt’s physically abusive second husband.⁹¹ Hutton creates these immoral characters in order to show them being deservedly punished. This is one point of difference from her father’s real life: William Hutton described his ‘generous friendly uncle’.⁹² Hutton’s choice to associate this moral with urban industrial settings is typical of the negative image of such spaces in novels of this period. However, her condemnation of the working conditions in the textile trade provides a more detailed picture of Midlands industry than appears in any other novel in my corpus (as further discussed under ‘Industrial settings’, below).

Hutton’s brief use of the Nottingham stocking manufactory from her father’s childhood is the only appearance of the city in this group of novels. As a ‘major centre of gentry leisure and residence’, Nottingham is a notable exclusion.⁹³ There are also no other appearances of the county of Nottinghamshire, which demonstrates that the appeal of neighbouring Derbyshire to this group of authors is largely attributable to the Peak District. The absence of representations of Nottinghamshire in these novels suggests that the county’s cultural associations would not have been conducive to their generic rural ideal: the county was defined by its city. Nottingham had a ‘large population of Dissenters’ and their ‘major role in urban government’ in the city and neighbouring Derby is another reason for the exclusion of these cities from my corpus. Their representation would not be in keeping with

⁸⁷ William Hutton, *The Life of William Hutton, F.A.S.S. Including A Particular Account of The Riots at Birmingham in 1791. To Which is Subjoined, the History of His Family, Written by Himself, and Published by his Daughter, Catherine Hutton* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1816), p. 11.

⁸⁸ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 25.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 93.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; William Hutton, p. 9.

⁹¹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer.*, iii, p. 40.

⁹² William Hutton, p. 22.

⁹³ Dyer, p. 108.

these novels' primarily Anglican ideals (see 'Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture', below).⁹⁴

Leicester also does not appear, but this is more easily explained: it 'lagged behind Nottingham as a genteel centre' and was dismissed by Gilpin as having 'little beauty'.⁹⁵ The county of Leicestershire is included briefly in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. William Hutton's autobiography records that at 'Mountsorrel I had an uncle who was a Grocer', 'at Swithland, two miles distant, three crabbed aunts'.⁹⁶ Hutton fictionalises this in her soldier's tale into an incident in which he ran away from work 'to go to a village near Mountsorrel, where two of my mother's sisters resided'.⁹⁷ The county later reappears in his story when he 'passed through Loughborough without stopping' and was offered work 'near Market-Harborough' by a 'farmer's son'.⁹⁸ *Trecothick Bower* also includes passages set in Leicestershire, because the Battle of Bosworth is a key event in the plot. Trecothick has to go 'to the expected scene of action, but without absolutely declaring himself for either side' because 'he was to fear avowing himself would be the signal for his daughter's death'.⁹⁹ He is then tricked into attempting to rescue her from a nearby castle. Emmeline is in fact imprisoned at Catesby's mother's home (elsewhere in Leicestershire) at this point. Father and daughter are unexpectedly reunited in the county after her escape. Bosworth is only referred to in Roche's historical novel, despite the other novels' frequent references to Midlands historical sites (see 'Historical references'). This could be due to the disappointing appearance of the battlefield. Samuel Ireland wrote in 1795 that it 'now presents little more than an extensive range of modern enclosures'.¹⁰⁰

Northamptonshire is the second most widely used East Midlands setting. The county is the location of the estates of some especially wealthy characters, reflecting its having 'distinguished itself in the creation of parks' in the process of enclosure.¹⁰¹ Austen's

⁹⁴ Paul A. Elliott, *Enlightenment, Modernity and Science: geographies of scientific culture in Georgian England* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co., 2010), p. 190; p. 217.

⁹⁵ Dyer, p. 109; Gilpin, ii, p. 245.

⁹⁶ William Hutton, p. 5.

⁹⁷ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 32.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, pp. 44-45.

⁹⁹ Roche, iii, pp. 89-90.

¹⁰⁰ Samuel Ireland, *Picturesque Views on the Upper, or Warwickshire Avon, From its Source at Naseby to Its Junction with the Severn at Tewkesbury: with Observations on the Public Buildings, and Other Works of Art in Its Vicinity* (London: R. Faulder and T. Egerton, 1795), pp. 22-23.

¹⁰¹ Doody, p. 313.

depiction of ‘the grandeur’ of Mansfield is characteristic of representations of Northamptonshire.¹⁰² Robert Clark asks ‘why Austen chose to set’ *Mansfield Park* in ‘a county of which she apparently knew nothing’, but Doody’s proposition that it is ‘a very good locale for a novelist looking for a wealthy region somewhat remote from London, hospitable to great houses [...]’ is a convincing description of its appeal.¹⁰³ As with Pemberley, scholars have attempted to establish Austen’s inspiration and intended location for Mansfield. By triangulating references to place names, John Wiltshire proposes that it is likely to be ‘somewhere in the neighborhood [sic] of Easton Maudit, not too far from Stoke Goldington, and within traveling distance of Stanwick’.¹⁰⁴ Clark builds on this work, suggesting that ‘Castle Ashby is a strong candidate’.¹⁰⁵ Austen also situates Sotherton Court, ‘one of the largest estates and finest places in the country’ (meaning neighbourhood), within Northamptonshire, ‘ten miles of indifferent road’ away from Mansfield.¹⁰⁶ Clark proposes that Stoke Park is a ‘possible *location* for’ Sotherton, but also notes its similarities to estates outside of the county, namely Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire and Hackwood House in Hampshire.¹⁰⁷ It appears Austen drew on a number of sources when creating her fictional Northamptonshire settings. In addition to the aforementioned grand estates, *Mansfield Park* also includes another setting typical of the generic rural ideal: the picturesque and ‘retired little village’.¹⁰⁸ This appears in the form of Thornton Lacey, the location of Edmund and Fanny’s first marital home, a ‘solid, roomy, mansion-like looking house’.¹⁰⁹ This association of Northamptonshire with generically idealised rural homes is also central to Sarah Green’s *The Fugitive, Or Family Incidents* (1815). The heroine’s childhood home ‘near Northampton’, is a typically ‘sweet cottage’, and her neighbour Dr Walton’s estate, Penley Grove, includes at least one ‘cottage ornée’.¹¹⁰ Pinchard’s *Mystery and Confidence*, like *Mansfield Park*, associates Northamptonshire with the prosperity of a ‘noble park’, but in this

¹⁰² Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 16.

¹⁰³ Robert Clark, “‘If You Could Discover Whether Northamptonshire Is a Country of Hedgerows’: The Location of ‘Mansfield Park’”, in *Jane Austen’s Geographies*, ed. by Robert Clark (London: Routledge, 2017), p. 221; Doody, p. 314.

¹⁰⁴ John Wiltshire, ‘Exploring “Mansfield Park”: in the footsteps of Fanny Price’, *Persuasions*, 28 (2006), p. 85.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Clark, “‘If You Could Discover [...]’”, p. 226.

¹⁰⁶ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Clark, “‘If You Could Discover [...]’”, p. 222.

¹⁰⁸ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 280.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 283.

¹¹⁰ Green, i, p. 8; p. 49; p. 15.

case the ‘magnificent’ estate is elevated by being labelled a ‘Castle’.¹¹¹ The heroine, a Welsh farmer’s daughter (see Chapter Two), is surprised when her husband reveals that he is an Earl and they will live in this ‘immense pile of building’.¹¹² As well as emphasising the county’s prosperity, all three of the novels set in Northamptonshire associate it with the positive aspects of the generic rural. Like Warwickshire, Northamptonshire’s relative proximity to London means it is less frequently associated with the negative consequences of remoteness.

3. Midlands trends

One of the primary differences between the West and East Midlands in my corpus is the influence of neighbouring regions. The border with Wales is significant in the representation of the West Midlands, creating associations of danger and wildness. In contrast, there is no corresponding interest in the East of England; characters do not regularly travel further East from the East Midlands. The distinction between the West and East Midlands’ primary industries (mining and textiles, respectively), is not often visible in these novels, because they rarely acknowledge the region’s industrial character. Claire Townsend argues that the East Midlands has been seen as having ‘lacked a coherent and consistent identity’ partly because of the competing influences of Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester, in contrast to the predominance of Birmingham in the West Midlands.¹¹³ The lack of extensive representation of any of these cities in these novels means the overall image they create of the Midlands lacks coherence in a similar way, because they choose not to represent any ‘dominant centre around which a region could coalesce’.¹¹⁴ In this section, I will consider trends which emerge in the representation of the Midlands as a region. I will discuss the contrasts between Midlands rural and urban spaces, with particular attention to the distinction between spaces associated with leisure as opposed to industry. I will then consider the extent to which the Midlands is represented as a distinctive region. This will involve discussion of the rare instances where Midlands dissenting traditions and scientific culture appear in my corpus, and the limited representation of Midlands dialect. In the final part of this section, I will turn to two ways in which the Midlands is treated distinctively in its centrality: its status in the

¹¹¹ Pinchard, i, p. 209; p. 230; p. 202.

¹¹² Ibid., i, p. 210.

¹¹³ Claire Townsend, ‘County versus region? Migrational connections in the East Midlands, 1700–1830’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 32 (2006), pp. 294–295.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

nation's history and how its role as a thoroughfare leads to tourism being represented as incidental.

The Midlands rural ideal

These novels' representation of the Midlands as overwhelmingly rural does not reflect the reality of the region; it became more urbanised throughout the latter half of the eighteenth century, as 'rural communities' grew 'slowly' in comparison with urban ones.¹¹⁵ Rural Midlands settings have primarily positive associations, because any negative aspects of rurality in my corpus usually relate to the additional quality of remoteness, with which the Midlands is less strongly associated than Wales and the West Country. The generic conservative association between rurality and domesticity is particularly prevalent in the Midlands. For example, in *Husband Hunters!!!*, Wilmot states that Georgina's presence has 'settled me in my home, which I have hated' and restored his 'natural habits' of domestic life.¹¹⁶ Many of the trends in the representation of the Midlands are the idealising tropes of the generic rural, inflected with a limited degree of regional specificity, which often relates to its central location within England. For example, the association between rural air and good physical health takes on a distinctive character in the Midlands, because here it is specifically associated with a lack of remoteness. This is illustrated in *Warwick Castle*. When Montague develops jaundice in Cumberland, he is told that 'the pure air of these mountain heights was at present too keen for his constitution'.¹¹⁷ He sees a 'visible change in his health' on his removal to the Midlands, partly due to the 'remarkably bracing and salubrious' Warwickshire air, as well as Leamington's spa waters (further discussed below).¹¹⁸

One of the most ubiquitous ways in which the generic rural ideal is evoked in the Midlands is through its use as the setting of happy childhoods and, after a period of tribulation away from home, happy endings. The Midlands is the site of these ideals in *The Prior Claim*, *Strathallan*, and *The Fugitive*, in which the heroine marries and returns to the region where she grew up. In *Mansfield Park*, Fanny's anxious youth after arriving in Northamptonshire at the age of ten is not the conventionally happy childhood usually

¹¹⁵ Rowlands, p. 174.

¹¹⁶ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 119.

¹¹⁷ Prickett, ii, p. 42.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 54.

associated with rural settings. However, Austen's description of Fanny and Edmund's marital home at Thornton Lacey and their 'eventual acquisition of [the] Mansfield living by the death of Dr. Grant' conforms to the happy ending trope.¹¹⁹ It is even possible that Fanny and Edmund will inherit Mansfield Park itself. Erin A. Spampinato argues persuasively that 'we get no indication from the text that Tom's reform will involve marrying and creating a family of his own'.¹²⁰ This would complete Fanny's gradual ascension to the role of mistress of Mansfield Park; Austen continuously draws her closer to the estate's centre. Fanny's unhappiness during her visit to her native 'home' in Portsmouth appears to reverse the trope of the heroine's suffering when away from home.¹²¹ Her tribulations would typically take place in a setting with which she has no previous connection, usually London. Austen deliberately subverts the convention of homesickness, as Sir Thomas' plan for Fanny to become 'heartily sick of home' is accomplished.¹²² However, Fanny's eventual realisation that 'Portsmouth was Portsmouth. Mansfield was home' means that this passage actually conforms closely to the convention of urban suffering away from the idealised rural home.¹²³ The rural nature of the setting is a more important element of this trope than its being the birthplace of the heroine.

The 1810s saw national concern about the 'rising population and economic difficulties' leading to an 'increase of crime and [...] political and economic riots'.¹²⁴ In the Midlands, these threats were 'exacerbated not only by industrialisation but also by the decline of industry in rural areas'.¹²⁵ These regional issues are seldom acknowledged in my corpus. *Faith and Fiction* contains a rare example of the Midlands being particularly associated with poverty: Ellen notes the 'wretched hamlets' of Staffordshire.¹²⁶ As the novel was published in 1816, this may appear to be a reflection on the economic decline following the Napoleonic Wars, but the plot takes place in the eighteenth century. Instead of acknowledging the reality of the Midlands' economic problems, which would also entail greater engagement with urban settings, these novels often promote the generic rural ideal of paternalistic charity. The

¹¹⁹ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 547.

¹²⁰ Erin A. Spampinato, 'Tom Became What He Ought to Be: "Mansfield Park" as Homosocial Bildungsroman', *Studies in the Novel*, 51: iv (2019), p. 491.

¹²¹ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 425.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 499.

¹²⁴ Rowlands, p. 213.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, ii, p. 88.

Midlands is used notably often as a space in which to explore the practicalities of charity. This theme challenges the ‘romantic hopes inspired by the fine description given in novels’ of idealised relations with the poor, typically associated with more remote settings.¹²⁷ The Countess in *Strathallan* experiences this when she is disappointed to be ‘treated as little less than an invader’ by a Derbyshire mother whose children she dressed without her consent.¹²⁸ Lefanu rebukes the unrealistic expectations of ‘rural innocence’ created by other novelists by showing their effect on readers like the Countess.¹²⁹ Midlands heroines often model the reverse of this entitled behaviour. For example, in *The Prior Claim*, Emily regularly visits ‘the poor cottagers’ and gives practical assistance, but ‘no children drest in the uniform she gave, appeared to deck her triumphs’, ‘nor were [...] the roses and woodbines trained by her hand’.¹³⁰ Later in the novel, it is stated that ‘the Blandfords and the late Mr Morrison were so humane, so truly liberal to the industrious poor, that few villages were more flourishing’.¹³¹ This exemplifies the paternalism inherent in the supposedly practical philanthropy promoted in these Midlands novels. Although they challenge some of the fantasies of rural life perpetuated in novels with more remote settings, they preserve the notion of noblesse oblige. The landowners in these novels are said to deserve their power because they are effective masters, which reflects the conservatism at the heart of the generic rural ideal.

In these Midlands novels, the heroines’ future husbands are particularly often described as benevolent but efficient landlords, in keeping with this Tory model of paternalism. For example, in *A Traveller’s Tale*, Dorrington ‘looked into the situation of his poor tenants, he relieved their wants, he promoted their industry’, and is therefore held in ‘veneration’.¹³² Similarly, in *Mystery and Confidence*, when the disguised Earl of St. Aubyn asks a landlady in a village near his estate about his reputation, ‘she gave him a very high character for his charity to the poor, and kindness to his servants and dependents’.¹³³ The ideal landowner was becoming an established trope during the 1810s, following Maria Edgeworth’s presentation of a fictional ‘blueprint’ for paternalism and criticism of absentee

¹²⁷ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 4.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Iliff, i, p. 95.

¹³¹ Ibid., ii, p. 215.

¹³² Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, iii, p. 19.

¹³³ Pinchard, i, p. 188.

landlords ‘who expect feudal obedience without assuming feudal responsibility’.¹³⁴ This ideal appears notably more often in the Midlands than in my other case study regions; it is being brought into the centre of the nation. Austen’s emphasis on the responsibility of the upper classes through her Midlands heroes, Darcy and Edmund, is characteristic of this trend. Like the heroines of *A Traveller’s Tale* and *Mystery and Confidence*, Elizabeth hears her future husband praised. Darcy’s housekeeper describes him as ‘the best landlord, and the best master [...] that ever lived’, and even the Lambton residents who see him as proud acknowledge that he ‘did much good among the poor’.¹³⁵ Edmund embodies the same Tory ideal of upper-class responsibility in his intention to be ‘constantly resident’ at his living at Thornton Lacey.¹³⁶ Moral domestic fiction often includes an emphasis on both the landlord and the clergyman being ‘integrated in provincial life’; as Mandal argues, this ‘dynamic is fundamentally conservative’, giving ‘greater potency’ to ‘existing hegemonic structures’.¹³⁷ In *Mansfield Park*, Austen criticises ‘improvements’ which constitute ‘a widening of the gap between church and house’.¹³⁸ Although the social model promoted in these Midlands novels initially appears to be more liberal than the untargeted charity more commonly depicted in my other case study regions, its emphasis on the responsibility of the upper classes is typically conservative. As the Midlands is at the centre of England, it is associated with a more practical form of rural idealism than that which is explored in more remote spaces such as Wales. The Midlands could less easily be associated with alternative social models without the implication that the novelist was calling for societal change (this is further discussed under ‘Female freedom’, below). These novels overwhelmingly use the region to present a conservative, and specifically Tory, message, through the disproportionate representation of idealised rural settings, with an emphasis on morality, domesticity, and responsible governance by a benevolent landowning class.

¹³⁴ Bellamy, p. 61; Trumpener, ‘National Character, Nationalist Plots’, p. 693.

¹³⁵ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, p. 276; p. 292.

¹³⁶ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 288.

¹³⁷ Mandal, ‘Evangelical Fictions’, pp. 268-9.

¹³⁸ Duckworth, p. 54.

Spa towns, tourist destinations, and cathedral cities

Where these novels do occasionally include urban settings in the Midlands, these are mostly the region's more fashionable centres, rather than its industrial towns and cities. Towns are often represented in a more specific manner than their hinterlands, because, by definition, they do not conform to the rural ideal. They most often appear in this corpus in relation to tourism. As the Midlands is not coastal, the role commonly given to seaside towns as the setting of plot points relating to leisure (for example in the West Country novels) is exclusively held by inland resorts. Midlands spa towns have similar associations to those in the West Country, and the region also contains urban spaces whose appeal lies in their historical associations. Both of these types of town are central to Prickett's *Warwick Castle*, which includes passages set in Leamington and Warwick. Leamington was 'the Midlands' only markedly successful spa' in this period (Buxton, Matlock and Malvern were 'still very small', see below for discussion).¹³⁹ Leamington's development was stimulated by its 'close proximity to a traditional leisure town in Warwick'.¹⁴⁰ *Warwick Castle* is the novel in my corpus which contains the most extensive representation of urban Midlands settings, because Prickett uses it to promote her home county of Warwickshire as a tourist site of historical interest. Unlike Prickett herself, her characters are unfamiliar with Leamington, which Frances spells 'Lemmington' when she first mentions it as 'a bathing-place in Warwickshire, whose waters [...] are somewhat similar in their properties to those of the Cheltenham springs'.¹⁴¹ Leamington is chosen for Montague's recuperation because the couple wish 'to pass unnoticed and unknown', which would not have been possible at Cheltenham.¹⁴² Frances describes how Leamington has 'rapidly grown into a place of some consequence in fashionable estimation', but was still 'in its infancy' at the time of their visit in approximately 1807.¹⁴³ As a local, Prickett accurately reflects Leamington's 'rapid rise' in the early decades of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁴ The 'assembly, card, and reading rooms', 'theatre, library and picture-gallery', as well as the 'new set of baths, with a pump room' are mentioned in a

¹³⁹ Dyer, p. 99.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Prickett, ii, p. 43.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Rowlands, p. 174.

footnote.¹⁴⁵ Although there are ‘several good boarding-houses and hotels’, the Montagues struggle to find lodgings as the town is busy, then find their hotel unbearably noisy because it is ‘assembly night’, so they remove to an inn at Warwick.¹⁴⁶ Prickett’s representation of Leamington is, however, primarily positive. The waters are later reported to have ‘materially benefitted the deranged health of Montague’, who arrived with jaundice and a duelling injury.¹⁴⁷

The portrayals of Midlands leisure towns in the other novels are relatively brief. As in her brief description of Malvern in *Oakwood Hall* (see ‘West Midlands’, above), Hutton draws on her own travels in Dorothy’s descriptions of Derbyshire’s spa towns in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. These are notably positive in contrast to her condemnation of industrial spaces. Hutton visited Matlock ‘several times’ and described herself as ‘happy’ at Buxton.¹⁴⁸ Her experiences inform Dorothy’s detailed description of Matlock’s baths and river, and her wry observation on Buxton:

the company live and dance in fine houses built in the form of a crescent, horses live in palaces built in the form of a circle, and men ride on horseback sheltered from the weather.¹⁴⁹

Although this comment shows Dorothy’s perspective as a rural outsider, it is far less damning than her remarks on industrial towns. Buxton also appears in *Strathallan*, in which it is a minor setting associated with the less morally scrupulous characters, as is typical for a fashionable urban space in fiction of this period. The scheming Countess writes from the ‘Crescent, Buxton’ that she has been advised to ‘try the hot springs of Matlock and Buxton’.¹⁵⁰ The recently reformed Arbella also writes from the town to report that O’Hara has eloped with the widow whom Stockwell expected to marry, and Fitzroy has returned to his ‘old amusement of breaking hearts’.¹⁵¹

Other towns are included in these novels due to their status as tourist destinations. Stratford-upon-Avon appears briefly in many of them, as characters often visit it to engage in

¹⁴⁵ Prickett, ii, p. 60.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., ii, p. 60; p. 49.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., ii, p. 102.

¹⁴⁸ Hutton Beale, pp. 38-40.

¹⁴⁹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 134.

¹⁵⁰ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 212.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 490.

Shakespearean tourism (see ‘Historical references’). Hutton’s novels contain the most tourism and therefore include descriptions of an unusually wide range of Midlands urban spaces, but even Hutton’s descriptions of these towns are often as short as a sentence or paragraph. In *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Hutton briefly describes Dorothy’s visits to several cathedral cities including Coventry, Lichfield, and Shrewsbury (see ‘West Midlands’ above, and further discussion of Coventry below under ‘Historical significance’). Hutton portrays all of these urban settings through the lens of Dorothy’s upbringing in rural Wales. For example, she finds Shrewsbury ‘grand’ but declares that ‘the streets are frequently so narrow, that I wonder the inhabitants find room to breathe’.¹⁵² Through Dorothy’s narration, Hutton makes explicit the prevailing attitude in my corpus that, while urban spaces are inferior to the rural, fashionable towns are preferable to industrial ones. That leisure towns are depicted more frequently and extensively in my corpus relates partly to the expectation that the reader may have been familiar with such destinations (culturally, if not from personal experience), but also to the novelists’ exclusion of the industrial reality of the Midlands.

Industrial settings

In these novels, Midlands industrial spaces are more widely acknowledged than those in Wales or the West Country, although the extent of their representation is still limited. The brief passages set in industrial urban spaces in several of these novels are part of what makes their representation of the Midlands distinctive. Their occasional inclusion despite their contravention of the generic rural ideal suggests that these novelists saw the Midlands as more unavoidably industrial than Wales or the West Country. However, these Midlands industrial descriptions are limited to certain passages in Hutton’s novels, and brief references in a small number of other novels. The overwhelming majority of novels using Midlands settings ignore the ongoing industrialisation of the region since the eighteenth century; this is typical of their exclusion of topics which do not conform to the generic rural ideal. Some of the Midlands’ most important industrial centres, including Leicester and Wolverhampton, do not appear at all. The marginalisation of industrial spaces in these novels is partly explained by the characters on whom they focus. As is conventional, they almost exclusively follow the lives of the gentry and occasionally superior farmers. These groups looked to more

¹⁵² Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 28.

fashionable urban centres for the ‘same services’ which the ‘industrial classes, rich and poor’ obtained in ‘industrial towns’.¹⁵³ There is little acknowledgement that the fruits of industrial activity would have facilitated the protagonists’ lifestyles. As is typical in novels of this period, the main characters’ wealth is rarely stated to have been made in trade or industry, and the side characters whose wealth does come from such sources are portrayed as vulgar. For example, in *Strathallan*, Mrs Stockwell, whose wealth comes from ‘a carpet manufactory, at Kidderminster’, is represented as uneducated through her consistent use of both written and spoken nonstandard English.¹⁵⁴ Her son Sam, who has inherited the factory, is maligned for his ignorance of ‘country matters’, such as hunting.¹⁵⁵ As it is never described, the factory is an absent presence in *Strathallan*, like the theme of industry across the wider group of novels. This is also comparable to the role of colonial wealth in this corpus. For example, the Caribbean plantations in *Mansfield Park* are highly significant but are never directly represented. A ‘carpet-manufactory of considerable extent’ is also mentioned in Frances’ brief description of the industrial face of Warwick in *Warwick Castle*.¹⁵⁶ She also notes that the town is ‘now considerably increased by the establishment of several beneficial manufactories, and the advantages of a navigable canal from Birmingham’.¹⁵⁷ These industrial spaces are remarked on as landmarks, in keeping with Prickett’s guidebook-like style, but the descriptions are brief because they are not in keeping with the novel’s portrayal of Warwickshire as ideally rural. Similarly, the fleeting description of Birmingham in the novel focuses on its industrial and commercial roles: Frances notes the ‘superb shops’ and the characters engage in industrial tourism, spending a day ‘visiting such of its manufactories as we could gain access to’.¹⁵⁸

Hutton’s *Oakwood Hall* and especially *The Welsh Mountaineer* contain the most sustained engagement with the industrial Midlands. Hutton uses her local knowledge of the region in order to associate her settings with the dominant local industries. In *Oakwood Hall*, when describing Worcester, Jane relates having ‘took a piece of china for two guineas price’, despite having intended ‘to admire, not to buy’.¹⁵⁹ She names a real shop on Worcester High

¹⁵³ Rowlands, p. 189.

¹⁵⁴ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 43

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹⁵⁶ Prickett, ii, p. 94.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 93.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, ii, p. 45; p. 48.

¹⁵⁹ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, iii, p. 40

Street, ‘Chamberlain and Son’, and reports its success: ‘it was impossible to make their articles too costly [...] the most exquisite found the readiest sale’.¹⁶⁰ This positive consumer experience stands in contrast with Hutton’s more negative descriptions of industrial spaces in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. Dorothy’s account of riding from Wolverhampton to Birmingham records in great detail the consequences of mining in the region: ‘the whole air was impregnated with smoke’.¹⁶¹ At Wednesbury, Dorothy describes sinkholes caused by mining, including a house that had fallen into a ‘chasm’, as well as having travelled ‘over a large field, where the coal beneath the surface was on fire’.¹⁶² She also relates a story about a woman being found ‘dead’ in a pit with the ‘flesh’ stripped ‘from the bones of her feet, like meat that had been over-roasted’.¹⁶³ Hutton satirises wilful ignorance of the benefits of industrial production for the upper classes through Dorothy’s wondering ‘what could induce men to [...] bury themselves in a coal-mine, six days in the week?’.¹⁶⁴ Hutton does not include Birmingham in much detail (see ‘West Midlands’, above), but Dorothy’s descriptions of the city as ‘the emporium of the smokeries’ and its shops as ‘bewitching’ succinctly convey its industrial and commercial role.¹⁶⁵

Hutton portrays the East Midlands’ textile industry similarly negatively, later in *The Welsh Mountaineer*. She uses the device of Dorothy recording the life story of the ‘old soldier’ in order to condemn the working conditions there.¹⁶⁶ As I discussed in the East Midlands section, Hutton uses details from her father’s childhood to portray a silk-mill in Derby and a stocking factory in Nottingham. This accurately reflects the towns’ particular specialities. Hutton emphasises the long working hours at the silk-mill, based on her father’s biography: the soldier describes working ‘from five o’clock in the morning, to seven at night’.¹⁶⁷ He also recounts being beaten with ‘sticks and rods’, which reflects William Hutton’s having been physically ‘scarred for life’ by such a beating.¹⁶⁸ The soldier’s recollection of having been fed ‘very sparingly’ resembles William Hutton’s comments on

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, iii, pp. 40-41; Sonia F.G. Parkinson, ‘Chamberlain, Robert’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/5051>>.

¹⁶¹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 31.

¹⁶² Ibid., i, pp. 32-33.

¹⁶³ Ibid., i, p. 34.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., i, p. 30.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., i, p. 35.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., iii, p. 17.

¹⁶⁷ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, pp. 21-22.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.; Childs, p. 95.

having ‘experienced a scanty cupboard’.¹⁶⁹ By drawing on her father’s experiences, Hutton is able to accurately reflect the ‘often appalling’ conditions in the textile industry, in order to condemn them.¹⁷⁰ This message is emphasised when Dorothy ‘visit[s] the silk-mills’ in Derby, inspired by the soldier’s story.¹⁷¹ Gilpin recommended that tourists seek out these factories: ‘a person curious in machinery would be much amused by the silk-mill at Derby’.¹⁷² Hutton’s greater compassion for the child labourers is demonstrated in Dorothy’s discomfort: ‘my heart recoiled at the view of such a number of little prisoners, and my stomach revolted against the smell’.¹⁷³ However, as at Birmingham, Hutton highlights Dorothy’s unwillingness to face the consequences of industry, or acknowledge her part in it as a consumer. She ‘retreated as fast as [she] was able’.¹⁷⁴ Dorothy’s discomfiting experience reflects a transition taking place in the role of industrial tourism in the early decades of the nineteenth century: ‘whereas in the eighteenth century docks and factories had attracted the admiration of well-born tourists, by the 1840s horrified travellers tended to avert their gaze’.¹⁷⁵ Hutton satirises the refusal to acknowledge the reality of urban industrial spaces demonstrated in other novels of the period, including those in my corpus. As discussed above, in representing the Midlands as primarily rural, the authors of these novels are generally able to avoid describing contemporary social and economic problems, and thus to advocate for the maintenance of the political status quo.

The lack of engagement with industry in the vast majority of these Midlands novels means they also overlook the ‘political and economic riots’ which took place in the region’s urban centres in the early nineteenth century, and the ‘Luddite disturbances’ which increased throughout the 1810s, particularly after the end of the war.¹⁷⁶ A notable exception is an unusual passage in *Warwick Castle*:

Birmingham has [...] been unfortunately subjected to numerous repetitions of those internal convulsions which, in the paroxysm of suffering, the frenzied feeling of *necessity*

¹⁶⁹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 28; William Hutton, p.18.

¹⁷⁰ John Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000* (London: Longman, 1988), p. 296.

¹⁷¹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 107.

¹⁷² Gilpin, ii, p. 244.

¹⁷³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 107.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ellis, p. 703.

¹⁷⁶ Rowlands, p. 213; Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000*, p. 241.

has unhappily excited. But the ‘reign of terror’ and devastation, I fervently hope, is at an end.¹⁷⁷

Prickett’s narrator, Frances, shows some sympathy for the rioters’ economic justification. However, in using the phrase ‘reign of terror’ she invites a comparison with the French Revolution, evoking the conservative fears of a similar radical uprising in Britain which remain unspoken in the majority of the other novels in my corpus.¹⁷⁸ A similar sense of threat stoked the ‘Church and King’ riots of 1791, in which Unitarians were targeted, including the Hutton family and their ‘pastor and friend’ Joseph Priestley.¹⁷⁹ The absence of any discussion of these events in these Midlands novels relates to their exclusion not only of industrial settings, but also of any mention of dissenting religion.

Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture

In my corpus, the novelists using Midlands settings entirely avoid mentioning the tradition of dissent which was associated with parts of the region including Nottingham, Derby, Birmingham, and the area which later became known as the Black Country.¹⁸⁰ The closest approximation to a comment on dissenting religion is the generalised reference to riots in Birmingham in *Warwick Castle* (see above), which may be intended to include the ‘Church and King’ riots. Even as a Unitarian herself, Hutton does not discuss the dissenting traditions of the Midlands openly in her novels, although she does mention Methodism in other settings, such as Wales (see Chapter Two). Hutton also does not draw on her own experiences during the Birmingham riots in her novels, although their influence can be seen in her dislike of the city (see ‘West Midlands’, above). The Midlands Enlightenment is not mentioned in Hutton’s novels either. When engaging with semi-autobiographical material, Hutton appears to have wanted to avoid some of the controversial topics that her novels otherwise often address. Dorothy’s ignorance of inequality in *The Welsh Mountaineer* (see ‘Industrial settings’, above) ironically mirrors other authors’ wilful avoidance of such topics. Hutton’s politics differ from the prevailing Toryism of the rest of the novels in my corpus. She declared her intention to

¹⁷⁷ Prickett, ii, p. 47.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Hutton Beale., p. 91.

¹⁸⁰ See: Beckett, *The East Midlands from AD 1000*; Peter Jones; Rowlands.

stay out of party politics, but described herself as ‘for equality, if by this term is meant an equal distribution of rights and privileges, protection and security’, although she mocked the possibility of ‘equality of property’ as unrealistic.¹⁸¹

Enlightenment scientific progress is rarely acknowledged in my corpus. The only reference to Birmingham’s rich intellectual culture is the very brief comment in *Warwick Castle* that the city has an ‘intelligent Philosophical Society.’¹⁸² In the Romantic period, science was sometimes seen as ‘dangerous, demonic’, and ‘revolutionary’, qualities which are not conducive to the conservative ideal promoted by the majority of the novels in my corpus.¹⁸³ The only novel which meaningfully engages with the Midlands Enlightenment is Lefanu’s *Strathallan*. Mr Melbourne, the heroine’s father, is a man of ‘science’, with a taste for ‘natural curiosities’ and an ‘endless’ interest in ‘blades of grass, and butterflies’ wings’.¹⁸⁴ He appears to be based partly on Erasmus Darwin. Melbourne’s estate, the Rocks, bears a striking resemblance to Darwin’s botanic garden near Lichfield, as described by Anna Seward. Darwin’s garden was ‘amongst the only rocks which neighbour that city [Lichfield] so nearly’ and contained a ‘fountain’ in the form of a ‘rock’ that ‘drops perpetually’ with water.¹⁸⁵ Lefanu’s fictional estate is surrounded by ‘all that nature can supply in rocks [...]’ and its most distinctive feature is a landmark called ‘the Fountain of the Rocks’.¹⁸⁶ Lefanu appears to have fictionalised elements of Darwin’s garden and relocated it to nearby Derbyshire, where Darwin created gardens in other periods of his life.¹⁸⁷ Melbourne’s collection of ‘specimens of plants and mosses’ at the Rocks resembles Darwin’s ‘systematic collection of botanically significant plants’ in his Lichfield garden.¹⁸⁸ This rare example of an apparent reference to the Midlands’ scientific culture implies an expectation that the reader will associate the region with its Enlightenment thinkers. However, it is not a serious or prominent theme of the novel: Mr Melbourne is a relatively minor character whose eccentricity the reader is invited to find amusing. None of the other novels in my corpus appear to refer to Darwin or Seward. In her *Summer Excursions* travel writing, Spence notes

¹⁸¹ Hutton Beale, p. 115.

¹⁸² Prickett, ii, p. 46.

¹⁸³ Uglow, p. 499.

¹⁸⁴ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 15; p. 13; p. 19.

¹⁸⁵ Anna Seward, *Memoirs of the Life of Dr Darwin, Chiefly During His Residence at Lichfield, with Anecdotes of his Friends, and Criticisms on his Writings* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1804), pp. 125-127.

¹⁸⁶ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 13; p. 72.

¹⁸⁷ Elliott, *Enlightenment, Modernity, and Science*.

¹⁸⁸ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 78; Elliott, *Enlightenment, Modernity, and Science*, p. 52.

that Darwin ‘was an inhabitant’ of Lichfield and ‘instituted a botanical society’.¹⁸⁹ She also mentions ‘Miss Seward (rather an admired poet of the present day)’ being buried in the cathedral.¹⁹⁰ Despite the characters in her novel *A Traveller’s Tale* visiting Lichfield, Spence does not describe the city or use any of her knowledge of its intellectual culture (see ‘West Midlands’, above). This is typical of the selective framing of these novels in order to exclude any themes that were not relevant to the generic rural ideal. The novelists represented in my corpus generally depict the Midlands in a way which promotes a conservative and Anglican worldview, whether they wished to do so explicitly, or merely avoid challenging the status quo. Hutton is the notable exception but remains relatively reticent about politics.

Dialect

The representation of linguistic variation is even more limited in these novels than in those set in Wales and the West Country. All of the authors discussed in this chapter, except Hutton, entirely overlook the existence of Midlands dialects. This reflects their general tendency to represent the Midlands as generically rural rather than to engage with its distinctiveness. Only Hutton attempts to differentiate between its subregions; she includes several characters who speak a range of Midlands dialects. As was conventional in novels of this period, Hutton’s dialect-speaking characters are all working class and the majority of them are servants to the protagonists. She often inserts metacommentary drawing the reader’s attention to the distinctiveness of these characters’ speech. Her narrators sometimes record local dialect for their correspondents’ information. For example, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy remarks that ‘a Derbyshire man [...] does not like the trouble of pronouncing words, and therefore shortens them as much as he can’.¹⁹¹ The phrase ‘Ittle rene t’dey; it leuks fow up’ th’ Grin’ is used to illustrate Dorothy’s observation about contracted words.¹⁹² Hutton uses similar contractions and non-standard vowel sounds when attempting to represent a Derbyshire dialect in *Oakwood Hall*, which suggests she is trying to replicate her perception of a speech pattern with which she was familiar from her travels. Two speakers of Midlands dialects appear in *Oakwood Hall*’s primary Yorkshire setting, where their speech is remarked

¹⁸⁹ Spence, *Summer Excursions*, i, p. 114.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 133.

¹⁹² Ibid.

on as distinctive. The first is Tom, the wagoner, a ‘native of Derbyshire’.¹⁹³ Hutton’s phonetic representation of his speech primarily takes the form of the contraction of consonants, particularly the letter ‘T’, as in the above example from *The Welsh Mountaineer*. She also uses alternative vowels in order to suggest non-standard pronunciation, for example ‘purtends’ and ‘mistekken’, and consistently replacing ‘I’ with ‘oi’.¹⁹⁴ She later includes ‘a specimen of dialect’ in the form of a boy brought up in Warwickshire.¹⁹⁵ His speech is characterised by extensive contractions, such as ‘becoz’, ‘it aynt’, and ‘may’be o’tother side’.¹⁹⁶ Hutton once again attempts to represent distinctive local vowel sounds, likely based on personal knowledge of the Warwickshire dialect, as a native of nearby Birmingham: ‘Uffi work at this raut’ (If I work at this rate).¹⁹⁷ The narrator’s comment that ‘Warwickshire is not inferior to Yorkshire itself, in its abuse of the English language’ is typical of the linguistic prescriptivism that was widespread in this period.¹⁹⁸ It does, however, acknowledge that the Midlands had a distinctive linguistic culture, as well as subregional differences. Hutton attempts to represent a Leicestershire dialect in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, once again using contractions, such as ‘o’the natur of’things’, and modified vowel sounds, including ‘harrast’ (harvest), to describe the speech of the ‘farmer’s son’ who offers the soldier work ‘near Market-Harborough’.¹⁹⁹ These examples show her attempts to distinguish between the dialects of different Midlands counties. Her use of contracted consonants is largely consistent across the region, and difficult to distinguish from the contractions conventionally used to represent generic working-class speech. However, Hutton does appear to associate each county’s dialect with subtly different vowel changes.

Hutton uses a Midlands dialect most extensively in her portrayal of Ralph and Martha, servants in *The Miser Married* who live in the Wye Valley (as discussed above, this novel demonstrates the permeability of definitions of the Midlands and the West Country). Hutton’s conceit is that the novel is a series of letters written by the characters, compiled by an editor. Ralph’s letters are almost indecipherable, for example he states ‘I conna so mutch as eat rite,

¹⁹³ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, i, p. 130.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 132; p. 131; p. 130.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 201.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 196.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 196.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 202.

¹⁹⁹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, p. 46.

ecksepting Ide ete nothing'.²⁰⁰ Martha, the housekeeper, writes slightly more intelligibly but still uses phonetic spellings, for example: 'I takes this hopertunity of letting you know my sinsare good witches'.²⁰¹ As these examples illustrate their written language, they are not as closely linked to their regional dialect as the above examples of speech. Instead, Hutton combines non-standard features in order to create comedy. For example, Martha ironically writes of her plan to 'keep a scule, and larn children to rede and spel' because she is a 'pretty good scollard'.²⁰² This is typical of the representation of non-standard English 'for comic effect' through 'a small number of stereotypical features' that was common in early nineteenth-century fiction.²⁰³ Hutton uses Midlands dialects in her novels partly because her novels are epistolary, and contain travel accounts, but also because her differing politics means she does not have the same conservative motivation to homogenise the region as her contemporaries. For example, from her own residence in Warwickshire, Prickett would have had ample knowledge of the local dialect; her choice not to represent it in *Warwick Castle* supports her generalising representation of the region.

Historical references

One of the most prominent ways in which these novels portray the Midlands as distinct from other regions is in the evocation of its particular historical associations. However, rather than representing the region in a genuinely nuanced way, the primary function of the many references to historic sites in these novels is to construct a more palatable alternative identity for the Midlands than its industrial reality. These novels often imply that the Midlands is central to the nation's history because it is at the centre of England. A typical example appears in *A Traveller's Tale*: when in Warwickshire, the characters go on 'excursions to their own and neighbouring county [sic], no two combining so much classic lore in any of the others throughout England'.²⁰⁴ They visit 'Kenilworth and Warwick Castles', as well 'Stratford-upon-Avon', all of which are common Warwickshire tourist destinations in these novels (see below).²⁰⁵ It is unclear whether by 'neighbouring county' Spence means

²⁰⁰ Hutton, *The Miser Married*, i, p. 145.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 6.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, i, p. 184.

²⁰³ Hodson and Broadhead, pp. 315-316.

²⁰⁴ Spence, *A Traveller's Tale*, iii, p. 21.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

Staffordshire, as the characters visit ‘Litchfield [sic]’, or Worcestershire, because they also visit ‘Lord Littleton’s [sic] Hagley’.²⁰⁶ In her *Summer Excursions*, Spence relates having been excited to visit Hagley, only to find ‘it was not, however, Lord Lyttelton’s, but Lord Curzon’s Hagley’; the former is in Worcestershire and the latter in Staffordshire.²⁰⁷ As *Summer Excursions* was published a decade before *A Traveller’s Tale*, it appears likely that Spence is allowing her characters to have the experience she was disappointed to miss, rather than making the same mistake again. Spence’s representation of the Midlands as containing numerous ‘inviting objects worthy of the notice of the admirers of antiquity’ exemplifies its image in many of these novels.²⁰⁸

Prickett’s *Warwick Castle* makes the most significant and extensive use of the Midlands’ historical associations. The travel account section features descriptions of the famous sites visited by the characters, including Warwick Castle itself. Prickett emphasises its having been ‘formerly of much consequence in the interior of the kingdom’, and often evokes royal connections, which link the Midlands to the metropolitan centre of the nation.²⁰⁹ This is typical of the use of the Midlands in these novels to evoke a nationalistic ideal. Prickett’s attempt to combine local and national history in her novel is illustrated by the title page description:

Containing [...] the Descent and Achievements of the Ancient Earls of Warwick, from the earliest Period of their Creation [...] With some Account of Warwick, Birmingham, Leamington, Kenilworth, Stratford-upon-Avon, &c. [...] interspersed with Pieces of Local Poetry, Incidental Biography, and Authentic Anecdotes of English History.²¹⁰

A significant proportion of the passage set in Warwickshire is taken up by a lengthy history of the castle and a ‘pedigree of these war-like Barons’ (the Earls of Warwick), inspired by the description of their portraits.²¹¹ *Warwick Castle* is part of the resurgence in the genre of ‘quasi-novels’ in the 1810s and 1820s noted by Kelly: in these texts, ‘elements from other discourses’ can ‘dominate’ the frame narrative’.²¹² In the preface, Prickett explains her ‘plan’

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 20.

²⁰⁷ Spence, *Summer Excursions*, i, p. 117-118.

²⁰⁸ Spence, *A Traveller’s Tale*, iii, p. 20.

²⁰⁹ Prickett, ii, p. 74.

²¹⁰ Prickett, p. i.

²¹¹ Ibid., ii, p. 99.

²¹² Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 253.

of inserting ‘facts and personages of real life’ as a digression ‘in the middle of a fictitious tale’ in order to disseminate information about the castle.²¹³ This innovation in form and genre was problematic and arguably unsuccessful: *The Monthly Review* correctly predicted that it ‘is so dull’ that ‘the new species of composition thus introduced [...] will not find many imitators’.²¹⁴ That Prickett’s method of ‘concentrating whatever was interesting’ about the area involves extensive historical accounts demonstrates her belief that the main appeal of her Midlands setting is its history, and that it could not stand on its own merits as the primary setting of a novel.²¹⁵

Warwick Castle also contains a shorter but still detailed historical account of ‘the magnificent ruin’ of nearby Kenilworth Castle and its surroundings.²¹⁶ As well as appearing in *A Traveller’s Tale* (see above), the ‘stately ruins of Kennelworth [sic] Castle’ are also mentioned in *The Prior Claim*, as part of a sentence briefly relating a tourist excursion which also includes a visit to ‘the birth-place of the immortal Shakespeare’.²¹⁷ Stratford-upon-Avon, ‘established’ as a tourist destination by David Garrick’s Shakespeare Jubilee in 1769, appears in four of these novels.²¹⁸ As well as *The Prior Claim* and *A Traveller’s Tale*, characters visit it in *Warwick Castle* and *The Welsh Mountaineer*. In *Warwick Castle*, Prickett portrays Stratford with a level of detail appropriate to her purpose of conveying historical information to the reader. She provides descriptions of Shakespeare’s birthplace and tomb, and ‘the Avon, celebrated as the favourite stream of our immortal Bard’.²¹⁹ These novels place great emphasis on being “‘on the spot” where the author had once been bodily present’, a convention of Shakespearean and other literary tourism.²²⁰ For example, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy relates her excitement at having been ‘in the very house in which Shakespeare was born; and sat upon the very chair in which he was accustomed to sit’.²²¹ The prominence of Shakespearean tourism in these novels reflects their positioning of the Midlands as central to the nation’s history and culture.

²¹³ Prickett, pp. ix.

²¹⁴ ‘Art. 29. Warwick Castle’, *The Monthly Review; Or Literary Journal, Enlarged: From September to December, inclusive*, lxxviii (London: Becket and Porter, 1815), p. 217.

²¹⁵ Prickett, p. viii.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 81.

²¹⁷ Iliff, iii, p. 83.

²¹⁸ Richard Schoch, ‘The Birth of Shakespeare’s Birthplace’, *Theatre Survey*, 53 (2012), p. 191.

²¹⁹ Prickett, iii, p. 95.

²²⁰ Schoch, p. 187.

²²¹ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, i, p. 42.

Prickett and Hutton make the most extensive use of the Midlands' historical associations; their novels contain many secondary historical passages which characterise their differing styles. Prickett provides extensive historical detail in a comprehensive and guidebook-like style, in her effort to emphasise the attractions of Warwickshire for tourists and its centrality to a nationalistic narrative of British history. For example, she describes 'Offchurch, a beautiful village beyond Lemington [sic]', as 'interesting in its earlier history' because it 'formerly contained' the court of the Mercian King Offa, whose biography she relates.²²² In addition to the locations described above, Prickett also includes accounts of other Warwickshire sites including Guy's Cliff, Wedgnoock Park, and Stoneleigh Abbey. Hutton uses historical detail more sparingly, often combining it with comic commentary. For example, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy states that the name of 'the principal inn at Dunchurch' is named for 'the celebrated dun cow, the sovereign of these realms in the time of Guy, Earl of Warwick', and goes on to joke that 'the inn at Coventry does not show the same respect to its hero, Peeping Tom', before relating the story of Lady Godiva.²²³ Hutton's use of historical detail, although less extensive than Prickett's, also shows the same educational use of the travel narrative genre. For example, in *Oakwood Hall*, while describing her visit to Worcester Cathedral, Jane reports having seen the tombs of its founder, 'St. Woolstan', as well as those of 'King John' and 'Prince Arthur, son of Henry the seventh'.²²⁴ All of these mentions of Midlands historical sites affirm the centrality of the region to the nation's history.

This tendency is also visible in the two historical novels which feature settings in the Midlands. *Edgar* includes a brief passage in which the hero travels to Warwick Castle and sees 'the vast castle of Kenelworth [sic]', 'the lovely town of Warwick', and 'Guy's Cliff'.²²⁵ As this 'national tale' ends with Edgar's marriage to Warwick's daughter Julia, whom he met on this visit, Appleton emphasises the centrality of Warwick (both the Earldom and the place) to British history. In *Trecothick Bower*, the Battle of Bosworth is a key incident in the plot. Roche uses the reader's presumed knowledge of the outcome of the battle to create tension, as Trecothick avoids 'declaring himself for either side', then faces the anger of the victorious

²²² Prickett, iii, p. 51.

²²³ Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*, iii, pp. 8-9.

²²⁴ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, iii, pp. 41-42.

²²⁵ Appleton, i, pp. 142-143.

Henry, who confiscates his estates.²²⁶ This is another example of the Midlands being portrayed as central to the development of the nation. This theme appears explicitly in the examples above but is also implicit in many more minor historical references. However, it is important to note that many other Midlands novels in my corpus do not contain explicit references to historical events or sites. The primary image of the region remains one of generalised and even context-free rurality.

Incidental tourism

The conventions of the generic rural dictate that the Midlands settings depicted in these novels are frequently the heroines' childhood and/or marital homes. However, the region has a major secondary function, as a thoroughfare, or space through which characters pass on their way to another setting. Midlands tourism therefore takes place incidentally in these novels; it is rarely a destination in and of itself, unlike Wales or the West Country. This key point of difference in the representation of the Midlands from that of other regions relates to its central position in England. The Midlands functions as a liminal space in these novels, because it is a 'transitional *landscape*', in both a '*spatial*' and '*temporal*' sense.²²⁷ Stopovers in the Midlands were necessary because 'most of the major routes between London and the northern and western provinces' took travellers through the region.²²⁸ For example, in *Frankenstein*, Victor visits Matlock as a 'place of rest', having decided not to 'follow the great road to Edinburgh'.²²⁹ The novelistic representation of characters breaking their journeys in the Midlands often involves informative descriptions of the region's interesting sites (as discussed above), generally in a manner which assumes that the reader is unlikely to be familiar with them. This waypoint tourism appears in Hutton's novels: in *Oakwood Hall*, Jane passes through the region on travelling to Wales for a tour and, in *The Welsh Mountaineer*, Dorothy rides from North Wales to London, and nearly back again, before travelling north to Harrogate, also through the Midlands.

In other novels, characters travel to the Midlands itself, and enjoy it, but it is not their preferred or original destination. For example, in *Warwick Castle*, the Montagues intend to

²²⁶ Roche, iii, p. 89.

²²⁷ Andrews and Roberts, p. 1.

²²⁸ Dyer, p. 95.

²²⁹ Shelley, p. 111; p. 109.

spend their period of retirement in Cumberland but ultimately make the most of their necessary stay in Warwickshire. Similarly, in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth and the Gardiners' 'pursuit of novelty and amusement' in Derbyshire is successful, despite its being a 'contracted' version of their planned tour to the Lakes.²³⁰ As 'a small part of Derbyshire is all the present concern' of Austen's narrator, the more southerly parts of the Midlands through which they travel are dismissed as waypoints: 'Warwick, Kenilworth, Birmingham, etc. are sufficiently known'.²³¹ This appears to relegate these locations to their thoroughfare function, but it also reflects Austen's opinion that she could not improve her novel by repeating the observations of previous travellers, including Gilpin.²³² The Midlands' role as a thoroughfare region gives these tourist sections a different atmosphere from those in the West Country and Wales, which, as destinations intrinsic to themselves, are portrayed with more grandeur. When using a Midlands setting, these novelists feel the need to explicitly highlight its interestingness, rather than assuming the reader will already perceive it in that way. Prickett's repeated defence of her home county as 'of great historical interest' is a characteristic example.²³³ The presence of travel routes colours the representation of the Midlands so significantly because they are one of the main reasons why characters visit the region, and therefore why these authors include it in their novels.

4. Remoteness

Although the Midlands is less remote from London than Wales or the West Country are, it is still depicted as more remote than the Home Counties. The Midlands is equivocally remote in that it can be represented as both remote and central, sometimes within the same novel, depending on the subregion portrayed but also the attitude of the author and their characters. The subregions on the northern and western peripheries of the Midlands are more closely associated with the imagery and vocabulary of remoteness. This is because they are further from London and closer to the North of England and Wales, to which they function as a stepping stone, both literally, when characters travel through them, and metaphorically. For

²³⁰ Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, pp. 265-266.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² A. Walton Litz, 'The Picturesque in "Pride and Prejudice"', *Persuasions*, 1 (1979), 13, 15, 20-24; Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty [...]*.

²³³ Prickett, p. viii.

example, the space around the Welsh border is associated with inhospitable weather and ‘dangerous’ travel conditions, because it is treated similarly to Wales itself (see discussion of Shropshire under ‘The West Midlands’, above).²³⁴ However, remoteness remains a common motif even in novels set in the southern counties of the Midlands, despite their relative proximity to London. For example, Northamptonshire is described as ‘a county so remote from the metropolis’ in *The Prior Claim*.²³⁵ *Mansfield Park* also emphasises the cultural differences between London and Northamptonshire, as exemplified by Mary’s discovery that she cannot get a cart to transport her harp: ‘this will not do seventy miles from London’.²³⁶ This demonstrates that although remoteness in these novels often relates to distance from London, this can include symbolic distance, not only physical space. Overall, in my corpus, the Midlands is generally more strongly associated with the positive connotations of remoteness, such as retirement, than its negative aspects. This is because the positive connotations of retirement persist even in equivocally remote settings, as they are inextricably linked to the generic rural ideal.

Retirement

The ubiquity of the notion of retirement even in Midlands settings demonstrates that this was an ideal relating to a symbolic change of place into a rural location, rather than a definitive physical distance from London. Matilda’s childhood home, the Rocks, in *Strathallan*, is a typical example of the happy, ‘retired’ home.²³⁷ In my corpus, retirement is conventionally represented as a positive quality created by the combination of the pleasant connotations of rurality with remoteness, and the additional but related condition of ‘domestic peace’.²³⁸ In *Husband Hunters!!!*, Beauclerc makes explicit the connection between retirement and domestic happiness, in Wilmot’s statement: ‘I was by nature formed for retirement – for peaceful bliss – for domestic life’.²³⁹ Because of these connotations of retirement, Henry Crawford’s description of Thornton Lacey in *Mansfield Park* as a ‘retired little village’ is a

²³⁴ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 83.

²³⁵ Iliff, i, p. 24.

²³⁶ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 68.

²³⁷ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 248.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²³⁹ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 36.

clue to Edmund's happy domestic future with Fanny.²⁴⁰ Mansfield Park itself also functions as a retirement for Fanny in contrast to Portsmouth. However, the estate is simultaneously associated with a more negative kind of sequestration: Lady Bertram's decision to live 'wholly in the country' during her daughters' teenage years has stifling consequences which contribute to their bad decisions.²⁴¹ When Maria and Julia leave, the family's withdrawal from even the Northamptonshire social scene further restricts Fanny's horizons. She never gets the opportunity to attend the local balls that her cousins enjoyed. Austen's portrayal of retirement is more nuanced than is typical in novels of this period; she suggests it is both sometimes necessary and sometimes intellectually as well as physically restrictive (this is further discussed under 'Female freedom', below). The restrictiveness of retirement is conventionally shown to be outweighed by the benefits of morality and safety. For example, in *The Fugitive*, Emma has 'a strong desire of participating in those scenes, so different from the monotony of her country life', but when she does have to leave her 'retirement', she finds herself exposed to the typical urban difficulties of financial precariousness and threats of sexual assault.²⁴² Midlands heroines, like those in more remote settings, conventionally undergo a period of tribulation when they leave their retired homes.

The related convention in which a character's preference for retirement demonstrates their good morals also appears in the Midlands. For example, in *Strathallan*, the more worldly and morally inferior characters regard Mr Melbourne's extreme 'retirement' as eccentric.²⁴³ Miss Hautenville calls him 'an old Prospero, who lived there like a wizard in his cave'.²⁴⁴ As is often the case, Hutton engages with this trope in a more nuanced way. The Wye Valley setting of *The Miser Married* is initially associated with retirement because Charlotte removes there with her mother, while her inheritance is in Chancery. Hutton deviates from the typical association of retirement with peaceful domesticity when Charlotte's mother marries their neighbour, the titular miser, and they move into Winterdale Hall. The subsequent marital power struggle is an unusual departure from the generic image of household relations in a retired setting.

²⁴⁰ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 280.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

²⁴² Green, i, p. 86.

²⁴³ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 121.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

Risk

Overall, the negative connotations of remoteness appear less strongly in the Midlands than in Wales or the West Country. Where the Midlands is associated with danger, this often takes place in settings which are symbolically remote even if they are not as physically distant from London as similarly dangerous settings. In these instances, the wild qualities of the landscape are often emphasised in order to confer additional metaphorical remoteness on these spaces. This is the most explicit in *Strathallan*, when Sir Harold attempts to murder the titular hero on a rocky outcrop: he leads him to ‘one of their most solitary and savage recesses’ and ‘the highest point’, where he tries to shoot him, then throw him off the edge.²⁴⁵ The Rocks estate is in rural Derbyshire and this particular cliff is at a distance from the house, allowing for secrecy. This scene is therefore a microcosm of the conventional depiction of remote regions as dangerous due to their distance from civilisation. The physical danger of a wild landscape also appears in *Trecothick Bower*, when Emmeline escapes from Lady Catesby’s house by sliding down ‘a hollow of tremendous depth’, ‘at imminent hazard of my life’, then running ‘through the wild thickets and tangled vegetation’.²⁴⁶ Even after this perilous escape, the whole of rural Leicestershire is dangerous to her, as the Battle of Bosworth is taking place nearby, and she is at risk of being recaptured.

Similarly, the trope of superstition caused by isolation from civilisation sometimes appears in Midlands settings, but to a lesser extent than in those set in Wales and the West Country. *Warwick Castle* contains a typical example: the housekeeper at the lodge tells ‘miraculous goblin stories’ and believes the ‘wandering spirit’ of a ‘murdered’ woman ‘haunted the interior of Warwick Castle!’.²⁴⁷ Prickett replicates the conventional association of superstition with the working classes; it is the ‘inferior domestics’ who are afraid.²⁴⁸ The rumour is also encouraged by the nature of the setting. The narrator wonders, ‘what is a castle worth in modern times without a ghost?’.²⁴⁹ Midlands spaces are sometimes associated with superstition when the landscape is given the typically gothic connotations of antiquity or wildness. Bennett draws on both of these tropes in *Faith and Fiction*: the ‘ancient cave’ is

²⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 381.

²⁴⁶ Roche, ii, p. 175.

²⁴⁷ Prickett, iii, pp. 3-5.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

said to be ‘visited by the unquiet spirits of the murdered’.²⁵⁰ However, only the rustic Judith appears genuinely concerned: ‘didend [sic] you see the ghost, Miss?’.²⁵¹ Credulity about supernatural phenomena is mostly limited to lower-class characters, as is conventional, regardless of whether they are from the Midlands. For example, the only superstitious character in *Strathallan* is the governess Miss Langrish, who is hiding that she is the uneducated daughter of a servant. While staying in Derbyshire with her employers, she suffers uncontrollable terror when the Countess and her friends tell ‘ghost stories’ and read extracts from gothic fiction including ‘Otranto, Udolpho, [and] Montorio’.²⁵² This vulnerability causes Miss Langrish to ‘shriek’ that she sees ‘Strathallan’s ghost’ when he appears after his family have mistakenly announced his death.²⁵³

Although the remoteness of the house stokes Miss Langrish’s fears, there is no suggestion of any real hauntings in *Strathallan*. However, the novel’s plot hinges on several non-supernatural gothic tropes. Sir Harold hides his mother, Lady Julia, whom everyone else believes to be dead, in an unused wing at the Rocks. When she is first seen, her white clothing and ‘aërial transparency’ mean she could ‘pass for an inhabitant of the other world’.²⁵⁴ Sir Harold also regularly hallucinates the ghost of the man he murdered when defending Julia’s reputation. He sees it whenever he is not with her at midnight, the hour at which she relives the trauma of having been kidnapped. Lefanu’s association of the Midlands with gothic incidents in *Strathallan* is relatively unusual: the region is more often positioned as a place of safety. In *Mystery and Confidence*, Northamptonshire initially has gothic associations, but it ultimately conforms to the more typical image of Midlands security. Pinchard implies a reversal of the convention of remote settings being more dangerous, as Ellen’s removal from her rural Welsh home to a less physically remote setting exposes her to a husband who is rumoured to have murdered his first wife. However, these rumours are disproved. The real place of danger, where the murder occurred, is Spain; Catholic Europe is a conventional setting for violent incidents in this corpus.

²⁵⁰ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, ii, p. 196; iii, p. 119.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 119.

²⁵² Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 66.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 414.

5. Female freedom

Female freedom is an important theme in these novels, but it is less strongly associated with the Midlands than with Wales and the West Country. This relates to the Midlands' lesser remoteness: it is not frequently associated with departures from the social norms of the metropolitan centre. This leads to the Midlands being used in a more consistently conservative way, in contrast to Wales, which could be more easily used to explore alternative gender relations without appearing to radically challenge the status quo.

Physical freedom

There is no positive association between physical freedom for female characters and Midlands settings. Where female characters in the Midlands are shown to be physically exuberant, this has connotations of masculinity or hypersexuality. This is clearly illustrated in *Strathallan*, in which the conventionally feminine heroine Matilda is contrasted with a range of other women who are castigated for their inappropriate behaviour. The comically named Miss Mountain, whose 'figure rose above the size of most men' has a 'passion for field-sports', which ultimately leads to her death, when she falls from a horse.²⁵⁵ Similarly, Arbella's 'activity' and 'agility', in climbing through windows and 'bounding with aërial lightness from cliff to cliff', reflect her failure to conform to feminine ideals. For example, she considers proposing to a man.²⁵⁶ The convention of female characters' exuberance representing their moral inferiority to the heroine is also prominent in Austen's *Mansfield Park*. The staunchly moral Fanny, 'whose rides had never been extensive', is contrasted with the wide-roaming Mary, Maria, and Julia.²⁵⁷ This is exemplified at Sotherton: Fanny is left alone 'with great regret that she was not stronger', while Edmund and Mary walk and when Henry and Maria pass around the locked gate, over which Julia later 'scramble[s]'.²⁵⁸

Instead of having the positive freedom to move or act independently, heroines in the Midlands often have a negative kind of freedom, freedom from persecution. Due to the association of the Midlands with retirement and other positive connotations of remoteness, women are generally freer from physical danger there than in Wales and the West Country.

²⁵⁵ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 51; p. 387

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²⁵⁷ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 94.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112; p. 118.

Deletia's removal into Warwickshire in *A Traveller's Tale* is a typical example of the region's association with safety. In many of these Midlands novels, female characters' first experiences of danger take place during the conventional period of tribulation outside of their home region. For example, in *The Fugitive*, Emma becomes a 'wanderer' when she has to leave Northamptonshire because her family is defrauded of their grandfather's estate.²⁵⁹ Like Burney's *The Wanderer* (see Chapter Three) *The Fugitive* depicts a woman forced to live 'a life of migration, perhaps subject to the caprice and convenience of others, at best'.²⁶⁰ She travels to London, Gibraltar, and Jersey, a 'fugitive' pursued by unwanted male attention.²⁶¹ This experience takes place outside of the Midlands, which is implied to be insufficiently remote to be the setting of a conventional wandering experience. The same implication appears in Prickett's *Warwick Castle*, in which Frances laments being reduced to 'literally wandering about my native country', while staying with her husband in a Lodge at Warwick Castle, awaiting the expected recovery of a man with whom he has duelled.²⁶² Although her situation is potentially precarious should the man not recover, as 'the wife of a British Peer', enjoying tourist excursions from a pleasant Midlands residence, her situation is not comparable to that of genuinely wandering heroines such as Burney's.²⁶³ Prickett uses Frances' exaggeration to illustrate her personality, but also to create interest in the opening of her novel.

Physical threats do still sometimes appear in the Midlands, although much less frequently than in more remote regions. Settings within the Midlands that are portrayed as more remote are more commonly associated with dangers for women, primarily because they can become exposed to unwanted male attention. An archetypical example is Rawlington's 'forcibly detaining' Ellen in the cave in *Faith and Fiction* when he finds her waiting to secretly meet St. Elmer. He points out that her having come there '*unprotected*, will wear too much the appearance of an appointment' for her to accuse him of impropriety.²⁶⁴ This reflects the conservatism of these novels' representation of female freedom: it is implied that, in order to be free from danger, women ought to constrain their actions. Many of these novels suggest

²⁵⁹ Green, ii, p. 220.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., ii, p. 117.

²⁶¹ Ibid., i, p. 145.

²⁶² Prickett, i, p. 5.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Bennett, *Faith and Fiction*, iii, p. 76; p. 78.

that women can best avoid the dangers of assault and accusations of impropriety by upholding scrupulous standards of behaviour. This reflects their overwhelmingly conservative attitude to gender.

Intellectual freedom

This conservatism is also visible in these novels' equivocal portrayal of women's intellectual freedom in the Midlands. Female education remains a prominent theme because it is ubiquitous in this type of fiction and is conventionally associated with rural settings. The persistence of the association between rurality and female education in these Midlands novels, including those set in the less remote southern subregions, demonstrates that it is generic to rural settings, rather than remote ones. The trope of the heroine assisting in the education of others, often in the form of establishing a school, appears frequently. For example, in *Mystery and Confidence*, Emily establishes 'Schools of Industry' and, in *Strathallan*, Arbella's decision to arrange a subscription to set up a girls' school is a sign of her moral development.²⁶⁵ These projects are typical of the paternalistic charity promoted in these novels (see 'The Midlands rural ideal', above). However, while female education is promoted in the context of charitable action, the Midlands is not positively associated with intellectual education, rationality, or community for women, in contrast to Wales. Also, unlike in the Welsh novels, there is no positive representation of female-only households in these Midlands novels. In *Strathallan*, Miss Hautenville and Miss Mountain are stated to have 'agreed to live together', with the former supplying 'the more subtle but nobler treasures of intellectual wealth' in exchange for board.²⁶⁶ However, this is not a positive vision of a female household: their relationship is dismissed as an example of how 'some women, possessed of neither merit, beauty, or fortune, attach themselves to another, distinguished by one of those requisites' in order to 'ris[e] with her [...]'.²⁶⁷

There is 'evidence of middle-class female involvement in scientific culture' in the Midlands in this period, according to Paul A. Elliott.²⁶⁸ Similarly, Uglow notes that 'women were not excluded from natural philosophy' entirely.²⁶⁹ However, in all of the novels

²⁶⁵ Pinchard, ii, p. 93; Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 315.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 52.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

²⁶⁸ Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers*, p. 231.

²⁶⁹ Uglow, p. 313.

discussed in this thesis, there is only one heroine brought up to be a ‘woman of science’: Matilda in *Strathallan*.²⁷⁰ Her ‘acquirements in science’ provoke ‘disapprobation’ from her future husband’s father.²⁷¹ This reflects the widespread view that science, with the possible exception of botany, was not an appropriate activity for women.²⁷² The dismissal of women’s intellectual capacity in these Midlands novels is often implicit, but is sometimes made explicit. For example, in *The Prior Claim*, the heroine Emily states that women ‘are not generally *capable* of attaining education of such deep scientific knowledge as men’ because ‘our mental powers partake in some measure the weakness of our corporeal frame’.²⁷³ Iloff promotes this conservative message to her reader by expressing it through her heroine and, conversely, associating the argument that intellectual equality between the sexes is possible with the unlikeable Mrs Brereton. Like other aspects of the Midlands Enlightenment, the ethos of ‘progressive “improvement”’ which existed in Midlands ‘urban culture’ is also excluded from these novels, as it is not in keeping with their conservative rural ideal (as discussed above, see ‘Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture’).²⁷⁴

Rather than genuine intellectual stimulation, the Midlands is almost exclusively associated with the generic rural ideal of moral education for female characters, with the purpose of preparing them for marriage. This trope is made particularly explicit in *Husband Hunters!!!*, in which Wilmot wishes to marry Georgina, who ‘already looked up to him as her instructor’.²⁷⁵ Georgina is contrasted with Wilmot’s first wife, who ‘disliked’ both ‘reading’ and moral reflection; this lack of a moral education led her to cause the deaths of their two children by refusing to breastfeed them, and then elope with her harp teacher.²⁷⁶ In *Mansfield Park*, Austen demonstrates that a secluded upbringing in the rural Midlands could be beneficial or harmful to a woman’s education, by contrasting Fanny and the Bertram sisters. Fanny acquires the ideal education of a rural heroine with Edmund’s guidance. Maria and Julia’s ‘anxious and expensive education’ is completed ‘without their understanding their first duties’, because of a focus on ‘elegance and accomplishments which ‘could have [...] no

²⁷⁰ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 19.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁷² Uglow, p. 271.

²⁷³ Iloff, i, p. 98.

²⁷⁴ Elliott, *The Derby Philosophers*, p. 231.

²⁷⁵ Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*, iv, p. 196; p. 73.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, iv, p. 73.

moral effect'.²⁷⁷ This demonstrates that rurality does not guarantee morality in these novels; they show that women's education has to be carefully controlled, which reflects their general conservatism.

The calculated management of female characters' rural educations, especially by male relatives, raises the question of the extent to which these educated women are intellectually free. An extreme example appears in *Edgar*: the hero first notices Julia's 'sweet promise' on her eighth birthday and marries her when she is fifteen.²⁷⁸ Appleton emphasises that Julia was raised according to the values of 'virtue, piety, and industry'.²⁷⁹ It is unclear whether she is free to choose whom to marry. Her father states he will 'give' Julia to Edgar but clarifies that he 'will not restrain her inclination for she is a dutiful child'.²⁸⁰ However, her eventual consent is reported by the narrator passively, suggesting that her education has prepared her to consult only her duties: 'she would offer no obstacle to their plighting of their faith'.²⁸¹ The impact of female characters' education on their ability to make their own choices is also a prominent theme of *Mansfield Park*. This relates to the novel's central concern with freedom, due to Austen's implicit juxtaposition of Mansfield Park with Sir Thomas' Antiguan estates. Edmund's statement that, if Fanny moved to the White House, she would have 'as free a command of the park and gardens as ever' is ironic, because Fanny explicitly lacks freedom on the estate.²⁸² She is left 'without any choice of companions or exercise' both before Edmund provides her with a pony and when Mary later deprives her of its use.²⁸³ While Fanny lacks the power to exercise freedom, the other women at Mansfield Park lack the requisite rationality. Christopher Stampone argues persuasively that 'no person is free' in *Mansfield Park*, because of 'mental enslavement'; the novel connects patriarchy with slavery in a similar manner to Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).²⁸⁴ The lack of a positive vision of female freedom in *Mansfield Park* is typical of the generally conservative representation of this theme in novels set in the Midlands.

²⁷⁷ Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 536.

²⁷⁸ Appleton, iii, p. 238.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, i, p. 145.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 165.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, iii, p. 241.

²⁸² Austen, *Mansfield Park*, p. 31.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

²⁸⁴ Christopher Stampone, "'Obligated To Yield": The Language of Patriarchy and the System of Mental Slavery in "Mansfield Park"', *Studies in the Novel*, 50: 2 (2018), p. 198; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman; with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects* (London: J. Johnson, 1792).

6. The Midlands contrasted with other settings

The Midlands' association with the generic rural ideal is established through contrasts with other settings. These comparisons with external spaces are similar to those made with Wales and West Country settings, as discussed in the previous chapters. For example, the trope of the conventional period of urban suffering when the heroine leaves her home region appears in *Strathallan*: Matilda's father dies in London, and Sir Harold threatens to kill her there. The Midlands' central location in England and role as a thoroughfare region colours the novelistic comparisons drawn between it and other regions in Britain. For instance, in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Frankenstein*, Derbyshire is a more moderate or equivocally remote version of the Lake District (as discussed under 'Incidental tourism', above). This idea of the Midlands as central and therefore moderate is often presented as positive. For example, the primary Derbyshire setting of *Strathallan* is contrasted with the titular character's estate of the same name in Scotland. Strathallan's statement that 'the romantic beauties of Derbyshire are nothing in comparison to the wild Ossianic scenery of Strath-Allan in Scotland' appears to position Derbyshire as inferior.²⁸⁵ However, Lefanu's later description of Fitzroy's wife's negative reaction to its 'bleakness and nakedness' suggests that the Scottish landscape is too extreme for those habituated to the Midlands.²⁸⁶ The Midlands' centrality is associated with domesticity; this is also established through contrasts with spaces outside of Britain. *Mystery and Confidence* is a typical example of this. Pinchard establishes the safety of Ellen's marital home in Northamptonshire (as well as her Welsh native home, as discussed in Chapter Two), through a positive contrast with Spain, which is the location of a murder committed by a Frenchman. This replicates the conventional association of Catholicism with immorality. Similarly, the role of Antigua in *Mansfield Park* as an implicit foil to the idealised Midlands home is characteristic of the role of colonial spaces as points of contrast for the generic rural ideal.

²⁸⁵ Lefanu, *Strathallan*, p. 121.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 450.

7. Conclusion

In this corpus, the Midlands is represented as a liminal region. Its equivocal relationship with remoteness, a key theme of regional fiction of this period, complicates its image. In comparison to more remote regions such as Wales, and to a lesser extent, the West Country, the Midlands is less strongly associated with the conventional connotations of remoteness, including negative associations such as physical danger, superstition, and the gothic, but also the possibilities for social commentary created by peripherality. The Midlands is also represented less distinctively than either Wales or the West Country. Although there is more acknowledgement of urban industrial spaces in the Midlands, this remains limited, and there are few coherent Midlands regional stereotypes with which this defining feature of the region can be replaced. Similarly, where Midlands tourism is depicted in these novels, it is incidental, or secondary to a visit to a more remote destination. The Midlands' relative proximity to the metropolitan centre, and its geographical and historical centrality to England mean novelists primarily associate it with the positive qualities of the generic rural ideal. This is mostly used to promote a conservative, usually Anglican and Tory, social message, which would be contradicted by any negativity in the depiction of the 'interior of the kingdom'.²⁸⁷ As in the previous chapters, Hutton is the exception, subtly providing a distinctive political and religious perspective as a Unitarian. Hutton creates some of the most nuanced images of the Midlands in my corpus due to her unusual level of engagement with the region's industries, and her acknowledgement of its internal differences, including, for example, its dialects. As another writer from the Midlands, Prickett also sometimes provides an unusual level of local colour in her depiction of the region. This includes her notable but admittedly brief acknowledgement of some of the Midlands' associations which are usually excluded from my corpus, including industrialisation and riots but also intellectual culture.

The novels discussed in this chapter constitute a new lens for the exploration of the Midlands' cultural image in the Romantic period. Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Pride and Prejudice* are to some extent characteristic of the representation of the region, including the conventional subregional distinctions between the North Midlands as wild and the South Midlands as civilised and affluent. However, by reading lesser-known writers, larger trends in the homogenisation of the region emerge, for example in the erosion of the distinctions

²⁸⁷ Prickett, ii, p. 74.

between the West and East Midlands through the avoidance of the representation of their respective industries. Hutton and Prickett's more nuanced portrayals of the Midlands are particularly valuable. They exemplify what has been overlooked in the exclusion of female-authored novels from scholarship on the influence of the Midlands' industrial, scientific, and religious cultures on Romantic-era literature.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The preceding chapters have considered the extent to which my three case study regions are portrayed distinctively in my corpus. They have also examined the similarities in their representation and their shared differences from other spaces. I have aimed to demonstrate that these forty-four novels function as a coherent body of work, because my case study regions are often portrayed alongside each other, and they have several particular similarities. This concluding chapter discusses my corpus as a stage in the development of the regional novel genre. I will consider the extent to which trends in regional representation in my corpus relate to formal regional boundaries as opposed to broader geographical trends. Drawing comparisons between my case study regions and other spaces within and beyond Britain facilitates my positioning of these novels as part of the wider English and Welsh regional novel phenomenon. I will then outline the features in my corpus which shed light on the development of regional fiction out of eighteenth-century conventions and into the Victorian regional novel, with a particular focus on realism and stability of setting. In the final part of this chapter, I will discuss how a few exceptional novelists in my corpus portray their regional settings in an unusually distinctive manner, and then consider why the majority of their contemporaries create a mostly generic and conservative vision of the same settings. I will also discuss their representation of these spaces as an idealised microcosm of the nation.

Formal regional boundaries and geographical contiguity

My corpus shows a limited degree of regional distinctiveness: while Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands have their own particular associations in these novels, when viewed collectively, they also share many qualities. For example, these novels often suggest that these regional settings are particularly historically significant. The Midlands is the most frequently associated with history, a trend which relates to its central location in the nation facilitating a key role in its narrative. The West Country is associated with historical references only slightly less often, while Welsh settings are often linked to a vague but evocative sense of the ‘ancient’.¹ Any regional space can be imbued with an apparently

¹ For example: Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures*, i, p. 36.

unique historical appeal which is more aesthetic than it is meaningful; if every region is said to be especially historical, this quality ceases to be genuinely distinctive. The shared qualities in the representation of my three case study regions relate not only to their particular similarities but also to trends in the English and Welsh regional novel genre more broadly, especially with regard to generic rural stereotypes.

The similarities between my case study regions raise the question of the relative importance of geographical and topographical patterns as opposed to formal regional boundaries. The significance of the latter is demonstrated by the ways in which Wales is treated differently from immediately contiguous English spaces. For example, I found that passages set in the West Country frequently focus on the sea, but the adjoining Welsh coastline is mentioned much less often. This may relate to the association between coastal settings and patriotism in these novels, as discussed in Chapter Three: England is made to stand for Britain as a whole more frequently than Wales is put to the same purpose. However, despite the importance of the distinctions made between England and Wales in these novels, I have argued that the English and Welsh regional novel in this period is nonetheless a coherent phenomenon, because Wales is often treated as a part of England.

The contiguity of my case study regions means that many of these novels include settings in more than one of them. Like the characters in these novels, many of the apparently distinctive characteristics of a given region traverse regional boundaries; these novels often highlight features of physical geography rather than formal categorisations of place. Relatively ambiguous settings within a county, rather than in a specific place, appear very frequently in my corpus. These novels' settings are often spaces in the sense of an 'abstract' idea or expanse; they resemble Tuan's definition of space, as discussed in Chapter One.² I have suggested that some spaces are inflected with the associations of contiguous regions; for example, Gloucestershire and the West Midlands are associated with danger and wildness due to the proximity of the Welsh border.

The prominence of themes of retirement and remoteness in my corpus further demonstrates the significance of transregional geographical trends. I have argued that, in these texts, remoteness is ultimately a neutral quality, despite its evocativeness: it is simultaneously strongly associated with the dangers of wildness and with positive features which resemble the generic rural ideal. The ubiquity of retirement in these novels suggests

² Tuan, p. 6.

that it is not a purely geographical quality, but a possible positive consequence of remoteness. Remoteness and retirement are symbolic conditions, not defined by physical geography. The Midlands' relationship with remoteness is the most complex; these novels portray the region as simultaneously central and provincial. I have argued that the generic rural ideal often relates to an ideal of moderation in remoteness, a position between cultivation and wildness. This image appears relatively often in the Midlands, for example at Oakley Park in *A Traveller's Tale*, but it is not unique to one region.

The English and Welsh regional novel

Some of the shared features of my case study regions, particularly those which relate to the generic rural ideal, are common to the broader category of the early nineteenth-century English and Welsh regional novel. This is evident in their representation of other settings in England. To give just one notable example, the North of England is associated with some of the same qualities as my case study regions. In *Oakwood Hall*, Jane's praise of York's 'grandeur and antiquity' closely resembles her appraisal of tourist destinations in Wales, the Midlands, and the West Country.³ Furthermore, the novels about Anglo-Welsh gentry often feature estates in the North of England. One characteristic example is *Eva of Cambria*, in which Lancashire is portrayed as having many of the same benefits as Wales, through Eggerfield's 'most romantic seat in the wildest part' of the county.⁴ The similarities between my case study regions and other regional settings, not only the North of England but also other areas including the Isle of Wight and the New Forest, demonstrate that the novels in my corpus are part of a wider English and Welsh regional novel phenomenon.

The Romantic-period English and Welsh regional novel has an overwhelmingly rural focus. The generic rural ideal is constructed in opposition to urban settings, most commonly London. As the preceding chapters have aimed to demonstrate, many of the novels in my corpus portray London negatively to create a contrast with their idealised rural settings (this anti-metropolitanism is discussed further under 'The development of the regional genre'). However, often within the same novels, the rural ideal is in tension with the association between remoteness and threats to women, such as in the trope of the abduction of a lone

³ Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*, i, p. 10.

⁴ Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria*, i, p. 258.

female walker. Their depiction of dangers to women often serves to reinforce conservative standards of prudent female behaviour. As well as contrasts with urban spaces, the generic rural ideal in England and Wales is also sometimes constructed through comparisons with other parts of Britain, most commonly Scotland, which are portrayed as more extremely remote. Such spaces highlight the moderate remoteness of my case study regions, which represent an ideal compromise between wildness and civilisation. A typical example appears in *Strathallan*: the Scottish estate is positioned as excessively remote, in contrast to the domestic ideal created in Derbyshire.

In these novels, England, commonly extended to include Wales, is frequently made to stand for Britain (for further discussion of the regional as microcosm of the nation, see ‘Distinctiveness, genre, and politics, below). Britain is also defined by opposition in depictions of spaces outside of the nation. The denigration of ‘foreign’ settings reinforces the inherent nationalism of the generic rural ideal. Morin argues that spaces outside of Britain are often temporary ‘sites of exile, hardship, enslavement and imprisonment’ in novels of this period.⁵ This is the case in many of the texts in my corpus. Their conventionally negative portrayal of European Catholic countries, in particular, often takes the form of demonstrating characters’ suffering there. The imprisonment of Clara and her companions on the way to Switzerland in *Llewellen* is a characteristic example. They regret leaving ‘blessed England’ (here referring to Wales) and their lamentation of ‘how little did we consider our native benefits when we left thy shores’ constructs England and Wales as a place of safety.⁶ The association of Catholicism with danger in many of these novels presents, by implied contrast, the benefits of Anglicanism. Although Britain’s colonies appear less frequently than European settings, they are also sometimes the setting of dramatic secondary plots that act as a counterpoint to the safety of the generic rural ideal. Of the novels in my corpus, *Owen Castle* includes the most extensive exploration of colonialism, through the mixed-race character Omphale, whose English father took her Indian mother to Jamaica and abandoned her there. Sullivan uses Omphale’s suffering and other characters’ attempts to control her for her inheritance to portray colonial wealth as a corrupting influence on Britain.

⁵ Morin, p. 117.

⁶ Stevens, iii, p. 176.

The development of the regional genre

While my case study regions share many characteristics, some of which relate to the wider English and Welsh novel phenomenon, there are also some notable signs of distinctiveness in their representation. As I outlined in Chapter One, the extent to which these novels show the unique characteristics of their regional settings defines the degree to which they can be regarded as ancestors of the Victorian regional novel genre. This thesis has aimed to demonstrate that a category of fiction with a regional focus was evident in the 1810s and that it represents a stage in the development of distinctive regional representation in fiction. In this section, I will discuss several ways in which the novels in my corpus can be read as a pre-history of the Victorian regional novel, bridging the gap from eighteenth century genre conventions to those of the later nineteenth century. I will focus on the development of features of regional realism and the tendency to focus on a fixed setting. It is important to note that although these features were emerging, my corpus is not simply a precursor from which one could have predicted the pattern of the regional novel's development throughout the nineteenth century. There are some notable early examples of themes that would later become popular, but the novels in my corpus generally lack many of the key features of the Victorian manifestation of the genre.

Despite the prominence of the generic rural ideal, my corpus also shows some signs of the development of realism. These novels were published shortly before a major trend for regional realism became established: the detailed depiction of 'landscape, customs, and dialect came to the fore as a privileged aspect of fiction' from the 1820s onwards.⁷ This trend began primarily in the Scottish regional novel but was translated to other settings in subsequent decades in the work of celebrated realists including George Eliot and Elizabeth Gaskell.⁸ While the novels in my corpus draw attention to their regional settings as evocative landscapes, they show less interest in the people who lived in them. For example, I found that the majority of the (relatively infrequent) examples of dialect in my corpus are not regionally specific, but an attempt to represent a generalised working-class speech pattern. Some of the novelists make limited attempts at associating particular features with a specific region, but

⁷ Josephine McDonagh, 'Place, Region, and Migration', in *The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume III* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), ed. by John Kucich and Jenny Bourne Taylor, p. 361.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 363.

only Hutton makes a sustained effort to differentiate between subregions (as outlined in Chapter Four). The differences between my corpus and the later, realist, regional novel genre relate to the novelists' motivations for representing their regional settings. The "social problem" novel, which developed into an established genre by the 1840s and 1850s, depicted regional culture for the purpose of discussing 'the social problems that had been created by industrialisation'.⁹ Contrastingly, the novels in my corpus almost entirely avoid drawing attention to issues of this kind. Even attempting realism would not be compatible with their conservatism. As with dialect, of the novelists represented in my corpus, only Hutton openly presents the impacts of industrialisation. I will consider Hutton's willingness to represent themes which her contemporaries avoided in the next section of this chapter. Other novels in my corpus can be read as a pre-history of the emphasis on regionality evident in gothic fiction published later in the century.¹⁰ For example, in *Strathallan* and *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey*, British regional settings begin to participate physically and psychologically in the gothic narratives staged on them. This interaction between gothic setting and plot became more fully realised in later novels such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).¹¹

My corpus further resembles the later nineteenth-century regional novel in that each text's primary setting is defined in opposition to London. These novels are anti-metropolitan in that they shift attention away from London, suggesting that the nation can be defined by areas other than its commercial and political centre. However, unlike many regional novels of the Victorian period, in the main the novels in my corpus do not establish one space as the antithesis of the metropolis. Instead, they often include a small group of regional settings which are visited or inhabited by upper-class characters and they retain some of the geographical mobility which was common in novels of the eighteenth century and earlier. As Ruth Livesey argues, the lasting predominance of the 'trope of the journey [...] speaks to the emergence of the novel from the European picaresque'.¹² This picaresque tradition depicted 'incessant, aimless travel'.¹³ Its influence on eighteenth century British novels led to a tendency to depict an 'open' sphere of action which extended beyond 'the village, the manor

⁹ Ibid., p. 366.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 363.

¹¹ Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (London: Thomas Cautley Newby, 1847).

¹² Ruth Livesey, *Writing the Stage Coach Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 8.

¹³ Luigi Gussago, 'Introduction: A Journey around the Picaresque Novel', *Postmodern Studies*, 54 (2016), p. 4.

house, or the parish'.¹⁴ In the novels in my corpus, this more restricted, domestic scene is often foregrounded, but their plots remain notably mobile. Stuart Miller argues that the possibility of a picaresque revival was closed off as the 'realistic novel drove out all other subgenres' in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ My corpus demonstrates this transition was not immediate, or binary. While these novels do not focus on the realistic portrayal of a single setting, they more commonly depict leisurely tours than picaresque wanderings. However, a more direct link with the picaresque is visible in the trope of the heroine required to relocate frequently, whether due to financial precarity or unwanted male attention. Julia Epstein compares the mobility of Burney's heroines, including Juliet in *The Wanderer*, to that of picaresque heroes.¹⁶ My corpus includes other heroines whose journeys evoke the picaresque, most particularly Emma in *The Fugitive*.

The development of a regional novel that moved 'towards stability of place' was partly a political phenomenon.¹⁷ Josephine McDonagh argues that the 'positive' depiction of 'constant movement of characters' appears 'only in radical novels' in the nineteenth century.¹⁸ The most static subgenre in my corpus is the most conservative: moralising novels of the type which Bohrer describes as 'didactic tales on the domestic economies of cottage life'.¹⁹ The 'rural tale' tradition was defined by taking a 'view of the countryside from the village', rather than the 'country estate'.²⁰ In my corpus, *The Welsh Cottage*, *The Clergyman's Widow*, and *Seabrook Village* are early examples of this subgenre of regional fiction. They are precursors to Mary Russell Mitford's *Our Village* (1824-1832), which itself was influential in the development of the provincial fiction genre, as exemplified in Gaskell's *Cranford* (1851-3).²¹ McDonagh notes that both Mitford and Gaskell depict 'female

¹⁴ John Ricketti, 'Introduction', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by John Ricketti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 8.

¹⁵ Stuart Miller, *The Picaresque Novel* (Cleveland: The Press Case of Western Reserve University, 1967), p. 133.

¹⁶ Julia Epstein, 'Marginality in Frances Burney's novels', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Eighteenth-Century Novel*, ed. by John Ricketti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 199.

¹⁷ McDonagh, p. 375.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Bohrer, p. 91.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92; p. 89.

²¹ McDonagh, p. 368; Mary Russell Mitford, *Our Village: Sketches of Rural Character and Scenery* (London: Whittaker & Co, 1824-1832); Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1853).

community, polite gentility, and natural history'.²² All of these themes are also visible in the earlier cottage tales which appear in my corpus.

Distinctiveness, genre, and politics

The development of distinctive and realistic regional representation in early nineteenth-century novels was not a chronologically linear process. I did not find a consistent pattern of increasing acknowledgment of regional differences throughout the 1810s. Were such advancements visible, this would have more clearly prefigured the development of the regional novel genre into its Victorian form. Instead, I found that, throughout this decade, six female novelists in particular tended to engage with regional space in a more nuanced way than their contemporaries: Hutton, Hatton, Spence, Prickett, Burney, and Austen. They often acknowledge the distinctiveness of particular spaces rather than relying on the generic rural ideal. In this section, I will consider why these writers produced more sophisticated accounts of their regional settings than their contemporaries, by discussing expectations relating to both genre and politics. What the six novelists named above have in common is that there is evidence that they either lived in or visited at least some of their settings and drew on their memories to describe the particular character of these spaces. Some of the other novelists in my corpus also knew their chosen settings but chose not to include details from their own experience. In the latter part of this section, I will discuss how a combination of gender politics and genre conventions incentivised conservative and generic regional representation in female-authored novels of this period.

While Austen did not have personal experience of all of the places which she represented in her novels, her settings are never merely conventional recitations of generic rural tropes. When describing places she knew, she used especially detailed geographical references. Taking the West Country as an example, Austen's knowledge of Bath allowed her to make the passages which she set there particularly evocative. Burney's staging of scenes of emotional turmoil in the West Country settings of *The Wanderer* is similarly effective due to her drawing on her own experience of travel in the area. She considers the psychological impact of the landmarks and sublime scenery, showing the reader how certain settings are or

²² McDonagh, p. 368.

are not ‘congenial’ to her heroine’s mental state.²³ Spence similarly drew on memories of travel in the West Country, for example in dramatizing her own desire to see Lundy in *A Traveller’s Tale*. The West Country tours in her novels are therefore more detailed than those in other texts in my corpus. Like Burney, Spence also shows an awareness of how comparable landscapes can be experienced as either pleasant or oppressive, in her contrasting representation of similar coastal settings in *The Curate and His Daughter* and *A Traveller’s Tale*. As discussed in the previous section, the subjective psychological aspect of spatial experience subsequently developed into a prominent feature of later nineteenth-century gothic novels.

Hutton and Hatton similarly draw on their own experiences to add detail to their regional settings, but in their novels this specificity takes on a political dimension. As I have noted throughout the preceding chapters, among the novelists in my corpus, Hutton inverts generic rural stereotypes the most consistently. Her three novels give sophisticated accounts of a range of English and Welsh regional settings. These include passages acknowledging industrialisation, including descriptions of the effects of mining, although these are still relatively brief. Hutton’s Unitarianism is also unusual among this group of novelists, who mostly actively promote Anglicanism. Although Hutton makes only brief references to nonconformist religion, her acknowledging it at all is unusual in this corpus. However, Hutton does not openly promote dissent in her novels, or associate it with her home region, the Midlands. She portrays the Midlands less extensively than other regions, instead focusing on Wales, London, and the North of England. This may relate to her unwillingness to associate the relatively controversial topics which she discusses, including politics and religion, with her own life (see ‘Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture’ in Chapter Four). *The Welsh Mountaineer* is particularly unusual because of the extent to which Hutton acknowledges the distinctiveness of Wales and suggests that it is exploited by England. Like Hutton’s novel, Hatton’s *Cambrian Pictures* is another rare exception to my corpus’ general acceptance of the internal colonial dynamic. While Hutton only visited Wales, albeit regularly, Hatton lived in Swansea on her return from America in 1799 until her death in 1838, excepting a period of three years spent in the nearby town of Kidwelly.²⁴

²³ Burney, v, p. 133.

²⁴ Moira Dearnley, ‘Hatton [née Kemble; other married name Curtis], Ann Julia’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45853>>.

Cambrian Pictures draws attention to the domination of Wales by England through the depiction of Welshwomen suffering at the hands of Englishmen. The novel is further unusual because it contains an extensive portrayal of alternative gender performance. Eliza's crossdressing and shooting of an unwanted suitor is an exceptional example of unfeminine behaviour which goes unpunished. Like her nuanced engagement with Wales' status as an internal colony, Hatton's interest in gender politics appears to relate to her own lived experience (as discussed under 'Wales as a part of England, or an internal colony' in Chapter Two).

Prickett is unusual among this group of novelists because she openly admits to using her knowledge of a place where she was 'reared and resident for years' in her depiction of her primary setting.²⁵ In *Warwick Castle*, she creates a distinctive portrait of Warwickshire through dense factual detail that is so extensive that it appears incongruous in a novel. She admitted in her preface that 'it is possible' the historical passages 'may be considered somewhat too prolix'.²⁶ This was confirmed by the reception of the novel; far from initiating a new hybrid genre, as Prickett had hoped, it was dismissed as 'dull'.²⁷ This exemplifies the difference between readers' expectations of regional representation in novels and other literary forms such as poetry or tourist essays: the provision of extensive local detail was not yet an established trend in prose fiction. Prickett failed to mediate her knowledge in a manner that was sufficiently entertaining to satisfy the expectations of her audience.

The more successful uses of personal experience in regional representation in my corpus are less exhaustive than Prickett's. Both Hutton and Spence fictionalise material which they also published in factual travel accounts, but they carefully select which of their own experiences to represent, and how to mediate these through different characters. For example, Spence discusses the Midlands' intellectual culture in her travel writing but does not mention it in her description of Lichfield in *A Traveller's Tale* (see 'Dissenting religion and Enlightenment scientific culture' in Chapter Four). This topic, apposite in a more factual genre, would seem irrelevant in her novel, as well as relating to a theme that was not commonly discussed by female novelists. Women writers also needed to conceal the autobiographical material included in their work in order to protect their reputation. Spence

²⁵ Prickett, p. xi.

²⁶ Ibid., p. x.

²⁷ 'Art. 29. Warwick Castle', p. 217.

creates a male narrator for her frame narrative: the traveller named in the novel's title. Any detail can be implied to be his observation rather than her own. An even clearer example of this kind of transformation of personal experience appears in Hutton's *The Welsh Mountaineer*. She assigns the narrative recounting the cruel conditions of industrial production to a working-class secondary character, rather than admit that it was her own father's life story. Like her choice not to extensively depict her native region, this device allows Hutton to distance herself from this potentially incendiary material.

As I have noted throughout this thesis, the majority of the novels in my corpus foreground generic rural themes because these are more compatible with their conservative message than regionally specific images, which sometimes draw attention to controversial topics, such as industrialisation. Generic regional depictions were more aesthetically and politically acceptable to readers and critics, and therefore more attractive to publishers. Innovative attempts at regional representation were often negatively received, as illustrated by Prickett's *Warwick Castle*. The development of realistic linguistic representation may have been delayed by reviewers' disparagement of the use of local dialect in novels, for example in the case of *The History of a Clergyman's Widow* (see 'Dialect' in Chapter Three). The majority of the novels in my corpus were written to appeal to a wide audience and were distributed via circulating libraries. This tightened the generic 'constraints' on their content.²⁸ The Minerva Press, the publishing house responsible for the largest proportion of novels in my corpus, was particularly well-known for producing a mass of 'derivative works' which 'catered to the day's fashion'.²⁹

Many of the novelists in my corpus focused on producing works which conformed to the 'conventionalized morals' expected of "'lady" novelists' because they needed to ensure that their novels would continue be published.³⁰ Their income from writing was often essential to their supporting themselves and their families. For example, both Appleton and O'Keefe were working as governesses around the time when their novels *Edgar* and *Dudley* were published.³¹ Several of the novelists in my corpus faced penury, and some applied to the

²⁸ Neiman, p. xviii.

²⁹ Ibid., p. xv.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 35.

³¹ E.H. Chalus, 'Appleton [married name Lachlan], Elizabeth', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/51773>>; Clare L. Taylor, 'O'Keefe, Adelaide', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/20657>>.

Royal Literary Fund for relief. One notable illustrative example is Clark, who submitted forty-two ‘increasingly pathetic and desperate’ applications to the Fund from 1811 onwards.³² The prefaces of many of these novels illustrate the expectation that women writers ought to produce morally impeccable texts. These writers often emphasise the morality of their work in order to pre-emptively defend against potential criticisms of its literary quality. For example, Haynes writes in the preface of *The Foundling of Devonshire*: ‘I sincerely acknowledge the want of brightness in the following pages; yet give me leave to add, they have been dictated with the purest principles’.³³ Similarly, Ryley states in the preface of *Fanny Fitz-York* that she ‘would rather’ be told that her work is ‘dull and insipid’ than be ‘accused of shocking the nicest delicacy by a hint or innuendo, that could raise a blush in the cheek of modesty’.³⁴ In female-authored novels of this period, any departure from strict conservative social norms, or failure to actively promote Anglicanism and Tory politics, could be interpreted as radical, or even immoral. The novels in my corpus tend to promote the maintenance of the patriarchal status quo, although there are notable exceptions, particularly Hatton’s *Cambrian Pictures*. By presenting danger to women as ubiquitous in any space, whether remote, central, urban, or rural, these novels give an implicit warning to their female readers to restrict themselves. Frivolous accomplishments are condemned, but so is female rationality for its own sake.

Although these female novelists were pressured to promote conservative values in their work, that it is not to say that none of them genuinely held these beliefs. One prominent example of a distinctly conservative woman writer represented in my corpus is West: she wrote didactic texts promoting conservative messages about ‘political change and women’s role in society’ in a range of forms, including poetry as well as didactic novels such as *The Refusal*.³⁵ Several other novels in my corpus are explicitly didactic, particularly those belonging to the cottage tales genre which I discussed above. As outlined in Chapter One, the many ‘moral-domestic’ novels in my corpus also include didactic features.³⁶ This genre

³² M. Clare Loughlin Chow, ‘Clark, Emily Frederick’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45841>>; See also, for example, Paul Baines, ‘Wilkinson, Sarah Scudgell’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/45868>>.

³³ Haynes, p. vi.

³⁴ Ryley, p. vii.

³⁵ Gail Baylis, ‘West, [née Iliffe], Jane’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/29086>>.

³⁶ Mandal, ‘Evangelical Fiction’, p. 267.

overlaps with that of ‘domestic realism’.³⁷ Realism in this case refers to the absence of supernatural elements, in contrast to gothic novels, rather than a desire to portray the details of everyday life. This latter form of realism did not become an established literary trend until later in the nineteenth century (as discussed in the previous section).

In addition to the trend for generic regional representation, another way in which conservative ideals dictated how women novelists could engage with space was that it was generally not deemed appropriate for women to discuss national politics. In this period, female novelists ‘represent[ed] the nation through the local and particular’, as part of the ‘extension of the suitably feminine topic of domesticity’, as Kelly argues.³⁸ This tendency is evident in my corpus. Many of these novels present their regional setting as a microcosm of the nation. These spaces come to stand for Britain, usually as an idealised vision of how the nation ‘has been or should be’, rather than observing its realities.³⁹ Scholars of literature of this period have observed that Scott’s representations of regional spaces in Scotland posit ‘an idea of nation that grows out of locality’.⁴⁰ Many of the novels in my corpus undertake a similar project in a more conservative, Anglocentric manner. They define Britain through idealistic images of the regions of England, and sometimes Wales. Alongside this, they also establish their regional settings as a contrast to the image of the nation presented by urban spaces, particularly London. They imply that the nation’s spirit can be found in these nostalgic pockets of ruralism even if these spaces were no longer really representative of life in Britain. At the same time, the regional spaces which they depict as wildly remote, mostly in Wales, are also presented as a contrast to their idealised image of the central nation. The generic image that was made to stand for Britishness was associated with ‘cultivated land’ as a symbol of civilisation.⁴¹

³⁷ Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period*, p. 201.

³⁸ Kelly, *Women, Writing and Revolution*, p. 178.

³⁹ Helsinger, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Livesey, p. 12.

⁴¹ Helsinger, p. 24.

Closing remarks

In this thesis, I have argued that there is a degree of regional distinctiveness in the representation of Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands in female-authored novels of the 1810s which is limited in its extent but significant in its implications for Romantic regionalism. My corpus of forty-four novels is a coherent grouping because my case study regions are often treated similarly to each other and differently to other spaces. These three regions have a particularly strong relationship. Comparing them has shed light on their individual representation, establishing which regional features are demonstrably specific. At the same time, I have argued that the stereotypical imagery which I call the generic rural ideal was extremely prevalent in this genre. While some of the themes in my source texts relate to formal regional distinctions, many others correlate with more ambiguous geographical concepts, particularly remoteness. This shows the importance of both considering individual regions and taking a wider, transregional perspective when studying the role of space in literature of this period.

My corpus of texts set in Wales, the West Country, and the Midlands is part of the wider phenomenon of the English and Welsh regional novel. In focusing on the 1810s, I have aimed to shed light on an evolutionary stage in the development of the regional novel genre. Alongside their interest in the topography and local history of their settings, the novels in my corpus show the beginnings of realism, particularly in the rare instances where local industries and dialect are represented. They also represent the transition from the eighteenth-century picaresque into the increasingly static nineteenth-century regional novel. In these limited ways, my corpus can be read as a pre-history of the Victorian regional novel genre. However, the majority of the novels in my corpus depict their regional settings in a highly generic manner, using them to create, in microcosm, a nostalgic, conservative ideal of Britain. They also approach gender politics in an overwhelmingly conservative way.

I have identified several writers whose novels depart significantly from the generic rural ideal trend. While Austen is predominant in this field and Burney is relatively well-researched, Hutton, Hatton, Spence, and Prickett have received comparatively little scholarly attention. The revival of relatively overlooked writers can reveal unexpected trends, so a similar corpus-based approach could also informatively be applied to other time periods; for example, a study of the 1820s could shed further light on the development of the regional novel genre. While I identified that Hutton, Hatton, Spence and Prickett used space in an

unusually nuanced way by studying them as part of a large corpus, future detailed research into the unique features of each of their works would be valuable to the fields of Romantic regionalism and women's writing more broadly.

Appendix: Plot Summaries

Summaries (arranged alphabetically by author surname) are provided here for all female-authored novels published 1810-1820 discussed in this thesis other than the work of Jane Austen, Frances Burney, and Mary Shelley.

Elizabeth Appleton, *Edgar*

The action takes place approximately 1356- 1364. Edgar, son of the Earl of Mercia, arrives home from college to Restormal [sic] Castle, near to Lostwithiel in Cornwall. The Earl of Warwick visits them. They learn that Edward the Black Prince is Duke of Aquitaine, and he is taking Earls Warwick and Stafford with him to fight the French who are disputing the Prince's right to his possessions. Mercia decides to send Edgar to fight under Warwick, with whom he fought in the battle of Crescy. The Prince arrives. A pilgrim recently returned from France tells them that some French nobles call for Edward III's leadership, rather than King John of France. They enjoy entertainment for the Prince, including a song celebrating King Edgar the peaceful.

The men set out for London with Edgar. He enjoys the scenery and then London itself. At Warwick's mansion, Edgar meets his friend Lord De Clifford. Warwick takes Edgar to his castle. Travelling through the Midlands, they arrive at Kenilworth then Warwick. Edgar meets Warwick's family and enjoys their domestic happiness. They go to Seton [sic] harbour to meet the fleet. Edgar wants to take one last look at Restormal, since they are near, and De Clifford lends him his horse. Edgar dangerously crosses the river during a storm. At Restormal, his father is disappointed that he did not tell Warwick or the Prince that he was temporarily leaving the fleet. Edgar realises his mistake and rushes back; De Clifford tells him the fleet has already left. They successfully row to catch up with the fleet. Edgar is sad to leave his home country.

The action then follows Edgar's exploits abroad. After the Battle of Poitiers and King John's surrender, Edgar exchanges himself as prisoner for De Clifford. Edgar thinks he will be ransomed but is sent to the Dauphin at Paris where he is imprisoned for years. Charles, King of Navarre, offers Edgar his freedom in return for loyalty and marriage to Isabella of France (the Dauphin's sister). The pilgrim from Restormal, Leolf, helps Edgar escape Paris when the Dauphin allows him to flee on condition that he will not return to England for three years. In Venice, Leolf persuades Edgar to hide his identity; they stay in a house where a rich woman is also hiding. On the ship to Candia, Edgar reveals his birth to General Pisani, who says he cannot take his word for it. They siege Candia, taking it back for Venice, and Edgar's leadership persuades Pisani of his birth. Edgar saves an Egyptian woman called Nourayah, whose voice Edgar recognises as the woman from Venice. Edgar and Leolf take her to her court at Alexandria. Edgar is flustered by her attentions as he does not want to marry her. Nourayah attempts to poison him, but her slave helps him to escape. In Cyprus, Edgar is reunited with his college friend Peter de Lusigan, son of the King. Edgar refuses the offer of Peter's sister's hand in marriage. Edgar explains he is descended from Edgar Aetheling. De Lusigan makes Edgar governor of the western part of Cyprus. Leolf dies. Edgar is a good governor. Near the end of his prescribed banishment, he rescues Warwick

and the King of Cyprus during a storm. Edgar's councillor tried to turn de Lusigan against him, but the King arrives in time to prevent this and make his son beg Edgar's forgiveness. At Nicosia, Warwick tells Edgar he can marry his daughter Julia on their return to England.

Edgar and Warwick return home via Bordeaux where they visit the Black Prince and Edgar finds De Clifford, dying from a slow acting poison. He went to Venice and was poisoned by Nourayah when he told her he was married. When they arrive near England, Edgar is allowed to leave the fleet and go to Restormal via the Bay of Seton rather than go to London first. He is ecstatic to be home after eight years. He rides home and greets his parents. Warwick's wife and daughter Julia are already there. Julia agrees to marry Edgar. Mercia dies a Christian death. Edgar and Julia are married in London.

Amelia Beauclerc, *Eva of Cambria; Or, the Fugitive Daughter*

Barrington inherits his castle in Wales, near Chester, where he lives with his sister, Helena. He marries Laura, who came to castle having had a carriage accident. They give the peasants cloaks instead of a feast because they worry about Welsh drunkenness. Tourists often visit, including the vulgar French Captain Cachot, who falls in love with Helena but is tricked into eloping with a boy dressed in her clothes. The Barringtons have three children: Julius, Horatio, and Helen. When taking the boys to Eton, the family visit London, which the ladies find restrictive. At Eton, Julius saves a girl from being imprisoned in order to be seduced by a fellow pupil. He sends her to Wales to keep her safe. On their way home for the holidays, they rescue a French governess and her charge Eva from a carriage accident. They were on their way from France to Eva's English guardian. Eva runs away because she fears he has bad intentions. She meets Mr and Mrs Byram and goes with them to Bristol. On the way there, Captain Manners attempts to assault her. She accompanies the Byrams to Spain.

Barrington becomes Lord Alvington. Julius joins his regiment at Bristol, where Manners is a bad influence. They go to balls in Bath. War is declared. They spend the winter in London, where Manners is improved by the Alvingtons' acquaintance. Manners and Colonel Walpole both fall in love with Helen. Julius' regiment goes abroad. The Alvingtons go on a tour to Lancashire, Westmoreland, Cumberland, and Scotland. In Lancashire, Alvington falls off his horse when going to visit his former friend Lord Eggerfield, so the whole family go to stay with him at Fearnhill castle. Walpole is Eggerfield's nephew.

Horatio saves Clara from a bull. She and her mother Mrs Toryn, distant relations of Eggerfield, live in a nearby cottage. Eggerfield explains to Lord Alvington that he married a French heiress and promised that their children would be Catholic and inherit all his property. His wife died leaving a young daughter (who turns out to be Eva), who he sent to her grandmother in France. Eggerfield then married a fashionable woman who persuaded him to have Eva kidnapped and brought up without knowing her parentage so their son would inherit. When his second wife and son died, he asked the nurse to bring his daughter back from the French convent, but Eva escaped on the journey (as related above). Eggerfield makes proposals for Helena, but Alvington says Eva may still be alive, so he ought not to marry yet. Horatio and Clara are in love: Alvington agrees they can marry if they are faithful while the Alvingtons continue their tour. The Toryns move into Fearnhill. Horatio and Clara correspond via Helen.

The Alvingtons visit Edinburgh. They plan to return home via Fearnhill, but Alvington insists Horatio travel on to the Highlands, in order to test his love for Clara. The

Alvingtons travel with Lord Aukworth, who annoys Helen with his love, and his sister, Lady Lucy. At Tynemouth, Lucy gets caught up with a drunken sailor, but Captain Malcolm takes her back and dines with them. Lucy gives the clothes she wore that day to her maid, Kitty, who plans to elope with an Irish ensign by pretending to be Lucy. When this is discovered, they buy the ensign a lieutenancy to ensure he does not abandon her. Malcolm notices Lucy's waywardness but likes her. The Alvingtons travel on via Durham and arrive back at Fearnhill castle. Clara no longer wants to correspond secretly with Hortatio, so Helen tells her aunt about it. Eggerfield marries Mrs Todyn.

Horatio meets the beautiful Scottish Lady G— and visits her family's castle. He feels bewitched into forgetting to write to Clara. Horatio worries about getting drunk at the castle and Lady G— tries to flirt with him. He admits his love for Clara, which upsets her. Lady G—'s brother conspires to make Horatio get drunk without knowing it. Horatio embraces Lady G— then flees when she asks him about Clara. He recalls himself and goes home to Barrington castle but is shot in the legs by a gamekeeper who thought he was an intruder. Clara is with the Alvingtons at Barrington castle while her mother is on honeymoon in Harrogate. Horatio explains what happened, asks Clara's forgiveness and they are happy. Alvington agrees that Walpole and Helen can marry if they still want to when he returns from America.

Julius and Manners are injured in battle. On the way home their ship is captured by the French, and they have to wait in Spain for an exchange. They stay with the Byrams, their niece Harriet, and Eva. Manners loves Harriet and Julius loves Eva. Julius tells them the story of saving the governess and girl from a carriage, and Eva's reaction makes him realise she must be Eggerfield's daughter. The Byrams plan to return to England as Spain is likely to join the war. Eva tells Julius her story and he tells her who her father is. It emerges that Manners tried to attack Eva when she escaped, but he has changed.

Horatio recovers. The family hears what has happened to Julius. They inform Eggerfield about Eva, and he worries what this will mean for his wife and Clara, but Clara is soon to marry Horatio. Helena buys an estate for Horatio. At Lord Aukworth's in Yorkshire, they meet Sir Malcolm, who inherited a title on his brother's death and still plans to marry Lucy, whose character he ultimately reforms. There is a ball at Barrington castle. All except Byram leave Spain. Manners and Harriet elope to Scotland. Eva is introduced to her father who tries to insist on moving into a cottage and leaving the castle to her and Julius, but they refuse to let him. The Manners live in the cottage instead. The Byrams will purchase a nearby estate. Colonel Walpole has become Adjutant-General and marries Helen. Lord Aukworth falls in love with Sir Malcolm's sister.

Amelia Beauclerc, *Husband Hunters!!!*

Methodists John and Margery find a baby at their cottage in the New Forest. Margery looks after the baby, who is called Ella. Margery sometimes leaves Ella with the Miss Mortimers who have recently returned to Hope Cottage in the nearby village. Dorothea is around forty and desperate to marry. She has just taken her two half-sisters, in their early twenties, on a tour of watering places to look for husbands. Louisa is a novelist, waiting for the ideal man, while Emily secretly loves Hareville, the youngest son of Lord Harbingdon, who is in the navy. They host some drunk and unpleasant officers. Dorothea elopes with a quack doctor

who claims he is a baron whose estates were seized by Napoleon. On their return, he beats Ella, so Louisa and Emily threaten to claim their two thirds of Hope Cottage. He is later arrested as a thief and deserter from a German regiment, called Gluck. He is imprisoned but is allowed to escape, on condition that his wife repay the money. She refuses until he threatens to kill her.

Emily is taken ill and admits to Louisa that she married Hareville and Ella is their child. The newspaper says he has drowned. Louisa takes Emily and Ella to Ryde on the Isle of Wight with Margery as a servant. Louisa writes to inform Hareville's father Lord Harbingdon, but he refuses to acknowledge the marriage. Emily explains that she first met Hareville at her friend's house in Brighton and they married secretly, knowing his father would not consent (there is an inconsistency here: in one passage the wedding took place at Weymouth, in another it occurred at Brighton). Hareville had to return to his ship.

Emily faints when they see a body wash up on the beach. They are helped by Irish siblings Sir Lucius Fitzgerald and Mrs Conolly. A mysterious sailor follows them, but Lucius protects them, and he falls in love with Louisa. Gluck arrives, demanding money; Lucius puts him onboard a ship with a press-gang but he is later freed. Margery is dismissed for showing ingratitude. Emily is taken ill when they are out on an excursion; they rest in rooms let to a Mr Burn. Emily accidentally meets Harbingdon, his daughters, and his son Felix, who visits Emily but dies soon after leaving them. Lucius tries to propose to Louisa but is accidentally interrupted. He sees Louisa's manuscript and no longer wants to marry her because she is an author. He sails to Portsmouth, where he meets a friend who invites him onboard his ship.

Louisa is surprised by Hareville appearing in her room: he deliberately allowed everyone to believe he was dead in order to live with Emily in secret until his father's death. Both the sailor and Mr Burn were Hareville in disguise. Hareville (disguised as Burn), Emily, and Louisa flee to Wales. They take a house between Denbigh and Wrexham. Meanwhile, Lucius regrets leaving Louisa. They take a French ship and Lucius is wounded. While they sail home, the French ship's female passenger explains that she is trying to reach her husband, a Count, after they had to flee France because of his politics. She says she wrote novels to support herself when separated from her husband and plans to continue to do so. Lucius realises Louisa could be a novelist and a good wife.

Lucius takes the Countess to the Isle of Wight and leaves her in the hotel. People assume they are having an affair. When his sister tells him Louisa has left, he becomes delirious. The Countess cannot make herself understood in English and thinks Lucius has abandoned her. She meets Mr Osborne who plans to keep her as a mistress against her will, but Lucius' servant Byrant arrives to tell her Lucius is ill. The Countess is established in Lucius' family. They find the Count and get him released. Osborne, who is the undersecretary of state, secretly ensures the Count is paid for his deprivation. Lucius' mother and sister live with the Count and Countess near London, while Lucius searches for Louisa, before their return to Ireland. Lucius goes to Hope Cottage, using the name O'Brady. Dorothy convinces herself he is in love with her. Gluck beats her almost to death, and steals her valuables, intending to go abroad. He coincidentally tries to rob Lucius, injuring him. Lucius kills Gluck in self-defence. Dorothy is glad to be widowed; when Byrant calls on her she thinks he is O'Brady because her eyes are covered. Byrant tells Lucius he has seen Louisa travelling toward Salisbury Plain. They spend the night at the halfway house, but the woman turns out not to be Louisa. The Count takes the injured Lucius back to London.

Meanwhile, Harbingdon's daughter Georgina elopes with a swindler who has abandoned four other wives. Harbingdon will not support Georgina but Mr Wight, a country curate and relation of her mother, takes her into his family. Harbingdon's other daughter marries a Russian prince and his remaining sons both drown, so he intends to find his granddaughter Ella. Harbingdon gets Mr Wight a better living in Shropshire to support Georgina. She is accidentally injured on the way, so they have to stop near Shrewsbury. Sir Wilmot takes them in. Wilmot wants to marry Georgina even when he knows her history. Hareville arrives to take shelter from a snowstorm. Wilmot knows him as Mr Burn, but he explains he is Georgina's brother. Wilmot says he divorced a fashionable woman who refused to breastfeed their children, who died as a result. Hareville allows his real identity to be made public and they plan to go to London. Wilmot proposes to Georgina, but she says she does not deserve happiness. Harbingdon writes to say he does not believe Hareville is alive, and he has learned that Georgina's 'husband' has killed himself.

Louisa sees Lucius and Mrs Conolly at Church: they were on their way back to Ireland through Wales. Lucius explains he has been searching for Louisa. She is angry that he deserted her and will not marry him. Louisa is abducted; Emily gets a letter from Hareville explaining that he has helped Lucius to carry her off. When Louisa finds herself in a church with Lucius, she decides to marry him, and they go to Ireland. Hareville visits Wilmot and expects Georgina will accept him within a year. In London, having given birth to a son, Emily goes to a ball hosted by their friend Lady Tampleton, who arranges for Harbingdon to discover that Emily's offspring are his grandchildren. Harbingdon reconciles with Hareville and Georgina but dies soon after. Dorothy drinks herself to death.

Amelia Beauclerc, The Castle of Tariffa; Or, the Self-Banished Man

Monomia and Belville get engaged and write to each other while he is away as secretary to an embassy, until she accidentally receives a love letter he wrote for a French woman. Rather than publicly sue Belville (her father made him agree to pay if their engagement was broken), Monomia agrees to marry a rich, old Admiral, Sir Harbottle Dareall, who lives in a half-ruined castle on the Plymouth coast. Dareall believes his first wife and their son are dead: they ran away after he first took the boy to sea, and he heard they died from the Climate at Ceylon. Dareall's servants at Tariffa are unmanageable alcoholics, including his former sailors. He discovers this and replaces them. Monomia adopts a girl called Emma who she finds on the beach outside the castle, abandoned by her grandmother.

Monomia sees Belville at a ball. He wanted to ask her forgiveness, but heard she was already married. He resolves to exile himself until she is widowed. He sends a letter to her via his valet, Frederick, who is in love with her maid, Anna. Monomia's father dies. Monomia becomes ill and her unmarried sister Laura arrives to care for her. Belville goes to his dying uncle in Harrgoate: he will inherit his estates, including Avondale Park in Yorkshire. Lady Harriet tries to seduce Belville, having previously forced her attentions on him at Weymouth. On his uncle's death, Belville becomes Lord Avondale but decides to live incognito and not assume his title yet. He travels secretly to Avondale Park, then into Cumberland and lives in retirement with a vicar.

Laura admits to Monomia that she loves Colonel Welford, but they could not marry while their father was alive. Frederic writes to Anna to tell her that he is going into exile with

Belville. A woman appears, claiming to be Emma's grandmother and Dareall's first wife, with the marriage certificate and ring as evidence. She claims their son did not die but went on to father Emma. She has come forward to ensure Emma gets her inheritance. Dareall becomes ill. Monomia runs away with Laura and Emma. As they travel north, Monomia is hurt in a carriage accident in Yorkshire. Coincidentally, they are taken into Avondale Park for help. Monomia sees a portrait of Belville and is upset. Belville learns from a newspaper that the first Lady Dareall has appeared and superseded Monomia. Anna writes to Frederick, telling him that they are going to Scotland. Near Berwick, Welford recognises Laura and joins them. Laura conceals Monomia's situation from him, saying she is a widow. Laura agrees to marry Welford only if he agrees to leave the army, but he says he has been cheated out of his inheritance. Monomia decides they should go to the Isle of Mull, and Welford says he will join them when he can get leave. They notice a mysterious man following them; it later emerges that this is Belville following Monomia.

Laura gets a letter from Belville asking her to plead his case with Monomia, but she refuses. They sail to Mull. They take a house and Welford visits them. Still disguised, Belville introduces himself to Anna as McCready. She tells him that Welford is courting either Laura or Monomia. Monomia learns that Dareall can no longer write due to gout. Laura and Welford plan their wedding because he is able to leave the army, and Anna informs McCready (Belville). At their wedding, Welford seals a paper proving his real identity in front of everyone. The Welfords go on a honeymoon tour and visit his friends the Delafields. Belville visits Monomia, asking her to marry him. She says she sees herself as Dareall's wife by duty, if not legally, and dismisses him. Emma has measles and Monomia becomes ill too.

Welford tells Laura his life story; it becomes clear he is Dareall's lost son. His parents were unhappily married. He ran away with his mother after his father treated him harshly onboard ship. He joined the army under his new name and went to Ceylon. He married his first wife and had to go away to fight. His friends believed him dead because a corpse was found wearing his coat. He was sold into slavery but escaped after four years. He was told his wife died in childbirth and his mother also died. Their deaths were registered but not that of his child. He returned to England. Laura is shocked and tells him that Emma must be his child. Welford thinks the woman claiming to be his mother must be an impostor. He decides to go to Plymouth and investigate. Laura returns to Monomia, but they do not tell her where Welford is going. There is an interruption to the narrative as Laura and Monomia read the Delafields' letters to each other which explain how they met.

Welford sees Sergeant Pulford (whom he knew in the army) being ejected from Tariffa. Pulford says the woman claiming to be Lady Dareall is really his wife, formerly the nurse in Welford's family. After Welford was reported dead, his wife died in childbirth, and his mother later died, Mrs Pulford ran off with Emma. Pulford remained abroad: on his return, he saw his wife being called Lady Dareall. Welford is happy Emma must really be his child. He goes to the castle and tells Mrs Pulford he knows she is an impostor, because he is Dareall's son. Dareall is overcome by the news and wants Monomia to return to him before he dies. Welford informs Laura and Monomia, who begin their journey south. Monomia is glad she did not marry Belville because she was not free to do so.

Belville gives up his disguise. He gives the vicar he has been living with the Avondale Park chaplaincy. Mrs Pulford confesses that she took Lady Dareall's property and abandoned Emma with Dareall because she did not want him to enquire into his wife's affairs, but when

she wrongly heard Monomia was pregnant she felt guilty about depriving Emma of her inheritance. She decided appearing as Lady Dareall would protect Emma's rights but also her own lifestyle. They pay Mrs Pulford to go away. The doctor tells Dareall he is dying but they celebrate Welford reappearing as his son. When Monomia arrives, she faints, and Dareall dies instantly. Monomia mourns him for over a year because she loved him, although in more of a filial manner. Monomia marries Belville and Anna marries Frederick.

Anna Maria Bennett, *Faith and Fiction, Or, Shining Lights in a Dark Generation*

This novel tells the story of three generations in the late eighteenth century. Henry Dorville, curate of Glenross, Devon, was unfairly deprived of a better living by his former friend, Selby, the future Lord Castleton. Henry's brother John married for money and took his wife's name, becoming Mr Dorville Burton. Henry fell in love with Mrs Burton's dependant relation, Maria. They married and had children: Charles and Ellen.

When Ellen is sixteen, she disappears, apparently having eloped. Three years later, a woman comes to Glenross to tell Ellen's parents that she has died, leaving her infant daughter (also called Ellen) to their care. Ellen's papers explain that she met a stranger calling himself Sinclair in the ruins of Glenross Abbey. After several meetings, he persuaded her to marry privately there and go to London. He said he wanted to wait until they could present a male heir to his father to reconcile him to their marriage, but they had a daughter. After his father died, Ellen discovered he was due to marry a rich woman. He claimed their marriage was never legal and left her. Charles returns from sea then dies when his ship leaves for the West Indies without him.

Little Ellen is brought up believing she is an orphan in the Dorvilles' care. When she is a teenager, the Burtons and their children, Hector and Phillis, visit Glenross. Hector falls in love with Ellen, unrequitedly. Mrs Burton explains that the owner of Glenross Abbey, the Earl of Glenross, married the daughter of Lord Castleton (Henry's former friend, Selby), but she died. Ellen meets a handsome stranger. The Burtons take Ellen to their home in Staffordshire. Rawlington, the local curate, is trying to seduce Phillis for her money. Ellen meets two Frenchwomen who live nearby: Madame de Valmir and her daughter Mrs Stanley. The Countess of Belmont, a fashionable widow, visits the Belmonts and befriends Ellen. Ellen refuses Hector's proposal. Ellen helps the gardener, Robin, by paying his family's debts to the Burtons, and saves his sweetheart, Judith, from Rawlington's attentions. Ellen is reintroduced to St. Elmer, the handsome stranger she met in Devon, at Madame de Valmir's house. They fall in love. St. Elmer arranges to meet Ellen in a cave but does not appear. Instead, Ellen is surprised by Rawlington and has to run away. Ellen discovers St. Elmer left Staffordshire. Ellen and Lady Belmont leave for London.

Ellen dislikes London. Lady Belmont introduces Major Elrington, whose proposals Ellen rejects. Madame de Valmir writes to say Mrs Stanley is widowed. Ellen sees St. Elmer at the theatre, but he avoids them. To escape the libertine Marquis of Glanthorn's unwanted attentions, Lady Belmont takes Ellen to visit her brother, the Earl of Glenross, at Richmond. His daughter, Lady Gertrude, is slightly younger than Ellen. The Earl is agitated by Ellen's appearance. The flirtatious Captain Manby is also visiting. Gertrude is due to marry the Marquis of Rosemore. Mrs Stanley informs Ellen in a letter that Mr Stanley says St. Elmer is worthy. Ellen meets Mr Neville, who is also struck by her appearance. Lady Belmont was in

love with Neville, but he had to go to the West Indies. Not knowing that Glenross prevented their letters reaching each other, she married the Earl of Belmont, who was a cruel husband.

Gertrude's fiancé Rosemore arrives; Ellen sees he is St. Elmer. He tries to explain to Ellen that the engagement to Gertrude was arranged for him and he would not marry her if Ellen gave him hope. He repeatedly tries to justify himself. He tells Glenross he wants to delay his marriage with Gertrude. Ellen realises Gertrude does not love Rosemore. Lady Belmont visits her brother as he is ill, while Ellen assists a poor girl with Elrington's help. Rosemore sees them together. Glenross arrives in London looking for Gertrude, who abandoned him during his illness. Mr Alton, a strange man, asks Ellen questions about her family. They return to Richmond. Glenross admits to Ellen that he caused his wife's death. Ellen's kindness to the Earl leads others to think she has designs on him.

Rosemore manages to explain to Ellen that his uncle loved Lady Selby, but she married Glenross instead, so this uncle arranged a childhood engagement between Rosemore and Gertrude. Rosemore did not love Gertrude and hoped to meet a woman without using his title, as St. Elmer. In London he found a portrait of a beautiful woman (who turns out to be Ellen's mother) and was surprised to meet its likeness in Ellen. He followed her to Staffordshire then had to leave for London, then became jealous of Elrington when he saw her there. Ellen says she cannot marry him because he is Gertrude's fiancé, and she does not know her own parentage.

Glenross unexpectedly asks Ellen to marry him. Ellen reads a letter from her mother for advice, which explains her origins. Lady Belmont is angry with Ellen for accepting Rosemore's attentions and becomes suspicious of her relationship with Glenross. Glenross tells Ellen his story which leads them to realise he is her father. He kept his relationship with her mother secret because he knew his father would not consent, but later married Lady Selby. Ellen is happy but he cannot acknowledge their relationship. Their closeness leads the other to assume they are in love. Gertrude elopes with Captain Manby and marries him, leading Glenross to disinherit her.

Meanwhile, Mrs Dorville's brother Altamont, who she thought was dead, arrives in Glenross. He explains that their father left her £20,000 for marriage: it must have been stolen by their uncle (Mrs Burton's father) and left to the Burtons. Altamont survived the shipwreck which killed their father, was enslaved, then became rich through the friendship of a merchant. He went by the name Alton and met Ellen in London when looking for his sister. Altamont wants the Burtons to replace the money, which means they have to sell the Hall. Altamont buys it and gives it to their son Hector, who ultimately gives it back to his parents.

When the rumours about Glenross and Ellen can no longer be ignored, he admits to Lady Belmont that Ellen is his daughter. He says that his marriage to her mother was legal; Neville was a witness. Neville and Lady Belmont realise their letters did not reach each other because their union would have led to the discovery of his actions. Neville tells Gertrude she is the Earl's illegitimate daughter, and Ellen is offering to share their fortune. She angrily refuses and her husband admits he lied about his debts. Gertrude goes to see her grandfather, Lord Castleton: when she informs him that his daughter's marriage was illegitimate, he dies with nothing to leave her. She becomes mistress to a rich Lord. Ellen is presented at court and Glenross orders repairs to Glenross Abbey. Ellen and Rosemore get engaged when they realise that they were true to each other. Everyone forgives Glenross. Ellen and Rosemore marry on the same day as Neville and Lady Belmont.

Emily Clark, *The Esquimaux; Or, Fidelity*

General and Mrs Douglas, and their children Rose, Felix, and Jane, leave North America for Devon. They travel via Newfoundland, where they rescue an 'esquimaux' called Kamira, who has been wounded by a love rival. She asks to go with them as their servant. They sail to England with Captain Burton, then travel to Treharne Hall, Mrs Douglas' mansion. Mrs Douglas' brother, Lord Treharne, had large debts which reduced her inheritance, but her parents ensured she kept the Hall. She knows he is alive but has not heard from him. The Treharne servants include Dolly, who tells superstitious tales and introduces them to her aunt Dame Brownson. Their neighbours include Lady Morington and her French companion Louisa.

When Rose is about eighteen and Felix has joined the army, the girls hear strange noises, but they do not tell their parents. Rose and Jane shelter from a storm with Mrs Pryce, a widow, whom they initially befriend, but they see that she beats her servant and abuses her children. Their mother tells them not to visit her anymore. They meet Eustace, a lieutenant with a bad reputation. They are visited by Captain Burton and his friend Captain Courtenay, who plans to marry for money. The French Count de Fontenai admires Jane. They also meet Miss Herbert, the illegitimate child of a rich man. The General and his wife go to visit his dying, miserly brother, Sir James Douglas. Mrs Douglas' friend Mrs Fane visits the girls. Courtenay proposes to Rose, and she accepts, on condition of her parents' approval. Rose and Jane see lights and hear firearms at night. They follow them to the entrance to the cellars, but Jane faints. The servants are superstitious. Louisa tells Rose that Courtenay is engaged to a rich Miss Manson and has had relationships with several women. Rose confronts Courtenay about this. Rose and Jane allow Eustace to hide from bailiffs in a secret chamber at Treharne. Eustace proposes to Rose; she refuses.

Jane goes missing. When Rose meets her by appointment, Jane explains that she is married to Colonel Guilford, whom she met when secretly visiting Mrs Pryce. Guilford threatened to murder her and kill himself if she refused. Jane is pregnant, living in a house ten miles away. Rose tells Mrs Fane, but they decide not to tell their parents yet. Courtenay arrives in disguise and tries to force Rose to become his mistress, wounding her in the struggle. Karima defends Rose. They later hear that Courtenay is married. Rose goes to investigate sounds in the cellar with Karima. They find caves leading to a chamber, but they are unable to investigate further. They realise people can enter the house through the caves, and Rose thinks people want them to believe the house is haunted. When Rose and Karima are walking in the wood, they are seized by men who take Rose to a house on the beach. She learns they are involved in smuggling and plundering shipwrecks. Mrs Pryce is there. One of the men frees Rose and takes her home because she swears not to tell anyone. Kamira was able to swim to freedom.

Felix returns home, bringing with him Sir Delavalle, an officer who has been attacked by smugglers when trying to defend the customs officers. Rose and Delavalle fall in love and get engaged. Jane tells her siblings that Mrs Pryce has told her that Guilford already has a wife, so their marriage was not legal. When Jane gives birth to a girl, named Caroline, Rose arranges for her to be brought up by Dame Brownson as the child of a friend. Jane returns to Treharne as nobody knows what happened. Jane writes to Guilford telling him she will not see him anymore due to his deception. She is repentant and ill. Rose hopes that Fontenai would still marry Jane if he knew that she was deceived. Guilford comes and tells Rose he

wants to really marry Jane if he is ever widowed. He says he will pay for the child and offers to keep Jane at the cottage, but Rose keeps her at Treharne.

Delavalle goes to Holland with his battalion. Mrs Douglas returns home with Mr Moncrief, a friend of the General's from Scotland. The uninhabited part of Treharne is destroyed in a fire. After Sir James' death, a man claims that he was married to a servant, Helen, and they had a son. The General and Moncrief suspect this is not true. The General stays in Scotland to resolve this, while the rest of the family go to live in London, but Mrs Douglas soon returns to Scotland too.

Lady Mornington is rude to them when she learns the estate is disputed. Rose is imprisoned at the sponging house for a day over debt to a tradesman from whom they bought clothes on credit at Lady Mornington's recommendation. Miss Herbert refuses to give her any money, but Lady Elinor, a new acquaintance, helps instead. Felix has to go Scotland with his regiment. Mrs Pryce publicly embarrasses Jane by asking about her child and calling her Mrs Guilford. Jane becomes Fontenai's mistress because he persuades her nobody would marry her. Eustace tries and fails to engage Rose as his mistress. Guilford comes to London because Jane asked him to transfer Caroline to a different person's care. Elinor sees Jane at the theatre with bad people. Elinor takes Rose in to live with her and her father. Rose goes to Jane when they are informed that she is dying. Just before she dies, she explains that yesterday she married Fontenai. They learn that Guilford challenged Fontenai, but Jane was accidentally shot when trying to stop them. Fontenai then killed Guilford and escaped.

Rose goes to Mrs Fane in Devon; Delavalle is waiting for her and says he will still marry her. A relative of Elinor explains he is related to the clergyman who supposedly married Sir James to Helen. He says this did not happen: the boy is not Sir James' son. Delavalle takes soldiers and arrests the smugglers in the caves under Treharne, but the foreign men who were the most brutal offenders have all escaped already, so he allows the rest to escape. One of them explains that Lord Treharne arranged the smuggling. Treharne arranged to have Rose carried off: she was meant to be given to Courtenay, for a price. They discover Mrs Pryce was Treharne's mistress, but she poisoned herself after he escaped when they learned the plot had been discovered. It was also Treharne who plotted to defraud the General of Sir James' inheritance. Treharne's boat sinks, so he and all the foreign smugglers die. Felix inherits his title and marries Elinor. Rose and Delavalle also marry, and Kamira lives with them.

[Mrs] Edgeworth, *The Ballad Singer; Or, Memoirs of the Bristol Family*

Mr Clayton, curate of a village in South Devon, and his wife take in a girl called Angeline. A woman left her at the inn with a miniature and a note saying her husband's threats forced her to abandon her, but she is the daughter of a noble house. The Claytons are friends with the widowed Countess of Bristol and her daughter Lady Emmeline Trelawney, who live nearby at Trelawney Lodge.

The Bristol family's story is explained. The Earl of Bristol married for love, despite having originally intended to marry for money. He then lived a dissipated life in London before they returned to his paternal home in Devon to save money. The Countess remained there for her health after giving birth to Lady Emmeline and then Lord Henry. Clayton was Henry's tutor. Due to Henry's illness, they went to the South of France during the peace. At Montpellier, Clayton's son Major Clayton joined them and fell in love with Emmeline. They

knew the Earl would not consent to their marriage. Back in Devon, Henry made his last request to his father that he allow Emmeline to marry the Major. The Major's regiment went to the West Indies. After Henry's death the Earl took a London house again and got Clayton his living. They discovered the Major's ship was wrecked and Emmeline sunk under her grief. Emmeline met Lord Augustus Fitzroy and his sister Lady Caroline. Augustus fell in love with Emmeline and told her father, who told her she must marry him because he offered to pay his debts. The Earl's friend Mr Melvil, to whom he owed a lot of money, also wanted to marry Emmeline. When the Earl declined, Melvil arranged to have the Earl's goods claimed. The Earl shot himself and they went to Devon for his funeral. The Countess and Emmeline had to move to Trelawney Lodge, the Countess' jointure house, near Clayton's vicarage. The Bristol family estate descended on Major Trelawney, the new Earl of Bristol, who was in America. Emmeline told Augustus she could not love him because of Major Clayton. Augustus visited them and told them that Caroline married a man called Colonel Montague and they went abroad. This was when Angeline appeared.

Angeline is sent to school but spends vacations alternately at the vicarage or at Trelawney Lodge. Augustus visits them often but becomes depressed as Emmeline's feelings do not change. He goes to the continent. The Countess dies and Trelawney Lodge descends to Major Trelawney, so Emmeline moves into the vicarage. Lady Caroline's family return to London to prepare to move to Jamaica, so Emmeline takes Angeline to London. Emmeline plans to go to Lisbon to see her grandfather and to send Angeline back to Devon. Angeline helps a Frenchman by buying his translation when a bookseller will not. Montague and his uncle visit the Frenchman, the Chevalier St. Laurence, who lives with his nephew the Marquis de la Tour, having had to leave France as they supported the royals. The Marquis thinks his estates can be restored by visiting France, so they help them obtain passports. The Marquis hopes recovering his estates will allow him to marry Angeline, but she does not love him.

Clayton collects Angeline, and they travel with Emmeline as far as Exeter, where she leaves to sail from Falmouth to Portugal. They later hear that her ship was wrecked but that a lady was saved. Augustus returns to England and goes to search for Emmeline in Cornwall, and coincidentally finds her in a cottage near Penzance where he takes shelter. They go to London. Angeline and the Claytons join them. Emmeline agrees to marry Augustus because she cannot be happy while he is sad. They stay with Augustus' aunt, Lady Pelham, and her son Sir George: he likes Angeline, but he has an arranged engagement against his will to Lady Louisa. Emmeline and Augustus marry, and they go to Fitzroy Park, his villa outside London. Emmeline is very ill. Sir George proposes to Angeline: she says she will not marry him without his mother's permission, and she does not want to marry while her own parentage is unknown.

Emmeline goes to Lisbon, where her grandfather lives, for her health, with her husband and Angeline. They sail with Captain Willoughby from Falmouth. Her grandfather introduces his friends including Donna Olympia, a beautiful young widow who becomes Angeline's friend. Emmeline dies. Mrs Clayton sends Angeline a letter saying Clayton is dangerously ill, but she does not read it. Donna Olympia goes to England with the ambassador.

Angeline leaves Augustus to grieve and returns to England. He later dies of a broken heart. When she arrives at the vicarage, she learns that Clayton died. She goes to London to look for Mrs Clayton. She stays with Mrs Green, Emmeline's former waiting woman. Mrs

Horton tries to entrap Angeline into prostitution on the pretence that she knows Mrs Clayton's solicitor. Captain Willoughby saves Angeline when he finds her being attacked by Mrs Horton for refusing Lord Falcon's attentions. Angeline moves in with Mrs Green and struggles to support them with embroidery work. She sees a ballad singer earning money, so decides to become one for a few hours. She is invited into a charity dinner, but faints when her hood comes off. The Earl of Bristol (formerly Major Trelawney) sees the miniature round her neck: there is a picture of him in the back. The Earl and Countess' housekeeper Mrs Harsborough confirms that Angeline is his child.

The story is explained: Major Trelawney married Lady Amelia privately when his father refused consent and they hid the child hoping he would change his mind later. They placed her in Mrs Harsborough's care and went to America without her. Mrs Harsborough's husband made her desert Angeline and steal the money for her care. She later became their housekeeper, knowing she was unrecognisable from smallpox.

The Earl hires Mrs Green as his new housekeeper. Angeline is now rich. The French Marquis returns and marries Donna Olympia. They go to the Portuguese ambassador's mansion outside London. When Angeline goes for a walk there, she is nearly kidnapped by Lord Falcon, but Sir George appears and saves her. He was previously unaware of her changed circumstances. At the British institution rooms, Angeline finds Mrs Clayton with her brother. Sir George asks the Earl's consent to marry Angeline, and they get engaged after she refuses another suitor. They are married and go to Sir George's rural seat near Windsor. Lord Falcon marries Lady Louisa.

Sarah Green, *The Fugitive, Or Family Incidents*

Mrs Southby, widow of Major Southby, lives in Northamptonshire with her children: Emma, Edmund, who is at Westminster, and Henry, placed with a wealthy farmer. Mrs Southby's father, Mr Littleton, wanted her to marry the rector, but she eloped with Southby. Although Littleton has settled an annuity on his daughter, he says he will not leave his estate to her. Emma and Edmund grew up sharing a love of acting with their friend George, the son of their neighbour Dr Walton, a rich, widowed, retired physician. George is being brought up to be a physician but has anonymously written successful farces. Their other neighbours are Lady Harriet Walton, widow of Dr Walton's cousin, who is keen to think men in love with her, as well as Mr Brackenbury, the cunning village lawyer, his wife Lady Amelia, and son Horatio. Brackenbury hopes Horatio will marry Emma because he believes Littleton will leave her his estate. Emma and George fall in love. When Horatio poisons Emma's canary out of jealousy, George buys her a replacement to spare her feelings. When she learns the truth, she and George confess their mutual love, but they know Dr Walton would not consent to their marriage. George feels guilty because he has previously promised to marry another woman. He met Charlotte at Oxford and was entrapped into the relationship by her aunt. George got Charlotte pregnant, having convinced her they were already married.

A man calling himself Reverend Sir Robert Southby arrives and tells Mrs Southby he is her husband's cousin, returned from India. Emma finds Southby suspicious. It is later explained that Southby is a charlatan with a history of evil schemes. He decided to impersonate the Major's dead cousin, as he coincidentally shares his name. He hopes to acquire Littleton's estate and get Emma in his power. Emma confesses her love for George to Lady Harriet, who secretly wants George herself. Southby encourages Littleton to drink,

bringing on apoplectic attacks which eventually kill him. Littleton's will leaves his estate to Southby, and only £50 a year for his daughter. Southby proposes to take Emma as a mistress, but she refuses. George offers to marry Emma, hoping his father would forgive them. Emma tells Lady Harriet this; she claims that George is secretly married. When confronted, he denies this but admits an affair.

Emma and Mrs Southby move to London. Their fellow lodgers, Captain Mordaunt and his wife, offer to take Emma with them to Gibraltar as a paid companion, and Emma accepts. Mrs Southby dies. Edmund leaves Westminster to become an actor. George and his father see a poster in Northampton about a swindler whose description resembles Southby, under another name. Brackenbury asserts that he verified Southby's name for the will, then tells Walton that George proposed to Emma. Walton tells George he will disinherit him if he marries Emma.

When Emma has been at Gibraltar for nearly a year, George suddenly appears and importunes her, having come as surgeon to a regiment. Emma arranges to leave as companion to Mrs Bennett, the ignorant wife of a Major, who married her for her beauty. They go to Jersey. At the theatre there, Emma unexpectedly meets Henry, now an ensign. He tells her that Edmund and George are on stage, with a woman calling herself Mrs Southby. Edmund coincidentally met George in Oxford; it turned out that Edmund and Charlotte were in love before she met George. Charlotte's child was stillborn, and her aunt died. Edmund, Charlotte, and George joined a theatre company going to Jersey. After some confusion when Emma is accused of being an actress and seducing Major Bennett, the Bennetts pay for her passage to London to escape George. It is later explained that Lady Harriet wrote to Dr Walton revealing his son's indiscretion, but implying it was Emma he had impregnated. Emma struggles to find lodgings without a reference. Southby importunes her on the street. She writes to Dr Walton, but his reply makes clear he thinks she is married to George, and he knows she has been in improper situations, as unfortunate events led to her entering a pawn shop and gin shop. She replies defending herself and gets an anonymous letter with £40 enclosed.

Emma is hired as governess to the Earl of Gaveston's youngest daughter, on the secret recommendation of Walton, but is not paid regularly. People ask if she is related to the Earl of Wentworth because she resembles a portrait of Lady Caroline. At the Earl's seat, Binfield Priory, his elder daughter Lady Frances is kind to Emma and shows her the portrait. They hear that Lady Harriet took George under her roof despite their not being married. It is explained that she took advantage of his poverty, but his father then took him back. The Earl's son asks Emma to elope with him; she refuses. The Earl himself propositions her, continues to importune her in London and ensures his wife does not pay her. Emma leaves them, takes lodgings, and does embroidery work. Edmund explains that Brackenbury was paid to help Southby with Littleton's will. Southby escaped to America and Horatio died. Edmund wants to marry Charlotte, who had to stop acting because she is dying of consumption, but she refuses because she is not a virgin.

Emma sees an advertisement for the heir of Major Southby and finds Edmund in a sponging-house. Their father did not expect to inherit because the Earl had his own family, but his children died without issue, including Lady Caroline. Edmund is now Earl of Wentworth, his siblings Lord and Lady Southby. When Emma invites Dr Walton to thank him for his anonymous help, she is reunited with George, and they marry. Edmund marries Lady Frances. Henry joins the guards. Southby dies in America and leaves the fortune to the siblings.

Ann Julia Kemble Hatton, *Cambrian Pictures, or, Every one has errors*

The preface suggests this is the story of Delamere. Mortimer elopes with Louisa. They go to Mortimer's friend Sir Owen Llewellyn's castle in North Wales. Mortimer is sent to the West Indies and dies, then Louisa dies after giving birth to their son, Henry Mortimer. His grandfather, Lord Dungarvon, does not recognise the marriage so the Llewellyns adopt him. Henry loves his adoptive sister Adeline. Her friend Eliza loves Captain Seymour of the Scottish Greys, but her mother wants her to marry Montrose. Montrose tries to seduce a dairymaid, but her sweetheart pretends to be the devil and scares him, so he leaves. Eliza's father withdraws his consent when Seymour refuses to quit the army.

Henry visits his friend Delamere at his father's seat in Devon. Lord Dungarvon tries to force Henry to marry the dowager Duchess of Inglesfield. Henry is kidnapped and taken to her castle in Cumberland. He recovers from illness and meets the Duchess' daughters Julia and Isabella. The Duchess dies, Isabella marries Captain Lonsdale, and Julia dies. Isabella, Lonsdale, and Delamere go to Italy, but Henry returns to Wales. In Sicily, Delamere is seduced by the Marchesa della Rosalvo. Her husband walks in on them, makes her become a nun, and shoots himself (as he was soon to be arrested by the inquisition, having murdered his friend).

Eliza's parents try to make her marry Morgan. She fabricates a challenge to duel, dresses as a man, and shoots Morgan. When she reveals herself, Morgan no longer wants her, and her father forgives her. Montgomery proposes to Adeline, but she rejects him. Henry rejects Miss Montgomery. Sir Owen discovers that Henry loves Adeline. Adeline marries Henry, whom she sees more as a brother, for the sake of her father.

Mr Jenkins, a proud Welshman, supports the idea of his niece Rosa marrying Montgomery for love. Rosa's father, Sir Edward, comes to claim her, bringing his English friend Lord Clavering who intends to marry her and pay off Sir Edward's mortgage. At a masked ball, Montgomery proposes to Rosa. Rosa is carried off and imprisoned, and Clavering tries to trick her into marrying him. She escapes to a cottage where Delamere, who has returned to England, helps her. Clavering is injured in an accident, then reforms and acknowledges his illegitimate son. Rosa marries Montgomery in Scotland. Sir Edward marries Miss Montgomery for money: she has nothing settled on herself and he is cruel, so she moves back to her parents' house.

Adeline gives birth to a son and her father dies. Delamere comes to visit them, and he and Adeline fall in love. Henry goes away to inherit his grandfather's estates. Adeline and Delamere make love and he offers to take her to Italy or kill himself. Adeline dies of guilt when Mortimer returns. Six months later, Mortimer finds out the truth and finds Delamere in her tomb. Henry forgives Delamere, makes him his son's guardian, then dies.

Ann Julia Kemble Hatton, *Chronicles of an Illustrious House; Or the Peer, the Lawyer, and the Hunchback*

Henry was brought up by Lord Lindermere. He gets into debt alongside Lindermere's son and Captain Auberly but resolves to change. He saves Lucy and her mother Mrs Harrowby from homelessness. Mrs Harrowby says she recognises Henry as a child she cared for in Kent, by a mark on his thumb, which refers to his birth name, Louis St. Vallory. She says he

was left in her care when his mother, Anzoline, a Frenchwoman, died, and his father, Delaval, went to India. They also left a daughter with a nurse. Years later, the boy's guardian claimed him, saying Delaval was dead.

Lindermere says this is not true: he claims Henry's father was a cobbler called Parkins, from Wiltshire, and he took him in out of charity. Lindermere dies, after raving about crimes. Henry goes to his lawyer Northington's house rather than impose on the new Lindermere. Northington takes Henry to meet Parkins, the Wiltshire cobbler's son: he says he was told he had a hunchbacked twin who was adopted by a Lord.

Northington also introduces Henry to Sir Edmund, who lives nearby, on the border of Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, with his niece, Emily, heir to the Fitzaubin estates, and a cousin, Miss Frasier, an old maid. Sir Edmund says his friend Fitzaubin carried off a nun called Anzoline St. Vallory, so they realise Fitzaubin and Delaval are the same person. Miss Frasier loves Henry and acts ridiculously. Henry and Emily fall in love. Northington hopes they will marry, so Emily will not lose the estates. Auberly emerges as a rival for Emily because his uncle wants him to marry her for her money. They meet Lady Elizabeth, an eccentric currently performing a masculine persona. They also meet Mullins, a hunchbacked scholar. When Mullins tries to seduce Sally, a housemaid, she tricks him into eloping with Miss Frasier: Mullins believes he is going with Emily, and Miss Frasier believes she is going with Henry (because each pair has the same initials). They return when they realise their mistake. When Emily rejects Auberly, he is angry and deceives her into believing Henry seduced Patty (a Wiltshire girl) by using Henry's name when seducing her himself. Later in the novel, Henry's reputation is cleared, Auberly marries Patty, and his uncle forgives him.

Elizabeth takes a large party including Henry and Lindermere to Gooselake, a remote watering-place. Captain Ormond of Elizabeth's party has long been in love with Eva, but unfortunate circumstances kept them apart and reduced her to taking work as a companion to Mr Dip, a rich retired tallow-chandler, and his wife. Elizabeth takes Eva in. Elizabeth and Lindermere marry at Gooselake despite being indifferent to one another. He plans to seduce Eva. They travel to Lindermere's Wiltshire seat and then London.

Ormond rescues Eva when she is abducted by her uncle; they marry immediately. Lindermere and Elizabeth's marriage is unhappy. He demands money for gambling debts from her; his threats make her go into premature labour with a stillborn son. Ormond goes to India with his regiment, while Eva stays with the Lindermeres and gives birth to a son. Lindermere unsuccessfully tries to make Elizabeth change a will she made which leaves money to Eva. Elizabeth dies in the struggle. Lindermere becomes more dissipated but fails to make Eva his mistress. Lindermere plans to marry the Dips' niece Dolly, their heiress, an unsophisticated country girl who wants to marry her village squire.

Henry gets into debt and Emily anonymously sends money to pay it. Auberly exaggerates Henry's bad conduct in a letter to Sir Edmund, which upsets Emily. Parkins writes to say his wife inherited a fortune so he can help Henry if necessary. Henry was considering marrying the dowager Lady Selwyn, who is in love with him, for her money, but decides he cannot. Henry meets Sir Frederick Dashwood, the Marquis St. Vallory, and his daughter Anzoline (the same name as St. Vallory's sister). Dashwood is in love with Anzoline. Sir Edmund's friend the Earl of Glenross' coquettish daughter, Lady Helen is won over by Captain Mandeville. Sir Edmund takes Emily to Lisbon for her health. Anzoline and Dashwood marry, then go to his seat in Sussex with her father, Helen, Mandeville, Eva, and

Henry. They go to London. Eva mistakenly thinks her husband is dead. Lindermere and Auberly unsuccessfully attempt to abduct Eva.

In India, Ormond rescues Fitzaubin from a tiger and he relates the story of how he was sold into slavery, but ultimately became heir to his captor's estate for saving his daughter from abduction. They return to England and are reunited with the other characters.

Through a series of revelations, it emerges that plots by the Dips and Lindermere concealed the fact that Henry and Emily are Fitzaubin's children and deprived them of their fortune. Despite increasing amounts of evidence unearthed by Northington, Henry is initially reluctant to believe the Lindermeres deceived him.

St. Vallory says that his sister Anzoline was in love with Fitzaubin and was tricked into escaping her convent with a jealous Englishman, who is later revealed to be the former Lindermere. She escaped him and was reunited with Fitzaubin, but Lindermere prevented their families from forgiving them for eloping. Fitzaubin had to go to India; Anzoline died of sorrow, leaving a son in Lindermere's guardianship and a daughter with a nurse, who is revealed to have been Mrs Dip. The Dips abandoned the baby at a school and stole the money. The name of the school makes Eva realise it was her (she was brought up in a school as the proprietor's daughter), so she is Fitzaubin's daughter. The Dips restore Fitzaubin's property; he sets them up in trade and sends Dolly home, where she marries the squire. Mrs Dip drinks herself to death.

The relation who sent Fitzaubin to India left an estate to Fitzaubin's son Louis (now Henry), but Lindermere senior got it by claiming the boy had died. He took one of the cobbler's twin children so he could claim that this was Henry's origin when he brought him up as a charity case (because he wanted to see him to suffer dependence, as the son of Anzoline). He gave away the real cobbler's child, who grew up to be Mullins. Mullins married Miss Flam, the Dips' second companion. He takes her to live with his twin brother Parkins' family.

Lindermere junior becomes ill and then kills himself after being confronted about the plot. Lindermere senior's papers include a confession and request that his son restore Henry to his rights. Henry and Fitzaubin move Anzoline's coffin to Wrexham Abbey, the Fitzaubin family seat. Henry goes to Lisbon. Rosedale, who was previously in love with Emily, marries her Portuguese friend Floranthe, who is in love with him, after they save her from becoming a nun out of desperation. Henry and Emily are reunited, return to Britain, and marry in Wrexham Abbey.

C.D. Haynes, *The Foundling of Devonshire; Or, "Who is She?"*

When Laura Mansell's benefactress dies, she leaves Devon for London to seek employment. Her benefactress, also called Laura, was due to marry her father's friend's son Henry. Henry fell in love with Laura's friend Louisa. Laura released Henry from their engagement and left for Devon, where she married Mr Mansell. The Mansells adopted Laura, who was given to them by a dying woman, who said she kidnapped her in order to sell her clothes. Mr Mansell died, and Mrs Mansell devoted herself to Laura's education. She gave her a box to open on her twenty-first birthday containing a necklace she was wearing when she was stolen.

In the stagecoach, Laura meets Mrs Sweeting, a grocer's wife, and Hartville, a gentleman. They are joined by a widow and a married couple; the husband accidentally

injures Laura's arm. The widow screams on seeing the birthmark and gunpowder spots on Laura's arm. In London, Mrs Sweeting engages Laura as a music teacher for her daughter Eliza. Stanley, Mr Sweeting's head shopman, also lives with them. Stanley prefers Laura to Eliza, which makes her jealous. Stanley proposes to Laura in Kensington gardens. Although she declines, Hartville, Mrs Sweeting and Eliza all arrive and assume they are mutually in love. Hartville says he is going abroad tomorrow. Laura has to leave the Sweetings because Eliza refuses to have lessons from her. Laura gets a letter from Hartville saying he loves her, but he thinks she has accepted Stanley, and he is due to marry a lady of high rank, whom he does not love, on his return.

Laura gets a new situation educating Fanny, the ward of Mr Fitzmorris, just outside of London. Fitzmorris plans to marry Fanny, at her now-deceased father's request. Laura is given a love letter signed E.H. and assumes it is from Hartville. When Laura walks out in a veil, Edward Harrington (the E.H. of the letter) mistakes her for Fanny. Fanny explains that she and Harrington are in love. Fanny and Harrington elope. Laura goes to enquire after a situation in London as companion to Mrs Selwyn, who turns out to be the invalid wife from the coach. She resolves a dispute between Mrs Selwyn's Welsh servant and an Irish fruit-seller. Mrs Selwyn tells the story of how she fell in love with her husband: he saved her when she was attacked by a goat in the Welsh mountains.

Laura finds a note written by Harrington's sister Caroline to her ex-fiancé Manby. She meets Manby when he comes to pick it up; he agrees to tell Laura if he learns where Mrs Harrington is living. Fitzmorris visits Laura to say he cannot find Mrs Harrington. Fitzmorris declares love for Laura, but after he overhears her talking to herself about Hartville, they agree to be friends. Mrs Selwyn's niece Ellen comes to live with her, leading Mr Selwyn to tell his wife to dismiss Laura. Laura visits the Sweetings, who are going to Eliza's wedding to a Devon farmer. Before Laura leaves Mrs Selwyn, they go to theatre. When Mrs Selwyn faints, a man tries to abduct Ellen, but Stanley saves her and takes her home, saying he knows Laura. Stanley falls in love with Ellen. Laura meets Mrs Selwyn's acquaintance Miss Montgomery, who is revealed to be Caroline: she hid her identity to find out whether Laura forgave Mrs Harrington. The Harringtons are forgiven and go to his ship at Plymouth. Caroline and Manby are happily reunited.

Laura moves in with the widowed Mrs Allanson, who lives with her brother Sir William, to educate her daughter and nieces. Sir William is the man who tried to abduct Ellen. He importunes Laura, but Mrs Allanson believes Laura is innocent. Fitzmorris and Mrs Allanson fall in love and eventually get married. Sir William tricks Laura into going with him to Eastbourne, where he has her imprisoned. He tries to force her to marry him, but the Irishwoman she met outside Mrs Selwyn's house helps her to escape to a nearby inn where she asks for protection: the Earl of Richland and his son Lord Lionel take her back to London to live with their family. It emerges that Laura once returned Lady Richland's lost purse. Their daughter Lady Louisa (Lionel's twin) has a formal engagement to Lord Stanmore, who is abroad, but she prefers Lessington. Mrs Jenkins, their nurse, faints when she sees Laura.

Lionel declares love for Laura, but she says she thinks of him as a brother. He explains he met a mysterious, beautiful woman in Berkshire who eventually explained she was Augusta, Countess Rubini. She escaped her cruel Italian husband who took advantage of her fortune and threatened to kill her. Laura realises that some time ago she helped Augusta by exchanging clothes with her. Laura and Lionel get engaged, but she still loves Hartville.

Louisa behaves increasingly unfeelingly to her parents. On her twenty-first birthday, Laura realises her box has been taken.

Lord Stanmore returns: he is Hartville, having come into his title while he was away. Stanmore explains he thought she had accepted Stanley; if he knew the truth, he would have tried to break off his own engagement with Louisa. The family hold a masquerade for the twins' twenty-first birthday at their estate on the Thames. Stanmore learns that Louisa prefers Lessington, so decides to break off their engagement. A magician tells Lionel that Augusta can now be his, and later tells Laura not to marry Lionel. Sir William tries to abduct Laura, but Stanmore saves her. Louisa tells Lady Richland she feels she cannot marry Lionel.

Mrs Jenkins is ill and tells Lady Richland that Louisa is not her real daughter, but Laura is. She returns the box to Laura, and Lady Richland recognises the necklace which she gave to her daughter. She also recognises the likeness of Mrs Mansell, and they realise that her friend Laura brought up her daughter for her without knowing it. Mrs Jenkins explains that when the twins were left with her, the girl was stolen. She substituted her own daughter and spotted her arm with gunpowder to match the marks they had given the twins. When Mrs Jenkins was widowed, she travelled in the same stagecoach as Laura, where she saw the birthmark. She returned to Earl's household and realised she needed to stop the incestuous marriage between Laura and Lionel. She appeared as the magician and plotted with Louisa to help Sir William abduct Laura. Meanwhile, Louisa elopes with Lessington, to gain consequence before her parentage becomes known. She later accepts money but refuses to be part of the family. Mrs Jenkins dies.

Laura is henceforth known as Lady Louisa. She and Stanmore marry. They go to Devon, where Stanmore has purchased an estate. They arrive at Mrs Mansell's home and Stanmore reveals he has bought it for her. Stanley and Ellen, and Caroline and Manby, also get married. Sir William mortally wounds Rubini (Augusta's husband) in a duel and flees to the continent. After Rubini dies, Lionel is able to marry Augusta.

Barbara Hofland, *The History of a Clergyman's Widow and her young family*

In Lisbon, an English merchant, Mr N—, meets Mr Gardiner, a Devonshire clergyman who has come abroad for his health. Gardiner explains he has left his pregnant wife with their three daughters and two sons behind, and they are running out of money to pay the curate. The villagers of Whitechapel like the Gardiners because they helped and educated them, so they are helping them in return now. Mr N— cares for Gardiner. Gardiner asks that Mr N— visit his family if he is ever nearby. When Gardiner dies, Mr N—arranges his funeral and writes to inform his widow.

Mrs Gardiner gives birth to a son called Henry. Soon afterwards, Mr Wallington (also sometimes called Wallingford), the curate, tells her that her husband has died. They have to leave the parsonage because another man will get the living, although Wallington will be kept on as curate and schoolmaster. They have to leave the village to earn a living in the nearest market town because Mrs Gardiner has no close family. She leaves her eldest son, George, with Wallington, and her second son, William, with Farmer Gooch. Mr Wilson, the new rector, and his friend Simpson arrive. Wilson plans to only spend part of the year there, and

the rest of his time at his other living in Staffordshire, so Simpson persuades him to raise Wallington's wages and allow him to live in the parsonage in his absence.

Mrs Gardiner and her children arrive at the town of S—, where they take small lodgings. The eldest, fifteen-year-old Maria becomes an apprentice milliner. Betsy, the youngest girl, is sent to a local boarding school. Sarah, the middle girl, and Mrs Gardiner make gloves from home. Mrs Gardiner receives money from the bounty for clergymen's widows, which allows her to rehire their maid. William starts to pick up dialect and manners from Farmer Gooch, which worries his mother. When Mrs Gardiner is ill, Sarah measures Lady Barbara for gloves, and tells her she likes to draw but does not think she ought to anymore. She returns and tells Sarah she will pay for her to have lessons from a local drawing master. She is a widow whose children died and occupies herself with charity, including a young artist who lives with her in London.

Mrs Gardiner receives a letter from a cousin she lost touch with long ago. Mr Staniland, an apothecary and surgeon, heard of Gardiner's death from Mr N—, who is his patient. Staniland offers to take one of her sons to learn his profession as he only has daughters. George goes to him. Wilson allows Wallington to live at the parsonage full time, so he takes pupils. Simpson and Wilson get William a place at Christ's Hospital school. When Maria finishes her apprenticeship, the family take different lodgings so she can become a chamber milliner.

When Sarah is seventeen, Lady Barbara takes her to London to learn from Mr Montgomery, the artist who lives with her. She is surprised when he turns out to be an elegant young man. Next spring, Lady Barbara takes Sarah and Montgomery to the Lakes to sketch. When travelling through Harrogate, they meet Mr Lawrence, who turns out to be a cousin of Mrs Gardiner. His property will go to his nephew, but Lady Barbara tries to interest him in Mrs Gardiner's family by introducing Sarah to him. When they reach the Lakes, Montgomery saves Sarah when she falls in the water. Lady Barbara and Sarah travel back to London via Devon. At Harrogate they hear Lawrence has already died and made a codicil, but they cannot find out its contents.

Meanwhile, the mercer who lives on the same street as the Gardiners leaves his business to his son, Mr Clarkson. He asks Mrs Gardiner's permission to propose to Maria, but she tells her mother that she does not love him, and hints that she has a prior attachment. Sarah returns. Mr Staniland says he will take George on as an equal partner and help William get into the church. Henry is sent to school with Wallington, back in the village of Whitechapel. Lady Barbara takes them there in her coach while she visits her friend Sir Thomas. The villagers are pleased to see them. When they visit Gardiner's memorial at the church, Montgomery arrives to fetch Lady Barbara and Sarah back to London on business.

The children visit their mother at various times. Sarah sends the money she makes from her art. Sir Thomas offers the Normanton living to Wallington. He can remain at the Whitechapel parsonage and take a curate for Normanton and serve the churches alternately. Wallington goes to S—and proposes to Maria, who admits it was him she preferred. Mrs Gardiner decides not to move in with them at the parsonage. On Maria and Wallington's wedding day, Montgomery arrives with a letter explaining that Lawrence left Mrs Gardiner five thousand pounds, which will allow her to rent the Normanton rectory and have the curate board with her. Lady Barbara leaves Sarah with them. Betsy admits that she and Mr Clarkson are in love. They decide she will go into the country with her mother to learn housekeeping before she marries. Lady Barbara tells Montgomery she has bought him a furnished house in

London and thinks Sarah would marry him. He goes to Normanton and Sarah accepts him. They move to London, become respected artists, and have a son. The Wallingtons have children, Betsy marries Mr Clarkson and George marries Miss Staniland. William gets a fellowship and Henry is placed with Mr Clarkson. Mrs Gardiner moves to a cottage near the parsonage.

Catherine Hutton, *Oakwood Hall*

This novel consists of letters from Jane Oakwood to her friend Mrs Brudenell, and from Margaret Freeman to her friend Maria Caradine. Jane, who is over fifty and unmarried, travels from her home in the South of England to stay with her brother at his Yorkshire estate, her childhood home, Oakwood Hall. They get on well despite their different habits. Oakwood works alongside his labourers and does not hunt.

Freeman, a local yeoman who retired on the proceeds of small estate, and his daughter Margaret visit the Oakwoods daily. Millichamp, a young gentleman, stays at the Freemans' cottage after asking them directions to the inn. He has a small estate in Kent, as well as expecting to inherit from his uncle, a Manchester cotton manufacturer. Millichamp was travelling to Margaret's friend Maria's house; he was supposed to marry Maria because her father's estate is half mortgaged to his uncle, Goldacre, but she wants to marry Mr Marriot. Goldacre advertises in the newspaper to find Millichamp, then he arrives in person. Millichamp tells Goldacre that he wants to marry Margaret, but he refuses his consent because they would be poor. Goldacre dines at Oakwood with the Freemans: he is proud of his factory and wants his nephew to either join him there or marry Maria. Millichamp stays at Oakwood, separated from Margaret, and will go with Jane on her tour to Lancaster over the summer to visit Mrs Douglas. Goldacre learns that Maria would not marry Millichamp anyway. He invites the Oakwoods to see his factory in Lancashire. Jane disagrees with industrial manufacturing.

Jane and Millichamp arrive at Mrs Douglas' house but then decide to go to the lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland. Jane describes Lancaster, and their journey to Windermere and Ambleside, and their tour, including Ullswater, Keswick, and Derwentwater. She states that her expectation of the Lakes based on what she has read about them spoiled her enjoyment. She notes the negative effects of tourism. They then go via Grasmere Lake to Kendal, Burton, and Lancaster. She compares the scenery to that of North Wales. They return to Mrs Douglas' house, where the many guests include a young woman who tries to attract Millichamp.

Back in Yorkshire, Oakwood invites Jane to live with him permanently, but she wants to keep her own home in the south. They are visited by their niece, Barbara, and nephew, Charles, who has inherited an estate as well as expecting to inherit Oakwood. They are both rude. Barbara becomes jealous of Millichamp's affection for Margaret. They visit Fountains Abbey. They all stay at Ripon for the night. On the return journey, Charles loses control of the horses. Margaret is injured and needs rest for a few days at the house of a nearby acquaintance. Jane tells the story of their host's Welsh cousin, whose husband beats her, but states this is not typical of the Welsh character. Charles flirts with Margaret. Barbara gives up on Millichamp and instead decides to work on Goldacre. Maria persuades Goldacre to buy part of her father's estate in order to let him redeem the other and secure it on terms that protect his wife and daughter from him ruining them. The village festival of statutes is

described including traditions such as the cushion dance. Charles imprisons Margaret at the farm of former Oakwood servants, and says he is determined to marry her. She says she cannot hesitate in her choice between him and Millichamp, who overhears and mistakenly thinks this means she prefers Charles. Charles also thinks he has her consent and asks Oakwood and Freeman for theirs. Millichamp leaves immediately. Margaret explains her words, but the others hope that Charles will prevail in time. Goldacre marries Barbara.

Jane decides to travel through South Wales on her way to visit her own home. She takes Margaret with her in the hope of improving her health and happiness. Jane describes their journey: she planned to go to Llandrindod Wells but cannot find out anything about it in nearby towns so changes her mind. She describes going to Wales via Hay. They travel via Brecon and Newport. Jane notes the politeness of the Welsh miners. They arrive in Swansea, where Jane finds the air noxious from copper. She describes the local dialect and how different South Wales is from the North. They see an ironworks and cross the Vale of Glamorgan. They travel via Cardiff to Gloucester between the Severn and the Forest of Dean. Monmouthshire is described as inferior to Wales. Jane describes Gloucester and the Malvern Hills. They arrive at her house, where Charles is awaiting them as planned.

Margaret admires Jane's house and the freedom of her life. Margaret finds Charles has changed for the better. Mrs Brudenell's son Henry, who has fought in India, tries to rival Charles for Margaret, but she says she loves neither. Jane defends novels to Margaret, including Burney and Edgeworth. They return to Oakwood and Jane asks her brother to build her a house on his estate. A Yorkshire plough-day is described.

Margaret consents to marry Charles, having been persuaded by her father that he would make her happy: his money will allow her to indulge in artistic pursuits. Charles and Margaret go to visit Maria. On their return, Charles rescues Margaret when she falls into a river, and he gets a fever from the cold and dies. Charles' will leaves £5000 to Margaret. His sister Mrs Goldacre is not satisfied with having all the rest of his estate, combined with her husband's. Mrs Goldacre plans to build a new house at Oatley against her husband's wishes and tries to prevent him from visiting Margaret.

Millichamp walks into the Freemans' house and embraces Margaret: he believed she preferred Charles, so he lived in seclusion at a farmhouse until he heard that Charles had died. Maria told him his mistake about Margaret's feelings. Millichamp proposes to Margaret. Goldacre announces he is giving the house his wife is building at Oatley to Millichamp: he has already put it in trust for him to protect it. Goldacre offers his wife £500 a year if she leaves him, which she accepts, and he then doubles this sum because she was honest about hating him. Millichamp and Margaret marry.

Catherine Hutton, *The Miser Married*

This novel consists of letters, mostly between Charlotte Montgomery and her friend Harriet, but also from Winterdale to his steward, and from Winterdale's housekeeper and groom (these latter contain phonetic spellings and a note that an editor added punctuation). It is set on the banks of the Wye, apparently on the English side. Winterdale, a miser with £6000 a year, enjoys pursuing lawsuits against his tenants and neighbours, no longer goes to church because of a dispute about tithes with the vicar, and refuses to give his son Henry an adequate

allowance. He avoids meeting his new neighbours, Mrs Mereval and her daughter and niece, who have taken nearby Ravenhill Lodge.

Charlotte writes to Harriet saying that she and her mother have had to retire from London. As her father's sole heiress, she expected to be rich and borrowed money against her future inheritance, until a distant relation returned from India and claimed the estate. The case is now in Chancery. Charlotte's cousin, Eleanor, the beautiful orphan daughter of a clergyman, who has a fortune of more than £10,000, has come with them. They are living under the assumed name of Mereval to avoid their creditors. Charlotte misses life in London, but she takes up country pursuits such as walking and riding with Eleanor. The vulgar vicar Mr Thacker and his wife invite them to an assembly. Thacker's rich but silly nephew Mr Sharp asks Eleanor to dance. At the assembly, Charlotte dances with an officer called Montgomery; she suspects he could be the son of the man claiming her estate. On their way home, there is an accident, but Henry seizes the reins and saves them.

Winterdale breaks his leg in a riding accident near the Lodge. He stays there being nursed by Mrs Montgomery. Henry visits and enjoys the young women's company. It emerges that Montgomery is indeed the son of Sir James who is claiming the estate. Charlotte notices that her mother hopes to marry Winterdale. She has told him about the Chancery suit, but not the debts. Henry hopes that marriage will make his father happier, but really Winterdale is just hoping to increase his income. Henry employs some labourers to put Winterdale house in order while his father is in London and prepares apartments for Charlotte and Eleanor. Winterdale marries Charlotte's mother, and they move into his house, which is outdated but grand. Lady Winterdale goes to church and has visitors despite her husband's disapproval and determines to manage him. Winterdale is disappointed that his wife turned out to be the opposite of what she pretended to be. Charlotte admits that her estate is disputed and Winterdale agrees to help with the case. Sharp decides to pursue Eleanor. Charlotte notices that Winterdale is managed by his steward, who balances his master's and the servants' interests. Winterdale wants Charlotte to marry Henry, so he gets the Montgomery estate, but Charlotte is in love with Montgomery, and Henry with Eleanor.

Sir James refuses to allow Montgomery to marry Charlotte because of her debts, even though their marriage would resolve the Montgomery case. He wants to marry her anyway and believes his father will change his mind once he gets to know her, but she says they must wait. She assures him that he need not be jealous of Henry, and he agrees to leave the army and pursue agriculture once they are married. Winterdale is furious when he discovers his wife's debts and decides to begin spending his money to prevent her wasting it all. He and Henry are surprised to learn that Charlotte has even more debt: he warns her that she must marry to avoid prison if she loses the Montgomery case.

Mrs Thacker invites them to a dance. They meet the Elringtons, whom Winterdale is suing for accidental trespass. Sharp tries to monopolise Eleanor but she wants to dance with Henry. Montgomery leaves for Newcastle with his regiment. Charlotte expresses her opinions on writers including Richardson, Edgeworth, More, Holcroft and a forgotten poet, Mary Jones. Sharp proposes to Eleanor. She rejects him, but he persists. Montgomery wants to elope to Scotland but Charlotte refuses. They visit the Elringtons. Their son Francis admires Eleanor.

Lady Winterdale buys a coach without her husband's knowledge, and insists on their lifestyle improving, visiting neighbours, and going to Brighton. They go to Aberystwyth instead because Mr Winterdale prefers it, but otherwise he concedes. Sharp insists on

following them there and the Elringtons also arrive eventually. Charlotte describes a fight that happened at the inn they stayed at on the way into Wales. Charlotte is admired and receives proposals from Colonel Sunderland, and later Sir Edward Halifax, but she still prefers Montgomery. Henry decides to marry Eleanor whether or not he can gain his father's consent. Winterdale is happier but still wishes to protect his gold from his wife. He hears that Charlotte is likely to lose her suit. His servant Ralph is not used to town life and gets drawn into gambling. Montgomery's parents have a carriage accident and Lady Winterdale takes them in her carriage. Sir James is surprised to discover who they are and comes the next day to attempt to persuade Charlotte to give up Montgomery, by offering to settle her debts if she does so, and threatening that, if they did marry, Montgomery would face prison for her debts.

They return to Winterdale. Montgomery asks Charlotte to elope. He believes his father would not execute his threats, but she refuses and says they must wait until one of them gets the Montgomery estate. On their return home, they found that Lady Winterdale had ordered it to be modernised, except her husband's own rooms. Henry tells his father of his attachment to Eleanor; he approves (because Charlotte appears unlikely to win her estate) and will settle them at the Lodge. The hearing is postponed.

Charlotte wins the Montgomery estate because Winterdale discovered additional papers in the bottom of an old chest. She repays her mother's debts and redeems the estate from the mortgage. Montgomery arrives and they agree to marry at the same time as Henry and Eleanor. They all plan to go to London together, to meet his parents, while their castle is prepared for them. Ralph is glad not to accompany them, because of his bad experiences at Aberystwyth. Sir James apologises to Charlotte, explaining he did not think it was wrong to take her property because he thought her dissipated. Lady Winterdale finds it hard to resist wasting money despite avoiding her former acquaintances, but Eleanor and Charlotte are careful.

Catherine Hutton, *The Welsh Mountaineer*

This novel consists of letters from Dorothy Penrose to her cousin Miss Tregarnog, and some from her servant Jenkin to his sweetheart. Dorothy, who is in love with her cousin Owen, goes to visit her cousin, Bridget, who has married Sir Theodore, in London. Leaving her home for the first time, Dorothy travels on horseback with Jenkin. She gives a detailed account of her journey in which her ignorance facilitates satirical comment on gender norms, economics, national identity, and politics. A man called Fitzmarmaduke begins to follow her. Dorothy is proud of her ancient Welsh heritage and resents both the Saxons and the Normans.

When they arrive in London, Bridget claims to be an invalid, and her maid Retail exaggerates her condition. Dorothy wants to visit tourist sites and expects to be able to walk there. Bridget refuses to try her native air, or even go out in the carriage. Dorothy is frustrated by the restrictions on women in London, because she is used to being free and travelling alone. She resolves to obey customs, although she does not agree with them. Dorothy is overwhelmed by the size of London and goes to see *Hamlet* with Miss Hardy, who explains that town ladies cope with life by drinking, or by recovering in the country, and that they wear makeup and false hair. Dorothy learns that Sir Theodore is running out of money because of his gambling, and she is surprised that noblemen do not pay their debts.

When Jenkin leaves her alone, Dorothy is arrested and accused of stealing lace. She is upset that she cannot understand London customs and wants to return home. Miss Hardy tells

Dorothy that Fitzmarmaduke is engaged to a rich woman. He claims he is expected to marry a cousin for an inheritance but is determined to marry Dorothy instead. Dorothy refuses. She overhears Miss Hardy and Fitzmarmaduke being rude about her, but Fitzmarmaduke says he arranged it to reveal Miss Hardy's character.

Owen arrives and accuses Dorothy of forgetting him because the last two letters were never posted. He asks her to marry him now, but Bridget will not let Dorothy leave until she goes to their country house. Sir Theodore announces he has sold their house because they are ruined, partly by Bridget's dissipation, so Retail leaves. Dorothy gives good advice and Sir Theodore says Bridget must live with him on a limited income or return to her family. They each admit their errors and decide to go to Barmouth to try her native air. Dorothy manages Bridget and wants to stay with her in Barmouth, but they change their minds and go to Harrogate, so Dorothy rides home.

Owen meets her and says she has her grandparents' permission to go to Harrogate. He wants her to go and be happy. Dorothy gives a detailed account of her journey north, through Derbyshire. At Harrogate, she finds Bridget and Theodore having the same arguments. Dorothy argues with a Lord, stating that England has stolen from Wales and condemning his colonial ideas for China; the Lord proposes to her on behalf of his son, but she refuses. Bridget is better, so she feels she can leave. They resolve to avoid London. Owen comes, and they are happy.

Maria Iiff, *The Prior Claim*

Emily Morrison lives with her widowed father at an estate called Woodville in Derbyshire. When she was young, her brother Arthur was lost at sea on the way to Florence, then their mother died there. Their neighbours are another widower, Blandford, and his children Phillip, Eliza, Louisa, and Jane. Emily is mutually in love with Phillip, and she is friends with Eliza. Emily is educated with the Blandford girls.

When Phillip returns from travelling, their parents still hope he will marry Emily. They meet his friends. Eliza falls in love with Mr Estern, Sir Henry is misled by Mr Slater, who is wicked, and Slater's widowed sister, Mrs Brereton, tries to attract Phillip. Sir Henry tries to win Emily, and Mrs Brereton tries to come between Emily and Phillip. Phillip loves Emily but knows he cannot marry her: it is later explained that he married another woman out of a sense of duty. Distressed by a letter from Italy, Phillip goes missing overnight. He saves a woman whose carriage was overturned; she turns out to be Estern's sister, Anna.

When Mr Morrison is dying, his sister Mrs Fitzosborne, a fashionable widow, arrives from town. Morrison tells Phillip he wants him to marry Emily. Phillip then becomes feverish and raves. Anna marries Mr Williams, the physician who attended her, and Eliza marries Estern. Phillip tells his father the truth about his marriage in Italy. They keep it secret as he could not marry Emily soon anyway. Blandford plans to go to Italy to see what can be done. Mrs Fitzosborne wants Emily to marry better than Phillip, so plans to take her to London. Blandford visits his widowed friend Mrs Irwin in Llangollen. He takes Laura (later revealed to be Phillip's Italian wife) to stay with Mrs Irwin as a companion. Laura says she expects to die soon.

In London, Emily meets Lord L—, a distant cousin whose title she will inherit if he does not have an heir. He falls in love with her, and Mrs Fitzosborne hopes they will marry.

Sir Henry also tries to win Emily, and Slater plots to prevent her marrying Phillip, so he will be free for his sister. Mrs Fitzosborne prevents Phillip from seeing Emily. Lord L— learns of Emily's love for Phillip. Emily discovers that Mrs Fitzosborne stopped her getting Phillip's letters. Emily writes to Mr Blandford to explain that she loves Phillip, not Lord L—. Mrs Fitzosborne plans to take Emily to her Llangollen estate, the Priory. Emily gets a letter saying Blandford renounces his guardianship of her because she betrayed Phillip. Mrs Fitzosborne keeps Emily imprisoned at home; Sir Henry proposes to her and says he would get her freed if she marries him. Emily refuses. Emily realises Phillip never said he would marry her, so she thinks he does not want to, and writes saying she wants to break off the engagement. Blandford intends to follow her to Wales, but he becomes ill when they receive the letter renouncing Phillip, and he suspects it means she knows he is married.

Mrs Fitzosborne and Emily go to the Priory, with Slater, Sir Henry, and Mrs Brereton. Slater plots to get Emily in his power. Lord L— arrives unexpectedly, offering to take Emily to stay with his mother to protect her. Lord L— is going to help a widow at Carnarvon, and Mrs Fitzosborne plans to take her party to stay there too. Emily meets Mrs Irwin and Laura. Emily tells Lord L— that her brother had A.M. marked on his arm; he says he could be her brother. At Carnarvon, they meet Mr Otley, who admires Emily. Lord L— is initially jealous of him, but then learns that Emily was only with Otley in order to help the widow he had recommended to her assistance. Mrs Irwin writes to Blandford about Emily, and he says he will come to Wales soon. Mrs Fitzosborne has a masked ball, where Emily meets Phillip, but Slater (in disguise) tells her that Phillip is married. Emily learns that Mrs Fitzosborne has married Slater.

Emily and Phillip meet at Mrs Irwin's and realise their letters were intercepted and replaced. He admits he came to see Laura, who is his wife. Blandford arrives and goes to confront Mrs Slater, but he sees that Slater has run away, with all the money he could raise on his wife's property. He was behind the plot, although his wife supported it. Lord L— writes to confirm he is Emily's brother: his mother's son died on a voyage to Italy, and she coincidentally found another boy who was saved during a storm. She and her husband brought him up as their own but later realised he must be Morrison's son, but kept it secret, as he was rightful heir to the L— title anyway. He therefore inherits Morrison's estate.

Laura dies, leaving her story written down for Emily: her father tried to force her to marry an old man, but she was in love with Phillip's friend Mr Alwyne. Her father mortally wounded Alwyne, who asked Phillip to protect Laura on his deathbed. She had to live with Phillip as no convents would allow her in, then her father insisted they marry, because of their cohabitation. Phillip married her out of a sense of duty, then returned to England, but she wrote asking for help when her father married a servant and left her friendless.

Mrs Slater and Mrs Brereton plan to live together, having learned their lesson. Slater drowned when trying to escape the country. Emily goes to live with Lord L—'s adoptive mother in Shropshire during Phillip's mourning period for Laura. Lord L— settles the Woodville estate on her. Phillip and Emily marry. Lord L— will marry Louisa, and Otley will marry Jane.

Alicia Lefanu, Helen Monteagle

Mrs Temple, a young widow, has a large group of friends staying with her at Caerlaverock in Wales. Her cousins Edric and Sir Almaric arrive. They mysteriously warn Edric against

Cordelia, but he is attracted by her beauty and harasses her. They visit Lord Severn at Belrespiro. They then visit Lord Rosstrevor and his daughters, Helen and Adeliza, at Rock Trevor castle. Edric likes Helen but she is in love with Captain Edmund Monteagle. Rosstrevor wants Helen to marry Edmund's brother Arthur instead, because their uncle disinherited Edmund when he joined the army.

Helen elopes with Monteagle to Gretna Green. Rosstrevor disinherits Helen in favour of Adeliza. The Monteagles arrive at the town in the North of England where his regiment is stationed. They are cut off by their relations. Adeliza admires Sir Almaric, but her father intends to marry her to Arthur. Coincidences make Monteagle and Helen suspicious of each other and they struggle on their small income. He is wrongly jealous of Edric. The regiment moves to a small town called Everleigh. Helen gives birth to twins. They rent a cottage from Winslow, a rich banker. Winslow's daughter Rosina is a coquette: she monopolises Monteagle's attentions at a ball, and he neglects Helen in her favour for some time afterwards. Edric leaves for Edinburgh to avoid Monteagle's unfounded jealousy. He is surprised to see Cordelia acting, under a pseudonym. She is trying to raise enough money to free her father from prison. Mrs Temple is fundraising for her. Edric proposes to Cordelia in a letter and sends her jewels, which she refuses. Mrs Temple tells Edric he cannot marry Cordelia due to her reputation.

Monteagle wants to join the dragoons, but they cannot afford it as Helen spent her small sum of money when she was being neglected. The regiment is sent abroad, and Monteagle goes with them, although he does not have to, leaving Helen behind. He writes to ask Helen's family to protect her. Rosstrevor and Adeliza coincidentally meet Helen at the inn at Everleigh. Rosstrevor refuses to see her, but, when they arrive at their estate, Marchmont Hall near Edinburgh, Adeliza persuades him to invite Helen to them. However, he refuses to ever speak to her. Adeliza explains to Helen that they met Cordelia, and their father admired her in London. They see her in Edinburgh. Rosstrevor is restoring Marchmont Hall's theatre and writing a new tragedy. They put on his other play, with Cordelia in the lead role. Almaric admires Adeliza and they both worry about Rosstrevor's attentions to Cordelia. Adeliza and Almaric fall in love, but he is not rich enough for her father to approve. He says she must discourage him or be disinherited. Adeliza hears a rumour about Almaric's conduct in Algiers: he is accused of having carried off a woman.

Lord Severn goes home to Wales on business and dies there. Monteagle returns to England and Helen goes to meet him in London. They are invited to his uncle Sir Howard's seat in Wales, Helwellyn. Rosstrevor proposes to Cordelia in a letter. Almaric turns out to be Lord Severn's heir. Lady Severn is disappointed that little is left to her, but he provides for her to stay in her Welsh home. Rosstrevor tells Adeliza that she may now marry Almaric because his fortune has improved. It emerges that Lady Severn rejected Almaric (now Lord Severn) many years ago.

A conjuror recognises Lord Severn, and he is mysteriously agitated by seeing the image of a dagger. The conjuror flees and Lord Severn has to go away on business, after warning Cordelia not to accept Edric. Under pressure, she decides to accept Rosstrevor, and a secret private marriage is arranged. Cordelia does not arrive for the marriage. Rosstrevor and Mrs Temple find Cordelia with Lord Severn, who has saved her from Edric, who tried to abduct her. Rosstrevor is embarrassed that his intention to marry Cordelia could become known and decides against it.

Mrs Temple introduces Euphemia, the rightful heiress of Edric's estates, who has long been thought dead. She was abducted from Gibraltar when a child, and later rescued in Algiers by Lord Severn (then Almaric Douglas). His guilty conscience is explained: he saw her attempt to kill herself with a dagger, before she escaped to England without his knowledge, with the help of Monteagle. Edric readily agrees to return his estates to Euphemia. Rosstrevor becomes ill and Lady Severn attempts to ingratiate herself with him so that he will either marry her or leave her money if he dies. Helen and Rosstrevor are reconciled during his illness. Rosstrevor realises Lady Severn is deceitful because she was not concerned about his illness.

Adeliza and Lord Severn marry. The widowed Lady Severn tries to marry Sir Howard. Monteagle and Helen go abroad to his regiment in Spain. Lord Severn explains to Edric that he thought Cordelia was a coquette because she encouraged then refused his friend, but Mrs Temple later refutes this. Edric goes to Brighton, where Mrs Temple is with Euphemia. She hopes Euphemia will fall in love with Edric, but she is too impressed by her idea of Lord Severn as her rescuer, although he is married. Cordelia arrives, very ill, having freed her parents. She aggravates her illness by acting to raise money for a fellow actress. Cordelia dies. Mrs Temple becomes ill with grief and retires to Caerlaverock. Lord Severn leaves the army. Adeliza has a child. Mrs Temple dies and leaves property to Edric because she hopes this will encourage him to pursue Euphemia in future, but Edric says he is too overcome by grief to marry.

The Monteagles have been in Spain for four years and had more children. Sir Howard dies, leaving half his estates to Arthur (including Helvellyn) and half to Monteagle (his Yorkshire Estate). Monteagle loses an arm, and they travel to his Yorkshire seat. Edric returns from service abroad too. Rosstrevor takes a house to be near his daughters in Yorkshire. Helen meets Rosina because, coincidentally, Lord Severn's seat is near Everleigh. Rosina married a good farmer. They discuss what has happened to their other Everleigh acquaintances. The widowed Lady Severn tried to marry Winslow, but his firm failed so she married a rich but disagreeable man. She sadly compares him with Lord Severn, whom she could have married originally, if not for greed.

Alicia Lefanu, *Strathallan*

Lord Torrendale takes his wife to his Derbyshire estate, Woodlands, having sold another estate because of her profligacy. When Torrendale married the current Countess, he already had a son, Lord Strathallan, from his first marriage to a woman whose Scottish estate bordered his own. He and the Countess then had a son, Fitzroy, and a daughter, Lady Emily. The Countess forces her acquaintance on their reclusive neighbours, the Melbournes of the Rocks. Mr Melbourne studies natural sciences. His wife chose him over his cousin Sir Reginald, who later married Lady Julia and had a son, Sir Harold. Melbourne's teenage daughter Matilda's education is overseen by their friend and neighbour Mr Sowerby. Matilda often visits the Countess and eleven-year-old Emily, who is educated by an ignorant governess (whom the Countess was duped into hiring, but later dismisses). Other guests include Mrs Stockwell, the vulgar widow of a carpet merchant, her orphan heiress niece Arbella, whom she intends to marry her son, and her companion, Miss Hautenville, and her friend, Miss Mountain, a large and exuberant Derbyshire heiress. Matilda befriends the imprudent Arbella, who is in love with Fitzroy, having met him at Cheltenham, while he

recovered from wounds received in the Peninsular War, in which Strathallan is still fighting. When Fitzroy arrives, he trifles with Arbella.

They mistakenly hear that Strathallan died in battle. The family and villagers grieve, as does Matilda, despite not having met him. Strathallan then appears and falls in love with Matilda. Sowerby is jealous. Strathallan invites Matilda to the Countess' literary party: she patronises rival poets, Mr Spring ('Alcæus') and Miss Swanley ('Sappho'). The Melbournes go to London, leaving Matilda at Woodlands. The Countess tells Matilda that Strathallan is engaged to Miss Mountain: it was planned by their parents to unite their estates. It emerges that Mrs Stockwell lent the Countess money for Fitzroy's expenses and resents him for coming between Arbella and her son. The Countess tries to get the Strathallan estate transferred from Strathallan to Fitzroy, but Torrendale refuses. Arbella hopes that Fitzroy may marry her for her money and considers proposing. Fitzroy joins his regiment. The Countess plans to transfer Miss Mountain's engagement to Fitzroy because she seems indifferent to Strathallan, but she will not give him up.

Sowerby and his sister take Matilda to London. Melbourne dies, so Sir Harold inherits the Rocks. Matilda's inheritance was invested in a bank which failed. Sowerby proposes to Matilda. She decides to sacrifice herself to her duty, but her mother will not let her. Sowerby remains their friend. Arbella gives Matilda £500. Sir Harold meets them and falls in love with Matilda. They learn he is insane. When Matilda refuses his proposal, he threatens her into vowing that she will never admit another lover and declares he will kill the man she loves. Harold entrusts his ten-year-old sister Julia to Matilda's care and gets them a better house in London. Harold separates Matilda and Strathallan at the opera, leading her to fear for Strathallan's life. Strathallan tells Matilda he will not marry Miss Mountain, because she wants him to take her family name. Matilda says she cannot marry Strathallan but cannot explain her fears about the vow. Strathallan and Miss Mountain reconcile, and Matilda avoids him. Arbella makes herself agreeable to Sowerby to borrow a shell for the Countess' scientific party. The Countess leaves Emily in Matilda's care while she briefly visits Tunbridge. Matilda has to quash rumours that she runs a school. Harold writes to Matilda, saying he awaits Strathallan at the Rocks, but she then hears they met at Tunbridge. Matilda again refuses Strathallan when the Countess contrives to leave them together. She realises that the Countess is planning to provoke Torrendale to disinherit Strathallan in favour of Fitzroy. Strathallan marries Miss Mountain because his father claims it is necessary for his health. They go to Scotland.

Matilda is taken ill, so Sowerby takes the Melbournes to his Derbyshire estate. They visit Harold, who continues to madly importune Matilda. Arbella is living at Woodlands, having cut ties with her aunt because Stockwell proposed, then withheld her fortune when she refused. Sowerby makes Stockwell release Arbella's fortune, then proposes to her. She does not know whether to accept. Fitzroy arrives, and Arbella plays him off against Sowerby and her admirer Major O'Hara. O'Hara and Fitzroy duel. Fitzroy is shot in the eye and convalesces at Mrs Stockwell's house. Sowerby renounces Arbella and she rejects O'Hara. Strathallan and his wife arrive. At a concert at the Rocks, Harold leads Strathallan up to the highest point, and tries to kill him, then himself, but Strathallan saves him. Harold faints on hearing the midnight chimes. Sowerby houses Mrs Melbourne and Matilda at Woodbine Lodge. Matilda helps the Strathallans find common ground in charity.

When they are the Rocks, Arbella opens the door of the purportedly uninhabited wing. They see Harold talking to his supposedly dead mother, Julia. Harold explains himself

to Matilda and Mrs Melbourne. At university, a fellow student insulted Julia's reputation, so Harold killed him, but was acquitted. His father, Reginald, told him he had banished Julia for infidelity, so he searched Europe for her, but on returning to his father's deathbed, he told him his mother was alive but imprisoned. Reginald died and Harold found Julia had gone mad. She is always agitated at midnight, the hour when Reginald had her seized when she was meeting another man. Harold sees the ghost of the man he murdered whenever he is not with her at midnight.

Fitzroy tells his mother that he married Miss Hautenville during his convalescence. He does not plan to acknowledge the marriage. Arbella returns to her aunt. Matilda helps Arbella with her new charity schemes, including a subscription for a school, which attracts Sowerby to her again. Arbella and Sowerby marry and have a son. Strathallan gives Fitzroy the Strathallan estate. Fitzroy takes his wife there and abandons her. Matilda learns that Lady Strathallan has been thrown from her horse while hunting. She dies. Strathallan suddenly arrives to see Matilda. They agree they can correspond during his mourning period but, remembering the threat, she refuses to marry Strathallan while Harold lives.

Strathallan joins his regiment abroad. Julia (senior) dies, and Harold also dies after becoming more insane in his grief. He leaves Matilda £10,000, and his sister Julia inherits the Rocks. The Countess intercepts many of Matilda and Strathallan's letters, which stops Strathallan learning of Harold's death. On his return to Derbyshire, he initially worries that Matilda has married Harold. He finds her and they realise the Countess' duplicity. They marry in London and adopt Julia. Arbella writes to Matilda from Buxton and explains that Stockwell was duped by one rich widow, who ran off with O'Hara, so he is marrying another, and Fitzroy is living fashionably at Buxton.

Olivia More, *The Welsh Cottage*

In Hampshire, Eliza worries about the difficulties faced by women, such as cruel husbands or becoming old maids, taking an essay by Johnson in the 'Rambler' as confirmation of her fears. Her mother says that Johnson did not discuss the difficulties only faced by men. Eliza admits that married women may be happy, but her experience of local old maids make her fear that state, so her mother sends her to visit her friend Miss Owen, who is happily single.

Eliza travels to North Wales and arrives at Lanmere cottage, which is beautiful and compliments its natural surroundings. She climbs the mountain and experiences sublimity. Miss Owen dedicates her mornings to charity, including visiting the poor and administering herbal medicines, and her afternoon to studying. She is devoted to religion and has set up a School of Industry for girls, which also contains a circulating library.

Eliza asks Miss Owen about her life, to understand why she has not married. Miss Owen explains her early history: her father became a clergyman after the death of her mother, and they moved to Lanmere. Her father taught her to strengthen her mind, while avoiding immoderate love of reading. He died, having advised her to either marry a pious man with a good understanding, or to consider herself consecrated to God. Miss Owen was left under the guardianship of her fashionable uncle and aunt, who have two vain daughters, Augusta and Maria. Miss Owen felt like a prisoner in London and was shocked by the immorality there and at the coast. Augusta married a miserly man, but his avarice and her pride prevented them separating. Maria was offended by criticism of her poetry, and said she wished she were dead, but a storm frightened her into religiosity. She then married an Irishman, and Miss

Owen moved with them to his bleak estate in Connaught. Miss Owen found the poor more deprived than the Welsh peasants and blames the state of Ireland on Catholicism and absentee landlords. Maria separated from her husband for keeping a mistress, became ill and moved with Miss Owen to Lanmere, where she became more religious before her death.

Miss Owen dedicates herself to the poor, by getting the help of her rich neighbours. She tells Eliza that marriage is happier than celibacy, but that she has remained single because she only received offers from men she did not respect, and she knows unhappy wives do not get help. Miss Owen has a birthday party, where rich and poor come together.

Eliza returns home and tells her mother she wishes for nothing more than Miss Owen's lot, but she wavers because of her desire for a family. She realises that happiness consists in doing one's duty.

Adelaide O'Keeffe, *Dudley*

This novel consists of correspondence between the family and friends of Sir Eliot Howard. Reverend Clonmore writes to his friend Eliot's sister, Lady Alford, a young widow. Eliot is missing from his estate, Oakland Park in Dorset. Lady Alford replies that Eliot is not with her in Paris, or with his half-sister Mrs Grantley in Copenhagen. Clonmore finds out that Doctor H— took Eliot to Tenerife. Eliot is hiding due to grief for his wife and has left his infant daughter Claudy behind. Claudy will stay in Clonmore's house, Bloomfield Rectory in Wiltshire, with his wife and many children, until Lady Alford collects her.

A year later, Mrs Grantley is widowed and comes to live with Lady Alford and Claudy. Eliot writes to explain that he nearly went mad with grief, so he impulsively decided to go to Tenerife. Eliot is now living at Santa Cruz and has made friends with a Scottish man called Balfour. Clonmore reproaches Eliot for abandoning his daughter, but he refuses to come back. He has made a friend called Zulvago. Lady Alford likes the sound of Zulvago and thinks she might fall in love with him. When Eliot's house is finished, he asks Clonmore to bring Claudy and Mrs Grantley to live with him. Lady Alford is disappointed not to be asked, and instead goes to Clifton then Bath. Clonmore writes to his wife from Tenerife to say that he, Claudy, Mrs Grantley and Dr H— have arrived safely and met Zulvago and the Balfours. He worries about one of his sons, Dudley, who is sickly. When Clonmore returns to England, Eliot writes to ask to adopt one of his sons, so that Claudy will not be spoiled, and he can split his fortune between them. Clonmore is reluctant, saying Sir Eliot should marry again, or wait for Lady Alford to give him a nephew he could adopt, as she has many suitors including Cavendish, a lieutenant.

Sir Eliot tells Clonmore how he met his late wife. He travelled to S— near Honiton in Devon, where he met a young woman with a beautiful voice who assisted the schoolmistress. The next day he walked to another village and met her again, walking through a muddy field. On Sunday, he saw her in church. He later saw her with an older woman and was told they were a Miss Powis and her poor companion. He followed them to Sidmouth, then Exeter, where he saw her again in a jeweller's shop. At a ball he met a friend who explained all the men were pursuing Miss Powis of Oakland Park in Dorset. Eliot realised his mistake: the beautiful lady was Claudina Powis, and the older lady the poor friend. She was initially proud but recognised his voice. The Colonel invited Eliot to dine with him in Dawlish. Eliot and Claudina explained their mutual confusion about each other's status; they were both watching each other. They learned they both were friends of Clonmore, and, when Eliot proposed, they

decided to be married by him. She died eight years after they married, and four more years have now passed.

Clonmore agrees to send his son Dudley to Eliot because he was Claudina's godson. Dr H— predicts that Dudley will fall in love with Claudy one day. Dudley is reluctant to leave his mother, so Mrs Clonmore goes with him to Tenerife. Dudley's health is benefited by the climate. Claudy is spoiled and treats Dudley like a baby although he is her own age, but they soon become close friends. Lady Alford arrives suddenly; her mother-in-law has died, and she travelled with a friend as far as Madeira. She brings Clonmore's curate with her to educate the children. She is keen to meet Zulvago but although she stays for over a year, she does not see him. Mrs Grantley and Mrs Clonmore correspond to discuss the children's education. Lady Alford writes to Mrs Clonmore, telling her that when staying with the Balfours at their country seat she fell in love with Major Hernandez. He saved her life but does not seem to return her feelings. She later visits her friend Lady L—. Lady L—'s companion Miss Shelburne is surprised to see Hernandez: she knows he was once supposed to marry her mother, but it went wrong. Miss Shelburne leaves for Calcutta. It emerges that Zulvago and Hernandez are the same person. Zulvago asks that Clonmore look for the widowed Mrs Gabrielle Shelburne in Tunbridge Wells, as her daughter would not tell him where to find her. Zulvago later leaves for Calcutta, thinking Gabrielle may have followed her daughter; this disappoints Lady Alford, who becomes ill and temporarily mad. Cavendish arrives to see Lady Alford, bringing a letter she sent to Mrs Clonmore in which she said she would marry him if he came. They eventually get married and return to England.

Zulvago writes to Eliot telling him his ship was captured by the French, so he is going to tell his life story to pass the time. He and Gabrielle fell in love, but he accidentally said something which led her to believe he did not love her, so she married Sobrino. Sobrino unintentionally killed Gabrielle's father and subsequently killed himself. When Zulvago found Gabrielle seventeen years later, he wanted to marry her or adopt his daughter as his heiress, but they disappeared.

At fourteen, Dudley wants to be trained for a profession, not knowing he will inherit half of Sir Eliot's estate, or that he hopes he will marry Claudy. After Claudy and Dudley get typhus, they are newly awkward around each other, so Sir Eliot sends Dudley to England to study law for four years. Dudley is happy at Bloomfield, but he and Claudy miss each other. Dudley no longer wants to return to Tenerife after he hears people say that men of lower standing should not marry heiresses because they will later resent them. Sir Eliot explains his plan to split his fortune between them, regardless of whether they marry. Dudley is happy but still wants to gain his own consequence in the world. Zulvago arrives in London: he travelled back to England with Miss Shelburne, who married a Colonel Hamilton, but he died on the voyage. Zulvago left Mrs Hamilton in Portsmouth. He cannot find Mrs Shelburne, but Dudley says he saved a woman called Gabrielle from a robbery yesterday. He takes them to her. Just as Gabrielle and Zulvago are reunited, Mrs Hamilton rushes in, raving, and she soon dies. Her mother inherits her property. Zulvago goes to Tenerife and tells Eliot that Gabrielle also died, but they married on her deathbed. Gabrielle made Dudley her heir. Dudley is reunited with Claudy in Tenerife.

Emma Parker, *Fitz-Edward; or, the Cambrians*

Mrs Sedley, the widow of a navy lieutenant, moves to her native home near Llangollen Vale with her daughter Celia, to be near her brother Mr Morgan, who is a rector. Celia's friend Mary-Ann, a farmer's daughter, loves Lieutenant Toper but he is a drunk. Celia longs for higher society because of her education. They meet Henry, who has an estate in England but recently came to his nearby Welsh estate, Plas Gwynnedd, with his sister, Eva. They are charitable and prefer Wales to their other residences. Celia distances herself from Mary-Ann. After regularly visiting Celia, Henry realises he likes her too much given her low position, so he goes to stay his friends the Fitz-Edwards at Garreg Wen. Lady Fitz-Edward lives with her sons, Sir Stanley and Mr Osmond, and her daughter, Mrs Bouverie, who is a young widow with a daughter. Celia and Eva meet at church; Henry knows Eva would not approve of his love for Celia. Mrs Sedley is offended when she hears that Henry is going away on a shooting tour with Osmond.

Henry leaves but Celia claims to be out when he comes to say goodbye. The Garreg Wen and Plas Gwynnedd families become close. Stanley declares love for Eva, but Eva says she needs more time to decide. Celia finds out that Mary married Toper against her father's wishes. Mrs Bouverie takes Celia with her to Garreg Wen for a visit. They decide to keep her with them. Eva comes to dine, and Celia is sad to learn they will go to London, but then she is invited with Mrs Bouverie. Osmond asks the family he is staying with in Essex about Eva's reputation and is told that she encourages men only to reject them. He advises his brother to be cautious.

In London, Henry is agitated by the sight of Celia at the Fitz-Edwards'. Eva tries to introduce Henry to Celia, not knowing they know each other. Henry becomes hopeful as Eva clearly likes Celia. Eva realises she will not grow to love Stanley; she starts to like Osmond more. Eva's aunt informs Stanley that she cannot marry him. Eva decides to promote Henry's match with Celia, but she is concerned when he says he sees Osmond as a rival for Celia. Celia is determined to get over Henry. At a ball, Osmond realises Eva wants him to love her but assumes this is just for her amusement. Osmond begins to understand Celia's feelings for Henry. Henry proposes to Celia, and they get her mother's consent. Celia is satisfied by Eva's explanation of why Henry left her in the country. Eva writes poetry about her love of Osmond. He jokes about not marrying, which upsets Eva, so she tries to get over him. Eva and her aunt prepare to return to the country because she is ill, but they say it is for Henry's wedding preparations. Osmond discovers she is ill, but she decides to appear calm to avoid his judgement on her feelings. They have an awkward conversation, and he says he does not think happiness in marriage is impossible as he previously implied. He realises she is innocent of coquetry, and they hold hands. There is tension when Stanley sees Osmond accompanying Eva on the first stage.

Osmond decides to go to his estate, Brynnfellin, to do repairs in order to be near Eva. His mother is angry, but he says he will not be imposed upon, and he will not visit her at Plas Gwynnedd. When Morgan says Osmond has already arrived in Wales, Eva is surprised he has not visited them. The rest of the party arrive. Lady Fitz-Edward invites Miss Williams, whom she intends for Osmond. Osmond and Eva meet, awkwardly. Morgan brings his invalid friend Howell to Garreg Wen, where he is taken ill. Celia and Henry are married and go on a tour to Snowdon. Miss Williams tries unsuccessfully to win Osmond. Osmond decides Eva is not being artful.

Mrs Bouverie sees Howell caress her daughter and call her his own child, but then she hears Osmond call her Bouverie and realises he is her husband: Captain Bouverie was not killed but taken prisoner in India. He was saved by the care of an old Hindu woman and an English man who returned for him. When he was returning to Europe, he was captured by the Spanish for three years until an exchange was arranged. He worried that his wife's feelings may have changed and decided to stay away if he found out she had remarried. He came under an assumed name, but Morgan recognised him and helped him. They are happily surprised. Mrs Sedley is dying but they decide not to call Celia back from her tour as her mother is already unconscious.

Lady Fitz-Edward tells Miss Williams that Osmond will never marry her, so she leaves. Lady Fitz-Edward warns Osmond to be careful to ascertain Eva's affection. She is becoming ill when not with him. She is nearly overcome when she thinks he may have to go to the West Indies. Osmond thinks she is dying. He discovers her poetry about him and declares his love. They plan to marry next month. Celia learns of her mother's death, and they extend their tour to include South Wales, because she has already missed the funeral. When Henry and Celia are nearly back home, they meet a poor woman who turns out to be Mary-Ann: her husband was a cruel drunk and died in Ireland after selling his commission. She has had his baby and walked home from Holyhead. They help her, giving her money and taking her back to her father, but keep her at a distance.

Eva gets a letter which says Osmond used to think her a coquette and warned his brother against her. She realises it is from Miss Williams, attempting to create a rupture. Not knowing it is essentially true, she burns it, unaffected by its contents. Eva mistakenly believes Osmond has had an accident, but he arrives and says he had a copy of the letter and that the contents are not entirely untrue. She is upset but does not change her mind about him. They send the letter back; Miss Williams decides to go to a distant part of England. Stanley brings a woman back from Worthing and gets engaged to her. Osmond's estate is prepared, and they have an old-style Cambrian wedding celebration for the poor.

Elizabeth Pinchard, *Mystery and Confidence: A Tale*

Mordaunt arrives at the village of Llanwyllan in North Wales. He meets Farmer Powis, his daughter Ellen, and her friend Joanna, daughter of the English curate, Mr Ross. Ellen is beautiful but not accomplished, due to her modest education. Mordaunt claims to be the steward of the Earl of St. Aubyn of Aubyn Castle in Northamptonshire. He suspects an attachment between Ellen and Charles Ross, who is going into the navy. Mordaunt decides to stay if Ellen is unattached, as he wants to forget his own mysterious past. Ellen says she thinks of Charles as a brother and would not marry him, even if she had not met Mordaunt. Mordaunt takes lodgings at a nearby widow's house. He helps Ellen in the garden, and they discuss her education. Mordaunt's parcels arrive before he does, causing a rumour that he is married because there is a ladies' hat box. It actually contains a bonnet for Ellen to replace the one he slightly damaged in the garden, and one for Joanna. He gives other gifts to their families and explains he is not married. He is often with Ellen at the farm. When Mrs Ross walks in on them holding hands as he shows his house on the map, she suspects he has bad motives, so she keeps Ellen at the parsonage away from him. Mordaunt explains a secret to Mr Ross which explains why he did not yet propose and is granted his permission to do so. Ellen accepts. Mordaunt ambiguously asks her to believe he is innocent even if accusations

come out in future. Powis gives his consent after receiving a character reference for Mordaunt. While they await this, they go on excursions, including to Snowdon, Beddgelert, and Carnarvon.

Mordaunt and Ellen get married. He takes her to Bristol, then Bath, then London, where they make luxurious purchases. Their London landlady assumes Ellen is Mordaunt's mistress. On the way to his house, Montague explains to Ellen that he is in fact the Earl of St. Aubyn. He says he cannot explain his full story to her, but Ross knows. Ellen is impressed by the castle and its surroundings. They are remarried under his real name. She looks around the house with Mrs Bayfield the housekeeper and accidentally discovers that St. Aubyn has been married before: his wife died seven years ago. They get on with their neighbours including Sir William and his daughters Laura and Juliet, a pious invalid child. St. Aubyn continues to mysteriously state he is innocent, and they might need to flee to the Continent. He sends money for the poor in Ellen's home village and buys a promotion for Charles. Juliet dies and the St. Aubyns take Laura with them to their house in Cavendish Square.

Ellen meets her husband's aunt Lady Juliana. St. Aubyn explains that his former wife Rosolia was half-Spanish and very different to Ellen. He married her for his family interest, but she died in Spain. Her brother Edmund is expected to return to England soon to claim his estates. Lady Juliana likes Ellen's simplicity and agrees to chaperone her. Sir Edward falls in love with Laura. Charles sees Ellen at Covent Garden and believes she has been abandoned by St. Aubyn: their first London landlady told him that Ellen is St. Aubyn's mistress, not his wife. Charles sends a challenge which St. Aubyn accepts. When Ellen secretly goes on a charity visit to a widow because St. Aubyn would not want her to upset herself, her maid persuades her to go to their former lodgings to collect a book. Charles arrives and Ellen explains she is married, but St. Aubyn appears and believes they met by appointment. Lady Juliana makes St. Aubyn see that Ellen was not doing anything wrong, but Ellen becomes ill and raves. As the dispute is resolved, the men do not duel. Ellen recovers and all is forgiven. She arranges for the widow to run a school in the country near the castle, to which they return. Ellen gives birth to a son.

Edmund and his guardian O'Brien, an Irish Catholic priest, arrive at the castle. Edmund comes into Ellen's room in the night, raving about his sister, wondering if St. Aubyn murdered her, and saying St. Aubyn claims it was De Sylva. St. Aubyn explains to Ellen that the man who killed Rosolia has not been found. He explains that Rosolia had affairs, but Edmund was too young to know about them. De Sylva followed them into the countryside, and they arranged a duel. De Sylva did not arrive for the duel and St. Aubyn found Rosolia dead in a cave, having been shot in the head. Edmund suspects St. Aubyn because his ring was found there, and the pistol used was the pair to his own (that he gave De Sylva for the duel). Edmund says he will avenge his sister when he is of age, unless St. Aubyn can find De Sylva. He has not been able to find him. Ellen persuades Edmund of her husband's innocence: he decides God would not allow St. Aubyn to have a lovely wife and son if he was guilty.

Ellen does not want to go to London too soon because she did not like it before, but they plan to go with Laura after her marriage. The heir is christened, and they entertain the poor. Ellen prefers London this time, and they meet Edmund at the play. They return to Wales to see her family. Mrs Ross has improved the farm for their visit. Ellen visits the poor and provides money to allow Mr and Mrs Ross to move in with her father at the farm, while Joanna will marry a clergyman and live at their house. In July, a ship is wrecked nearby:

Charles is on board and is brought to his parents. He was meant to be landing at Falmouth, but a storm wrecked them and their French prisoners, who include a man who turns out to be De Sylva. He confesses that he planned to elope with Rosolia but shot her by accident and escaped to Algiers. Edmund accepts the confession as proof. Charles is promoted to Captain, and all are left comfortable in Wales. The St. Aubyns are happy whether at the castle, in London, or in visits to Wales.

[Miss] Prickett, *Warwick Castle*

This novel consists of a series of letters from Frances, now Lady Montague to Mrs Fortescue, her brother's wife, in Madras. Her other, elder, brother Lord Rathfarnham is an ambassador. In 1807, Frances writes to explain she has married Lord Montague, although only six of the seven years of their planned engagement have passed. She recounts the events which led up to her marriage. Her mother, an Irish Countess, had Rathfarnham and Fortescue from her first marriage. When widowed, she married Lord Carloline, with whom she had Frances: he was indifferent to her because he needed a male heir. He was cruel, had lovers, gambled, and stole from his stepsons' inheritance. Rathfarnham gave his mother money to support herself and Frances, then went on a tour with Fortescue. The Countess eventually refused to give her husband more money, and mostly retired into Devon with Frances. When Rathfarnham and Fortescue returned, they both got married.

When Frances was eighteen, she and her mother went to visit General and Mrs Aylmer at Richmond. Frances met and fell mutually in love with Lord Montague, who was then a Major. Back in London, Frances' father paid her more attention after her court presentation. She refused proposals from two titled men. In Richmond, Frances met Ellen and Margaret, nieces of General Aylmer (daughters of his profligate brother, Sir James). Montague arrived, having inherited his title. Ellen failed to win Montague for herself. Montague heard, from rumours and from Carloline, that Frances was engaged to another. He planned to leave for the Highlands but was dangerously injured in a carriage accident. During his convalescence, he confessed his love for Frances to her mother. The party went to the Countess' seat in Devon, Wilton Abbey, where the air accelerated Montague's recovery. He explained to Frances that he would not be able to marry her for seven years because his brother left debts on his estates, so he had to let them out. Carloline refused to give them money, and Montague chose to wait to have his own income, rather than accept money from others.

The Countess died, so Frances lived with her father. She continued to correspond with Montague while he was with his regiment during their long engagement. Carloline was furious when he learned of her engagement. He brought in his mistress as their housekeeper. This affair came out in 1806, when a housefire exposed his having been in her bedroom. Frances therefore went to stay with the now widowed Mrs Aylmer and married Montague, although he was not due to get his estates back for another year. Lord Maynooth challenged Montague to a duel because he took offense at his speech on Catholic emancipation. Maynooth injured Montague, who accidentally shot him, leaving Maynooth's life in danger. The Montagues left under an assumed name and went to Montague's former tutor Dr Carlton in Cumberland. They found Carlton had died; Montague left his living to the curate. Montague developed jaundice and was recommended to take the waters at Cheltenham. As he

did not want to go somewhere fashionable and be recognised, they agreed to go to Leamington instead.

Frances describes her admiration of Birmingham. On arriving in Leamington, they found the hotel too noisy. They went to stay at an inn at Warwick instead. Frances describes the history of Leamington. They went to stay in the Lodge in the grounds of Warwick Castle. They met Captain Arden when they had a carriage accident on their way to Leamington. He was there with his sister and dying mother. Frances describes the history of Warwick and its Castle. She explains that Montague is descended from the houses of Beauchamp and Neville. Frances describes paintings at the castle, with biographical digressions about their subjects. She gives an account of the Earls of Warwick.

They met Arden's sister, Marianne, who lived with her mother in India until she abandoned her fiancé Mr Delme and returned to England, because of her unfounded jealousy. Frances, Montague, Arden and Marianne went on excursions, including to St. Mary's Church and Beauchamp Chapel, which Frances describes in detail. Mrs Arden died, so Marianne had to go to her cousins at Marazion, in Cornwall. Captain Garth arrived to visit them, and they went on excursions around Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, which Frances describes, with a focus on Shakespeare. She also describes their other excursions, including to Guy's Cliff, Kenilworth Castle, and Stoneleigh Abbey. They learned Maynooth was out of danger, so they could return to London, as Montague had greatly benefited from the waters.

They heard Sir James died, leaving his wife and children dependent on Mrs Aylmer. The Montagues went to Ireland but had to return on learning that Carloraine had a stroke. They had a difficult journey via Holyhead due to the February weather. They took Carloraine to Bath. Lady Aylmer and her daughters were also there. Ellen seemed improved and was mutually in love with Meredith, son of a Caernarvonshire Baronet. Margaret tried to elope from London with a military companion of her brother. They failed because a highwayman stopped them, so he told his father, who returned Margaret to her brother. Margaret was sent to live with an aunt in Montgomeryshire. Frances publicly took Ellen under her protection, protecting her reputation, leading Meredith's father to consent to their marriage.

Carloraine died. Maynooth reconciled with Montague. Montague went to the dying Mrs Aylmer, but Frances had to stay behind in Devon because she is pregnant. Mrs Aylmer died, leaving some money to Margaret on condition of good behaviour. Montague's regiment had to go to Spain. Frances invited Marianne to stay with her. She improved and began to regret leaving Mr Delme. She describes her letters from Montague about Spain. Mr Delme came to claim Marianne.

These letters will be sent with the Delmes when they marry and return to India. On Montague's return, Frances asks him to retire for his health. She hopes she will give birth to a son.

Regina Maria Roche, *Trecothick Bower; Or, The Lady of the West Country*

An historical novel in which the main action takes place c. 1482-5. The Earl of Lestwithiel, whose estates were confiscated due to his Lancastrian loyalties, died in the Battle of Barnet. The Earl of Sebergham adopted Lestwithiel's son Edmund and made him his son Morcar's page. On Sebergham's death, Morcar did not try to make Edmund independent, despite having favour with King Edward IV.

Edmund visits his hereditary estates on the banks of the Tamar, in Cornwall. He falls in love with Emmeline, daughter of the Baron of Trecothick, whose estates border his, after rescuing her when she is being kidnapped by a rejected suitor. On Edmund's return, Morcar decides to find Emmeline himself, because it would be a desirable alliance. He sends Edmund to Northumberland to get him out of the way. Morcar learns that Emmeline promised Edmund her hand on condition that he recover his estates. When travelling through Savernake Forest, Morcar sees his father's ghost, which warns him to turn back. Morcar meets Emmeline and Trecothick, who has withdrawn from court because he sees Edward's faults, despite his Yorkist allegiance. Morcar falsely tells Emmeline that Edmund's estates could never be restored, so she thinks she must end their secret engagement. Her parents want her to marry Morcar but agree to delay the wedding because she says she needs time to grow to like him. Morcar takes the Trecothicks to his northern seat near Keswick. On their return to Trecothick, Emmeline's mother dies.

Morcar sends Edmund to his French castle on business, planning to have him imprisoned there. In France, Edmund's attendant Hardwicke is thrown off his horse. Edmund helps him into a deserted mansion, where they meet Sir Roland. He explains his life story: he fled to England after he was framed when his father accidentally killed his sister while attempting to murder another female relation for money. He later learned this man was not really his father. Roland inherited his mother's property and lives in isolation because of his grief. Roland fought alongside Edmund's father for Henry VI but saved Edward of York's life. He says he can use this favour to get Edmund's estates restored. As Hardwicke is dying, he admits that Morcar ordered him to imprison Edmund.

Morcar visits Emmeline while her father is away, against her will. Having pursued Morcar to Cornwall with Roland, Edmund confronts Morcar, who stabs him, then escapes. When Morcar and Emmeline see a body brought into the castle, they assume it is Edmund's. Edmund survived and sent in a body to trick Morcar. Sir Roland confronts Morcar after he hears of the murder. Morcar escapes to France, instructing Emmeline to hide that they are already married. Trecothick returns. Emmeline thinks she sees Edmund's ghost.

Edmund reveals himself to Roland. When Emmeline learns the truth, she is happy Edmund is alive but knows Morcar will come back for her. Roland arranges an engagement between Edmund and one of the daughters of Lord Pendennis (another Cornish noble) who has agreed to support his cause, but Edmund breaks it off. Trecothick grants permission for Edmund to marry Emmeline. She meets a man in a ruin who tells her that Morcar is dead: his ship back from France was wrecked. She later hears a voice telling her to go to the bower of Trecothick, where she meets Sir Ingelram, her kinsman, who tells her that Morcar is alive. Emmeline writes to tell her father that she is ill in order to delay her marriage with Edmund. Edmund believes this is because of her pride, because she has recently heard he is unlikely to get his estates back.

Lord Pendennis' daughter Isabel offers to marry an unwanted suitor in order to use his influence to help Edmund's case. Edmund does not let her do this, but they agree to correspond. Edmund goes to London and learns that the Duke of Clarence has been imprisoned. Richard (Duke of Gloucester) is behind it all due to his plot to get the crown. Meanwhile, in Cornwall, Emmeline admits to Trecothick that she married Morcar. He sends her to Ruthin, an old family castle on the coast, for her safety. On learning that her father has been arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London, Emmeline pays a man to sail her to London, hoping to get Richard's wife Anne to help.

Richard tells Trecothick that he has persuaded the King to free him and sends him back to Cornwall. Trecothick discovers that Emmeline is at Richard's home: he is keeping her hostage to force Trecothick's loyalty in a future conflict. Trecothick has to collect his vassals to fight for Richard, who becomes protector and, eventually, King. Trecothick goes to the Battle of Bosworth but does not declare for either side because he fears for Emmeline's safety. He is tricked into attacking a nearby castle because he is told Emmeline is there. When he returns, the victorious Henry VII angrily refuses to hear his explanation for why he did not fight on his side. He withdraws Trecothick's estates and gives them to Ingelram, who tricked Trecothick to ensure this happened. Trecothick is coincidentally reunited with Emmeline; they shelter in a cottage.

Emmeline explains that, when she arrived in London, Richard took her in but allowed his friend Sir Catesby to harass her, despite her telling him she was married to Morcar. Anne told her Trecothick was freed. Emmeline knew Anne was murdered, so they put her in a convent. Agnes helped Emmeline escape to her mother Lady Cheney's house in Gloucestershire. Ingelram, Agnes' suitor, ensured that Henry (the future King) saw Emmeline there so he would not believe that Trecothick avoided battle for her safety. Emmeline fled but was caught by Catesby and imprisoned in his mother's home in Leicestershire. She escaped and found her father.

Emmeline and Trecothick arrive at Ruthin and find Ingelram has taken possession but is not there. Emmeline discovers a scarf she made for Morcar: a servant explains that it belonged to a half-dead passenger from a ship that was wrecked nearby who was brought into the house and later disappeared. Ingelram made the servants believe a secret door was cursed so he could hide Morcar's body. Emmeline realises this was a deception to convince her that Morcar was alive so she could not remarry, meaning Ingelram would inherit her estates. They hear Edmund is at Lestwithiel, restored to his honours. They flee on hearing Ingelram is coming. Trecothick is taken ill on the journey. When Emmeline seeks help, she walks into the chapel in the middle of Edmund's wedding to Isabel.

Roland decided not to let Edmund see the letter Trecothick sent inviting him to marry Emmeline. He deceived Edmund into believing he had a duty to marry Isabel. When Roland realises Emmeline was not false, he helps Trecothick get his estates back by explaining Ingelram's deception to the King, who exiles Ingelram. Isabel dies giving birth to her second child with Edmund. Roland tells Edmund of Emmeline's goodness, and they marry.

[Mrs] Ross, *The Strangers of Lindenfeldt: or, Who is my Father?*

Sir Edward returns from India, with his heir, Walsingham. Edward purchases an estate on the Isle of Wight. He expects to discover Walsingham's real family when he turns twenty-one, next year. In London, they visit Lady Delmond and her daughters, including Lady Anne, who tries to monopolise Walsingham's attentions. They try to hide Delmond's orphan niece, Eglantine Courtland, from Walsingham, because she is beautiful. When he meets her, he admires her, despite his friend Belgrave being in love with her. Eglantine cares for her uncle because his wife and daughters will not. Anne's bad treatment of Eglantine makes Walsingham like her less, but he is already her accepted lover.

Edward tells his friend Major Delaney about Walsingham's origins. When travelling in Germany, he went to the Castle of Lindenfeldt, where he met an Englishman called 'The Stranger of Lindenfeldt'. Sir Edward saw the man being harassed by a woman called

Volonia. Volonia later gave Sir Edward the infant Walsingham and asked him to bring him up as his son, with a packet explaining his origins to be opened when he turned twenty-one. His mother is dead, and his father is 'The Stranger'. Walsingham is generally believed to be Edward's own illegitimate son; Walsingham thinks he is Edward's legitimate son.

Walsingham sees Eglantine with Belgrave, near Richmond, where Delmond is staying. Delmond says Walsingham resembles a villain. Walsingham breaks his engagement with Anne after seeing her arranging to meet another man. Volonia, in disguise, tells Walsingham that his mother was her sister, Adriana, and his father is a villainous Englishman. She warns him not to marry before he knows his family. Anne elopes with Lord Morland, the son of a man her mother previously tried to make her marry, with the help of Westwyn.

Eglantine loves Walsingham. Belgrave loves Eglantine, but she sees him as a brother. Delmond takes Eglantine to his Devon estate, Blandford Priory. Walsingham goes to Weymouth with Belgrave. Lady Morland is there with her husband and Westwyn, who now has power over her. She later dies after leaving her husband. Walsingham helps Julie, a French girl, whose mother soon dies. She falls in love with him, but he does not love her. He sends her to London to save her from the rumours and Westwyn's bad intentions. Eglantine gets engaged to Belgrave after suffering from her uncle's bad temper. Belgrave brings her to his aunt Fanny in Weymouth. Walsingham, willing to die because Eglantine is engaged, duels with Westwyn, wounding him seriously, but not fatally. Walsingham escapes to London. He begins a sexual relationship with Julie. She refuses to marry him because she knows he does not love her. Julie dies. A stranger warns Walsingham that any woman could be his sister.

On the Isle of Wight, Belgrave's wedding is delayed by Fanny's death. He has to leave Eglantine lodging with a fisherman's family. While Belgrave is in London, Walsingham arrives on the island, having heard that Eglantine prefers him. They see each other daily. Belgrave overhears them and says they can have each other. Eglantine needs a legal protector from Delmond's claim on her. Edward consents to Walsingham marrying Eglantine but says they can only marry before his birthday (and the discovery of his birth) if absolutely necessary. When Walsingham mistakenly thinks Delmond is coming for Eglantine, they arrange a private marriage the next day. Belgrave gives Lady Fanny's estate to Eglantine and goes abroad. The wedding is interrupted by Volonia's objection; she says he needs to try and find out his father's identity, in case Eglantine could be his sister. Edward ensures Eglantine's safety.

They read the papers which explain Walsingham's birth. Adriana was daughter of an Italian count, who has to become a nun despite being in love with an Englishman who called himself Walsingham. Meanwhile her sister, Volonia, was widowed. Adriana fled the convent with Walsingham, as his mistress, and he abandoned her when she was about to give birth. He later demanded the child, so Volonia took him away to keep him safe. Walsingham betrayed Adriana's whereabouts, so she was imprisoned and due to be buried alive, but the area was destroyed by an earthquake. Edward saw Volonia threatening Walsingham, which is when she gave him the baby.

Volonia wants Walsingham to find his father. He goes to Italy then Switzerland. Eglantine goes to Ireland with Delaney and his sister. She becomes upset when Walsingham does not write to her and she hears rumours that he has been inconstant. When they hear Walsingham is in London with a beautiful girl, Edward and Delaney go to meet him. Walsingham explains that he met his father, whose name is Claranville, at Lindenfeldt. He

introduced him to his half-sister, Annina. Walsingham is worried that Eglantine may be his sister or his aunt, based on a picture. Claranville said Walsingham should hate the Courtlands. Belgrave was also at the castle, but said he knew Eglantine would not have him even if it turned out she was unable to marry Walsingham, so he remained abroad when Walsingham returned with his father and sister. Volonia died there.

Claranville eventually explains that he is Delmond and Henrietta Claranville's illegitimate son. Delmond's aunt and uncle brought up Delmond and his brother Willoughby alongside their own daughter Eglantine and her friend Henrietta. Willoughby fell in love with Henrietta, and Delmond tricked her into eloping with him; she believed she was marrying Willoughby. He kept her as a mistress in France and she had his child (Claranville). Delmond then had an unhappy marriage to Eglantine, who was disappointed in her love of Willoughby and soon died. Claranville was badly brought up by servants because Henrietta was insane. Eventually Willoughby found out and rescued Henrietta, placed her in Devon, where she died, and tried to educate her son. Willoughby left Claranville, exasperated at his profligacy, and went to America, where he married and had a child: Eglantine Courtland (the woman Walsingham now wants to marry: she is his father's cousin). Claranville extorted money from Delmond and went to Italy as related above. He later married an Italian woman, but she died after giving birth to Annina. He had given up on finding his son when Belgrave then Walsingham arrived.

Claranville confronts Delmond, who then dies. Walsingham collects Eglantine from Ireland, and they marry. Claranville leaves them, to die alone. Annina goes to Ireland with the Delaneys and marries a man who previously hoped to marry Eglantine. Belgrave returns years later; he no longer loves Eglantine, and they are all happy.

Ann Ryley, Fanny Fitz-York, Heiress of Tremorne

Lady Anne retires to the Tower of Tremorne in Devon with her daughter, Fanny. Fanny does not know she will have £5000 a year from her father, Fitz-York, and uncle, Frederick, who have died. Only her mother, her uncle, Lord Milford, and Mr Strickland know; they hope to prevent her future husband being tempted by it. Their neighbours at Tremorne include Reverend Cavendish, his parents, and his two teenager sisters Rosette and Julia. Anne takes in Rosette to educate Fanny. They also have unpleasant neighbours in Mr Gaskell, his wife, daughters, and son, Ensign Gaskell. Cavendish's pupil Tudor rescues Fanny after Ensign Gaskell grabs her when she is walking with Rosette.

When Fanny is sixteen, Anne and Milford's sister Lady Mountcastle arrives in London with her family. She no longer wants Fanny to marry her son Lord Moseley because she thinks she will only have £500 a year. Moseley, his sister Lady Maria, and Milford's new wife try to resolve the family dispute. Julia is sent to live with her brother George in Exeter. Strickland and Anne take Fanny and Rosette on a tour of the Devon coast. They visit Exeter, then Lyme. They meet Lord Moseley, who introduces himself as Mr Moseley, and hides that he is their relation. He falls in love with Fanny. They also meet Sir Herbert, who falls in love with Rosette. Moseley returns as a Lord, pretending to be a different person to Mr Moseley by wearing a wig. After visiting Exmouth and Teignmouth, they return to Tremorne.

Mrs Gaskell's sister Mrs Stokes and her husband Major Stokes move to Tremorne. Mrs Stokes claims that she was married to Lady Anne's brother Frederick, and their son will be his heir. They really did have a child but were not married. She abandoned her son when

she eloped with her first husband, Sergeant Mellor. Many of the characters go to London. A highwayman robs them as they travel through Bath. He is persuaded to restore the property to Mrs Stokes; she keeps some which belongs to Lady Milford. Moseley continues visiting them using his dual identities. Mrs Stokes uses a corrupt ex-lawyer, Brierly, to claim Frederick's estate through a false will. She is imprisoned for stealing Lady Milford's property. Brierly introduces an imposter called Smith who claims to be Frederick junior. Mrs Stokes is freed and separates from the Major.

Moseley admits his deception: he wanted to woo Fanny under his false identity because he heard Anne did not want Fanny to marry her cousin. Fanny does not love him. They meet the Duchess of Newland's family including her nephew, Talbot. The flirtatious Captain Corbett transfers his affections from Maria to Fanny. Cavendish and Tudor arrive and say Julia has left Exeter with a seducer. Rosette returns home with them. Tudor admits he loves Fanny then goes to visit his father in Heligoland. On his return, Tudor dies of consumption. O'Brian, a relation of Anne's, reconciles with her family as he was falsely told that Fitz-York was a gambler. Moseley and Corbett fight over Fanny. It is proven that Smith is not Frederick, but he escapes. It emerges that the real Frederick is the highwayman, who testifies against Mrs Stokes (his mother) for stealing from Lady Milford. Mrs Stokes' first husband Mellor appears: because he did not die, she is not legally Stokes' wife. Stokes leaves her and then dies. Smith marries Miss Gaskell while still pretending to be Frederick. Once the truth comes out, the Gaskell women live separately from Mr Gaskell senior. Moseley is injured when he duels with Corbett, but they keep it secret. The real Frederick explains his life story: he married his benefactors' daughter, Mary, and became a highwayman due to poverty. While he was away, Mary escaped prostitution with Julia's help. Mary and Frederick settle near Tremorne.

Anne goes to O'Brian, who is ill at Chester. Most of the other characters go to Newland Abbey in Oxfordshire. The Duchess' niece Phillipa wants to marry Talbot. She is jealous of Fanny because both Talbot and Corbett like her. Corbett and Phillipa deliberately make Fanny think Phillipa is engaged to Talbot, and make Talbot think Fanny is engaged to Corbett. Fanny is eventually able to tell Talbot she is not engaged. They find Julia at the theatre; Herbert takes her back to Devon. Colonel Parke admires Fanny. They meet Maria and Moseley, who thinks Fanny has chosen Corbett over him. O'Brian dies and Anne returns to Devon.

Fanny returns to Devon still thinking Talbot is engaged to Phillipa. Fanny inherits much of O'Brian's property. When Fanny refuses Parke's proposal, she admits to her mother that she loves Talbot. Parke and then Stokes then propose to Anne, who refuses them both. Rosette and Herbert get married. The Duke sends Anne a formal proposal for Fanny's hand on behalf of Talbot, but she refuses without telling Fanny because she thinks the Duchess wants him to marry Phillipa. They are confused by the rejection. Corbett comes to Devon, claiming Talbot and Phillipa are due to marry. Julia identifies Corbett as her seducer; they marry but he leaves her and goes to London.

The Gaskell women now live in Plymouth. Gaskell goes to free his son the Ensign from prison, but Frederick refuses to free his mother, who abandoned him. Taylor, who married the younger Miss Gaskell, and Smith run into each other, not knowing they have married sisters. They rob Gaskell's house at Tremorne; Smith is caught and executed for having forged money, while Taylor escapes to Spain where he dies. The Gaskell women retire to Penzance.

In London, Corbett tells Phillipa he is married. She assumes he means to Fanny, so she tells Talbot. The Newlands are confused but believe it. Frustrated at not being free to marry an heiress, Corbett goes to Devon and tries to murder Julia by pushing her in a river, but she is rescued. At Vauxhall, Fanny loses her party and ends up alone with Corbett. The Newlands rescue her when he is seized for debt. The next day, they realise Fanny is not Corbett's wife. The Duke explains that Phillipa is not engaged to Talbot. They realise Phillipa must have lied and send her away. Talbot and Fanny get engaged and Fanny's fortune is revealed. Lady Mountcastle is angry that Fanny did not marry Moseley. Moseley marries the rich but not noble stepdaughter of Mrs Bloomfield, which saves his family's finances. Fanny and Talbot get married and go to Oxfordshire, then Tremorne.

Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *A Traveller's Tale of The Last Century*

An introduction claims that this is a manuscript about events which took place fifty years ago, given to the unnamed narrator by a clergyman (who is later revealed to be Mr Arden). A Catholic widow, Lady Valville, lives in Granville Abbey in Clovelly with her priest, Dermont, his French niece, Victoire, and Deletia Granville, who does not know how she is related to Lady Valville. Deletia finds what she suspects is evidence about her parentage in a fishing-house. Lady Valville's son from her first marriage, Lord Valville, arrives home from travelling. Lady Valville has secret reasons for wanting him to marry Deletia. They go on an excursion to the nearby Isle of Lundy, then to Hartland Abbey. When they are sailing back, Valville drunkenly tries to throw himself at Deletia's feet.

Valville insists they go on a tour along the North coast of Devon. At Bideford, Deletia hears women say that Lady Valville is guilty of something and intends to marry Deletia to her son. They continue to Ilfracombe and visit Morthoe Bay, where Valville accosts Deletia but is interrupted by the arrival of a group of siblings. Deletia runs away and the man offers to help her. Lady Valville is rude about her being seen with a strange man. They visit Linton and Lynmouth, before continuing on to Porlock, Minehead, Dunster Castle, and Bath. Valville plans to seduce Deletia, then sail her to Falmouth, then abroad. They spend two months at Bath.

They return to Clovelly. During a midnight walk, Deletia is seized by Valville, who attempts to put her into a boat, but the man whom they saw on their tour saves Deletia again; he and his sisters are staying at the Clovelly parsonage with their cousin Mr Arden. He takes her back to Lady Valville, but she is unsympathetic. He is the Earl of Dorrington and has recently inherited Oakley Park in Warwickshire. He has been travelling with his sisters: the widowed Lady Robina and the younger Lady Elinor. Robina explains to her siblings that Lady Deletia Granville (who they suspect was Deletia's mother) was a friend of their mother's and died in mysterious circumstances.

Valville proposes to Deletia. She refuses. Valville tears up a letter from Elinor to Deletia so she cannot read it. They are upset when Deletia fails to reply, so they leave for Oakley Park. Lady Valville tries to force Deletia to marry Valville, including by threatening her with imprisonment and showing her a transcript of part of her father's will. This explains that Deletia's mother was Granville's first wife, before she died, and he then married Lady Valville. It consigns Deletia to Lady Valville's care and explains that Deletia is the sole heiress of the Abbey, but if she marries Valville before she turns twenty-one, he can take the family name. She realises she will inherit the Abbey when she comes of age and could not

then be forced to marry. She tries to escape with Victoire in the night. They reach the road to Bideford before Dermont takes them back to the Abbey.

Lawyers come to arrange the settlements. Deletia refuses to sign and shows them papers she found in the fishing-house which mention poison. Rutherford refuses to give Deletia away until all is explained, because Lady Valville was suspiciously overcome by this revelation. Lady Valville tells Deletia that her father killed himself in the fishing-house, but he wanted this marriage, and the will is proof of it. Deletia is persuaded to agree to the marriage, thinking it her unavoidable duty. Lady Valville interrupts the ceremony by shrieking because she sees Lady Deletia's tomb and memorial statues, having not been in the church since her own wedding because she is Catholic.

Rutherford takes Deletia and Victoire to London to stay with his sister Mrs Parker, but she is not welcoming, so he takes them on to his younger sister Mrs Clinton who recently married a clergyman on the Isle of Wight. Valville takes his raving mother to London to look for Deletia. He follows them to Southampton but cannot tell where they went. Rutherford writes to warn Mrs Clinton to remove Deletia temporarily from their home in case Valville finds them. They explain Deletia's situation to their neighbour Lady Barbara, and she offers to take her in at Barton villa, where she is staying with her niece and nephew, who are revealed to be Elinor and Dorrington. When they discover each other's identities, Deletia allows them to hear her story. Rutherford believes that they can get a legal ruling against Valville's claim on Deletia, and she will be of age soon. Lady Valville feels guilty: she made Granville write the will because she wanted to get the estates for her son. Valville continues to search for Deletia and goes abroad. Lady Valville disappears with Dermont and their servant Mrs Abbott and goes into a convent.

Elinor and Dorrington take Deletia with them to Oakley Park. They are happy and go on several excursions. Robina shows Deletia some of her mother's letters, which explain she believed she was dying of a slow poison, having met Lady Valville at Paris, and taken her to the Abbey as their guest. Deletia and Dorrington have fallen mutually in love, but when he proposes, she does not want to accept because it would put him in danger from Valville. They go to London together, but after they see Valville, Robina takes Deletia and Victoire abroad to avoid him.

They sail from the Isle of Wight to Normandy, where Victoire's family live. Deletia eventually goes to Paris with their new friends while Robina remains behind. A friend of Valville's recognises Deletia and informs him. At the opera, Valville seizes Deletia and takes her to a convent at Rouen. Deletia explains to her captors that she is not married to Valville, and she is not Catholic, so they do not make her become a nun. Lady Valville is in the same convent; as she is dying, she admits she murdered Deletia's mother because she fell in love with Mr Granville and wanted the Abbey for her son. When Granville later became suspicious, he killed himself. Deletia is released from the convent and Mrs Abbott takes her back to Robina. Dorrington is also there and asks her to marry him immediately for her safety. Deletia says that her father's will states that she cannot lose her name but keep her estates. Dorrington is unwilling to lose his own name and title. They decide that Deletia will relinquish the name of Granville and the Abbey estate in order to take his, because she was never happy there. It is inherited by a distant relation and falls into ruin. They marry quickly in France then sail to the Isle of Wight. They find that Clinton is too ill to remarry them, so they travel to Warwickshire and are remarried by Arden. After learning of his

mother's death, Valville sails to England but dies when his ship is wrecked off Brighton. Elinor marries a nobleman and the Dorringscourts are happy at Oakley Park.

Elizabeth Isabella Spence, *The Curate and His Daughter; A Cornish Tale*

Trevanion, curate of Boscastle in Cornwall, places a girl called Matilda into the care of the Dowager Countess Seyntaubyne who lives nearby at Pengwilly Hall, with a packet that will explain her origins. Lady Seyntaubyne has disowned her son for marrying against her wishes then pursuing another attachment. When Matilda is twelve, Lady Seyntaubyne sends her to be educated by Dr Arundel and his wife at Richmond. She moves to London to be nearby.

Matilda meets the Arudels' friend Lady Clairville and her niece Julia. It emerges that Lady Clairville's older sister was Lady Seyntaubyne's son's wife, but she died after giving birth to Julia. Julia is one year older than Matilda and there is a strange resemblance between them. When Matilda is seventeen, Lady Clairville's son arrives at her house having survived a shipwreck. He falls in love with Matilda, but she feels guilty about returning his feelings because he is engaged (by childhood arrangement) to Julia. Lady Seyntaubyne is not happy that Matilda has associated with the Clairvilles and Julia and takes her to London.

Matilda does not like London and is importuned by suitors, including Sir Charles. She hears gossip about where Lady Seyntaubyne found her. When she asks about her parentage, Lady Seyntaubyne is vague, but gives her a miniature of her mother. Matilda discovers that Lady Seyntaubyne has prevented Lady Clairville and Julia from seeing her or writing to her. Lady Seyntaubyne meets her granddaughter Julia for the first time, due to her breach with her son. Lady Seyntaubyne hopes that Matilda will marry Charles, and tells her that she cannot encourage Clairville, both because of her dispute with his mother and because of his engagement.

When Lord Seyntaubyne eventually meets Matilda, he becomes agitated. This is then explained in a retrospective narrative. Seyntaubyne married Lady Clairville's sister, despite his mother's disapproval. His wife died leaving him with baby Julia. He was consoled by the curate local to Penrose Castle and fell in love with his daughter Anna. He abducted her when she did not consent to elope with him. Despite his original intentions, he then married her, privately, under his Christian name. When the clergyman told Anna that Seyntaubyne used a different name, she thought it must have been a false marriage, so she left to live in seclusion in Cumberland. On discovering this, Seyntaubyne fell ill, and Lady Clairville came to care for him.

Seyntaubyne tells Lady Clairville about Matilda's resemblance to Anna; they are confused because they assumed Anna died and never heard of her having a child. Seyntaubyne asks his mother to forgive him and tell him if he is Matilda's father. Her reaction is to plan to remove Matilda back to Cornwall. When Matilda goes to say goodbye to the Arundels, she meets Clairville and Julia. She is upset about their engagement. She decides to only marry Charles if he can accept that she originally loved Clairville.

Matilda and Lady Seyntaubyne travel back to Cornwall. Matilda enjoys the journey and is happy at Pengwilly. She visits Trevanion's parsonage and is mistaken for Anna's ghost by the locals. She also visits Tintagel. On hearing that Clairville and Julia will come to nearby Penrose Castle to celebrate their marriage, Lady Seyntaubyne decides to send Matilda to the Highlands with Mr and Mrs McArthur. Matilda accidentally leaves behind the packet of information about her parentage.

They travel to the Isle of Mull. Matilda rejects McLaurel, a laird. Charles arrives and proposes but Matilda tells him she needs time to grow to return his affection because she loves Clairville. She agrees to marry him in six months if he still loves her then. On Mrs McArthur's death, Matilda has to leave and stay with Mr McArthur's sister, Mrs Sutherland, at Inverness. The Sutherlands, McArthur, Charles, and Matilda travel back to England via Edinburgh. When passing through Carlisle, they meet Clairville, who has come to tell Matilda that Julia has released him from their engagement. Communicating via notes and Mrs Sutherland, she tells him that she is engaged to Charles, which she would not have agreed to had she known he was free. Clairville returns to the sea. Matilda becomes violently ill from emotion and Charles finds out why she is upset but does not let her know.

They all spend the Christmas season with the Maitlands at Ennerdale Water. Matilda meets the mysterious Mrs Bertie. It emerges that she is Anna, Matilda's mother. She sent Matilda to be brought up by Trevanion, who was her grandfather. Matilda hopes to prove the legitimacy of her parents' marriage. Matilda has to leave for Richmond. Mrs Arundel tells her that Clairville has gone to sea, while Julia is now engaged to McLaurel, who Matilda rejected, having met him in Dublin. Charles dissolves his engagement with Matilda, saying he knows she would prefer to marry Clairville.

Mrs Arundel and Matilda go to the dying Lady Seyntaubyne in Cornwall, but they arrive too late. She was reconciled with her son just before her death. Matilda reads the letters from her grandfather and her mother that were in the packet, with the marriage certificate. Seyntaubyne acknowledges Matilda as his legitimate daughter, and she tells him that his wife is alive. They send the news to Anna then travel to surprise her in Cumberland, where they are reunited happily and return to Cornwall. Julia and McLaurel marry. Clairville returns, having been promoted to Captain, and marries Matilda. They live at Pengwilly. Matilda copes well with Clairville having to return to sea.

[Miss] Squire, *Incident and Interest; Or, Copies from Nature*

In Clifton, Glenrose sees Clarissa sketching St. Vincent's Wood. He backs away to avoid alarming her and falls backwards off a cliff. She runs down to help him and, with another stranger, Mr Nugent, takes him to a hotel. Clarissa lives with her mother, Mrs Mortimer, and their friend Mrs Benson, spending half the year in Bristol and the other half in the Somerset village of C—. After helping Glenrose, Clarissa arrives late at Mrs Benson's house. She tells them that Glenrose will be at the next ball.

Clarissa is in love with Lambert, a foundling cared for by their local vicar, Everard. They were educated together and fell in love, but he was informed in an anonymous letter that his unknown family wanted him to go a lucrative situation in the East Indies. Two years have passed, and he has stopped corresponding with them.

Nugent and Glenrose go to the ball together. Because Clarissa is not there, Glenrose dances with Miss Tattle. Nugent gets introduced at Mrs Belmont's house and becomes attracted to Clarissa. Glenrose then gets introduced into their circle. He attempts to make Clarissa jealous by paying attention to Miss Tattle, even swearing to marry her. Nugent proposes to Clarissa, but she refuses. He jealously thinks that Glenrose must have already succeeded with her. Mrs Mortimer plans to take Clarissa home to their village.

Mrs Belmont has a party at St. Vincent's rocks followed by a ball. Nugent's attentions to Clarissa lead to a rumour that they are engaged. Glenrose angrily confronts Nugent when

he tells Clarissa about his attentions to Miss Tattle. Clarissa faints. Nugent challenges Glenrose to a duel on Clifton Down because he believes he had a prior claim on Clarissa because he introduced him to her circle. Glenrose wins and Nugent is injured but not dangerously. Miss Tattle lies to Clarissa that Nugent is seriously wounded. When Clarissa's party hear he is safe they leave Clifton and return to the village of C—. When Miss Tattle realises Glenrose has left Bristol without her, she wants revenge.

When Clarissa is walking to visit a poor cottager, Glenrose surprises her. He later writes to her saying she must meet him outside the house. She meets him but refuses to go with him, saying her mother would not want them to marry. He threatens suicide; when she knocks the pistol out of his hand it goes off and she faints. Glenrose puts her in a post-chaise and takes her north. She marries him at Gretna Green because he says that is the only way he would let her see her mother again. They send a message to her family and go to Bath, where they live expensively. Glenrose is jealous and demands the money which is settled on her. Mrs Benson writes to say Mrs Mortimer is very ill and will not see Glenrose. Clarissa realises she cannot love her husband. She begs him to reform because she is pregnant.

Miss Tattle sues Glenrose for breach of promise. Her lawyer, Mr Garble, forces her to marry him and share the proceeds by threatening to turn the process against her. The trial then goes against Mrs Garble because she is now married.

Clarissa goes to stay with her mother without Glenrose. Mrs Mortimer relents and invites him to join them but dies shortly before he arrives. The couple return to Bath, where Clarissa gives birth to a daughter. Glenrose is increasingly dissipated and erratic, including threatening her with a sword. She sees him embracing their servant girl, who then claims that Clarissa is not his real wife. Clarissa is ill and they send the pregnant servant away. He insists Clarissa is his wife. Glenrose goes to Scotland because his mother has died. Clarissa and her daughter Jane go to Mrs Benson's house in C—. Clarissa offers to join Glenrose in Scotland as she is pregnant again. He is gone for five months. She becomes ill with worry.

Lambert arrives home to C—, without Clarissa's knowledge. Glenrose returns and takes her back to Bath. She gives birth. Lambert visits Mrs Benson and reads a letter from Clarissa which admits her sadness. He suffered from the climate and taking laudanum at Madras. His letters did not reach his friends. He met Mr Penfold, a white foundling who adopted him as a son. They returned to England but, on the way, they were captured by the French. When Lambert went to his banker, he was given a packet containing his mother's life story, which he later gives to Everard.

This document explains that Lambert's mother was educated by a harsh uncle and married a man she did not love to make another inconstant lover jealous. They had an unhappy marriage and their two children died, so she had an affair with his commanding officer, who is Lambert's father. He abandoned her, so, having heard Everard was kind, she left her son with him. She went to Italy with another lover and on her return her ship was wrecked at a castle on the English Channel. It turned out to be the new home of her uncle and aunt, with whom she reconciled. She arranged for Lambert to go to India. She asks him to now use the name Marchmont

Lambert decides to watch over Clarissa secretly, knowing he is changed beyond recognition. He takes lodgings near to her and leaves Penfold with Everard. Clarissa's baby dies. She finds letters in Glenrose's pocketbook from another woman in Scotland who calls herself his wife. Clarissa confronts Glenrose, then escapes with Jane to Monmouthshire. They take lodgings in a small village near Newport, where she decides to open a school and remain

concealed so Glenrose cannot take Jane. Glenrose coincidentally travels through the village with his friends. Clarissa collapses when she sees him. She tells him she does not want his support. Glenrose shoots himself and dies after apologising for his conduct. Lambert secretly helps, taking Jane to Mrs Benson. Everard finds a letter from Glenrose in his will, explaining his life.

Glenrose grew up spoiled in Aberdeen and had multiple lovers. He worked abroad, including in the slave trade. He married his Dutch neighbour's widow and kept lovers after her death. He married a French girl called Adelaide in a Catholic church and promised to ratify it in the Church of England but then refused after she had a baby. At this time, he met Clarissa. He gave Adelaide money, and she took her own lover. He married Clarissa, then he illegally 'married' another woman in Scotland. He leaves his Scottish property jointly to his children with Clarissa and this woman.

Clarissa renounces any of Glenrose's property. Months pass. When Clarissa finds out Lambert helped her daughter, they decide to marry. They later meet Miss Tattle, now a degraded ballad singer, in London; Clarissa charitably helps her, but she dies.

Grace Buchanan Stevens, *Llewellen, or the Vale of Phlinlimmon*

Mr and Mrs Dalziel retire from London to a cottage at the foot of Phlinlimmon to save money. Their daughter, Clara, flourishes in Wales. Mrs Dalziel dies after seeing what she thinks is a spirit. Dalziel and Clara temporarily stay with their neighbours the Howels at the parsonage, including their daughter, Julia, and son, Henry. When Clara is sixteen, she meets Alfred Llewellen who flirts with her, thinking she is a village maiden not a lady. Alfred's sister Matilda is financially dependent on him marrying well, so she disapproves when he becomes attached to Clara. Their father, Colonel Llewellen brought their (now deceased) mother from Sicily to England under mysterious circumstances.

Henry is in love with Matilda and sickens with heartbreak when she appears interested in Captain Byron. Alfred becomes jealous after Clara pays attention to Byron at Matilda's request. There are rumours that Byron has been accused of a crime. Dalziel's sister sends her daughter Isabella and her maiden aunt, Miss MacGruther, to stay with them. When Clara is walking in the shrubbery of the Castle, the Colonel declares love for her and threatens her. Isabella arrives when Clara screams; they go home. Matilda insinuates it is suspicious that Clara was walking alone. Matilda, Alfred, and Henry go to London, while the cottage household go to stay at the parsonage

Lord Bellington stays at the parsonage following a carriage accident. He falls in love with Isabella, who is determined to marry him despite his foolishness to escape her unhappy home with her parents. She decides to wait until he returns, in case he forgets her. Julia, who married the local clergyman, describes married life in a letter which makes Isabella worry that she does not want it. Henry and Alfred return, and the cottage household leaves the parsonage.

Alfred realises that Clara loves him because she is concerned when she sees him with a little girl called Ellen. Clara discovers that Ellen is the Colonel's illegitimate daughter, but Alfred ensures she is cared for. Clara stays at the parsonage while Dalziel takes Isabella to London to discuss her marriage with her father. Alfred temporarily thought it was Clara who was engaged to Bellington, but this is resolved. Clara sees a frightening figure, collapses, and raves about being parted from Alfred until death. Matilda convinces Clara not to tell Alfred

what happened; he is annoyed that she will not explain. Clara is taken to the parsonage because she is sick with worry. Henry assures Alfred this is unfounded. Isabella's father will not let her marry Bellington.

Matilda and Alfred go to London and Clara joins her father there. Rumours spread that Clara is engaged to Bellington. Sir Charles tells Clara that Alfred is engaged to Caroline McLeod, an heiress. Clara and Caroline become friends. Dalziel goes to his West India plantations. Clara stays with Isabella's parents. They go to a masquerade with the Duchess of D—, who was friends with the Colonel's wife. The Colonel and Byron are mysteriously told to repent. Henry returns to Wales, heartbroken about Matilda. Matilda schemes to make Alfred marry Caroline because she is rich, by casting doubt on Clara's character. Bellington's mother says that the Colonel is suspected of having murdered his wife's fiancé; the Duchess planned the masquerade to provoke him.

Clara goes to her grandmother in Richmond. She refuses to explain to Alfred what happened in the shrubbery, because the Colonel is forcing her to keep it secret. When Clara is seriously ill, Matilda manipulates her into writing to Alfred to reject his proposal. Alfred becomes jealous when he sees Clara with Sir Charles. Alfred thinks he has to marry Caroline because she has fallen in love with him, because she believed he loved her. Caroline would have preferred to marry Major Stewart. Clara rejects a proposal from Charles.

Howel takes Clara back to Wales. Alfred marries Caroline. Clara learns of their marriage. Matilda arrives and says she encouraged Henry to make Byron jealous. She spread rumours about Clara but has now written to Alfred explaining her innocence. Matilda kills herself; she eloped with Byron, but he abandoned her with a letter revealing he is her uncle. The Colonel explains to Clara that Byron helped him to carry off his sister, Cecilia. The Colonel murdered Cecilia's lover. Alfred and Caroline come to Wales; Caroline is jealous of Clara. Stewart visits Caroline while Alfred is away. Henry dies. Alfred is dangerously ill and argues with Caroline.

Clara goes to live with Isabella in London because Bellington has deserted her for a married woman. Isabella does not want a divorce but would prefer to retire. Alfred and Caroline come to London, still unhappy together. They all return to Wales. Bellington dies in a duel, leaving Isabella a large jointure. Clara learns that her father died. Howel is now Clara's guardian, and her fortune has increased. Caroline is ill. They meet a madwoman who raves about murder. Clara and Isabella move into Dalziel's old cottage and invite Miss MacGruther to join them.

Caroline flees with Stewart, hoping Alfred will dissolve their marriage so she can marry him. When she realises Stewart expects to be with her while she is still married, she dismisses him and goes to a convent in France. The Colonel explains that his wife did not actually die: he poisoned her, but she fled. The madwoman is revealed to be his wife, but she dies immediately. The Colonel also dies. Alfred goes on a tour of Europe.

Clara, Isabella, and Miss MacGruther go to Caroline in France, with Caroline's father, McLeod. Caroline repents then dies. They have to extend their stay when Miss MacGruther is injured. Byron (aka. De Montford) visits them, and wins over McLeod, despite Clara's protestations. On their way to Lucerne to visit McLeod's friends, the Lintons, they are attacked by banditti and Clara is nearly abducted by Byron but they are rescued by Charles, who falls in love with Isabella. Byron murders the Colonel, and the Lintons have the women arrested, as Byron told them they were of bad character. Byron intercepts their letters to England. Byron again tries to abduct Clara, but some Englishmen save her.

Coincidentally, Alfred arrives and has Byron imprisoned. Charles, Lady Bellington and the Duchess come from Paris to defend them. Lady Bellington testifies against Byron, and he dies during an escape attempt. Alfred and Clara get engaged and they return to Wales. Clara gives Miss MacGruther the cottage. Clara and Alfred marry.

Mary Ann Sullivan, *Owen Castle: or, Which is the heroine?*

Mrs Milbourne lives at her cousin Sir Matthew's Welsh castle with her niece Grace, who is grieving the death of her fiancé, William. Mrs Milbourne loses the Whitford estate because it emerges that her nephew Augustus has a right to it. Augustus is coming to England with his fiancé, Omphale, whose Indian mother was taken to the West Indies by her English father. Augustus says he will give Whitford to Omphale on their marriage. Omphale says she will give it to Mrs Milbourne. Their neighbour Mrs Wallace plans to seduce Augustus for his money. She has a chequered past, including having lived as a mistress and married Captain Wallace for his money before he went to America.

Sir Matthew, who is seventy, decides to pursue Grace. They meet their neighbour Reverend Maskall. Augustus begins to neglect Omphale for Mrs Wallace. Sir William's friend, Rufus, loves Grace, but respects the fact she is mourning. Omphale releases Augustus from their engagement and frees him from an agreement which stipulated he must give her his estates if he abandoned her. Augustus gives Whitford to Mrs Wallace rather than Mrs Milbourne, leaving them in Matthew's power. Matthew says they must leave his house if Grace will not marry him.

Grace, Mrs Milbourne, and Omphale move into a nearby cottage. Grace takes work teaching music to the eccentric Lady Temperance's rustic choir. One winter night, Mrs Milbourne is arrested for fabricated debts to Mrs Wallace on the Whitford estate. Grace collapses during her walk to work in the snow. She goes to Matthew, who says he will get Mrs Milbourne released if Grace marries him. They get married. Omphale sells some jewellery and goes to London. Mrs Wallace lives with Augustus in London. Rufus arrives at Owen Castle angry that Matthew married Grace; he shoots him in a duel and flees. It is doubtful whether Matthew will recover. Mrs Milbourne dies.

Captain Wallace reappears and learns that his wife hid her ownership of Whitford from him. Augustus and Mrs Wallace disappear. Augustus, now in debt, attempts to steal Omphale's remaining jewellery and stabs her in the chest. He escapes to Paris with Mrs Wallace, thinking he murdered Omphale. She survives and prevents Rufus being wrongly prosecuted for the crime.

A Quaker heiress, Lady Sarah, helps Omphale. They work out that Omphale's father is Lord Orkley. The story of Grace, Omphale, and Augustus' parents is ultimately explained. Sisters Mary and Eliza grew up in Wales. Eliza married an officer, George, but he did not tell his father, the Earl of Northerland. Eliza gave birth to a boy (revealed later in the novel to be Augustus) and a girl, Grace. Mary became Mrs Milbourne. Eliza followed George to London when she learned he was going to marry Lady Amanda. She was separated from her Welsh servant, Taffline, and her son, in a crowd. Eliza never found her son. She died, and Grace was sent to Mrs Milbourne. On learning about Eliza, Amanda refused to marry George. Her father sent her to Jamaica. She married Milbourne (Mrs Milbourne's husband's elder brother). They adopted a boy (Augustus) who was found by a sailor. Omphale's mother killed herself when

her husband left her, so Omphale was left to Milbourne's guardianship. Milbourne took Omphale's property, but his wife arranged Omphale and Augustus' marriage to repair the wrong. Augustus does not know he was adopted. Lord Orkley married Omphale's mother when he was a lieutenant in India, for her money, and took her to Jamaica, where he abandoned her. Milbourne hid Omphale's existence from him to keep her estates.

Omphale meets her father, who forces her to receive Lord Merioneth's addresses, under threat of imprisonment. Mrs Wallace returns to London, having had Augustus imprisoned as insane in Paris because he wanted to admit his crime. She took a German baron as a lover and is claiming to be Augustus' widow. After she is abandoned by her lover, she tries to win Lord Merioneth.

Lord Orkley meets his old friend George, now Earl of Northerland (although he does not know it, he is Augustus and Grace's father). Augustus came with Northerland, having met him in Paris. Matthew brings Grace to London. Rufus realises Sarah loves him despite being a Quaker. After learning Matthew survived his injuries, Rufus and Sarah get married and she converts. Maskall tries to make love to Grace and gives her papers which reveal she was tricked into her marriage: they reveal that her fiancé William is alive, and Matthew concealed this and fabricated Mrs Milbourne's debts. Grace flees Matthew's house; when she calls out her mother's name, Northerland realises he is her father. Although Northerland will not help Grace arrange a separation, he takes her into his house. Orkley cancels Omphale's engagement with Merioneth. Merioneth learns of Mrs Wallace's transgressions. She becomes a miser's mistress then shoots him when stealing his money, goes mad with guilt and dies on her way to be executed.

Taffline finds Grace; she is coincidentally married to O'Driscal, the man who saved William in America. Taffline explains she was separated from Eliza in a crowd and found it hard to be understood because of her Welsh accent. She lost the boy, but he has a gunpowder tattoo which will reveal him. William comes to Grace, but she refuses to run away with him. O'Driscal arrives and identifies Augustus as Northerland's son and Grace's brother.

Omphale forgives Augustus and will marry him. Matthew insists he will take Grace back to Owen Castle and keep her isolated. When Grace goes missing, they assume she eloped with William, so Matthew goes to Ireland, where William has estates. When William arrives at Omphale and Augustus' joint wedding with Rufus and Sarah, Northerland assumes Grace killed herself. What really happened was Grace was kidnapped by Maskall. She escaped easily and all is explained when she arrives at her father's house. They learn Matthew died as his ship was wrecked. Grace marries William.

Elizabeth Thomas, *The Vindictive Spirit*

Lord Abergeley moves into Roseville, his estate in South Wales, and sees Lady Celestia crying on her grandmother's coffin. Celestia's mother, Lady Beaconsfield, was brought up in France by her father's mistress, then married the Marquis of Beaconsfield and left Celestia with her grandmother in Wales. Celestia goes to Lady Beaconsfield in London. Abergeley is introduced into their family. Abergeley and Celestia discuss their neighbourhood in Wales; she longs to return. The Marquis allows Abergeley to propose, but Lady Beaconsfield tells Abergeley she wants him as her own lover, and, when he refuses, she says he can never have Celestia. She wants to seduce him as revenge on his mother for not being her friend. She

wants Celestia to marry Sir Felix. With the help of Mr Monkland, Celestia and Abergeley agree to wait for each other.

The Marquis is injured in a carriage accident. Abergeley helps to care for him, despite Lady Beaconsfield trying to keep him away from Celestia. The Marquis dies. Celestia does not feel able to pursue her attachment to Abergeley against her mother's wishes, but she also refuses to marry Sir Felix. Lady Beaconsfield decides to make Abergeley and Celestia's marriage miserable if it does take place. She tries to make Abergeley accept her as a wife instead of her daughter, but she fails.

Lady Beaconsfield takes her friends and Celestia to the South Wales estate which she inherited by the death of her mother, the Monastery. Her friends engage in extramarital affairs and other immoral conduct. Celestia's maid tells her that her mother wants to marry Abergeley herself. Lady Beaconsfield says she now consents to their marriage and invites Abergeley to the Monastery, then he returns to his own house after being told that Lady Beaconsfield is sickening through love of him, which he does not believe, but Celestia does. Celestia plans to renounce Abergeley to save her mother; he thinks she is being cruel because she will not explain why. Lady Beaconsfield begins a relationship with Captain Boutflower. Celestia realises her mother lied about her feelings. Celestia continues to refuse Sir Felix.

Lady Beaconsfield marries Boutflower in the hope of cutting Celestia off if she manages to have a son, as it emerges that Celestia is under the guardianship of Monkland (who will leave her his property) and the new Marquis. Celestia goes to live with the new Marquis and his family in London. They are kind to her. Lord John, the Marquis' younger son, falls in love with her. Celestia tells Abergeley that she rejected him to make another happy, but this was mistaken, so he works out what happened, and they get married.

They go on a three-week excursion then arrive at Roseville, but Lady Beaconsfield refuses to ever see Abergeley despite the Monastery being nearby. She leads Celestia to believe she has a secret connection with the Abergeley family. The Abergeleys go to visit his aunt near Kensington. This aunt says that the former Lord Abergeley paid Lady Beaconsfield too much attention; this upset his wife and he died around the time Celestia was born. Celestia believes this means Abergeley may be her half-brother, so she wants to go ahead to Roseville without him. Celestia is pregnant and becomes very ill but will not explain to her husband why she is refusing to be around him, so he suggests they separate and thinks she never loved him. Celestia receives an anonymous letter saying that her husband is her brother and that it will be made public. Celestia gives birth to a daughter and plans to leave her husband without him finding out what she knows.

They are not really siblings; this is a malicious plan of Lady Beaconsfield's. On hearing Celestia say she is guilty, Abergeley assumes she has had affair with John. He tells her she can stay in the house, he will go to London and never come back. Lady Beaconsfield has a son. Celestia isolates herself, writing poetry and drawing Roseville and Abergeley. She refuses John's attempt to instigate an affair. She also refuses to explain herself to Monkland. She decides to go to a retired watering place with the rector's wife, Mrs Sandford, as her companion.

Abergeley wants to avoid fighting John, so he travels, at random, to North Devon. Under a fake name, he lodges with a clergyman, Mr Staniforth, on the coast. He grows to like Staniforth's daughter Eleanor, but her cousin is jealous. Abergeley realises he could make a second attachment, but he cannot get a divorce without Celestia's agreement. He explains to

Eleanor that he is unhappily married, and he arranges for a living to be held for her cousin so they can marry. He goes to his estates in Ireland for six miserable months.

Celestia begins to feel better in Swansea, has her daughter Christened, and returns to Roseville. Lady Beaconsfield pays her maid Lister a large annuity, afraid she could reveal her secret plot. Celestia is seriously ill. Her mother invites her to live with her. Abergeley writes to say that he will divorce her and leave her free to have John. Celestia does not know what to do but thinks she is dying anyway, so she writes saying this, and stating that she was never unfaithful.

Lister, Lady Beaconsfield's former maid, goes to live with her family in Bristol and ends up marrying a Captain who has already impregnated her niece. He only wants Lister for the money and diamond necklace she has. They are arrested on suspicion of stealing the necklace. Abergeley is nearby but refuses to speak for her character until she tells him that Lady Beaconsfield gave her the necklace as a bribe to keep her secret about the plot against Celestia. Abergeley now realises what Celestia believes.

Meanwhile, Lady Beaconsfield's son dies of smallpox, she is disfigured by it and feels very guilty. She admits it was all a lie to deceive Celestia, and Boutflower is shocked at her immorality. Abergeley and Celestia are reunited back at Roseville. Boutflower intends to leave his wife and go back into the army, but Celestia does not want her mother to be punished, so he agrees not to. Instead, he decides to reform her by being controlling.

Abergeley takes Celestia to Devon, but she does not recover. She says he should marry again and dies in his arms in Clifton. Lady Beaconsfield goes mad with repentance when she finds out her daughter is dead. Celestia is buried near to her grandmother at the Monastery; Lady Beaconsfield throws herself on the coffin and dies shortly afterwards. Abergeley marries the Sanfords' daughter and loves her but not as much as Celestia.

Jane West, *The Refusal*

Emily Mandeville, an orphan and heiress to her maternal estates, is brought up by her maternal aunt, Lady Selina. She goes to live with her paternal uncle Sir Walter in his Devon castle for the summer. Sir Walter makes Emily his heiress. Sir Walter dislikes Selina; as he grows attached to Emily, he refuses to give Emily back to her. Selina refuses Emily's request that she move closer to them.

Sir Walter's friend and fellow soldier the Earl of Avondel returns to England from India and comes to stay at the castle. Emily guesses that Avondel may have been rejected by Selina in the past. A local widow, Lady Mackintosh, who is hoping to marry Sir Walter, moves into the castle as a female chaperone. Emily finds her duties as hostess difficult due to her shyness. She falls in love with Avondel, despite him being old enough to be her father, in poor health, and in need of her fortune. Avondel tells Sir Walter he does not want to take advantage of Emily's inexperience; he advises Sir Walter to take Emily to see more of society so she can choose who to marry. When Avondel leaves for his own estate, Avon Park, Emily thinks he does not love her. Lady Mackintosh gives up on Sir Walter and leaves to pursue a friend's rich son.

Sir Walter takes Emily to London. Lady Glenvorne is her protectress, at Avondel's suggestion. Several men fall in love with Emily, including Lady Glenvorne's son. Emily rejects him. Sir Walter continues to encourage Avondel because he can see Emily is sad. Avondel comes to London and gets engaged to Emily. Avondel accepts a public office;

Emily is disappointed that this will prevent them from living in retirement. They get married and Sir Walter returns to Devon, leaving the Avondels in his London home.

When Emily eventually tells Avondel that Selina is her aunt, after delaying this admission at Selina's request, he says that Selina did indeed reject him years ago. Selina explains her family history: she was brought up separately from her sister (Emily's mother) because their parents were separated. Selina says she cannot explain why she suddenly broke off her engagement to Avondel, because the reason is too horrifying.

Emily struggles in her role as Avondel's companion and hostess because she is too young and nervous. Avondel's colleague Lord Norbury tries to seduce Emily, causing rumours. Avondel has professional problems and wishes he could have married Selina. Avondel has to protect Emily from Norbury, so Norbury withdraws his political support. Avondel resigns his office, and they visit Sir Walter in Devon. In the winter, they return to London and Emily gives birth to a son. Avondel dislikes how much of Emily's energy is taken up by being a mother.

Emily meets Avondel's friend, Lady Paulina, who says she first met Avondel in Florence, but he refused to marry her because she was indecorous. She went to India and married his friend General Morthemer, who is soon to follow her to England. Paulina wants to seduce Avondel. Emily is worried and later becomes increasingly jealous. Avondel admires Paulina but thinks he can trust himself not to be unfaithful. Paulina replaces Emily as hostess at Avondel's parties, provoking rumours. Paulina makes Emily doubt whether Avondel loves her. Paulina says she does not want her husband to return. Avondel becomes indifferent to Emily, through Paulina's contrivance. Avondel and Paulina's relationship remains close but technically platonic. Paulina mocks Emily, showing off that she has won over her husband. Norbury continues to pursue Emily. When Emily shows dislike of Paulina by refusing to appear at court with her, Avondel angrily confronts her, claiming his attachment to Paulina is virtuous. Paulina convinces Avondel that Emily is jealous and cruel. When Emily stops visiting Paulina, this exacerbates the rumours.

Sir Walter dies. Lady Glenvorne and Selina try to help Emily by attempting to get Avondel to renounce Paulina. Paulina hopes Emily will die of neglect so she can marry Avondel after her own marriage is dissolved. She hears a rumour that Emily could be Selina's illegitimate daughter. She tells Avondel, who investigates this claim because, if true, it would mean he and Emily have no right to the Mandeville estates. Paulina convinces Avondel to elope, by saying that her husband will murder her on his return, so she will kill herself unless Avondel goes with her. His valet informs Lady Glenvorne, so Emily's friends prevent Avondel from meeting Paulina, by delaying her. When Avondel arrives at their planned rendezvous, he finds Selina there. Selina explains she could not marry him because she is his half-sister: his father seduced her mother. She provides evidence and explains that Paulina's accusations that Emily spread rumours about her are false.

Avondel is reconciled with Emily. Morthemer returns and Paulina tells his private secretary, Villars, that Avondel tried to seduce her. Villars tells Morthemer this story. Paulina is hoping they will duel and Morthemer will die. Morthemer accuses Avondel of trying to seduce Paulina. Avondel meets him the next day, not realising it will be a duel with weapons. Drunk and angry, Morthemer says he will only forgive Avondel if he publicly defends Paulina's honour and admits he tried to seduce her. Avondel refuses because this is not true, and Morthemer stabs him in the chest, but instantly regrets it. Avondel explains to Morthemer

that Paulina must have deceived him and advises him to flee the country to avoid punishment. Avondel ensures Morthemer will not be prosecuted, then dies, leaving Emily grieving.

Paulina chooses to remain in England because Morthemer cannot return. He kills himself. Paulina marries Norbury because he needs her money, and she needs a better reputation; they live in wretched dissipation. Seven years after Avondel's death, Selina writes to Lady Glenvorne to say she is happy that Glenvorne decides to marry another girl rather than wait for Emily, because she will never get over Avondel.

Sarah Wilkinson, *The Spectre of Lanmere Abbey, Or, the Mystery of the Blue and Silver Bag; A Romance*

Agnes, living in unbearable poverty, receives assistance from Lady Cecilia, wife of Sir Everard Martimel. This name mysteriously affects Agnes when she learns of it. Cecilia takes Agnes' baby daughter Charlotte to educate her so she can become a governess. Cecilia regrets this but cannot find Agnes to give Charlotte back, so she decides to keep Charlotte a secret, including from her husband. Sir Everard neglects Cecilia and she takes up gambling, meaning she lacks money for Charlotte's schooling. Cecilia sends Charlotte to live in Martimel Castle in Monmouthshire.

Charlotte thinks the housekeeper, Mrs Drew, is her aunt, and is taught at a day school by Mrs Stockley. Their neighbours are the Godolphins at Lanmere Abbey, who have a sad family history: their heir, Albert, was poisoned, and his fiancée, Matilda, died soon afterwards. Albert's sister, Mary, became their heiress. They refused to allow her to marry her lover because he would not take on their family name. The night before she was due to marry another man, she ran away and left a suicide note.

When Charlotte is thirteen, Sir Everard suddenly visits the castle. He says Cecilia is coming to bear their child there. Cecilia writes to Mrs Drew to say Charlotte must leave the castle. Sir Everard spends the night looking for mysterious papers in a blue and silver bag, which he concludes must have been stolen. He sees a veiled woman and thinks she is the ghost of 'Mary of Lanmere', so decides to shoot himself, but misses. Mrs Drew dies and Charlotte discovers she was not her aunt, and that Cecilia took her from her mother. Sir Everard overhears this information and tries to find out who Charlotte really is, to no avail. Charlotte goes to live with Mrs Stockley. Cecilia arrives at the castle in her husband's absence and gives birth to their daughter, Eleanor. Sir Everard has a nervous fever in London because he received the blue and silver bag in the post, which he interprets as a threat; he knows his own cruelty drove the bag's maker to her death.

Charlotte tells Mrs Godolphin about the mystery of her birth. Mr Godolphin thinks she resembles someone. Mr Alderton, the Godolphins' nephew and heir, and his daughter, Letitia, come to visit. Alderton is interested in Charlotte's origins because he is concerned about her interest with the Godolphins. Mrs Stockley goes to London, leaving Charlotte with the Godolphins.

Sir Everard comes to the castle with baby Eleanor but not Cecilia, who has gone to Europe with Colonel Templeton. Sir Everard sees Charlotte and thinks she is a ghost, and later realises he never found out from Cecilia who Charlotte really is. Mrs Stockley does not return; her friends receive a letter saying she is dead, so Charlotte remains with the Godolphins. Sir Everard hears Cecilia died in a riding accident but repented her infidelity:

she sent him a letter which someone sent her, with evidence that she could have used to blackmail him.

Mrs Matthews, a friend of Mrs Stockley, moves into her old cottage. Charlotte visits regularly and thinks she hears a groaning sound. Godolphin is dying. Charlotte sees a ghostly figure in his room which gives her nightmares. Charlotte is kidnapped by two men who stuff her into a coach.

The second volume opens with the story of Mary Godolphin. She was mutually in love with Sir Everard, and they married secretly after her parents refused to consent to the match. He grew to regret this decision and told her he doubted the legality of their marriage. She realised she was pregnant and ran away, making it look like she drowned herself. Sir Everard heard of her apparent death and married Cecilia. Now Sir Everard wants to marry Lady Elizabeth, but her younger sister scares him by asking if his castle is haunted.

Mary went to London and lived under the name Agnes: she is Charlotte's mother. She knew her marriage certificate was in a blue and silver bag and decided to leave Charlotte with the Martimels to see what happened. Agnes moved to Wales and disguised herself, taking on the name Mrs Stockley. She found the bag, which proved the marriage was legal. Charlotte is legally Everard's heir, not Eleanor. Agnes sent him the bag and wrote to Cecilia telling her that Everard was already married. She planned to reveal herself only if Sir Everard were to marry again, because Charlotte is safe with her grandparents, the Godolphins. Mary returned to Wales with Mrs Matthews and hid in her house. She went to see her father and was mistaken for a ghost by Charlotte.

After Charlotte is kidnapped, Mary goes to London to search for her and is tricked into becoming imprisoned herself. She eventually escapes and finds Charlotte. When she is sent back to Wales, Charlotte is kidnapped again, from the inn. The village curate goes to London and recognises Mrs Stockley/Mary without her disguise. She confesses she is Charlotte's mother. They go to Wales to look for Charlotte, suspecting that Alderton abducted her both times. Alderton is suspected of having poisoned Albert. Before Godolphin died, he ensured Alderton would have to wait six months to inherit to see if Mary and her child came forward. The curate tells Sir Everard that he cannot marry again because Mary is alive, and Charlotte is his child.

Alderton wanted his uncle's estate so he poisoned Albert, married a rich widow, and encouraged the Godolphins' harsh conduct to Mary in the hope she would die. He thought his plan had worked but he realised that Charlotte was Mary's child. He decides to imprison her in the castle, in the supposedly haunted turret. When he is about to stab Charlotte, he sees the ghost of Albert and runs away. Sir Everard learns that Eleanor died of measles. Hubert, son of a family friend, finds a message which Charlotte put out of the window, saying she is imprisoned. He takes Sir Everard to the castle. They find Charlotte and fight the three guards. Hubert is wounded. Alderton is imprisoned then kills himself. Hubert loves Charlotte but initially thinks she is not Sir Everard's legitimate daughter.

Mary is visiting her mother at the Abbey when Sir Everard and Charlotte arrive. They are shocked to see each other. Mary dies within three months, but not before writing to her husband to give her blessing to his marriage to Elizabeth. Charlotte is educated as an heiress. When her grandmother dies, she goes to live with her father and his wife. Hubert and Charlotte marry.

Sophia F. Ziegenhirt, Seabrook Village and its Inhabitants, Or, the History of Mrs Worthy and Her Family; Founded on Facts

Mrs Worthy is an officer's widow, left with only her jointure after her estate descends on distant relations following her son's death. She decides to educate her four daughters, Caroline, Catherine, Louisa, and Constantia (aged fifteen, fourteen, eight and six) away from London. Mrs Worthy's sister-in-law Mrs Seabrook lets them move into her estate, Seabrook house in Dorset, which Caroline will inherit from her. Mrs Worthy embarks on her system of education for her daughters, taking a teacher called Miss Molesworth to Seabrook.

The previous tenant of Seabrook house did not manage it well: the gardens were appropriated for vegetables, and he did not charitably aid the village. Mrs Seabrook attempted to ensure the poor received charity by giving farmer Willis' wife £10 a year to distribute, but it was not allocated according to real need. Mrs Worthy works to redress this. She and her elder daughters investigate and find extreme poverty. Some of the households live in extreme squalor, including an alcoholic woman who neglects her children, and men who threaten and abuse their wives. Other households live more respectably, despite their poverty, including the families of Giles Jenkins, a labourer, Sarah, an old woman who provides for her grandchildren by spinning, and Richard Wynyard, a blind old man whose household all craft items to sell to their neighbours. Mrs Worthy determines to help those who are willing to be industrious. She distributes clothing and food and arranges repairs for the cottages. She orders the villagers to come to her house in their new clothes for a breakfast, where she tells them she will help those who reform, but, if anyone fails to change, she will not help them. Mrs Worthy teaches her daughters religious and charitable values and decides to establish a school for the village children for religious instruction. She employs Sarah as the teacher.

The Worthys receive a series of visits. The first is from Mrs and Miss Mordaunt. They have just returned from Jamaica, where they owned plantations, due to Mr Mordaunt's death. Miss Mordaunt is spoiled and capricious, partially because she has had slaves. Later, Miss Molesworth introduces the Worthys to a family who live in a hovel by the sea: a fisherman, his wife, and several children. They lost their eldest sons during the storm on New Year's Day 1779. Mrs Worthy gives them enough to make them comfortable. When Mrs Worthy has lived in Seabrook for two years, her neighbours have improved significantly. They then receive a visit from Mrs and Miss Berkeley, who are on their way to Weymouth for Miss Berkeley's health. They are contrasted positively with the Mordaunts. Mrs Worthy's relation Mr Keith then visits and is inspired to open a school in his own neighbourhood.

Mrs Seabrook herself visits and is impressed with the improvements in the village. As she is going to marry her first love who has returned from India and is rich enough that she does not need her estate, she gives it to Caroline immediately. They continue to do charitable works. Their next visit is from Sir Everard Melmoth, his wife Lady Horatia, and daughter Harriet, who spend three weeks with them on their way to South Wales.

Mrs Worthy takes her two eldest daughters to London for three weeks because they need to settle the estate. Meanwhile, Miss Molesworth gets a letter from her parents, asking her to join them in America because their fortunes have improved: the man who persecuted them for protecting his slaves has relented and left them his estates. The Worthys enjoy visiting Vauxhall but find London disagreeable in general. When they return, Mrs Worthy has enough money (through Caroline) to repair many of the cottages and build three more, as

well as create a piece of common land for their tenants. One of the cottages is for Mr Lacy, an apothecary who was imprisoned after his business partner abandoned him with debts he had not contracted. Mrs Worthy establishes him as the Seabrook apothecary and pays him a stipend, with the help of the local rector. Mrs Worthy arranges employment for the village children as they grow up, including taking Miss Lacy as a replacement for Miss Molesworth.

They take Miss Molesworth to Bristol to say goodbye before she sails for America and return via Bath and some country seats on route. Mrs Worthy prepares to leave Seabrook, for some months, having banished distress. The reader is reminded to act similarly if they can.

Stories of Seabrook residents are interspersed throughout the narrative. These are mostly in the voices of their subjects, as if they were written by them and read aloud by the Worthys for moral instruction. The first is the story of their neighbours Mrs Collett and Mrs Marlow: after their modest farming family received an unexpected inheritance, Mrs Collett's brother married Miss Graspall, an unpleasant woman who previously looked down on them, which leads them to regret having more money. The moral of the story is that riches are not always conducive to happiness. The next story is that of Richard Wynyard: his father was the proprietor of a corn-mill, but he was persuaded by a scheming brother-in-law to lend him money which he lost in the ruin of the South-Sea scheme. Then when the mill was destroyed by a fire, he had no savings. Richard went to work for a farmer, and eventually married his daughter. He lost his sight in one eye after an illness, then, after his wife died, he lost his remaining sight in an accident. The moral of the story is to be firm, as Richard's father ought not to have lent the money. Next is the story of Mary Wilson, the fisherman's wife from the beach hovel. She was brought up on a farm in the Isle of Wight, overindulged by her father. Their housekeeper entangled her into marrying her brother, for her money. However, her father sent them away with £50 each and disinherited her. However, the Wilsons do love each other, and he does not reproach her.

Sophia F. Zienghert, *The Orphan of Tintern Abbey*

Mr Belmont, who wants to avoid his friends and hide his rank due to a secret sadness, moves into Tintern Lodge with his sister, because he admired the area years ago. The Belmonts become friends with their Welsh gentry neighbours. Belmont helps Mrs Morgan, whose houseguest Mr Mellincourt has died, leaving his young daughter Paulina. It seems they were rich people from France; their possessions include distinctive jewellery. Belmont takes Paulina in and unsuccessfully searches for her family.

They meet the Glendowers, an ancient and charitable Welsh family. At a ball to celebrate Owen Glendower's coming of age, Paulina, now fourteen, meets many of her neighbours. The Glenmurray family are unable to come. At a masked ball, Miss Glendower elopes with her brother's tutor, who was hiding his good connections and is actually Lord Montgomery's younger brother.

The Belmonts visit Bristol, where a man appears to recognise Paulina at the theatre. They then go to Belmont's northern estate, Eglinton castle. A servant observes that Paulina looks like a painting at nearby Glenmurray Abbey, but Belmont says she cannot be related to that family because she was born abroad. Paulina and Miss Belmont visit the Abbey, although the family are away, and see the painting. They meet Dormer, who is recovering from a broken leg there.

They return to the Lodge. Belmont writes to his friend Sir Clifford explaining his life story, which he also allows his sister to read. Belmont is secretly Lord Eglinton. He married his friend Lord Merton's sister Almeria, whose mother was Catholic. They were initially happily married and enjoyed their estate near Eastbourne. Their son was snatched and disappeared. They returned to Glenmurray Abbey (her family home), and their daughter died of fever. They spent the summer at Eglinton castle. Almeria gave birth to another daughter, Mary, then became withdrawn. Her aunt and her confessor persuaded her to convert to Catholicism, so she fled to a French convent with her baby. Belmont could not find her. This was when he retired into Wales. Lord Merton died suddenly, so his son inherited and became Earl of Glenmurray.

Belmont plans to buy a London house and use his title to help Paulina get married. Owen loves Paulina but Belmont says she is too young at sixteen, and she refuses him. They visit the Montgomerys; Lord Montgomery and his wife are visiting from Scotland. Sir Clifford says he has met Dormer, the stranger from the Abbey, who was travelling to Scotland from Bengal. He has learned that the Dormers are not his birth parents, so he has no right to his estates. He went to ask an old servant and she explained that Dormer's real child drowned, so her sister snatched him at Eastbourne to swap. They realise that he may be Belmont's son.

At the Priory, Belmont meets the Earl of Glenmurray, who does not realise Belmont is his uncle. Glenmurray's son, Lord Merton, has been seduced by a woman he met while travelling. Glenmurray went to Ireland to tell him that the woman had left him for a French count so he could not marry her. This is why they were not at the ball in Wales. Dormer arrives and Belmont declares him his son, as proved by documents and clothes. Belmont decides to go by the name of Lord Eglinton and his son is known as Belmont from now on. The Glenmurrays realise their relation to the family because of the title. Their daughter, Lady Mary Merton, becomes Paulina's friend.

Paulina finds a ring in the Abbey ruins with a miniature that resembles her, inscribed to Maria. She realises that Maria also looks like Almeria, so she could be related to her. Lord Eglinton suspects Paulina could be his granddaughter. They go north to Eglinton castle. Lord Merton falls in love with Paulina, but their families decide they need to prove their characters during the temptations of a London winter. Belmont falls in love with Lady Mary Merton.

They all go to London. Paulina is surprised by the rudeness of strangers. She wants to go home to Wales. They go to fashionable parties. Lady Mary tells her father she needs to know Belmont better before she could marry him. Eglinton tells Paulina of Lord Merton's proposals. She says that she will marry Lord Merton when they leave town unless her parents emerge and object. Lord and Lady Montgomery decide to send their daughters Madelaine and Jane to their aunt and uncle in London. They are both beautiful and become friends with Paulina and Mary. At a masquerade, Mary is abducted by a man pretending to be Belmont, who then leaves her in a village, saying he thought he was taking Paulina, for a bet.

At the opera, Sir Herbert shouts when he sees Paulina's locket. He tells Eglinton he loved Paulina's mother Maria, but she married his friend the Duke de Mellincourt. Maria had a baby daughter, then was guillotined for loyalty to Marie Antoinette. Mellincourt escaped with Paulina and went to America for three years. He then brought Paulina to England to try and find Herbert, but he died in Wales. Eglinton now knows Maria (born Mary) was his daughter and Paulina is her daughter. Herbert says Lady Eglinton (Almeria) is alive and coming to England. They are all happy and wait for her to come. The couples delay their

engagements to wait. Lady Eglinton arrives and asks forgiveness. They decide to go to Tintern Lodge together before going to Eglinton castle via London for the weddings. Paulina provides for Mrs Morgan's family in Wales. Lord Merton and Paulina, Belmont and Mary, and Herbert and Jane get married at Eglinton, and Madelaine marries Lord Maitland in Wales on the same day. Herbert buys an estate nearer to Eglinton than his Leicestershire estate. They are happy and the Eglintons live to see their grandchildren.

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