

**CONSTRUCTING LOCALITY:
ROOTING NINETEENTH-CENTURY
BRITISH NOVELS IN GARDEN CULTURE**

by

Samantha R. Nystrom

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

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ABSTRACT

Constructing Locality: Rooting Nineteenth-Century British Novels in Garden Culture uncovers how the garden influenced the nineteenth-century novelistic imagination. The literary garden was an oft-used tool for novelists to consider how the century's ecological and social alterations transformed the identities of Britons' living amongst such change, with Wells' *The Time Machine*, for instance, theorizing the long-term biological effects of pollution and climate engineering schemes. Building on Franco Moretti and Patrick Parrinder's arguments that the novel was essential to the development of nations, along with historian Anne Helmreich's argument that the garden was an essential component to the formation of nineteenth-century English identity, this project contributes to novel studies and environmental humanities by focusing on novelistic gardens like Wells'.

Constructing Locality offers two contributions to these conversations. First, it argues that the garden was one of the most effective tools for novelists to consider the formation of national identities, adding to the discourse linking the novel to the rise of the modern nation state. It does so through its second contribution: expanding literary approaches of the garden past its focus on symbolism to the garden's ecological *and* material components, reading novels' representations of gardens alongside the physical gardens, catalogues, periodicals, and designs that inspired them. Specifically, it shows how the garden's different physical arrangements enable characters to

construct and engage with different forms of place—bounded spaces that fix identity at both personal and national levels.

This project is divided into five chapters that consider how characters engage with their sense of place—*escorting* in Burney and Eliot, *improving* in Austen and Oliphant, *historicizing* in Scott, *uprooting* in Edgeworth and Trollope, and *glassing over* in Wells. In these readings, this project considers the different ways novelistic gardens establish place and, with that, shape identities; such readings reveal how characters either create their own sense of place or the place of others to ensure their fellow characters adhere to a prescribed gender, national, or class identity. Ultimately, *Constructing Locality* reveals the crucial role gardens played in establishing the novel as one of the most pervasive and influential literary forms of the nineteenth century.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION: TO GARDEN

Much of Charles Dickens' 1853 *Bleak House* centers upon its heroine, Esther Summerson, and her quest for self-knowledge. Readers follow Esther as she strives to develop her sense of self and her sense of place. By serving as Bleak House's housekeeper—cultivating its physical sites, such as the garden, and the emotional needs of its residents—and learning her parentage, Esther's narrative centers on her developing a stronger sense of who she is and where she belongs. From these considerations, Esther decides to stay at Bleak House, transforming from housekeeper to wife by marrying John Jarndyce, her guardian-turned-fiancé. Yet, this is not her future. Answering Jarndyce's summons, Esther travels to Yorkshire to give housekeeping advice to Allan Woodcourt, her former love interest. Esther and Jarndyce start their tour of Woodcourt's new house in the garden. Opening the garden gate, "the first thing" Esther saw "was, that the beds and flowers were all laid out according to the manner of my beds and flowers at home" (Dickens 888). Amazed, Esther finds that Jarndyce has remade her garden in this new location. With a "sweet west wind"¹ blowing, Esther and Jarndyce explore the "pretty little orchard," "humming mill," "meadow," and cottage, which she discovers is filled with her "little tastes and fancies . . . [her] odd ways everywhere" (888-889). Esther finds her place in

¹ The "sweet west wind" is opposite to the foul "east wind" plaguing Jarndyce throughout the novel.

Yorkshire. Adding to this familiarity is the house's name; it is christened Bleak House after Jarndyce's property. It is a lovely afternoon, only (temporarily) disturbed by Esther's fear that Woodcourt will be saddened living amongst so many reminders of her. Soon, however, Esther's fear evaporates. She learns that she will wed Woodcourt—not Jarndyce—and she shall live in this new Bleak House. Marrying her true love and living in a house already made to feel like home, Esther begins the next chapter of her life with Woodcourt.

I see no promise of a peaceful future. Esther encounters herself—her plans, her designs, her flowers, her garden—in an unfamiliar location. Comprised of Esther's designs from St. Albans, this Yorkshire property is “strangely familiar and familiarly strange” (Morton, *Ecological Thought* 50). By making this Yorkshire garden a replica, Jarndyce prevents Esther from growing into this new location. Esther's identity is restricted. Rather than cultivating this new location into *her* place, Esther finds her sense of place, her sense of home, already developed for her. Caroline Levine argues that Jarndyce replacing “himself and his house with another husband and another house” is “one of the most unsettling moments in the text,” a text filled with other unsettling moments stemming from tragic deaths, inherited family trauma, and a deadly bureaucratic system (“Narrative Networks” 521). I agree with Levine and attribute such discomfort to Jarndyce's assumption that Esther is easily placed into either situation: Jarndyce's Bleak House in St. Albans or Woodcourt's Bleak House in Yorkshire. What disturbs me is that Esther and her garden are transplantable and controlled by those other than herself. She is expected to accommodate this transplantation, accept others arranging her life, and find comfort in this forced familiarity.

Much of *Bleak House* centers around Esther. As one of the novel's narrators, readers see her search for, and grow into, her identity. In the close of the novel—when Esther marries and lives with the man she loves—Dickens mobilizes the literary garden to illuminate the interlocking relationship between identity formation, agency, and gender politics. While Esther may seem happy in her final situation, a Mortonian sense of the uncanny lingers in this Yorkshire garden.² This new chapter in her life is constantly engaging with the old. Rather than Esther establishing her own, new identity—she is marrying, moving, and assuming new daily roles—Esther continues to wear the identity of her old life. Esther's identity has been decided by the men around her and they choose that she remains the same.³ The Yorkshire garden serves as a physical and metaphoric reminder that Esther must continue to act as her previous self in her new life. In the novel's close, readers see the final iteration of Esther's identity and it is one grounded by a forced sameness. Dickens' use of the garden, this human-designed locale, to comment upon identity formation is not unique. Through their narration of gardens' development, maintenance, and/or reconstruction, novels like *Bleak House* often consider how identities are made, preserved, and recreated.

Constructing Locality argues that nineteenth-century British novels took root in the garden. The garden—a finite, semi-public, semi-private space built and maintained through a network of human and non-human beings and often, but not

² See Morton's *The Ecological Thought* (50-54) and *Dark Ecology* (5-11, 65) for more on the uncanny.

³ Woodcourt's various names for Esther reaffirm this sense of a stunted identity. In Yorkshire "Esther has all her old names . . . and there is no decisive emergence of her own name from among them. On the last half-page of the novel, Allan calls her 'My precious little woman,' 'my dear,' 'my busy bee,' and 'my dear Dame Durden'—and never 'Esther' and, as I would add, never Mrs. Woodcourt" (Peltason 689).

always, connected to domestic spaces⁴—is continually present in nineteenth-century novels. I uncover how the garden influences the novelistic imagination, directing the narrative structure of many nineteenth-century novels. Specifically, I show that the garden directly shapes the way novels depict identities, thereby influencing how plots and characters develop. Drawing upon Caroline Levine’s conceptualization of form “to include patterns of sociopolitical experience” that “shape what it is possible to think, say, and do in a given context,” this project interrogates how the garden operates as a form shaping how novels narrate identity creation (*Forms* 2, 5). Interrogating novelistic identity formation is critical in literary studies; as scholars ranging from Ian Watt, Nancy Armstrong, Catherine Gallagher, Elizabeth Langland, and Patrick Parrinder have shown, identity formulation and articulation is a common—if not defining—trait of novels. That said, this project is not interested in interrogating the evolution of the novel’s aesthetic form. Rather, it interrogates how and why the garden is consistently mobilized in nineteenth-century novels to theorize identity formation from personal to imperial levels.

Gardens help shape and order how novels depict and create identities. From an individual woman’s identity in *Adam Bede* to a species-level identity in *The Time Machine*, I posit that the garden became a powerful and oft-used form for novelists to interrogate how identity formation operates. English troops’ destruction and reconstruction of a Scottish estate garden into something more picturesque in Scott’s *Waverley*, for instance, showcases how national identity can be constructed at ecological and architectural levels. During the nineteenth century, gardens were useful

⁴ See John Dixon Hunt’s definition of the garden: “a finite space formally marked off and designed with often a concentration of effects” (*Afterlife* 8).

to consider identity formation, as they assumed many shapes⁵ that engaged with a plethora of sociopolitical concerns. From anxieties over domestic plant use (which asked questions about how national identity alters in an ever-growing globalized world) to the popularization of the greenhouse garden (which directly brought forth considerations of industrialization, global warming, imperialism, and scientific progress), the garden could help narrativize identity concerns at a variety of levels. By widening scholarly approaches to the garden—recognizing the plurality of appearances it could take in the nineteenth century—critics see just how frequently novels mobilize gardens to comment upon identity formation. The working estate garden, as depicted in Austen’s *Emma*, placed landowners like Mr. Knightley within an Edenic and nationalistic framework, while greenhouse gardeners, as theorized by H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine*, placed themselves in dialogue with industrialization and colonial politics. When expanding our approach towards gardens, we do not find sites of peaceful refuge, as the Garden of Eden promised. Instead, we find that nineteenth-century literary gardens are often sites of disturbance, where identities of characters, communities, and nations are contested and remade.

Nineteenth-century novels using the garden to articulate identity is unsurprising—if not yet fully recognized—for two reasons. First, the novel and garden both came to cultural prominence during the formation of the modern nation-state and national identity. As Franco Moretti argues, the novel is “the only symbolic form that could represent [the nation-state]” making it “an essential component of our modern culture” (*Atlas* 17). Novel and nation are intrinsically tied, for it is through the novel

⁵ See Elliott’s *Victorian Gardens* for a detailed history of the garden’s evolution in the nineteenth century.

that national identity is articulated and made visible. At the same time, people began recognizing a landscape's power to build national identity. As Vittoria Di Palma observes,

[i]t is precisely at this moment [1707 Act of Union] that landscape is accorded an unprecedented role in the formation of individual and national identity: the character of a nation and its citizens was understood as being intimately related to its landscapes. (4)

The physical act of shaping land was recognized as shaping the identity of its owners and/or users. By the start of the nineteenth century, the garden became the focal point of such identity-shaping landscapes.⁶ With the explosion of professional and amateur gardening, suburbanization, and the rise of both the domestic and global horticultural trade, gardens became common throughout British society, articulating personal identities at all social levels.

Second, gardens are exemplar locations of placemaking. As Siobhan Carroll defines it, "place is a form of bounded space ascribed the power to anchor identity" (11). I contend that gardens make the work of binding and anchoring identities visible, for the garden is a bounded space that allows gardeners to intentionally shape their identity through the shaping of their garden. As Stephen Bending puts it, "the shaping of physical space is shaping also of identity, and . . . gardens are microcosms [of this act], speaking of and reacting to a world beyond themselves" (1). When developing her garden in St. Albans, Esther performed such placemaking. Through her garden, she made an outward representation of herself for all to see. Gardens are outward representations of the self that are simultaneously public and private. When building

⁶ See Helmreich (1-6).

and shaping their gardens, gardeners engage with larger sociopolitical issues. Jarndyce's replication of Esther's garden places her identity within the larger conventions of the Victorian "angel of the house," for instance. Esther designs her garden when serving as Bleak House's house manager. Jarndyce collapses the "loving, good, and true" traits of the wifely angel with Esther's household management, so her "virtue [as a wife] subtly becomes defined for us as managerial skill," when replicating her garden in Woodcourt's house (Langland 81). While here the novel uses Esther's garden to engage with larger gender concerns, this was only one of the many sociopolitical concerns influencing identity formation that nineteenth-century novelists considered through the garden.

This project focuses on placemaking in the nineteenth-century novelistic garden. In doing this work I recognize the sociopolitical problems connected with place. The very fixity of place has led critics to see place as ignoring the complexities and interconnections of locations; in its most sinister form, a focus on this fixity can make place become associated with essentialism and radical nationalism.⁷ I contend that a consideration of placemaking is crucial, as a focus on the local, on the immediate sense of place, enables critics to see the larger, nineteenth-century political issues of identity formation at work in the period's novels. I see place not as fixed or unchanging, but as a site of complexity. The garden serves as a focal point of this complexity, for in the literary garden readers see, to use Timothy Morton's phrasing, "[s]o many intersecting places, [operating at] so many scales" (*Dark Ecology* 10). There are often multiple identities and socio-political issues being organized,

⁷ Martin Heidegger's association with the Nazi Party further engenders such critiques.

articulated, and reshaped in the garden. By examining this concentrated site of placemaking we can see the various scales of identity being formulated.

Constructing Locality offers two interventions. First, it illuminates how nineteenth-century novels often mobilize the garden to present and formulate identities. It does so through its second intervention: expanding the scope of garden-based literature studies to the literary garden's material components by emphasizing its variances in design, appearance, and construction. By doing so, it shows the garden's ability to bind so many various kinds of identities. At the heart of these two interventions is an investment in how surroundings influence identity. To address this singular inquiry—how settings shape identity—I draw from a variety of fields, such as material culture studies, genre studies, spatial theory, and garden history. Yet, the two main conversations I draw on and contribute to are novel studies' interrogation of how (and if) the novel presents individualism and the relationship between literature and the environment.

Gardens in the Novelistic Imagination

While there was not a singular novelistic aesthetic form, novelistic sub-genre, or type of garden in the nineteenth century, the garden was inherent to the formation and development of nineteenth-century novels. Scholars considering the novel have often found a home in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for it is during these two periods that the novel rose to cultural prominence. By the end of the nineteenth century, the novel had assumed many aesthetic forms (from the epistolary to serial to three-volume) and many sub-genres⁸ (from the regional to historical to provincial to

⁸ See Moretti, *Graphs* 1.

speculative) continually evolving in shape and style. Such shifts have spurred excellent critical work on the interconnected relationship between the reading public and the novel's aesthetic form.⁹ That said, this project is neither interested in how the novel's aesthetic form developed nor its direct relationship with the reading public. Rather than focus on the rise of the novel, I interrogate the novel's ability to narrate identity construction.

Constructing Locality posits that the garden is one of the most effective forms for novelists to consider the formation (or lack thereof) of individual identities. Depicting individualism has been at the heart of the novel's definition for decades. As Jesse Oak Taylor observes, "[a]ccounts of the novel going back to Ian Watt have emphasized that the novel is the genre of individuation and the *cultivation* of the modern subject" ("The Novel after Nature" 113; emphasis added). Scholars have consistently marked the growth and cultivation of an individual as a primary affordance of the novel: of what it is "*capable* of doing" (C. Levine, *Forms* 6). Such horticultural language is not coincidental, for both the garden and novel are invested in identity formation. By drawing upon the garden, nineteenth-century novels elucidate the mechanizations behind identity-making.

Gender, class, and nationalism have been at the heart of this focus on individualism. Scholars like Nancy Armstrong suggest that eighteenth- and

⁹ For some examples, see: Joseph Rezek's *London and the Making of Provincial Literature*, which argues that the metropolitan readership directed how novelist from the Celtic Fringe shaped their novels' form (2); Franco Moretti's *Graphs, Maps, and Trees*, which moves from a singular rise to rises of the novel (9); Taylor's "The Novel after Nature," which notes that "[t]he 'rise of the novel' dovetails with industrialization. . . an alignment that . . . is not simply coincidental, but constitutive" (110).

nineteenth-century novels helped shape a “new female ideal” and the middle class (8).¹⁰ Some, like Michael McKeon, have argued against this emphasis on the individual—McKeon posits that the novel came about because other literary forms couldn’t grapple with ideological changes towards truth and virtue—while others, like Catherine Gallagher, have complicated critical understandings of “individualization.” Gallagher suggests that it is the “nonreferentiality” of a character’s proper name “that could be seen as a greater referentially” which grounds the novel (342). Rather than hiding its fictionality behind the pretense of real characters, the novel’s use of named, fictional characters enables readers to connect such people to their larger world.¹¹ When interrogating individualism more broadly, Patrick Parrinder, Franco Moretti, and Benedict Anderson all link the novel to the emergence of the individual nation state and their nationalistic identities.¹² With different cultural formations, like the rise of the modern nation, societies reconceptualize their own identity. Scholars have tracked how the novel articulates, represents, and helps formulate these new social formulations and their resulting identities.

Critical attention to placemaking is essential when considering how novels make such identities visible. In the past few decades there has been a slight turn to consider how novels mobilize place. Ruth Livesey and John Plotz have grounded their

¹⁰ See N. Armstrong (3-27).

¹¹ John Plotz affirms such a theory in his *Portable Property*, observing that *Lorna Doone*’s “universality depends upon the novel’s efforts to produce a sense of inimitable locality” and, more broadly, that the “seemin[g] disavow[al of] mobility altogether” is what makes a novel culturally “portable” (95, 93).

¹² See Parrinder’s *Nation & Novel* (1-8), Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (26-30), and Moretti’s *Atlas of the European Novel* (17).

consideration of nineteenth-century novels in these texts' engagement with placemaking. Livesey, for instance, argues that the novel theorizes the emergent nation by exploring "portable attachments to locality," which show that the "rooting of an idea of a nation . . . grows out of locality" (7, 12). Livesey specifically focuses on historical fiction, noting that a turn to the recent past enables readers to have a "collective experience of a place and time" (3). Novels make place visible so readers can collectively engage with the identities such places evoke. John Plotz considers how Victorian novels "rend[er] a place palpable," specifically considering how they make "abstract concepts like Englishness, race, or family heritage" visible through objects (*Portable* 5, 46). I contribute to this critical line of inquiry, considering how the novel draws upon the garden to make such placemaking of personal, communal, and national identities visible.

By considering placemaking, I also follow in the critical line of scholars who emphasize the material and organic goods comprising a narrative's background. As Elizabeth Chang argues, "[t]he things surrounding novel characters. . . the plants they harvest or admire and the gardens and woods those plants are grown in . . . exist in the narrative and give shape to what narrative can be" (5). Within these fictional narrations, it is the stuff comprising the background that directly influences people, cultures, and modes of living. Attention to material goods, as Cynthia Wall's *The Prose of Things* stresses, plants, as Chang's *Novel Cultivations* emphasizes, and gardens, as I focus on, illuminate what path a novelistic narrative can take. In other words, a focus on the background reveals what a narrative can do with its characters and the identities they assume. From the epistolary novels of the 1770s to the science fiction of the 1890s, I continually find the garden at sites of narrative prominence. As

a site where the identities of individual characters and communities are commonly formed, tested, rewritten, and destroyed, gardens create a sense of place. This placemaking is integral to nineteenth-century novelistic narratives, as the garden enables such works to address issues of individualism and identity, issues critical in literary studies' interrogation of novels.

Literature and the Environment

I see two central, interlocking questions at the heart of the literary sub-discipline that examines "literature and the environment": what is the ever-allusively defined "nature," and how are people influenced by and inseparable from their environment. Scholars turn to literature to address such questions, as it is able to narrativize our experiences with the environment in ways that go undocumented in historical records. It is the continued narration of Bessy's cough in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* (1854) that enables readers to feel the pain of those living and working in a polluted environment. In historical records Bessy would simply be a number in the reported death count, but in a novel Gaskell can showcase the daily, consistent trauma that arises from living within this newly emergent industrial modernity. Through the fictional experience of others, literature enables readers to address questions about where they can find nature and how it influences them.

That said, nature is difficult to define. While one can point to a Brownian deer park, with its swaths of rolling hills and well-placed trees and say, "that is nature," one can also point to the soot-covered terrariums in London and say, "that is nature." As Timothy Morton observes, "[n]ature only looks natural because . . . we keep our distance, frame it, size it up" (*Ecological Thought* 85). When we get close to nature, we see it for what it really is: a fantasy, a mirage invented by us to elide the socio-

political work we've been doing in these "natural" spaces. The deer park, constructed by landscape architects to ensure a good view from a drawing room, is implicated in agrarian capitalism—where capitalism's "abstracted economic drives, its fundamental priorities in social relations, its criteria of growth and of profit and loss, have over several centuries altered our country and created our kinds of city" (Williams 302). The terrarium creates its own ecosystem separate from the polluted world surrounding it, yet it is so overtly a human construction that its naturalness is immediately questioned. Which, in fact, is nature? As Jesse Oak Taylor has usefully observed, "what we call nature is replete with exceptions, always eluding definition" with no "identifiable, quantifiable, baseline entity called 'nature'" (*Sky* 5). Nature is a human construction, twisting and turning in meaning and location. Socio-political meanings hide in these twists and turns. As Alan Bewell conceptualizes it, "[n]ature. . . is the favorite hiding place of the political, the social, and the ideological" (11). Literary critics working in the sub-discipline of "literature and the environment" both consider how literature make nature visible and illuminate what is hidden there.

The garden is a productive place to consider how people construct nature. The presence of seed and plant catalogues, design manuals, gardening magazines, and flower shows continually reinforce the concept that gardens are constructed places. Such constructions range from the Brownian landscapes obscuring human influence to the terrariums immediately announcing their assembly. Yet, both these gardens are made from concentrated human efforts. Gardens are overt articulations of nature that enable critics to consider the formation and use of nature.

When finding these moments of nature's articulation, scholars also often see how nature influences those constructing it. Whether looking at one's relationship to

their local community or to the world at large, how people interact with and are influenced by their environment grounds environmental humanities. In her *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet*, Ursula K. Heise argues that “the question of what cultural and political role attachments to different kinds of space might play, from the local and regional level all the way to the national and global, has assumed central importance” in environmentalist thought (4-5). The scale and scope of such an approach—to focus on local or global, for instance—has oscillated in recent decades. With the rise of globalism and the “[c]ritiques of the ‘essentialism’ of local identities and of national belongings,” scholars in the 80s and 90s switched critical focus from the local to the global (Heise 6). Place’s sense of fixity proved limiting and ideologically problematic. Yet, environmentalism has recently re-established a focus on place.¹³ By recognizing that “[p]lace doesn’t stay still, but bends and twists,” some scholars are turning back to place, finding fruitful engagement in the fact that “[t]he local is far from the totally known or knowable,” (Morton, *Dark Ecology* 11). Rather than fixed and stable, places are recognized as sites of change, of questions, of contestations.

In recent years studies of literature and the environment have found a home in nineteenth-century studies.¹⁴ Such a focus has arisen, in large part, due to the

¹³ Such re-theorization of place was at work in the NAVSA 2018 panel, “The Challenge of Victorian Ecocriticism,” where Sukanya Banerjee fostered an excellent discussion on place’s role in 21st century scholarship.

¹⁴ Special issues of peer-reviewed journals, like *Victorian Studies*’ 2018 “Climate Change and Victorian Studies” and *Victorian Literature and Culture*’s 2020 “Open Ecologies,” along with INCS’ 2020 “Green” conference theme, highlight the current prominence of “literature and the environment” in nineteenth-century studies.

Anthropocene, the geological period when humans are the driving climatal force. With climate change being one of the most crucial concerns of the twenty-first century, scholars have turned back to the century often attributed with the beginning of this geological period. Embodied by works like Allen MacDuffie's *Victorian Literature, Energy, and the Ecological Imagination* and Jesse Oak Taylor's *The Sky of Our Manufacturer*, the environment serves as an umbrella for scholars to interrogate the interlocking relationship between industrialization, globalization, population, and the environment. Literature—especially literature of the nineteenth century—serves as a nexus where such issues arise and come together.

The literary garden is a fruitful way for literary scholars to consider these questions about nature's definition and the environment's influence upon people. Such a focus on the garden and gardening is not a presentist elevation of an obscure place and pastime, but a recognition of how strongly fascinated nineteenth-century Britain and Ireland were with the garden. The Royal Horticultural Society was established in 1804¹⁵ and such an event encapsulates the prominence of gardening throughout this century. With the complete publication of Erasmus Darwin's 1792 *The Botanic Garden* and the resulting popularization of Carl Linnaeus' work, botany soon became a prevalent pastime. Gardening wasn't just a pastime for amateurs, however, as the nineteenth century saw the professionalization of the horticultural industry. The rise and popularization of horticultural literature helped elevate this profession; J.C. Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine* (1820s-1840s) was a pioneering work intent on professionalizing and elevating the quality of gardening. Such horticultural literature

¹⁵ The RHS was initially called the Horticultural Society of London.

was not just geared towards professionals, as amateur gardening texts, like Jane Loudon's *Gardening for Ladies* (1843), were frequently published and read. Such horticultural knowledge was necessary, for gardens became a regular feature of suburban homes.¹⁶ For those without access to front or back gardens, houseplants were a common alternative. Nathaniel Ward's Wardian case—a small terrarium invented in the 1830s—soon became a staple of the Victorian home, enabling anyone with enough means to have a miniature garden. The 1850s saw *Pteridomania*, the fern craze, grip the nation. To show off such prized flora and fauna, nurseries, public gardens, and horticultural societies began regularly hosting professional and amateur flower shows.¹⁷ Gardens and gardening, both as a concept and as a practice, infused itself into every day, nineteenth-century life.

Despite the fact that this interest in gardens and gardening gripped much of nineteenth-century society, gardens have often been omitted from such productive conversations in literature and the environment. Rather, literary garden scholarship has often found a home in gender studies. Since the start of the nineteenth century, when horticulture became one of the few acceptable disciplines for women to participate in, there has been a firm link between women and floriculture. Literature reflected and helped shape such connections, as women soon became symbolically linked with the plants they studied, painted, and grew. Literary scholarship has made much out of this

¹⁶ “As the spread, first of suburban villas and then of urban housing, swelled the confines of London, creating large numbers of new gardens, large and small, so the nursery trade expanded also” (Elliott, “Commercial” 168).

¹⁷ “In 1821 . . . forty-two auricula and polyanthus shows, twenty-one tulip shows, five ranunculus shows, and sixty-nine carnation and pink shows were held in England and Scotland” (Elliott, “Flower Shows” 171).

connection. Amy King's *Bloom* is an exemplar study of the association between women and plants, while Barbara Gates' *Kindred Nature*, Judith Page and Elise Smith's *Women, Literature, and the Domesticated Landscape*, and Stephen Bending's *Green Retreats* have helped reveal the depth of engagement women had with their garden, from their nature-based artwork to their physical labor in the garden. These excellent and engaging works have firmly established the garden as a highly significant factor when discussing gender formation in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain, a prominent area of focus for literary studies. Despite its cultural significance in the period and in literary studies more broadly, the garden has often been absent from literary criticism considering nineteenth-century literature and its engagement with the environment.

Rather, plant studies has become one of the most prominent ways literary scholars consider nineteenth-century horticulture's socio-political depths. Rising in critical interest alongside post-humanism and animal studies, plant studies is a sub-discipline in literature and the environment studies, expanding critical literary considerations of horticultural works. Elizabeth Chang's *Novel Cultivations* and Mary Bowden's work on plant plots position plants as narrative actors driving nineteenth-century texts. Lynn Voskuil suggests that the orchid is one of the roots of post-humanism studies. Lindsay Wells shows how Wardian cases and the plants that filled them forced Victorians to confront their own pollution.¹⁸ All this work has expertly widened our understanding of horticulture's influence during this period. In doing this

¹⁸ See Bowden's "H.G. Wells's Plant Plots" (605-606); Voskuil's "Victorian Orchids and the Forms of Ecological Society" (27-31); Wells's "Close Encounters of the Wardian Kind" (635, 647).

work, however, plant scholars have generally turned away from the garden to focus on plants themselves.

My project incorporates the garden more firmly into contemporary literature and the environment studies. The garden is more than its plants, meaning that plant studies and garden studies should not be conflated as the same critical conversation. While plants are almost always significant components of the garden, so too are its walls, water features, landscape features, benches, chairs, faux ruins, animals, and climate. For instance, in the 1820s the Earl of Shrewsbury incorporated a pond atop a hill, a faux Stonehenge, Grecian temples, gothic towers, shell cottages, dead trees, and weeding women adorned in Swiss dress into his estate garden.¹⁹ To only focus on the plants would erase the complexity of this location. All components of the garden serve as potent avenues of study when considering the socio-political implications of this horticultural space and how it constructs identities. Novels reflect such an interest, as faux ruins, intricate pathways, ornamental features, and water features are common components of nineteenth-century novels' backgrounds. Drawing from the foundational work of those like Bending, Page, and Smith, while also engaging with the horticultural conversations forwarded by plant studies scholars, I work to show the literary garden in its totality: structurally and ideologically.

Chapter Breakdowns

I am interested in how literary gardens engage with and shape identity and place within nineteenth-century novels. Accordingly, this project is most interested in how gardens were *used*: how people engaged with gardens to create a sense of place at

¹⁹ For a full detail of this garden, see Loudon "General Results" 391-393.

personal, communal, national, and imperial levels. Each chapter centers upon a verb emphasizing the cultural work performed in nineteenth-century gardens and puts at least one novel in dialogue with other texts—such as artwork, pattern books, and magazine articles—from the period. In doing so, this project includes various novelistic sub-genres popularized throughout the century. That said, I am not making claims about the historical progression of the novel’s aesthetic form. Rather, by incorporating novels spanning the long nineteenth century, I reveal the continued, influential presence of the garden in this period’s novelistic imagination and its role in theorizing identity.

I begin with a driving focus in literary garden studies: a woman’s identity. Yet, rather than focus on the symbolic association between women and plants, my first chapter, “To Escort,” considers the most common action occurring in the literary garden—walking—to illuminate how gardens were used to foster sexual violence against women.²⁰ Such sexual violence assumed a multitude of forms ranging from physical assault to public humiliation. Directing gendered considerations of the garden to how women physically navigated this location, I examine how the construction and organization of garden pathways were embedded with violence. In short, I show how often a woman’s identity was built around violence, for the places she was made to associate with were inherently violent. The chapter’s central conceit is that the literary garden illuminates how the garden—structurally—afforded sexually violent experiences for women. Such novelistic gardens can narrate the violence so often

²⁰ While walking was a very common action in actual nineteenth-century gardens, the labor to maintain a garden would have been the most common action in physical gardens. In most novels from this period, however, such labor is omitted.

silenced, ignored, or intentionally forgotten when physically using gardens. By placing Frances Burney's *Evelina* (1778) and George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859) in dialogue with nineteenth-century artistic renderings of women running in the garden, I show how too often in this period a woman's immediate understanding of place was an understanding built around violence; therefore, how she shaped her identity was often in response to such violent localities. Ultimately, this chapter makes the socially invisible violence that directed women's actions and identities visible.

Turning from personal to national identities, "To Improve" centers on the nineteenth-century impulse of actualizing Eden into being. By creating perfected versions of English landscapes, landlords were remaking their estates to project and build new identities for themselves. "If the estate is symbolic of an entire inherited culture," as Alistair Duckworth claims, how they are maintained is of great importance (55). In this chapter I consider what happens when preservation and maintenance is discarded. When landlords instead focus on improving Eden into being, they attempt to construct a sense of self based in the future; rather than attend to their present, they focus on their estate and self's future iterations. Yet, building an Eden and its corresponding identities are not actualizable actions, as Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1815), along with Margaret Oliphant's *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866), show. Austen examines such practices at the national level, suggesting that an Edenic English national identity cannot be theorized into being, as it is already embedded within English landscapes; already located in the countryside, Eden needs to be maintained and preserved, not made. Oliphant suggests that ideal English landscapes and people cannot be found within the present or the future; rather, she shows that even if land could become Edenic, people themselves would not improve. Continuing

to create such perfected landscapes without accounting for those living upon them means that land will no longer ground identities of their owners and/or users.

National identity also centers my next chapter, “To Historicize,” yet it considers how the garden can build a shared history that unites two countries under the same national identity. To do so it illuminates how late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth-century horticulturalists and architects proposed a Gothic national landscape aesthetic, and therefore a national identity, that would unite England and Scotland. Stressing that national feeling is cultivated at the environmental level, I examine how gardens and their ability to project a collective past became tools to alleviate colonizer/colonized enmity. I call such a phenomenon the *Old English ecological aesthetic*, an architectural and landscape style that was built upon the notion that the British climate demanded the Gothic style. This chapter argues that Sir Walter Scott played an instrumental role in this ecological management of Britain, helping formulate such an aesthetic while also critiquing the inherent violence such an aesthetic engenders in *Waverley* (1814). While anyone within Britain who participated in such a landscape aesthetic could claim kinship with this national, Old English identity, *Waverley* narrates how refiguring one’s landscape into such an aesthetic is inherently violent. Specifically, it elucidates how Scottish localities are violently forced to refigure themselves at aesthetic and environmental levels with English landscapes to form an Andersonian imagined community.

While the previous chapter examines how historicizing a colony’s garden can build a shared national identity, “To Uproot” considers how the rootless garden—a garden without cultivated roots—reveals how place breaks down when a colony is forcibly connected to the metropole. Specifically, I reveal how the rootless garden is a

novelistic tool used in Maria Edgeworth's and Anthony Trollope's respective novels, *The Absentee* (1812) and *Castle Richmond* (1860), to consider placemaking in Ireland after the 1801 Act of Union. Both novels depict the destruction of place and community through their gardens. Rather than connect such rootlessness to this new union, these works connect their rootless gardens to absenteeism. They use this connection between absenteeism and rootlessness to argue for various imperialistic land practices as solutions to recreate Irish communities after their initial destruction. While *The Absentee* puts forth the returned colonial landlord as the solution to such widespread destruction of place, *Castle Richmond* suggests that communities can only be successfully remade after the Famine by creating English sense of place. While both novels present deeply problematic solutions to the breaking down of place, they reveal the role rootedness has in the garden's ability to establish identities within novels.

I conclude by interrogating how literary gardens theorize human identity at the species level. "To Glass Over" turns to a predominantly Victorian action: enclosing the garden behind glass.²¹ Glassing over a garden was a powerful act, as it enabled gardeners to manipulate climate. Ranging from the small Wardian Case to Kew Gardens' multiple glasshouses, Victorian gardeners created new, artificial climates in various sizes. Regardless of the polluted climate outside, within the glasshouse Victorian gardeners could create an idyllic climate for their plants. This chapter links

²¹ Chatsworth's 1694 greenhouse is one of the first recorded glasshouse gardens in the United Kingdom (see Bisgrove 67). For over a century the glasshouse garden remained a firmly upper-class place; yet, with the abolition of the Glass Tax in 1845, glasshouse gardens became more accessible (I. Armstrong 43).

Victorian plans to combat pollution by creating human-size glasshouse gardens with H.G. Wells' 1895 *The Time Machine*. It argues that Wells narrativizes such horticultural plans, illuminating how both pollution *and* climate engineering schemes meant to remove such filth will bring about a destruction of place for all. In other words, *The Time Machine* shows how pollution will bring about the collective destruction of human identity. Such a species-level identity is lost, for all humans residing in an artificial place transform into another entity entirely. Ultimately, I reveal the very prescient warning Wells offers all his readers living within industrial modernity, as his futuristic world depicts the cultural and biological harm pollution—and its solutions—create.

This project stems from an interest in the garden's significance in nineteenth-century Britain. *Constructing Locality* only focuses on one (albeit very large) way gardens altered this century: their influence upon the novel. My interrogation of the garden's influence on the novelistic imagination has prevented me from going down several other garden-centric rabbit holes. Most notably, I do not treat garden texts—such as periodicals like Loudon's *The Gardener's Magazine*, manuals by Gertrude Jekyll, or seed catalogues like those by James Carter—themselves as objects of study.²² Rather, I use such works to reveal the garden culture novelists drew upon to interrogate identity formation in their own works. Nor do I focus on the garden's appearance within other types of literature. Wordsworth's daffodils, Tennyson's flower-filled riverbanks, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's garden walks, which all

²² See Sarah Bilston's "Queens of the Gardens," "They Congregate . . . in Towns and Suburbs," and *The Promise of the Suburbs* (20-36), along with Sarah Dewis' *The Loudons and the Gardening Press*, as excellent examples of such work.

compellingly evoke garden imagery in their poetic verse, are absent from this project. While all of these paths are compelling avenues of study, I find a home in the novelistic garden. The garden shapes many nineteenth-century novels—directing how they formulate identity—in compelling ways. In what follows I make a start in examining how, why, and to what effect.

Chapter 2

TO ESCORT: CONSTRUCTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN BURNEY AND ELIOT

LOST, IN the dark walk at Vauxhall, on Tuesday the 24th instant, two female reputations: one of them had a small spot occasioned by some dirt thrown upon it last week in the road to Ranelagh; the other never soiled. Whoever will bring them back to the owners, shall receive five thousand pounds, with thanks. ~ *The New Foundling Hospital for Wit*, 1786²³

This parodic advertisement for “lost” items suggests that a woman’s reputation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was as easily discarded as a coat yet was infinitely harder to return. The 5,000-pound award offered exposes the near impossibility of returning a woman’s reputation.²⁴ Many reputations were destroyed in pleasure gardens, locations frequented by society during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Comprised of walks, entertainments, and food stalls, such gardens “were part urban green spaces, part amusement parks” that often veered towards the bacchanal (King 78). Significantly, these gardens’ formal elements permitted violent revelry. The dark walks, with their unilluminated pathways and high hedges, were

²³ See 255. The exact date of this article is unknown. In Jacob Henry Burn’s Vauxhall scrapbook (held in the British Library), someone wrote “June 1757” at the top of this article, dating it over thirty years earlier than its printing in *The New Foundling*.

²⁴ Consider that the annual salary of the First Lord of the Treasury was 4,000 pounds around this period. See Piccard 293-298 for more on eighteenth-century economic structures.

notorious for licensing sexual acts. Such illicit acts occurred so frequently that Vauxhall's proprietor boarded up such walks and placed more illuminations in the garden itself in the mid-eighteenth century. These efforts were in vain, as 150 young men tore down the barriers and lights, which were not reinstalled.²⁵ For many, removing danger removed these gardens' appealing qualities. Patrons and proprietors alike acknowledged that Vauxhall and other pleasure gardens were socially accepted sites of immorality. Yet, such gardens' immorality and danger did not influence everyone equally.

The central conceit of this chapter is that during the long nineteenth century gardens were often dangerous places for women.²⁶ While gardens could regularly serve as places of refuge (as Stephen Bending observes in *Green Retreats*), of education and artistry (as Judith Page and Elise Smith argue in *Women, Literature, and the Domesticated Landscape*), of professional labor (as Sarah Bilston outlines in *The Promise of the Suburbs*), and of fantasizing new ways of life (as Jennifer Wren Atkinson notes in *Gardenland*), literary scholars have yet to explore one affordance of the garden in depth: its facilitation of violence against women.²⁷ As a semi-public

²⁵ See Borsay, "Pleasure Gardens" 70 for more on this incident.

²⁶ While garden-goers would, in all probability, also commit such sexual violence against men, in this chapter I am exclusively focused on sexual violence against women. In my research I have not yet found direct documentation of male sexual trauma arising in pleasure gardens. This absence itself is compelling when considering what traumas are recorded and what remains undocumented.

²⁷ See: Bending 1-40; Page and Smith 1-11; Bilston, *Promise* 114-138; Atkinson 1-6. Furthermore, I do not mean to imply that literary scholars have not considered sexual assault in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels. As Anne Greenfield notes, "as the English novel began to develop into its mature form it too was highly concerned

place, individuals could either receive public scorn or protection against assault. As a semi-*private* space, gardens could either provide refuge from unwanted spectators when conducting personal actions or prevent aid from arriving when in danger. The shift in public and private, seen and unseen, could engender refuge or harm for garden-goers.

I argue that the garden often encouraged violence against women, as other garden-goers drew upon the garden's oscillation between public and private to create harm. While vulnerable women could have drawn upon the public nature of an estate garden for protection, anyone looking to attack could simply wait till she encountered a grove of trees to launch their assault; this public place would quickly transform into a private one. While this setting's capacity to permit violence is not directly visible—no guillotine-like object hangs over the garden, indicating such ready danger²⁸—when entering the garden women were often sexually and/or socially threatened. In this chapter I use the term “violence” to mean sexual violence against women, such as harassment, humiliation, assault, and attempted rape. While legal recognition of sexual violence was limited during my period of study, I follow in the path of Anne Greenfield's edited collection, *Interpreting Sexual Violence 1600-1800*, which “adopts an intentionally modern (and therefore inclusive) scope, examining a wide variety of sexually-violent acts, many of which would not have been grouped together by writers

with sexual violence” (1); Zonitch's *Familiar Violence* and Tromp's *The Private Rod* serve as excellent examples considering such novelistic depictions.

²⁸ Johan Galtung, a structural theorist, argues that structural violence is often imperceptible. It is “invisible, deeply embedded within the spatial and infrastructural configurations,” as Boehmer and Davies summarize (9).

and thinkers during this era” (Greenfield 7). To make visible how the garden affords such violence, critics must, to use Žižek’s phrasing, “step back” and “perceive the contours of the background which generates such outbursts” (qtd. in Boehmer and Davies 9). Looking at the background, a garden’s structural design, allows critics to better understand how these places could become violent localities for their female users. I neither mean to suggest that violence was the only experience a woman could have in a garden nor that all gardens were always inherently violent to all women. Rather, by examining Frances Burney’s *Evelina* (1778) and George Eliot’s *Adam Bede* (1859), I explore how violence was a common experience for women in gardens by interrogating how they afforded violent outbursts. Put differently, I consider how a garden’s design would often *escort*²⁹ women into violence, conducting women through its spatial layout to encounter social and sexual danger.

Literature enables critics to see how gardens permit such violence, as it can narrativize trauma in ways that historical records often cannot. For instance, while designs show the layout of the garden, they do not often reveal how gardens were used after their creation. Designs reveal the garden’s “implied visitor,” who the designer imagines interacting with and using the garden.³⁰ Yet, their actual visitors would often deviate from this imagined one. Within the recorded garden visits critics have access

²⁹ Escort—a word entangled with various gendered implications ranging from the protective male to the fallen women figure—evokes gendered connotations of protection, illicit behavior, sexualization, and (forced) movement, all concepts this chapter investigates.

³⁰ By using such terminology, I draw from John Dixon Hunt, who incorporates Iser’s implied reader rhetoric to consider how garden scholars interpret designs. See Hunt, *Afterlife* 12-17 for more.

to, *what* experiences get recorded are quite selective. Sexual assault and its resulting trauma were often written out of the historical record due to a combination of an unsympathetic judicial system³¹, willful ignorance, psychological repression, patriarchal norms, and general misogyny. Literature brings to light experiences that are not often recorded elsewhere. For women authors in particular, fiction writing provided “one of the few places in which women could speak for themselves, could represent women’s experiences . . . [and] their nightmares” (Backscheider and Richetti qtd. in Kelly 2).³² Here the sexual violence within the garden could get recorded.

Both *Evelina* and *Adam Bede* illuminate such experiences, for their narratives are steeped with gendered violence, violence spurred on by their gardens. *Evelina* centers on its titular character’s coming of age and is filled with scenes of her attempting to navigate eighteenth-century social norms; after many social foibles and true dangers, she eventually reunites with her estranged biological father and marries Lord Orville, her suitor throughout the novel. *Evelina*’s social encounters are consistently set in the pleasure garden, a setting that continually emphasizes the social and sexual precarity she is within until her marriage. The landscapes within *Adam Bede* also highlight the inherent gender imbalances within its 1799 rural English setting. Depicting the interpersonal relationships between its four central characters—

³¹ Even when women were legally protected, they were still subject to gendered violence. As Lisa SurrIDGE shows, “Victorian polemic on wife battery repeatedly compares wives, dogs and horses as beings over which a man has legal and propriety control . . . invit[ing] readers to reflect on a man’s ‘ownership’ or control over his spouse” (4).

³² Compellingly, Kelly connects this narrativization of trauma in the eighteenth (and I’d add nineteenth) century to the twenty-first century’s “Me Too” movement and its emphasis on narrating collective trauma (1-2).

Arthur Donnithorne, heir to the local estate, Hetty Sorrel, a beautiful dairymaid who becomes Arthur's lover, Adam Bede, a local carpenter in love with Hetty, and Dinah Morris, Hetty's Methodist cousin who eventually marries Adam—this novel is bound up in considerations of religion, gender, labor, and class structures. The narrative thread grounding it is the tumultuous relationship between Hetty and Arthur, which ends with Hetty murdering their illegitimate child.³³ It is the text's rural setting, specifically its estate gardens where Hetty and Arthur frequently meet, that grounds the gender and class concerns fueling the narrative.

In what follows, I examine how a woman's social identity was built around navigating sexual and social violence afforded by the garden's structure. I turn to literary depictions of women walking through the garden to examine how its oscillation between public and private is used by other garden-goers to conduct women into violent scenarios and to analyze an eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century phenomenon: smock races. Connecting the historical practice of smock races to their literary counterparts, I illuminate just how pervasive and socially accepted sexual violence against women was in the garden. Such events—and the places in which they were held—ensured that women publicly experienced physical and emotional trauma. Before turning to *Evelina* and *Adam Bede*, this chapter, centered on gardens and gender, begins by discussing how the symbolic association of women with flowers permeating nineteenth-century literature is often grounded upon a societal power imbalance between men and women. I include this brief discussion of the gender inequalities within this symbolic association to further situate my own

³³ She leaves the child to die from exposure.

discussion of use and violence in Burney and Eliot's works. By placing a woman's symbolic connection to plants and her physical use of the garden together, critics can see how the focus on use, violence, and gender grounding this chapter participates in the larger systemic violence against women that was often planted within nineteenth-century cultural practices. First considering the imbalance of power within the symbolic association of women and flowers and then turning to the violence women often experienced when using the garden, I illuminate how an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century woman's reputation, her socially perceived identity, was frequently built around such encounters with violence.

Always Floral Women, Rarely Vegetal Men

Evelina Annville is a blooming flower entering the marriage plot in the eponymous *Evelina*. Jane Fairfax is a delicate plant, withering without the right climatal conditions in *Emma*.³⁴ Hetty Sorel is a "rose-petal" wishing to be transplanted in *Adam Bede* (Eliot 76). Dora is the whole garden in *David Copperfield*, attracting all of David's senses: "The south wind blew Dora, and the wild flowers in the hedges were all Doras, to a bud" (Dickens 450). Hyacinth, Molly's new stepmother in Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*, is an exotic plant disrupting Molly's native environment. Such comparisons populate eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels, affirming a sympathy between women and flowers. The symbolic association of women and plants was built into the cultural fabric of Britain, with novels like *Emma* perpetuating and shaping this cultural perception.

³⁴ Deidre Shauna Lynch considers how the rise of greenhouse gardening influenced women-plant symbolism; in so doing, she argues that "Austen . . . pointedly locates her growing girls in 'artificial climates'" (690).

Women are symbolically made part of the environment in these descriptions, which results in a gendered imbalance of power. Such a connection is not inherently negative. For instance, women gardeners at the end of the nineteenth century often drew upon the traditional linkage between women and plants/botany to emphasize their horticultural knowledge:

authors regularly reminded their readers of the richness and longevity of the tradition they inherited Women are not only ideally constituted to gardening, . . . but they have been doing it for a long time; by contrast to the professional gardener or jobbing nurseryman. (Bilston, “Queens” 11)

Yet, when we consider plant-human comparisons, this literary symbolism is not equally applied to men and women. Such an unequal application reveals a gendered power imbalance in the cultural perception of landscapes and horticulture more broadly. As Jacqueline Labbe observes, to be separate from a landscape, able to gaze over it, is most often associated with a masculine perspective. As men can own land, they are distinct from it. Women, on the other hand, were more commonly seen as *within* rather than *outside* a landscape.³⁵ Such women-plant comparisons highlight the social and legal differences between men and women of the period.

Such social and legal differences could violently manifest during this period. Floral symbolism’s engagement with the violence embedded in these differences is most overtly seen in the phrase “deflower.” A euphemism for rape that has been in use since the fourteenth century, to deflower is “[t]o deprive (a woman) of her virginity; to violate, ravish.”³⁶ Significantly, such a definition highlights that men, who can of

³⁵ Both male and female authors enforce such distinctions (See Labbe ix-xxii, 66-112).

³⁶ See the *OED* definition of “deflower.”

course also be raped, are not seen as being deflowered. Once again, such floral symbolism is for women alone. Not only are women raped, but with this terminology, they also lose their bloom. If Hetty in *Adam Bede* had been raped, for instance, she would no longer have any “rose-petals” to be compared to, no beauty to garner praise. Part of a “joke” recounted in a 1785 issue of Roger Ranger’s *The Covent Garden Jester* both emphasizes the floral symbolism within rape discourse and highlights the link between the symbolic and physical power imbalanced women experienced in gardens during this period. To defend himself against a rape charge, a man observes ““that the prosecutrix having frequently come into his garden to steal beans, he told her, if ever she came again, she should not return without a green gown,’ and this he proved by a witness” (Ranger 9). This man *gave* this woman a green gown, a now archaic phrase that means to “deflower [or] deprive a woman of her virginity.”³⁷ Significantly, this phrase reveals the physical violence embedded within a garden, for the gown becomes green by its wearer being forced to roll within grass and stain her dress. Deflower and green gown, terms almost exclusively applied to women, forcefully bring to light the sexual violence within the practice of applying floral symbolism to women.

In a rare instance when men are compared to plants within a novel, they do not receive the same sexual or vulnerable status as women. Rather, they are connected to life-sustaining produce. Charles Dickens’ association of schoolboys with vegetables in his 1848 *Dombey and Sons* accounts for one of the few instances of male-plant

³⁷ See the *OED* definition of “green gown.”

symbolism.³⁸ Describing a boy's school, the narrator observes that "Doctor Blimber's establishment was a great hot-house, in which there was a forcing apparatus incessantly at work Mental green-peas were produced at Christmas, and intellectual asparagus all the year round" (162). By linking the schoolhouse to a hot-house, both locations are positioned as forcing younglings—in both the human and vegetal variety—into maturity. Dickens could have compared the boys to ornamental flowers (as he does for Florence who is compared to "a rosebud" in *Dombey and Sons*) for such flowers can also be grown in hot houses (869). Yet, Dickens positions these boys as vegetables. While flowers have social functions of extreme value, the alignment of women with decorative flowers and men with vegetables—plants providing sustenance—is striking. By comparing boys to vegetables, Dickens keeps them out of the "botanical vernacular," Amy King's theorization of how the nineteenth-century marriage plot uses the image of the blooming girl to detail the sexuality inherent within courtship without breaking social mores.³⁹ Rather, it is Florence, the (engaged) "rosebud" that participates in the botanic vernacular. Florence is part of the literary tradition that sexualizes and ornamentizes young girls while the boys from Blimber's are compared to plants that nourish, that have a recognizable, tangible, and immediate societal use.

The symbolic connection between women and flower could be, and was often, employed to devalue women's knowledge. Put differently, the power imbalances

³⁸ As Christopher Looby observes in his 1995 survey of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature and art, both gay men and men of color are sometimes compared to flowers, with their "otherness" connected to exotic flora (112).

³⁹ See King for more on the botanic vernacular (11-47).

within this symbolic connection influenced and reflected actual horticultural practices. By so frequently connecting women with flowers, their horticultural knowledge was often devalued and/or relegated to amateur status. With its connection to “the traditional feminine arts of herbal healing and medical cookery,” horticultural was seen as the discipline “best adapted for female minds” (Looby 119). This pervasive interest in horticulture affirmed the “cult of floral symbolism,” for women were able to understand horticulture due to their connection and similarity to flowers themselves, so the circular logic went (119). While gardening throughout the nineteenth century “[a]uthoriz[ed] women to engage in physical labour, aesthetic debate, and technological innovation,” and while works like Jane Loudon’s brought women gardeners into larger horticultural discussions, all too frequently their work was culturally recognized as amateur (Bilston, “Queens” 3). For instance, when men worked with ornamental flowers in this period, horticultural texts often “deploy[ed] the rhetoric of science” rather than “sentimental and aesthetic interest,” which was often prescribed to women (Looby 119). In short, till the 1880s women horticulturalists and gardeners were mostly relegated to amateur status, enjoying horticulture as a hobby rather than a vocation.⁴⁰ This perceived divide between amateur and professional persisted after the 1880s, for even Gertrude Jekyll, one the most successful horticulturalists in the late-Victorian and Edwardian era, “modestly” situated herself “as a working amateur” (Helmreich 169). I do not mean to imply that women of the time collectively bemoaned their amateur status. Rather, I wish to emphasize that devaluing knowledge is a form of oppression; through the symbolic connection of women and flowers, such oppression could more readily occur. Yet,

⁴⁰ See Bilston’s “Queens” for more about this divide in the 1880s (7-15).

professionalism was not the only cultural disparity embedded within such flora symbolism.

In the past few decades, critics have interrogated the cultural disparities embedded within this symbolic association of women and flowers. Amy King's botanic vernacular explicitly reveals the sexuality embedded in this association, arguing that the blooming girl "represent[s] that which is otherwise unrepresented (the promise of marital sexual fulfillment)" (135). She further argues that by the mid-century blooming could turn a woman into a "caricature" "linking a woman's bloom with silliness and domestic ineptitude . . . depreciat[ing] sexual attractiveness as an inadequate basis for courtship" (136, 139). King not only reveals the sexuality embedded within such associations but also shows how narratives draw upon this sexualization to belittle female characters, such as Mrs. Finching in Dickens' 1857 *Little Dorrit*. Theresa Kelley shows how such symbolism often forces women into artificial classifications. She examines how botany complicated the period's conceptions of nature, breaking down categorizations; specifically considering Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden*, Kelley show how women were often forced to "inhabit personifications" of themselves (89). Recently, Elizabeth Chang has observed that "country house novels substitute girls and women for the plant life that surrounds them, and vice versa" to reveal the "gothic interruptions" Britain's entrance into a globalized modernity had on domestic spaces (85).⁴¹ Such symbolic disparities connect to the cultural power imbalances that arise when women use the garden.

Turning to *Evelina* and *Adam Bede*'s depiction of the physical rather than symbolic, in

⁴¹ Chang lists Beverly Seaton, Ann Shteir, and Elizabeth Campbell as others participating in this conversation surrounding women-flower symbolism (85).

what follows I reveal how such disparities and cruelties manifest not only when women are seen as part of the landscape, but also when they are moving within it.

To Promenade

Just as comparing women to flowers populates nineteenth-century novels, women walking—specifically women walking into some level of trouble—also permeates the period’s literature. One of the century’s most famous walkers is perhaps Elizabeth Bennet, who walks three miles over stiles and through puddles to see her sister Jane, despite the censure expressed by her mother, Mrs. Hurst, and Miss Bingley. This act sexualizes Bennet (Mr. Darcy observes that her fine eyes “were brightened by the exercise”) and produces class scorn (her walk prompts the Bingley-Hurst-Darcy contingent to discuss her lack of social prospects) (Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* 26). Another Austen heroine, Marianne Dashwood, meets the rakish Mr. Willoughby while walking in Devonshire; this meeting sets off their turbulent relationship, which ends with a walk in the rain that almost kills the young Miss Dashwood. The titular Jane Eyre encounters Mr. Rochester on a walk to town—a walk that “marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life”—and this meeting begins their tumultuous relationship (Brontë 136). Gilbert Markim immediately sexualizes and sensationalizes Helen Graham’s late-night garden stroll with her brother, Mr. Lawrence, in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Finally, it is Bathsheba Everdeen’s late-night walk around her estate in Hardy’s *Far From the Madding Crowd* that connects her with the degenerate Segregate Troy, who later becomes her husband and leech upon the estate.⁴² In all of these instances, these

⁴² See Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* (29-33), A. Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (98-102) and Hardy’s *Far From the Madding Crowd* (140-145).

pathways escort women into violence—whether it be physical, emotional, social, or some combination thereof.

One of the most dangerous places for a woman to walk during this period, as Evelina Annville learns, were pleasure gardens like Vauxhall. Upon entering Vauxhall, guests like Evelina were soon ushered into its grand walks. When walking along these pathways, garden-goers could encounter the orchestral stand (center in Figure 1); here guests could mingle and listen to music. If they became hungry, guests could eat and rest in supper boxes. While eating they could both observe passers-by and the Hogarth paintings adorning the boxes. When satiated, guests could go enjoy ornamental sites—like the Chinese Pavilion, triumphal arches (seen on the right-side pathway), faux ruins, and statuary. Moreover, they could view the evening’s performance acts, whether they be fireworks, fire performers, or tight-rope walkers. Once darkness truly took over, lamps would illuminate all but the dark walks (unlit wooded pathways). If one wanted privacy to escape unwanted attention, there were a plethora of pathways and alcoves a guest could hide within. The trees, for instance, lining the pathway on the right of figure one provided seclusion from other guests. What made Vauxhall unique was its combination of a variety of entertainments; it was not just an outdoor space, but also an amalgamation of a concert hall, food hall, art gallery, and performance center.⁴³

⁴³ For more on Vauxhall’s unique draw, see Borsay, “Pleasure Gardens” 50-51.

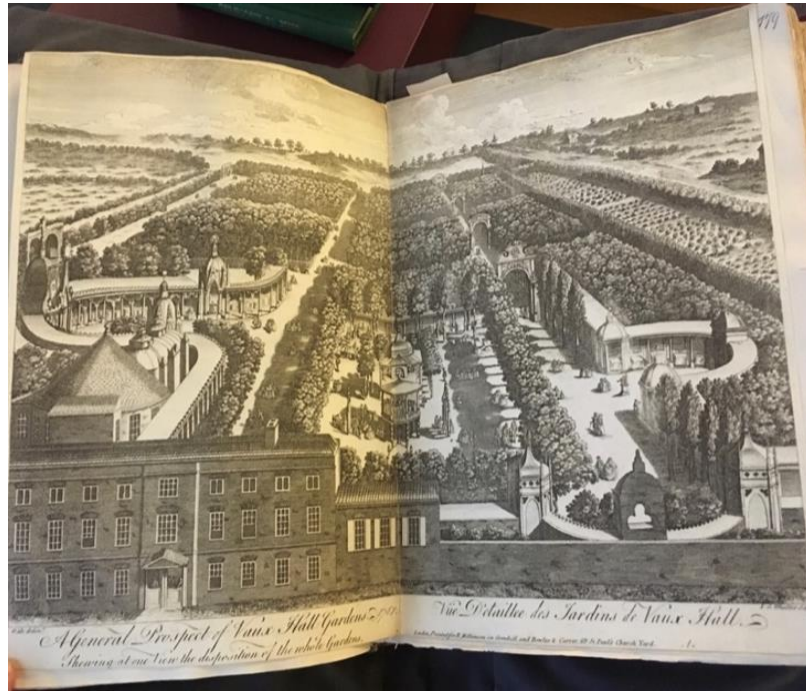


Figure 1 “A General Prospect of Vaux Hall Gardens.” 1751. *A Collection of Tickets, Bills of Performances, Pamphlets, Ms. Notes, Engravings, and Extracts and Cuttings from Books and Periodicals Relating to Vauxhall Gardens.* Image Courtesy of the British Library.

Despite all these entertaining features, fellow guests were the most prominent source of amusement. “For those seeking social or sexual status . . . walks and gardens were among the key auditoriums from which to observe, and stages on which to perform,” as Peter Borsay notes (“Pleasure Gardens” 64). Seeing and being seen were the main event. Guests used the pleasure garden’s structures—its walks and band stands, for instance—to engage with other guests. Pleasure gardens afforded circular movement; rather than “progressing from point A to point B . . . when the company moved they were effectively going nowhere,” as they remained within the confines of the garden (Borsay “Pleasure Gardens” 62). As fellow garden-goers were the main

spectacle, guests promenaded in this non-progressive way to observe others. The various entertainments and garden structures provided resting and gathering points for this non-progressive movement.

Burney's *Evelina* narrativizes how guests became part of the entertainment, specifically how women transformed into objects to amuse male guests. Considering Vauxhall's end of season, one of Evelina's cousins, Mr. Branghton, observes that

it's the best night of any; there's always a riot, —and there the folks run about, —and then there's such squealing and squalling! —and, there, all the lamps are broke, —and the women run skipper scamper.—I declare I would not take five guineas to miss the last night. (Burney 196)

For Branghton, women become sources of entertainment meant to be gazed upon by male guests. Using “skipper” and “scamper” to describe a response to this riotous violence dismisses the very real danger women would most likely feel when surrounded by male aggression.

Such aggression was afforded by the garden itself. Put differently, the ability to control female movement was ingrained within such pleasure gardens. The nooks, crannies, and pathways figure one depicts not only enabled guests to find privacy, but also enabled guests to isolate themselves with others—whether both parties were consenting or not. The pleasure garden's characteristic circular movement, along with the pre-determined sites to stop, rest, and mingle with other guests, ensured that most knew where other guests were heading. Male guests who knew the layout of the garden afforded them the opportunity to physically overpower women. Such is the case when Mr. Smith (Mr. Branghton's lodger) grabs Evelina's “hand, and, with a motion too quick to be resisted, ran away with me many yards before I had breath to ask his meaning, tho' I struggled as well as I could to get from him” (Burney 195).

Under the guise of bringing Evelina to see the cascade, Mr. Smith exerts control over her bodily autonomy. Gripping her hand so it cannot “be resisted,” Smith physical maneuvers Evelina’s body so she is forced to follow his lead. Yet, within *Evelina*, such overpowering of female guests, such structural allowance of sexual violence, is best seen in the dark walks.

First, the structural confinement of the dark walks’ trees and hedges enable male guests to entrap female guests in *Evelina*. Upon her first visit to Vauxhall, Evelina gets lost amongst these unlit paths, running into groups of men that use the confining and confusing nature of these paths to overpower her. Upon first getting lost,

a large party of gentlemen, apparently very riotous, and who were hallowing, leaning on one another, and laughing immoderately, seemed to rush suddenly from behind some trees, and, meeting us face to face, put their arms at their sides, and formed a kind of circle, that first stopped our proceeding, and then our retreating, for we were presently entirely inclosed [*sic*] our screams were answered with bursts of laughter, and, for some minutes, we were kept prisoners. (Burney 197)

Using the trees that comprise the walks to hide their position, these gentlemen corner Evelina and her female companion. The garden transforms from a place of leisure into one of confinement, as Evelina feels like a “prisoner.” The men and trees serve as prison walls, ensuring that women lose their freedom of movement. The darkness, the height of the trees, and the lack of signage all contribute to Evelina’s imprisoned feelings—and are all mobilized by these riotous men to entrap her.

Second, by manipulating light, gardens-goers rapidly transform the garden to a site of danger for Evelina. Breaking free from her first prison, Evelina attempts to reach the illuminated walkways and the safety they promise. Yet, she is prevented by a

second group of men who halt her movement by “directly” standing between her and the lighted walks (Burney 197). One guest grabs her hands to make her race up and down the pathway with him. Making her run on command, this man strips Evelina of her physical agency and objectifies her, turning her into a figure for his aesthetic enjoyment. While such advances “almost distracted [Evelina] with terror,” for the male guests this was a moment of play (197). She transforms into a plaything in the unlit pathways. By playing with height and light, male garden patrons create a sense of danger for Evelina by secluding her away from the safety of the public eye.

When detailing Evelina’s final assault within the dark walks, the narrative explicitly comments upon the danger arising when the garden moves between public and private.⁴⁴ Coming upon Evelina after these previous assaults, Sir Clement (a London acquaintance) is initially cast as a savior; recognizing Evelina’s danger, he pulls her away from such threats. Yet, he does not take her to the illuminated walks and the safety they provide. Rather, “he had led me . . . into another of the dark alleys, instead of the place whither I meant to go” where they “shall be least observed” (Burney 198). Rather than taking her to the physical, sexual, and social safety of the illuminated walks, Sir Clement takes advantage of the precarious position such darkened pathways create to have a private conversation with Evelina. Forcing a private conversation (which itself could stain her reputation, regardless of location) in the notorious dark walks, Sir Clement risks Evelina’s safety despite her request to

⁴⁴ The novel’s commentary on the dark walks does not end here. One of Evelina’s companions, Miss Polly, had to be “rescued from a party of insolent young men” and two male guests forced another companion, Miss Bidy, to “walk up and down the dark walks by absolute force” (Burney 204-205).

leave. As she observes in a letter to guardian, Reverend Mr. Villars, “to escape” Sir Clement she “was forced to speak, and in some measure grant the pardon he requested” to “escape his importunities” (200). Only by acquiescing to Sir Clement’s desire is Evelina able to regain her physical movement and escape to the safety of the publicly lit pathways.

Yet, such publicly lit pathways did not guarantee safety. When turning to its description of a fire display gone wrong, *Evelina* reveals the danger within the anonymity that the garden’s semi-public nature could create. When Evelina ventures to Vauxhall’s rival, Marylebone Gardens, to see a firework display, she and other female patrons are physical moved closer to the fireworks themselves by a male patron: “Mr. Smith proposed the *ladies* should make interest for a form to stand upon” while the men should go to different parts of the garden (Burney 233). With Burney emphasizing *ladies*, the text asks readers to focus on this gendered division, for, as the novel quickly reveals, Smith places women closer to the fireworks to make them feel like they will be attacked by an “explosion of fire” (233). This fear, in turn, makes the women run away scared and confused. Drawing upon the ensuing chaos, male guests continually assault Evelina: “Every other moment, I was spoken to, by some bold and unfeeling man, to whom my distress, which, I think must be very apparent, only furnished a pretense for impertinent witticisms, or free gallantry” (234). Afforded the opportunity to approach her due to the resulting confusion from the fireworks, men continually take advantage of Evelina’s vulnerability. This danger comes to a head when “a young officer, marching fiercely up to me, said, ‘You are a sweet pretty creature, and I enlist you in my service;’ and then, with great violence, he seized my hand” (234). Alone and isolated from her party, she does not retain her identity as

Evelina Annville, but instead is another “pretty creature” the officer can take advantage of without consequence.⁴⁵ Becoming one of many, she loses the protection of her name and status. It is only when Lord Orville—a friend who can recognize Evelina’s name and status—arrives that Evelina is able to escape this series of assaults. Without such a protective male figure, Evelina would have lost her reputation through these other male garden-goers’ manipulation of the garden structural components.

Male garden-goers drawing upon the garden’s ability to create violence was not a decision of a moment but was something recognized and expected. Put differently, while one may not know how they would use the pleasure garden to create violence, they knew it allowed such behavior. As Mr. Branghton bluntly comments to Evelina, women who enter the dark walks are seen as encouraging sexual attention. Annoyed that he had to search for the women of his party, Evelina’s cousin claims that if women go into the “long alleys” they “must. . . have had a mind to be affronted” (Burney 201). For Branghton, women must protect themselves, monitoring their own actions. Rather than recognize how women are often escorted into the most dangerous parts of the garden—and how other, more public parts of the garden transform into sites of danger—Branghton believes that women must protect themselves. Women must navigate the quick shifts between public and private, moving to whatever part of the garden is safest at the moment. Yet, as *Evelina* depicts, many other male garden-

⁴⁵ Such objectified violence does not only come from male guests. Evelina runs into female prostitutes who also wish to take advantage of her vulnerable position. They “held [her] fast” ensuring she could not run away, for instance (Burney 235).

goers also direct their actions and choices around the garden's violent affordances; rather than mitigating such affordances, they bring them forward.

While pleasure gardens are overt examples of how gardens afford violence, George Eliot's *Adam Bede* reinforces that it is the public/private aspect of gardens that allows them to quickly transform into places of danger. This transformation is most readily seen in the meetings between Hetty Sorrel and Arthur Donnithorne that occur on garden pathways. Before their affair begins, Hetty directly comments upon the danger women risk when they walk. When Arthur asks Hetty why she doesn't just "have a walk" about the Chase to see the greenery, Hetty comments that "Aunt [Poyser] doesn't like me to go a-walking only when I'm going somewhere" (Eliot 79). To walk with purpose, to move from point A to point B, is a necessary, and therefore acceptable, act. Yet, to walk in the circular, non-progressive style that Borsay argues was so common of pleasure gardens is similarly problematic when taken to other kinds of gardens. To walk without a purpose through an estate garden, Aunt Poyser observes, means that women heedlessly risk the dangers that can arise from either the public or private side of the garden. Women could be forced into undesirable, compromising conversations—for instance, Hetty fears talking with estate gardener, Mr. Craig—which are then observed by a passerby, or could be sexually assaulted as there is no one around to aid them.

Ignoring this danger, Hetty and Arthur draw upon the garden's liminal qualities to begin an affair. The pathways in the Fir-Tree Grove (a small group of trees that are part of Donnithorne Chase's estate garden) are public places where private meetings can occur. As these pathways are simultaneously semi-public *and* semi-private, Hetty can truthfully tell her aunt she is going to Donnithorne Chase to learn

skills from a lady's maid, drawing upon the fact that the pathways are used by the public, yet can also draw upon their private nature to meet Arthur. It is the public nature of the pathways—most everyone from town can walk upon them without suspicion—and the privacy they afford that allows Hetty and Arthur to start their affair.

The pathways' structural informality provides a sense of security and privacy for its users, as their design evokes a sense of isolation. First, the lack of overt human intervention in the pathways' design create a sense of privacy. Humans appear to neither have designed nor frequented this place:

It was not a grove with measured grass or rolled gravel for you to tread upon, but with narrow, hollow-shaped, earthy paths, edged with faint dashes of delicate moss—paths which look as if they were made by the free-will of the trees and underwood. (Eliot 118)

Rather than the tread of human feet, it aesthetically looks as if trees created these pathways. Such a design makes users like Arthur and Hetty feel as if they are the first humans to encounter such a place, cultivating a feeling of privacy. In short, these pathways are designed by humans to erase a feeling of human intervention. Yet, such feeling is explicitly designed by human gardeners. The Donnithornes or their gardener chose to remove a sense of human intervention; the lack of measured grass or rolled gravel is a choice, a choice that creates a feeling of separation from the public. Second, the couple relies upon the Fir-Tree Grove's labyrinth structure to obscure their presence. They hide in the privateness that the pathways' curves provide. The "delicious labyrinthine" Grove, with its "winding path[s]," structurally creates moments of secrecy and surprise (Eliot 117, 267). Lacking direct sightlines, couples could obscure themselves within the pathways' curvature. While Hetty and Arthur had previously met in public spaces like a dairy, the Grove's pathways afford them

privacy. This garden creates a secretive milieu for the two. That said, the pathways' transitional qualities are not the only garden features the couple uses to continue their affair.

Arthur manipulates the liminal qualities of the hermitage adorning these pathways to court Hetty. The hermitage is an apt symbol of this slippage between public and private. Initially built for a hermit, by the late-eighteenth century hermitages often adorned landscape gardens. During this period, hermitages evoked a sense of repose, rest, and privacy. Yet, as Stephen Bending argues, "rather than being spaces in which one might actually meditate . . . they offer a public gesture, but have little to say about the private experience of being alone" (233). Hermitages evoke the idea of solitude and repose yet were public affirmations of such concepts. It is not a coincidence that Arthur uses his hermitage to initiate his first private meeting with Hetty. Arthur draws upon the private repose a hermitage evokes as a veil to obscure his actual intent when walking amongst the pathways: encountering Hetty on her public walk. Arthur takes advantage of the pathways' public throughfare nature to ensure he has access to Hetty. He also relies upon the privateness of the hermitage to justify this encounter:

it was just the sort of day for lolling in the Hermitage, and he would go and finish Dr Moore's *Zeluco* there before dinner. The Hermitage stood in Fir-tree Grove—the way Hetty was sure to come in walking from the Hall Farm. So nothing could be simpler and more natural: meeting Hetty was a mere circumstance of his walk, not its object. (Eliot 117)

It is on his way to the hermitage—this public announcement of privacy—that Arthur transforms Hetty's public walk into a private encounter. As their relationship continues, the hermitage offers the couple a site of privacy, as it gives Arthur the

excuse of being out at any hour. It also offers a secluded room for the two to consummate their relationship.

Yet, the pathways can quickly transform into a public space due their structure. Not only do the pathways help the couple hide themselves away, but their lack of direct sightlines also affords other walkers the ability to come upon Hetty and Arthur with little warning. This structure enables Adam, another one of Hetty's suitors, to discover the couple; right when the pathway "turned" he saw the figure of Hetty and Arthur "bending to kiss" (Eliot 267). The winding paths that first promised privacy now betray the couple. The paths transform into a public location. The very curves that initially protected them from the public eye have now ensured that the couple would not recognize the pathways' shift from private to public.

This inability to control the shift from private to public places Hetty in Adam's power.⁴⁶ Adam now has socially damning information that could ruin Hetty if he decides to disclose it. While Adam does not reveal this information, he makes the power he now has clear to Hetty: "If anybody besides me knew what I know about your meeting a gentleman, and having fine presents from him, they'd speak light on you, and you'd lose your character" (Eliot 289). The threat is clear; Adam holds Hetty's reputation in his hands. Adam positions himself as the keeper of such knowledge, as one who has the power to deploy this form of social violence: character ruination. This power imbalance is compounded by the fact that Adam himself desires Hetty. He can position himself as Hetty's savior, as one she should feel indebted to

⁴⁶ While at times Adam, a local carpenter, does seem to employ moral authority over Arthur, heir to the local estate, Adam does not have a firm social hold over him.

going forward. While Adam never does draw upon this social imbalance, the garden's transitional structure ensures that he has such power.

Able to shift from public to private to public once again, gardens could rapidly change from places of refuge to places of danger. A woman's relationship with the garden was one often embedded with peril. To leisurely walk in the garden could place a woman in a dire situation, altering her reputation instantly. With the garden's quick transitional qualities, a literal misstep could directly alter a woman's reputation for years. To protect her reputation, a woman had to carefully navigate the garden, accounting for the violence it afforded. If not, one could be caught unawares like *Evelina*, reputation only protected from ruination by accidentally coming upon a male savior-figure, or could be out-manuevered like *Hetty*, reputation handed off to another, as she is unable to master the garden's transitional qualities.

To Run

Ladies were socially permitted to walk in gardens. Only "women, maids, and wenches" were socially permitted to run (J. Allen 160). Both *Adam Bede* and *Evelina* depict gardens transforming into racetracks, narrating how such a change collectively makes their lower-class female characters susceptible to violence. Unlike the threats to a woman's reputation that arose while walking, which depended upon the liminal qualities of the garden, inherent to these races was the public sexualization of lower-class women. Often set in estate lawns or larger public gardens, races drew upon the public aspect of the garden to collectively comment upon on women's reputations; such comments often centered on the objectification and social devaluation of women. These races highlight how the structural and ecological features of gardens could socially sanction such sexual violence during the period.

The dehumanization of the lower classes was essential to these racing events. Unlike other sporting activities of the period such as cricket, which could temporarily blur class boundaries, running was highly classed: the poor ran while those with higher social and economic statuses hosted the race (in theory, all could watch and bet). Men of higher ranks would pit “cocks, dogs, horses, boxers, plebian males, and plebian women against one another” (Rizzo 73). With racers placed at the same level as animals, such races reaffirmed the class divisions between contestants, spectators, and wagerers. Furthermore, the actions of the lower classes were controlled and commodified. In 1773 Frances Burney herself was a spectator of such races at Teignmouth, England, calling the events “‘truly ridiculous’, ‘certainly cruel,’ but at the same time ‘truly laughable’” (qtd in J. Allen 161). With contestants humiliated and dehumanized, the amusement garnered from such events stemmed from their social and physical violence. Put differently, for those calling and watching the race their enjoyment came from the social and emotional violence felt by contestants, along with the reaffirmation of their own humanity in the face of the dehumanization of the contestants.

For lower-class women, such violence and humiliation often manifested sexually, as one of the most popular racing events was the smock race. Women of the middle and upper classes inclined to participate in sporting events were more likely partaking in archery contests, which were seen as a healthy way to show off the female body.⁴⁷ The smock race, on the other hand, had participants racing with their outer layers stripped off to increase mobility and was therefore recognized as a

⁴⁷ Consider the Brackenshaw Archery Club in Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda* (26, 31).

“salacious” event (Harvey 209). Such sexually explicit events were typically sponsored by the wealthy who would contribute an equally salacious prize: a smock. This prize was inherently intimate, as smocks were undergarments (otherwise known as a shift or chemise). While often the prize smock was more elaborate than its everyday counterpart, it nevertheless was an overtly intimate object that was gifted in public. While the male contestants often received more practical items, such as a “splendid pocket-knife” that Eliot describes in *Adam Bede*, women received articles of clothing that referenced their sexuality (Eliot 251).

Inherently bodily, the smock race objectified and sexualized its contestants. Thomas Rowlandson’s 1811 *Rural Sport Smock Races* depicts such a race in all its sexualized glory (see Figure 2).⁴⁸ A Georgian period cartoonist, Rowlandson represents the race *in media res*, providing the viewer a snapshot of the sexualization and bawdiness inherent in this event. Four young women race bare breasted and, due to the thinness of their dress, spectators can see the outline of the racers’ legs and their fully exposed ankles. While such bawdiness is overdone—women would have had their breasts somewhat covered—Rowlandson makes the intent of such races clear: show off these women’s sexuality. Displaying the female form so clearly in public was the draw of such races. Moreover, by skewing the nankeen trousers of the two men near the racers towards buff rather than yellow, Rowlandson uses this flesh color to make the men appear as if they are nude from the waist down; this visual association is heightened, as Rowlandson takes pains to outline the buttocks of one of these male spectators and emphasize the groin of the other. These nude-like figures

⁴⁸ For an additional illustration of a smock race, see Robert Sayer’s 1770 *An [sic] Holland Smock to be run for, by any Woman born in the country*, where men fondle the racers as they pass by and attempt to look into the women’s skirts or cleavage.



Figure 2 *Rural Sport, Smock Races.* Thomas Rowlandson. 1811. Image Courtesy of The MET

being in such proximity to the contestants further emphasizes the sexualization of the event. Not only does Rowlandson's print highlights the sexual draw of such races, but it also emphasizes the direct link between sexualization and violence. One male spectator attempts to grope a racer, for instance (Figure 2 center right).⁴⁹ This

⁴⁹ While all viewers in 1811 may not have legally or socially recognized this act as violent—Rowlandson, for instance, was praised for his erotic and comedic depictions—twenty-first century viewers can recognize how such a physical invasion of privacy and non-consensual touching is an inherently violent act. It is through art like Rowlandson's where modern viewers can see the sexual violence inherent in the period's approach towards women.

violence and sexualization moves out towards the spectators as well, as one male spectator in the stands assaults a woman by groping her breast (Figure 2 center).

Rowlandson's cartoon sharply observes the tone of such races: sexual and violent.

Arthur Donnithorne's birthday celebrations in *Adam Bede* narrativize such a race and the harmful milieu it fosters. As was common for his class, Arthur uses his elevated position to call a series of races and games to celebrate his twenty-first birthday. Arthur is entering his majority and through his choice of entertainment affirms the social distinction between him and his soon-to-be tenants. Using the Great Lawn of Donnithorne Chase as the event grounds, he sponsors many races and games:

well-soaped poles to be climbed by the boys and youths, races to be run by the old women, races to be run in sacks, heavy weights to be lifted by the strong men, and a long list of challenges to such ambitious attempts as that of walking as many yards possible on one leg To crown all, there was to be a donkey-race—that sublimest of all races, conducted on the grand socialistic idea of everybody encouraging everybody else's donkey, and the sorriest donkey winning. (Eliot 246)

With games available for all tenant groups—young boys, young girls, adult men, elderly women, and the like—Arthur ensure that all his soon-to-be tenants are both entertained and the entertainment. Furthermore, with the “sublimest” race the donkey-race, the human contestants are put on the same level as the donkey (if not in a category below). By being displayed alongside a donkey, the human contestants are animalized; by performing their races on the same lawn as donkeys, competing in front of the same spectators and at the same celebratory event, in this moment the social distinction between human and ass is suspended. Both humans and donkeys become sources of amusement for the Donnithorne family. With the leveling of animals and tenant, Arthur ensures that all his family and social peers reestablish their elevated class positions.

Embedded within the ecological and structural setting of these celebratory games are such class and gendered divisions. For instance, the ecological formation of an estate's lawn during this period, such as the Chase's Great Lawn, was bent to the prospect: the view from the principal windows of the estate's main house. Put differently, landscapes were ecologically reformatted to meet the desire of the human gaze. What this gaze most often desired was a large swath of uninterrupted land, made possible with the invention of the ha-ha.⁵⁰ Most commonly, the prospect was structured around the masculine viewpoint, which surveyed their own "unlimited ownership and unbroken views" (Labbe 68). Unlike women, who were "without the advantage of the (legal) propriety eye," men could own landscapes and observe them as their property (xiii).⁵¹ The removal of any undesirable building to create this unlimited view reinforced this proprietary eye. A prospect "was made possible in part by the removal of public rights of way, [and] the enclosure of common land" (Bending 10). For the wealthy, masculine viewpoint to assert itself, those economically reliant upon public land were often denied access and tenants were frequently (and forcibly) relocated. Moreover, grassing over common land to make this uninterrupted view also created a "monoculture of grass," which both suppressed the development of a diverse ecosystem and reshaped the land, as earth was moved around to make the landscape

⁵⁰ Landowners were concerned that animals and their droppings would be too close to the house and disturb the view; these feelings prompted the ha-ha's widespread use. Ha-has are long ditches in a landscape that prevent grazing animals from coming too close to the house. With no fence or structural marker announcing the ha-ha's presence, when looking out from a mansion's principal window it appears as if nothing interrupts the swath of land immediately surrounding the house.

⁵¹ See Montgomery for a more on the association of masculinity and prospects (105-106).

level (Oliver, “Trees” 285).⁵² By doing so, landowners participated in what Raymond Williams theorizes as an agrarian capitalist system and created a garden that asserted one’s physical and monetary domination over the landscape.

For this specific birthday event, Arthur manipulates the structural design of this setting to bring forth such class and gendered distinctions. For example, Arthur erects a “striped marquee at the edge of the lawn, standing at right angles with two larger marquees on each side of the open green space where the games were to be played” (Eliot 231). Dividing the open space into distinct sections (the striped marquee for spectators and the open space and larger marquees for the races and competitors), he physically controls the mobility of all who attend his celebrations while ensuring that all can see such class distinctions. Continuing such divisions,

[t]here was a sunk fence in front of the marquee, dividing the lawn from the park, but a temporary bridge had been made for the passage of the victors, and the groups of people standing, or seated here and there on benches, stretched on each side of the open space from the white [larger] marquees up to the sunk fence. (Eliot 247)

Dividing the physical location of victors, spectators who stand, and spectators who are privileged enough to sit, Arthur temporarily restructures the estate lawn to ensure that class positions are highly visible to all through the erection of bridges and marquees. While these acts—both calling the races and designing the grounds—are not cast with malicious intent, inherent to such games and their setting are class and gender distinctions.

⁵² For an extended discussion of how grass was sown during the creation of many landscape gardens, see Symes (5-6).

Through Bessy Cranage, the local blacksmith's daughter, such distinctions turn sexually violent. Her race highlights how sexual objectification and social shaming are embedded within smock races. Bessy, "buxom" and "blooming," ran such an "arduous race, partly from mere hoydenish gaiety, partly because of the prize" (Eliot 18, 84, 249). Introduced as a large-breasted youth, from the start Bessy is sexualized. Moreover, as a "blooming" youth, the narrative places Bessy within King's "botanical vernacular," for "being 'in bloom'" refers to "the fact of the girl's imminent insertion into a marriage plot" (King 4). While Bessy is not the focus of *Adam Bede*'s marriage plot, the narration implies that she is about to enter her own off page. Finally, by calling her hoydenish at the celebration—a boisterous, noisy, sometimes ill-bred, woman—the narrator affirms Bessy's public visibility.⁵³ By bringing attention to herself through her palpable excitement, she occupies public space, thereby becoming an "object[t] of display" (Zonitch 29). Bessy is a classed, sexed, marriageable object to be controlled and judged.⁵⁴

Bessy encounters such sexual and class control most explicitly through her prize—a practical, ugly dress—for winning her race. Such policing comes from Arthur's Aunt Lydia, as she sexually objectifies, and therefore belittles, Bessy to quell any social advancement she may desire. When Arthur's aunt distributes Bessy's prize, she notes that she is giving "an excellent grogram gown and a piece of flannel," yet Bessy sees an "ugly, heavy gown" that is too "hot and disagreeable" to be worn in the

⁵³ See the *OED*'s definition of "hoyden."

⁵⁴ Bessy's public visibility and sexuality is also expressed through her faux-garnet earrings, which are condemned for encouraging her vanity and sexual visibility by both Methodists preachers and her own family (Eliot 19, 28-29, 249).

summer (Eliot 249-250).⁵⁵ Grogram, “a coarse fabric of silk, of mohair and wool, or of these mixed with silk; often stiffed with gum,” is often rough to the touch and, in this instance, dull in color;⁵⁶ this dress is opposite to the more ornamental article typically given as a prize for such a race. By providing this specific gown—an uncomfortable dress that will detract from the wearer’s appearance—Miss Lydia supplies a practical outfit meant to detract from Bessy’s public noticeability and sexuality. Miss Lydia observes that Bessy is “a bold-looking young person Not at all one I should like to encourage” (Eliot 250). Inherent in Miss Lydia’s prize is an assumption that poorer women are more promiscuous and, therefore, need policing by “proper” upper-class women like herself. For Miss Lydia, to provide an aesthetically appealing piece of clothing would “encourage” Bessy’s boldness, noticeability, and sexuality. Bessy’s body is policed rather than the actions of those that may take advantage of her; this itself highlights the threat of sexual violence constantly present for women like Bessy. Simply by being in public, she is in danger. Much worse for Miss Lydia is that Bessy might learn to cultivate such attention. As Barbara Zonitch argues, the societal fear was that women like Bessy would bring “potentially hazardous attention to themselves . . . [and] they might also learn to crave the seductive public gaze, thus sacrificing their supposedly natural proclivity for domestic life” (29). The more attention young women receive, the more attention they will crave. They will prolong their time in the public sphere and ignore their duties in the private one. Drawing upon such “logic,” Miss Lydia—who occupies a prominent,

⁵⁵ As Arthur’s celebrations occur in the summer, Bessy cannot instantly enjoy her prize.

⁵⁶ See the *OED*’s definition of “grogram.”

public place during the games—works to ensure that Bessy is neither an object of sexual attention nor learns to crave such attention.

Miss Lydia's policing is not just sexual in nature but also class based. As a "blooming" girl on the cusp of a marriage plot, Bessy theoretically could marry into another, higher class. Miss Lydia attempts to prevent such advancement. When Arthur observes that such a "grim-looking gown" is more appropriate for an older woman, his aunt retorts that she "'brought nothing but what is useful and substantial,' . . . [while] adjusting her own lace; 'I should not think of encouraging a love of finery in young women of that class'" (Eliot 250). While Miss Lydia is adorned with refined, expensive, and aesthetically appealing lace, through her prize she affirms class distinctions. By not wanting to "encourage" an interest in "finery" in those of "that class," Miss Lydia attempts to quash any of Bessy's (potential) desire to elevate her class standing; such a lack of encouragement implies that Bessy will never enter the class that already has access to such desirable goods. Miss Lydia uses fashion to reinforce that Bessy will always be part of the practical, not fashionable, class.

Miss Lydia's attempt to mitigate Bessy's supposed danger manifests in another form of violence: humiliation. To humiliate is a "violation of emotional boundaries" and this form of "assault render[s] their victims powerless," as Zonitch argues (15, 47). Proclaiming that Bessy should not assert herself publicly while also gifting her an unfaltering dress, Miss Lydia suggests to all that there is something about Bessy that should be policed.⁵⁷ Publicly shamed about her sexuality and given a dress distinctly

⁵⁷ This gift was not intentionally purchased for Bessy, as there was no way for Miss Lydia to know that Bessy would win. Therefore, this prize shows Miss Lydia's intent to publicly desexualize and shame any young, female tenant. That being said, after

not age appropriate, Bessy is driven to tears—tears visible due to Arthur’s landscape design. She “turned out of the open space, where she was visible from the marquee, and throwing down the odious bundle under a tree, began to cry—very much tittered at all the while by the small boys” (Eliot 250). Bessy is not able to privately express her discomfort; due to the garden’s layout, she must endure such shame publicly. She is mocked by those that will (likely) never experience such a public sexual shaming. Through her prize, Miss Lydia reinforces that Bessy should not be sexualized. Yet, she does so in such a way that emphasizes Bessy’s sexuality and puts her forward publicly, which both objectifies and sexualizes Bessy regardless.

Miss Lydia’s attempt to control Bessy’s class and sexual status is emphasized by her awarding fashionable clothing to older women. Miss Lydia provides “a scarlet cloak. . . for the old woman who wins” her race, for this winner (in the novel) poses less of a social threat than Bessy (Eliot 250). There is little fear that this elderly winner will advance her social status at this time in her life. While Bessy’s youth and marriageability mark her as one who could move into a new social status, the older winner is less likely to enter an advantageous marriage; she is not within King’s botanic vernacular.⁵⁸ Miss Lydia does not need to police the elderly winner, as there is little fear that the attention-grabbing scarlet cloak will garner her sexual attention and move this winner up in social status. Furthermore, as elderly women are often socially

seeing Bessy and hearing Arthur’s appeal to gift her something more age appropriate, Miss Lydia decides to keep the prize the same.

⁵⁸ The botanic vernacular, as stated earlier, is Amy King’s theorization that novelists use “bloom” to refer to the sexuality inherent within the marriage plot without breaking social decorum.

seen as non-sexual, donning eye-grabbing clothing will not encourage any sexual attention from onlookers.⁵⁹

Yet, even though these elderly women are not perceived as social or sexual threats, they too endure a form of gendered humiliation. Out of all the various chatter the narrative could include about Arthur's celebration, it records Bessy and the elderly women's races. Considering the elderly women's race, Arthur's friend, Gawaine, notes that he is betting on "[t]he long-legged one, unless they're going to have several heats, and then the little wiry one may win" (Eliot 248). While comments about long-leggedness and wiriness are not humiliating in the same way as Bessy's shaming, they once again affirm that female bodies are culturally policed; they, unlike men's bodies, are made into objects by the male spectators. Women contestants are positioned as oddities and spectacles. Out of all the races, the women-centered races are the most entertaining and the female bodies the most out-of-place. Arthur's birthday celebration affirms that women are forms of entertainment and amusing objects that are not taken seriously. While this treatment ranges from outright humiliation to small comments, women are continually objectified.

When elderly women race in *Evelina*, this objectification turns into outright physical violence. In the absence of sexual amusement, male spectators find enjoyment out of a racer's physical degeneration. Near the close of the novel Lord Merton and Mr. Coverley (two characters within Evelina's social set) arrange a race

⁵⁹ This social perception that elderly women are not sexual further illuminates gendered imbalances, as elderly men are often not instantly de-sexualized in the same way.

between two elderly women in a friend's garden. Considering the contestants, Evelina notes that

they seemed very healthy for their time of life, yet they looked so weak, so infirm, so feeble, that I could feel no sensation but that of pity at the sight. However, this was not the general sense of the company, for they no sooner came forward, than they were greeted with a laugh from every beholder. (Burney 311)

The women's physical unsuitability makes them such popular race contestants. Knowing that these "weak" and "infirm" women will be physically harmed creates the race's enjoyment for many of its spectators.

Those calling the race draw upon the garden's features, specifically its gravel walkways, to bring forth this physical violence. While such features were designed for one to promenade, take minimal exercise, and be a site of hospitality, their transformation into a racetrack exposes how the garden could quickly become a violent place. From its start, Merton and Coverley's race is characterized by violence:

When the signal was given for them to set off, the poor creatures, feeble and frightened, ran against each other: and, neither of them able to support the shock, they both fell on the ground They complained of being much bruised, for, heavy and helpless, they had not been able to save themselves, but fell, with their whole weight upon the gravel. (Burney 311)

Not only does the garden pathway become the racecourse, but the repurposing of this place creates a violent location for these women. The gravel becomes a tool of harm, as it injures these women during their fall. By choosing to use the gravel pathway, rather than creating a track upon the softer, grassed lawn surrounding these walkways, Merton and Coverley draw upon the existing structural forms of the garden to ensure that the contestants are put on the most harmful course. Unwilling to temporarily restructure the garden for a grass-based racetrack by putting up new markers, the

elderly women are forced to perform on more painful material. The race begins with these elderly women's bodies bruised and minds confused.

This race strips away its contents sense of humanity by intentionally removing their individuality. Betty Rizzo argues that “racing animalized the human contestants,” and, in this moment, these women lose any sense of individuality (74). The violence against them is accepted, as they are not recognized as human individuals. Tellingly, their names are unknown. Instead, they are connected to those who arranged the race: the “hallooing of ‘*Now, Coverley!*’ ‘*Now, Merton!*’ rung from side to side during the whole affair” rather than the contestants’ name (Burney 312). With the race centered on those who called it rather than on those performing the actual activity, these women’s individuality is stripped away, and their identities are assumed by Coverley and Merton. This lack of individuality ensures that spectators more readily accept the inevitable harm arising from this event. As long as the racers “seemed equal suffers,” the race continues without complaint: “they set off, and hobbled along, nearly even with each other, for some time; yet frequently, to the inexpressible diversion of the company, they stumbled and tottered” (311). When felt equally, suffering is amusing. As Julia Allen observes, such races were “staged because a wager had been made; interest focused not on the athlete’s performance. . . but solely on whether or not the terms of a wager had been met” (147). Stumbling, tottering, and hobbling in equal amount is not concerning, for it still maintains fair conditions for the men who called the race. The race in *Evelina* only ends when one contestant falls and harms themselves more than the other. Rather than expressing compassion over the fact that this woman cannot walk, her physical harm brings forth emotional harm; her “patron,” Coverley, loses the wager due to her fall and he almost strikes her in his rage. Such

racers are predicated upon degrading their contestants, specifically their female contestants. The gardens where such races took place afforded such degradation.

Throughout *Evelina* and *Adam Bede*, women are consistently treated as lesser, as objects to be played with. In his satirical cartoon (see Figure 3) of George IV escorting his dear lover, Eliza Chester, to a cottage in Windsor Park, Thomas Howell Jones forcefully highlights the status of women during this period: they are prey to be



Figure 3 The Head Ranger and his fallow deer. Thomas Howell Jones. 1829
Image Courtesy of the Library of Congress

stalked, caught, and transformed into trophies and/or devoured. Retaining her human head neck down Chester takes on the body of a deer, a game animal that George IV

would have hunted. With her collar and George IV's lack of weaponry, she is already caught and now is in the domestication process. She remains in "a neat Cottage close by," living there at the King's will. She is physically and sexually in his control. Windsor's landscape becomes a place where women are transformed into game animals that are stalked and hunted for the male sportsman's pleasure. Collapsing distinctions between dear, an endearment, and deer, a hunted animal, Jones shows the danger women could encounter in such locales. When women are socially and legally recognized as lesser, they can readily transform into decorative objects. Like hunting for sport, the hunting for women in Burney and Eliot's novels strips away a perambulator's selfhood when the walker is a woman. With garden pathways quickly transforming from public to private, from illuminated to dark, the garden can rapidly change from a place of pleasure to one of pain, forcing women's social identity to be built around such violence.

This chapter has argued that during the long nineteenth century a woman's reputation was often built around her navigation of sexual violence. Moreover, it has shown how *Evelina* and *Adam Bede* illuminate the sexual violence that was often afforded by a garden's structure during this period. In the next chapter, "To Improve," I turn to identity formation at a larger scale. Examining Austen's *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, alongside Margaret Oliphant's *Miss Marjoribanks*, I consider these novels' narrativization of an aspirational goal prevalent throughout the history of gardening: making Eden.

Chapter 3

TO IMPROVE: MAKING EDEN IN AUSTEN AND OLIPHANT



Figure 4 Plates 4 and 5, Humphry Repton, *The Red Book of Hatchlands in Surrey, 1800*. Images Courtesy of The Morgan Library & Museum.

On the left, a gloomy prospect. On the right, a bright prospect. Simply by lifting the overlay, Humphry Repton's *The Red Book of Hatchlands in Surrey* (1800) shows how this estate can be improved. Trees blocking sightlines and casting shadows are gone. Instead, far-off shrubberies create a sense of "cheerfulness" (Repton 7). Repton's Red Books, famous for their before and after slides that "offe[r] increasingly idealized views" of estates, inform their readers how to improve a landscape (Wall 7). What readers learn is that landscapes should be designed around the prospect—the

view from a house's principal rooms. To improve the prospect, Repton's Red Books consistently emphasize the need for "sweeping views and limitless parklands" (Voskuil, "Sotherton" 606). To create these views, Romantic-period improvers following Repton's advice often redirected walks, toppled cottages, uprooted trees, erected follies, remade hills, removed vagrants, and reshaped water features. In short, they fully remade their place.

The Red Books' remaking of place, however, is bound up in fictionalization and narrativization. While these Morocco-leather bounded books are each unique, they all follow a similar internal logic. As Cynthia Wall observes, comprised of "ground plans, watercolor slides, and narrative," they adhere to the same format: "describe[e] the topographical situation in terms of its landscaping potential . . . giv[e] a 'character' of the estate. . . evaluat[e] or recommen[d] the 'approach' from the perspective of the visitor" and then articulate this new, improved view (62, 75). They are centered around a landscape's potential. Put differently, Repton narrates a new version of a landscape that is not yet in existence. Within the Red Books, landscapes are pieces of fiction to be read. By combining graphics and narrative, Repton creates the experience of moving within a future landscape. Red Books, then, are inherently bound up in playing with a landscape's temporal and spatial relationship. The Red Books themselves highlight this emphasis on potentiality rather than actuality: "A Red Book came to be seen as a finished work in its own right and copies were often displayed proudly, their owners having no intention of carrying out their designs" (Mayer 19). During the Romantic period, the books quickly and cheaply⁶⁰ coded a

⁶⁰ Cheap in comparison to altering the landscape itself.

landowner's engagement with current aesthetic and landscape trends without the expense of enacting large-scale landscape changes. Landlords acquired cultural capital from owning these books. While Humphry Repton was not the only improver during the period and his Red Books were not the only pieces of improvement literature written at this time, as "the leading landscape theorist at the turn of the century," he and his works are emblematic of the improvement culture that gripped landscapers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Coffin 56). Through his Red Books, Repton offered "*projected* improvements to his *prospective* clients" (Wall 30; emphasis added). Repton's approach was inherently futuristic, centered on what a landscape—and, by extension, a sense of place—could become.⁶¹

In his Red Books, Repton offers a projection of what landed estates could become. In other words, he offers a projection of what much of the countryside's sense of place could become. Writing soon after Repton's death in 1818, architect S.H. Brooks observes that "England has been justly designated a cultivated garden" (iii). This observation that England, as a nation, is a garden is not unique. From Frances Bacon to J.C. Loudon to Charles Dickens to Rudyard Kipling, England-as-garden is repeatedly ingrained into English cultural consciousness.⁶² By the end of the nineteenth century, "the notion that the garden embodied Englishness reverberated"

⁶¹ Repton's model contrasted the style of Lancelot Capability Brown. Brown, a titan of eighteenth-century landscape gardening, went to estates enacting his designs and called his work "place-making," a term centered on establishing, building, and localizing a sense of place in the present (Wall 26). See Bisgrove (94-100, 130-131) and Wall (23-27) for more on the difference between Brown and Repton.

⁶² See Di Palma (49); Loudon ("Introduction" 5); Dickens (*The Mystery of Edwin Drood* 272); and Kipling (1-4).

across the nation (Helmreich 7). If, as Stephen Bending argues, to shape physical space is to shape identity and gardens are excellent sites for doing this work,⁶³ how this garden-nation is shaped is greatly significant. It directly impacts how its citizens are cultivated.

While garden styles fell in and out of favor throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, one concept persisted: improvement.⁶⁴ Grounded in Lockean theory⁶⁵, improving one's landscape was essential to improving oneself. To own land (to make it one's private property) one needed to labor and improve it. This transformation of land into private property also transformed individual identity.⁶⁶ Yet, who could improve land was limited, as land improvement practices arose alongside the enclosure movement. Large landowners took communal land previously used to graze cattle or grow local food and transformed it into large crop or animal fields, shifting away from a local, community-based model to a more individual one.

Making Eden was a prominent motivator in improvement practices. By improving land, some landscape theorists argued that this would enable landowners to exist within a prelapsarian state.⁶⁷ By creating an Edenic space, landowners created a

⁶³ See Bending 1.

⁶⁴ See Di Palma (43-83); Borsay ("Culture of Improvement" 191-204); and Drayton (51-67).

⁶⁵ See Di Palma 37-39.

⁶⁶ As Saree Makdisi summarizes, "improvers like [James] Loch were arguing that the people could be transformed and improved through the transformation and improvement of their space" (*Romantic Imperialism* 80).

⁶⁷ See Di Palma 62.

place, an identity, that was (theoretically) free from sin. To clarify, during this period this practice was not a *search* for Eden,⁶⁸ but a confidence that one could *make* Eden. It was not a literal attempt to “return” to Eden either, for “the landed gentry of England . . . was earnestly engaged in creating a natural landscape in England that had never existed before” (Bewell 58). That said, such practices were motivated by a “Nostalgia for Paradise,” which continued through the nineteenth century, motivating the reformation of the landscapes by those who lived upon and owned it (Eliade qtd. in Schulz 1). Those who had land to improve could, theoretically, create Edenic places and, with that, prelapsarian identities.

Throughout this chapter I track how novelists use improvement to consider the creation of a new English Eden. I argue that Jane Austen and Margaret Oliphant show that to improve a landscape is to project it into the future. Improvers align their sense of place with the future, projecting what it could be rather than focusing on its current state. Improving a garden—improving a national identity—is deeply embedded with fictionalization. It is about narrating a better sense of self than what is currently present. National identity is therefore bound up in possibilities rather than actualities. Defining the nation and its identity is a futuristic act, as it is constantly being made and remade through improvement rhetoric.

Specifically, I turn to Austen’s *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, along with Oliphant’s *Miss Marjoribanks*, to reveal how these novels show that such improvement efforts will inevitably fail. All three novels are deeply invested in the connection between gardens and identity and how improvement alters this

⁶⁸ See Grove 5 for details on fifteenth-century searches for Eden.

relationship. These novels respond to the impulse to make paradise that persisted throughout the nineteenth century, and I show how both Austen and Oliphant draw upon this future-thinking improvement culture to reveal that making Eden isn't actualizable. By reading *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* together, I suggest that they collectively show how one cannot make Eden by improving the landscape. Rather than defining English communities on a future sense of place, these novels show that an English Eden already exists within the countryside and if people live within such an Eden, they will acquire a more idealized identity. Landowners should not improve the landscape but maintain the paradise that already exists. Oliphant, on the other hand, turns to provincial town life to reveal that one can physically make a paradise, but it will not improve the people residing within it. Improving land breaks down place, decoupling physical landscape and identity. Such descriptions of improvement are greatly significant in these novels, for they theorize how communal and national identities form.

Maintaining Eden

Estates and their surrounding landscapes often take center stage in Austen's novels, as they foreground the class relations fueling the characters' actions. Alistair Duckworth's 1971 *The Improvement of the Estate* and Edward Said's 1993 "Jane Austen and Empire" have been fundamental to such considerations, as they emphasize how Austen's landscapes are entangled with inherited cultural practices and colonialism, respectively.⁶⁹ I turn to Austen's 1814 *Mansfield Park* and 1815 *Emma* to

⁶⁹ Lynn Voskuil's "Sotherton and the Geography of Empire: The Landscapes of *Mansfield Park*" is a prime example of these two discussions coalescing.

consider how these texts are deeply invested in contemplating the socio-political issues embedded within their landscapes. *Mansfield Park*, with its direct engagement with Humphry Repton's improvement practices, and *Emma*, with its comments upon nationalistic gardening practices through Donwell Abbey,⁷⁰ are deeply invested in considering how landscapes operate for the "knowable communities" of their characters.⁷¹

When read together, these novels suggest that an Edenic national English identity is built around maintenance and repair, not creation or improvement. Critical discussions of placemaking do not often consider maintenance, with Livesey and Plotz focusing on movement and portability, for instance. Yet, to create a paradisaical national community, I read Austen's works as putting forth a sense of perpetuation, rather than alteration. Eden is found in the present, not the future. By the time of Austen's writing, searching for an English Eden had helped structure the relationship between identity and landscape for centuries.⁷² That said, the correct way to embody this prelapsarian Englishness was always in flux. As Raymond Williams famously argues, the "escalator" to "Old England" stops at Eden (12). Austen promotes the notion that paradise is here and now; those living upon such paradisaical land find that their own identities will grow into more idealized versions of themselves. *Mansfield Park* illuminates the flaws within contemporary improvement practices—they are individualistic, not community-focused, they build landscapes and identities around a

⁷⁰ See Hunt, *Jane Austen* 44-46.

⁷¹ See Williams 165.

⁷² See Di Palma 43-83.

theoretical future that is never actualized—while *Emma* puts forth a model of maintenance.

“Did not know where he was”

Even though the word “improvement,” or some variation thereof, is used fifty-seven times in *Mansfield Park*, landscapes are not extensively altered within the text. Instead, its landscapes are like Repton’s Red Books, wrapped up in possibilities rather than actualities. Considering Austen’s engagement with Reptonian improvement is not new, as those from Alistair Duckworth to Richard Quaintance to Keiko Kagawa to Lynn Voskuil have considered how Austen critiques Repton’s landscape practices. Grounding this critical consideration is Duckworth’s observation that such “radical improvements of the kind Repton made were not improvements at all but . . . ‘alterations’ of a destructive nature” (47). What I would like to stress is that such “destructive” improvements are generally not made within the pages of the novel. By not allowing these improvements to be made upon the page, landowners within the text theorize their identity in relation to a place that does not yet exist.⁷³ Put differently, there is no place to bind these projected identities in the present. Rather than a futuristic approach to landscapes (and therefore, identities) via improvement, Austen puts forth a presentist approach.

Grounding *Mansfield Parks*’ discussion of improvement is Sotherton, the Rushworth family seat. The Bertrams et al. see Sotherton on the cusp of improvement. Inspired by a friend who “altered” his property so much so that Rushworth “did not know where [he] was,” Rushworth decides his property “will have *every*

⁷³ Similarly, Erika Wright observes that “[t]he novel’s interest in Fanny’s improvement, however, never fully materializes” (383).

improvement” (Austen 51). Little has been altered by the time of their visit, yet guests hear of what will be done. A primary target of Rushworth’s improving efforts will be Sotherton’s avenue of trees. At the time of this visit, Rushworth had already removed “two or three fine old trees . . . that grew too near the houses, and it opens the prospect amazingly” (53). Yet, he does not wish to stop there and plans to cut down more of the avenue, as its trees cast shadows upon the lawn. Here Rushworth mirrors Repton’s advice for Hatchlands. By removing the old trees that mark the property’s age, Rushworth privileges newness over historicity, aesthetics over permanence. Thinking that the property looks like “a dismal old prison,” as trees cast shadows and create an enclosed feeling, Rushworth wishes to open his prospect by altering his estate’s light and sightlines (51).⁷⁴ Furthermore, Rushworth notes he will make “a good deal of” the “stream” within the estate grounds (54). Repton’s 1778 *The Red Book of Attingham* straightens and widens a stream, making it look more lake-like.⁷⁵ While Rushworth does not detail his plan for the stream, it would likely be similar to Repton’s Attingham proposal, which improves the stream aesthetically. Rushworth plans to make Sotherton unrecognizable; he will ignore its *genius loci* to instead adhere to the period’s most fashionable designs.

Through Fanny, the novel’s heroine, *Mansfield Park* critiques Rushworth’s projected improvements. Fanny laments Sotherton’s future changes: “Cut down an avenue! What a pity! Does not it make you think of Cowper. ‘Ye fallen avenues, once more I mourn your fate unmerited’” (Austen 53). Fanny wishes to observe what is,

⁷⁴ See Austen 53n5 for more on Repton’s approach towards trees.

⁷⁵ See “Humphry Repton and the landscape of Attingham Park.”

rather than hear of what will be. Emphasizing that she wants to visit “Sotherton before it is cut down, to see the *place* as it is now,” she privileges Sotherton’s present-ness and current sense of place (53-54; emphasis added). She has a “respect for *genius loci*,” a respect for locality (Quaintance 377).⁷⁶ Fanny adheres to locality, to a landscape philosophy that values the uniqueness, the distinction, and the individualization of a place.⁷⁷ She puts forth maintenance and preservation, rather than destruction, as the appropriate way to care for landscapes.

The novel reinforces its critique of improvement culture through Henry Crawford’s proposal for the complete reconstruction of Edmund Bertram’s future home, Thornton Lacey. Crawford observes that to make a “tolerable” approach the “farm-yard [and blacksmith shop] must be moved” and, in doing so, disregards those living on and using the farm and blacksmith shop (Austen 223). Furthermore, he advises that the garden must be moved to the back of the house. Most significantly, as the house’s principal rooms do not have the best view, Crawford insists that “[t]he house must be turned to front the east instead of the north” (223). By rearranging Thornton Lacey so extensively simply for a better prospect, Crawford embodies how the upper-class masculine viewpoint often emphasizes the owner’s “unlimited ownership” (Labbe 68). Crawford directly speaks to the ecological changes he proposes for the property, noting that “something must be done with the stream”

⁷⁶ See Benis 341 for more on Fanny’s knowledge of and preference for the local.

⁷⁷ This is not to say that adherence to the *genius loci* means that no change is permitted. As George Dekker observes, nature can still be improved. Yet, this improvement should emphasize the place itself, rather than engage with “the wholesale reformatio[n] of nature” (136).

(Austen 224). Like Rushworth, here Crawford speaks to the type of change Repton details in his Attingham book. Water was a primary feature in landscape gardens; through its movement, reflection of light, noise, and nonhuman inhabitants, water features helped create a sense of liveliness and movement within a property. By planning such changes, Crawford proposes to entirely remake Thornton Lacey, changing its ecological and aesthetic makeup.

Through Crawford's plans, *Mansfield Park* explicitly links placemaking to identity. Furthermore, through Crawford it illuminates how projecting a sense of place and its related identity is problematic. For Crawford, such extensive efforts are worthwhile as they "may raise it [Thornton Lacey] into a *place*" (Austen 225). Rather than a "mere gentleman's residence," it will become "the residence of a man of education, taste, modern manners, [and] good connections" (225). Austen herself stresses *place*, which I suggest highlights the placemaking at the heart of landscaping. In Crawford's outline, all the improvements are intended to make Edmund's place—the spot that binds the identity of the owner—more modern, more cultured. Yet, in Crawford's conception, it is only a place in the future. For Crawford, Thornton Lacey can only represent and bind Edmund's identity in some future iteration. Crawford overtly acknowledges that changing Thornton Lacey would change Edmund's outward identity; in its new iteration, Thornton Lacey would announce that Edmund is not just a gentleman, but a gentleman of knowledge who engages with cosmopolitanism, education, and culture. For Crawford, these traits should "be stamped on" the property; by displaying them, such personal traits come into existence (225). Yet, readers know that Edmund—the educated clergyman, the considerate cousin, the

baronet's son—is a man of education, taste, manners, and good connections.⁷⁸ He already embodies the traits Crawford hopes to create. Despite Edmund's current status, only by remaking a property and ignoring what is present can Edmund be seen as a proper gentleman for the improver Crawford.

The inherent flaw within Rushworth and Crawford's plans is that they discount the local. As Lynn Voskuil observes, in Rushworth's (and I'd add Crawford's) plans, there "is the unquestioned proprietary right. . . to alter the landscape—a landscape that includes entire families and villages—to suit both his optical and social perspective . . . [which] is imperialist in its sensibility" ("Sotherton" 598). By planning to alter estates' landscapes around individual (not communal) use, Rushworth and Crawford effectively plan to colonize these landscapes. To actualize their plans, they would enclose common land, strip away land rights, and remove resources from the area's other inhabitants; they would "reord[er] the landscape figuratively and literally, erasing indigenous land and cultural practices" (McNeil 5). Tenants would not be afforded land rights or resources; their livelihoods would be wrecked for the fashionable landscape style of the moment. In making such plans, these improvers privilege their own taste over the communal good. They ignore all other people comprising their community, all other people who would occupy this landscape. Rather, it is through George Knightley's properties in *Emma*—properties that have not felt the improver's hands—where Austen shows an ideal blend of taste and community care. Knightley

⁷⁸ This is not to say that Edmund is an idealized character in *Mansfield Park*; his grooming of Fanny, his overlooking of Mary Crawford's inconsistencies, and his bending to the will of the group regarding *Lovers' Vows* shows as much.

and his Donwell Abbey model the ideal identity and landscape. In *Emma* readers see that if one simply maintains land, they will find paradise.

“English verdure, English culture, English comfort”

In *Emma* Austen shows that paradise exists in the present. Brian Southam argues that *Emma* is a national tale—a novelistic sub-genre often used by authors from the Celtic Fringe to insist that their readers recognize Ireland and Scotland as nations with their own history, culture, and the like—proposing that “there is no need to excavate the past to discover your origins and identity . . . the account of the indigenous English identity, the English way of life, its setting and its culture—is to be found here and now” (194).⁷⁹ Drawing from Southam’s argument that *Emma* is a national tale, I suggest that *Emma* shows how paradise is already within England through its depiction of Donwell Abbey and its surrounding properties. One neither needs to return to the past nor needs to project a paradise in the future. Rather than be subjected to improvement culture, Donwell Abbey and its surrounding properties are English Edens that simply need to be maintained.

Cosmopolitan towns like Highbury cannot offer a sense of English paradise. Rather than a bounded community, Highbury is filled with networks leading outside of itself. Close enough to London that Frank Churchill can ride there and back in a day to purchase a piano, it is connected “to the country’s larger economic and social grids, marking the town’s active participation in the Regency’s trade economy and Britain’s

⁷⁹ Southam here expands traditional conceptualization of national tales, as this novelistic sub-genre has generally been associated with Ireland and Scotland, rather than with England itself. See Southam 190-193 and Trumpener 11-17.

national identity,” as Janine Barchas observes (125). Its inhabitants reflect this town’s participation in trade, economy, and class movement: Mr. Weston purchases Randalls with newfound wealth, the merchant family, the Coles, earn enough to refurbish their house, and Mr. Elton goes wife-hunting in Bath. As Pam Morris notes, Highbury is a space, not a place: it must be “understood horizontally as a space of possibility and change, brought about by chance meetings, empirical contiguity and unregulated social interaction” (89). Highbury serves as a microcosm for the economic and class networks developing throughout Britain. It is a *space* of continual change rather than a *place* of stable boundedness.

Donwell Abbey, on the other hand, is a bounded, paradisaical place. Upon its first introduction, readers learn that George Knightley has valued maintenance over improvement:

the respectable size and style of the building, its suitable, becoming, characteristic situation, low and sheltered—its ample gardens stretching down to meadows washed by a stream, of which the Abbey, with all the old neglect of prospect, had scarcely a sight—and its abundance of timber in rows and avenues, which neither fashion nor extravagance had rooted up It was just what it ought to be, and it looked what it was. (Austen 247)

No Rushworths or Crawfords have altered this property. Once again, the trees serve as a potent symbol informing readers that the Knightley family has neither succumbed to the whims of fashion (recall the removal of trees in Repton’s *The Red Book of Hatchlands in Surrey*) nor used the trees to pay off debts. Trees, with their high economic value, were quick ways to raise funds; by cutting them down, landlords quickly erased the labor and growth of decades, if not centuries. The “abundance of timber” showcases the family’s historic ties to and care of this place. Furthermore, by not removing his trees Knightley shows that he does not care about improving his

prospect. While “his avenue of limes leads to a wall and pillars framing neither house nor view,” Knightley makes no attempt to alter this view (Todd 107). By not improving his prospect, Knightley privileges communal use. An improver would generally make the meadow, which is hardly seen from the Abbey, visible from their principal rooms. Yet, as Janet Todd observes, Knightley is “in no rush to ‘improve’ the pleasure grounds” (107). Recognizing that local villagers may use the path, he will not interfere with their use of his property.⁸⁰ Knightley will not remove cottages, trees, or well-trodden paths like many improvers of his day to develop his personal view. Instead, he respects Donwell’s *genius loci* and the community’s engagement with the landscape. Donwell Abbey’s sense of place is structured around community, maintenance, and tradition instead of individualism, improvement, and fashion.

Donwell Abbey emphasizes the connection between Eden and this non-improved estate through its fruit. Knightley is an Adam-figure (yet, unlike the Old Testament Adam, he is not forcibly cast out), as he has the literal fruit of the land. Knightley’s apple trees, continually praised throughout the novel, directly connect him to a prelapsarian milieu. Janine Barchas also makes such a connection, noting that Emma “judges Donwell a veritable Eden, casting George Knightly as the British Adam who tends to its fruit” (131). Bountiful in produce, idealized in its presentation, Donwell is Edenic. By “maintain[ing] the apple production from the orchards planted in his predecessors’ time” Knightley “has not succumbed to the lure of potentially improved profits from wheat and cattle” (Campbell 91). Knightley could drastically improve the profit of his land by changing its crop, yet he does not. Instead, he

⁸⁰ See Todd 107 for more.

displays a respect for the orchard's history and its valuable role for the larger community. *Emma* repeatedly notes that Knightley does not hoard his apples but shares them with townsfolk like Miss Bates. As Liz Bellamy argues, "an apple is never just an apple," as they are often "a symbol of natural abundance, simplicity, and English integrity" (15, 12). Knightley's apples, which he gives away with no regard to either his profit or own stores, connect him with an idealized form of English integrity and identity. His treatment of his apple orchard underscores how committed Knightley is to this practice of maintenance rather than improvement, community over individuality. Knightley keeps this prelapsarian milieu not through change, but by privileging maintenance and preservation.

Apples are not Donwell's only fruit. Its strawberry beds further connect Knightley to this idyllic, English identity. "Donwell was famous for its strawberry-beds" as they were some of "[t]he best fruit in England" (Austen 244, 247). Like the apples, these fruits are also shared with the larger community. Significantly, strawberries have strong ties to English nationalistic feeling, as John Plotz has outlined; for instance, they were so strongly tied to Englishness that they were grown in various colonies to ensure that colonizers still felt like they were at home in England while abroad.⁸¹ Through his agriculture practices, Knightley maintains a rooted sense of Englishness through the cultivation of his fruit beds.

This English, Edenic milieu extends to Donwell's surrounding properties and their owners. Abbey Mill Farm, leased by Robert Martin, is described as "favourably placed and sheltered," with "appendages of prosperity and beauty, its rich pastures,

⁸¹ See Plotz, "First Strawberries" 659-680.

spreading flocks, [and] orchard in blossom” (Austen 248-249). Already idyllic, it has no need of improvement. Not only is there an orchard, but it is blossoming, not only a pasture, but a fertile one. This thriving property is directly connected to an idealized sense of Englishness:

Abbey-Mill Farm, with meadows in front, and the river making a close and handsome curve around it. It was a sweet view—sweet to the eye and the mind. English verdure, English culture, English comfort, seen under a sun bright, without being oppressive. (249)

With its serpentine river that picturesquely nestles the property into the English landscape, Abbey Mill Farm is decidedly English, according to the novel. The narrative emphasis on the sun (bright but not too hot), along with its stress on the Farm’s bountiful nature, shows that the land itself responds to Knightley and Martin’s landscape management. Put differently, the landscape responds well to an emphasis on maintenance rather than change, on local rather than global. Through Abbey Mill Farm *Emma* once again stresses that paradise is found in a local, community-based, countryside that is not bound up within fashionable change, but is instead rooted in preservation.

Such an ideal landscape will improve all who reside upon it. This practice is most overtly shown through Harriet Smith, Emma Woodhouse’s companion and Robert Martin’s love interest. Readers meet Robert Martin as a favorable, well-cultivated person.⁸² Harriet Smith, on the other hand, grows greatly in character throughout the novel and her narrative directly emphasizes the connection between

⁸² As Mr. Knightley observes to Emma, “I never hear better sense from any one than Robert Martin. He always speaks to the purpose: open, straight forward, and very well judging He is an excellent young man, both as son and brother” (43-44).

one's identity and one's residence. Initially Emma claims that personal improvement occurs with a change in society. Emma focuses on improving Harriet's mental capacities through a change of company: "she would improve her; she would detach her from her bad acquaintance, and introduce her into good society; she would form her opinions and her manner" (Austen 18). Emma assumes that conversation, cultural access, and proximity to wealth will ensure Harriet's personal advancement. While Harriet is "cured . . . of her school-girl's giggle" through Emma's efforts, Harriet rejects a marriage proposal from a man she admires and continually places herself in positions of uncertainty by building up false expectations (43). Emma forgoes a key element in identity formation: identities are anchored by places. Emma cannot give Harriet a new sense of place, a new locality to bind her identity.⁸³ Harriet will only grow by finding a new place—somewhere besides Mrs. Goddard's boarding school in Highbury—to anchor her sense of self.

When she accepts Robert Martin's second proposal, Harriet finds her new sense of place at Abbey Mill Farm. Emma reflects on her failure at socially improving Harriet, observing "with him [Martin], and in the home he offered, there would be hope of more, of security, stability, and improvement" (Austen 332). Through her replacement Harriet will grow. The home Robert Martin offers, this testament to the beauties of the English countryside, will bring about Harriet's personal growth. Harriet's personal change occurs by removing herself from transient spaces, like Highbury and Goddard's boarding school, and living at the idyllic Abbey Mill Farm.

⁸³ While Emma allocates a bedroom for Harriet at Hartfield, this is not a change of residence. See Austen 42.

The maintenance and preservation of this “English verdure, English culture, English comfort” enables Harriet’s personal growth.

Readers can imagine what *The Red Book of Donwell Abbey in Surry* would contain. When the overlay is closed, Donwell would look like Austen’s description: avenues of trees that block sightlines, unadorned prospects, apple orchards, and walkways traversed with local villagers. When the overlay is raised, however, Donwell would have Rushworth-like improvements. The inconvenient trees would be moved, opening the house’s sightlines; these views would overlook a new pleasure ground adorned with walkways meant for pleasure, not community laborers. Perhaps a new folly, like the hermitage in *Adam Bede*, would adorn the landscape to provide a focal point for the prospect. All would be centered on Knightley’s prospect, his individual sightlines. The community members that use the property would be neglected and Donwell would become less local in both its materiality and use.

Yet, this improved future is not Donwell’s future. “[K]eeping no horses, having little spare money,” George Knightley was not in Rushworth’s position; while Knightley’s marriage to Emma gives him access to her thirty thousand pounds, meaning he would have enough money to make fashionable improvements, this is not Donwell’s future (Austen 147). As the symbolic patron saint of England—his first name evokes St. George—Knightley will continue to preserve his property.⁸⁴ This continued adherence to maintenance is most keenly expressed through Emma. With her “honest pride” and “respect” growing the longer she observes the Abbey, the novel indicates that an improver’s hand will not alter the estate (247). Rather, Knightley now has funds to repair whatever is or shall become broken and share more of his literal

⁸⁴ See Southam 196.

fruit with the community. Knightley furthers his ability to maintain Eden. This union of land and money will advance what is already present rather than alter the property.

Ultimately, *Mansfield Park* and *Emma* advocate for maintenance rather than improvement. Within the English countryside one finds an already-present Eden. In doing so, these texts are wary of moving away from the local, from community-based landscapes, and from established localities. This is an inherently conservative position for landscapes, as it suggests that to maintain an English paradise such estates—and the landed class that owns them—must continue to exist. Yet, *Emma* complicates this conservative class position; it shows that if these properties are maintained properly, such paradises are not closed off to other people. They are open to their surrounding community. Harriet, the (supposed) illegitimate child of unknown rank lives in this English Eden by the close of the novel. Miss Bates gets the “very delightful apples” from Donwell’s orchard, symbolic of this English paradise, every year (Austen 165). Communities and the identities they form can access Eden, so long as such paradises are maintained. So long as these orchards are not “improved” and removed from the property, the community will be able to gather the literal fruit from Donwell, this English Eden.

Losing Control of Eden in *Miss Marjoribanks*

Initially serialized in *Blackwood’s Magazine*, *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866) is the penultimate work in “Chronicles of Carlingford,” a collection of six novels detailing the provincial town of Carlingford. *Miss Marjoribanks* centers on a decade in the life of its titular character, Lucilla Marjoribanks, and her determination to improve

Carlingford. Armed with knowledge from the best conduct books,⁸⁵ Lucilla delays marriage—she has five viable suitors throughout the novel⁸⁶— to improve the social condition of this town by hosting gatherings every Thursday evening. Not only does she host such gatherings, but she also navigates a pseudo love-triangle and successfully manages a political campaign. Lucilla commits “to the reorganisation [*sic*] of [Carlingford] society” by establishing a “government . . . of the true despotic order” (Oliphant 93, 14). She gains such power by vowing “to be a comfort to dear papa,” for, under the guise of improving her father’s situation, she can influence all around her (15). Through the performance of this feminine duty, Lucilla can “smilingly” take “the reins of state” (29). After dedicating a decade to these improving efforts, Lucilla marries her cousin, Tom Marjoribanks, purchases the once-lost familial property, Marchbank, and plans to improve this new sphere.

Integral to Lucilla’s improving efforts is her control over Carlingford’s walled gardens. The novel consistently places Lucilla—the improver—within walled gardens, engaging with John Ruskin’s “Of Queens’ Gardens,” where walled gardens serve as a representation of a woman’s place in society.⁸⁷ A central concept in Ruskin’s “Of Queens’ Gardens” is that women can improve England, eventually creating an idyllic

⁸⁵ See Zlotnick 178.

⁸⁶ Her suitors are: Mr. Cavendish, a fashionable man who entangles himself with singer Barbara Lake, Archdeacon Beverley, who marries Lucilla’s charity case (Mrs. Mortimer), a general, who quickly turns his attentions to another, a rival doctor, whose courtship is cut short by the arrival of an Australian woman, Mr. Ashburton, the MP of Carlingford who intends to propose to Lucilla, and Tom Marjoribanks, her cousin who interrupts Ashburton’s proposals with his own.

⁸⁷ Oliphant read *Sesame and Lilies* (published in June 1865), as her 1868 review of Ruskin’s *Time and Tide* references his earlier work. See Schaub 200n10.

place for its residents. While women are embowered (and empowered) within their garden's sphere, it is a sphere that "Ruskin never precisely defines, but which seems to mean society in general, possibly even England itself" (Bilston, "Queens" 2).⁸⁸ A woman acquires such improving power, as she is skilled at ordering and arranging: "She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places" (Ruskin, "Queens" 21). A woman like Lucilla can bring out the best within her garden. For instance, women take care of her garden's "flowers" by ensuring to "lift their heads when they are drooping" (50). Drawing upon the cultural association between women and plants,⁸⁹ Ruskin's queen takes care of her young charges, thereby creating well-educated girls who will soon become queens themselves, tending to the "delicate plants" of the next generation. In doing such work, women can create a sense of paradise. Ruskin directly speaks to creating an Edenic world in his *Modern Painters*:

For what can we conceive of that first Eden which we might not yet win back, if we chose? . . . Paradise was full of pleasant shades and fruitful avenues. Well: what hinders us from covering as much of the world as we like with pleasant shade, and pure blossom, and goodly fruit? (1)

By women tending to their gardens, Eden can be won back. Rather than getting mankind cast out of Eden, the Ruskinian woman tends to all within her garden, which is separate from "the agony of men" outside her garden's walls (Ruskin, "Queens"

⁸⁸ While I recognize Ruskin's conservative gender politics, here he nevertheless "emerges . . . as one who offers an 'intoxicating' vision of 'power and a wide venue in which to apply it' to 'those to whom the radical possibilities proffered by women's rights were out of the question'" (Weltman qtd. in Bilston, "Queens" 2).

⁸⁹ Ruskin notes that "a girl. . . grows as a flower does, —she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough" ("Of Queens" 34).

51). This garden can become quite expansive. If “[t]he whole country is but a little garden,” it is a woman’s civic duty to organize, arrange, and better her garden: her nation (40). From behind her walled garden, for instance, Lucilla ensures that her candidate, Mr. Ashburton, wins his parliamentary campaign, therefore enacting influence at a national, governmental level.

Oliphant literalizes the concept of England-as-garden by making Lucilla’s Carlingford an amalgamation of enclosed gardens. Garden walls structure the town, defining its infrastructure and how its residents can move within it.⁹⁰ Most specifically, to enter Lucilla’s home—the epicenter of Carlingford’s community—visitors must navigate Carlingford’s gardens. They must go “between the two straight lines of garden-wall[s]” demarcating Grange Lane and enter through the garden gate (Oliphant 116). This garden distinguishes Lucilla’s *physical* boundary of influence. Once they’ve crossed this threshold, visitors enter an “embowered garde[n]” (172). As Page and Smith note, the bower “served so neatly as an extension of the home” (31). Within this walled garden, this extension of home, is a beautiful scene: “from the windows of Lucilla’s drawing-room [is] the prospect of the garden walls and glistening trees,” along with laurel and ivy (Oliphant 206-207).⁹¹ Within the walls of Grange Lane, visitors and residents alike will find a beautiful, tranquil, and safe place

⁹⁰ For instances of garden walls directing Carlingford’s population, see: Lucilla’s initial survey of the town (32-33); Beverley and Lucilla’s meeting (194); Cavendish’s avoidance of “the garden-walls” where so many people congregate (261); the children in Mrs. Mortimer’s school (196-207, 286, 319); and patients coming in and out of Dr. Marjoribanks’s practice (396).

⁹¹ See Oliphant’s 1876 *Phoebe Junior* (147) for more about the plants within the garden. This work is another novel in the “Chronicles of Carlingford” series.

to congregate. Lucilla does not often go beyond these garden walls into the town, the public part of Carlingford. While her influence extends outwards, Lucilla's machinations almost exclusively occur within her garden's walls.

Within these walls Lucilla Marjoribanks operates under the philosophy that improving her garden will therefore improve and define her community's identity. Considering Lucilla, place, and identity, much Oliphant scholarship considers how the drawing-room directs Lucilla's endeavors, as it is through this site that she "expand[s] the boundaries of her cultural place" (Tange 163). While recognizing the significance of the drawing-room for Lucilla, I suggest that her garden also becomes another room, another tool, that enables her "to re-cent[er] domesticity outwards," extending her control over the town as well (Page and Smith 2).⁹² Lucilla uses her garden like an extra limb that can direct the actions and identities of all within Carlingford. As a Victorian hostess, it is her duty to "consciously creat[e a spot] as a locus for the enactment of multiple kinds of personal interactions. The hostess influenced by creating the material—the spatial—possibility for influence" (Harris 6). It is Lucilla's self-proclaimed role to create a place for the community, a location that grounds their actions. She often does this work through her garden. Despite Lucilla's use of gardens in this way, the relatively few literary critics⁹³ who consider Oliphant consistently

⁹² As the narrator observes, Lucilla transforms an "abstract English drawing-room" into "an individual spot of ground revealing something of the character of its mistress" (28). For critical discussions of Lucilla and her drawing room see: Blair (148); Zlotnick (174-189); and Tange (163-168).

⁹³ Elizabeth Langland, Pamela K. Gilbert, Elisabeth Jay, and George Levine have all argued in some fashion that by "[c]hallenging . . . so many Victorian sacred cows—romance, angels, feminine duty, innocence, passivity, and the separation of home and state" Oliphant has often been relegated to the fringe of Victorian studies (Langland 153). See Langland (148-171); Gilbert (123-132); Jay (xix-xxx); and G. Levine (233).

overlook them. Page and Smith, the few who do, suggest that Oliphant “use[s] . . . various styles of gardens and landscape architecture as indicators of status and aspiration, as well as a garden setting to further plot and narrative lines” (228). By foregrounding the gardens of *Miss Marjoribanks*, readers see how Lucilla adopts the role of a queen in her garden, yet she cannot make the actions and identities of those residing within her garden align with her plans.

By considering Lucilla’s physical engagement with her local, walled gardens, I show how *Miss Marjoribanks* literalizes the concept of a queen in the garden to reveal that social paradise is not actualizable in Carlingford (and in England more broadly). In short, I show why such improving efforts fail. (Even her most successful change—getting her candidate elected as Carlingford’s representative, is not necessarily an actual improvement for the town.)⁹⁴ While Lucilla can control the construction of her material surroundings, she cannot control how the identities of those within the town respond. I suggest that the text turns Ruskin’s garden into a literal place and, in so doing, exposes the limitations of those in Lucilla’s position.⁹⁵ When leaving for Marchbank, Lucilla, “the disappointed reformer,” observes that the townsfolk “will go back to their old ridiculous parties, as if they had never seen anything better” (Oliphant 483). Her efforts to socially improve the town come to nothing, for, as I argue, Lucilla uses gardens ineffectually. The novel shows how placemaking centered

⁹⁴ While this campaign proves Lucilla can enact real change, her candidate is not necessarily the best for Carlingford (or for the nation more broadly). Throughout the campaign Lucilla obscures her candidate’s politics, so his position on voting reform and expanding women’s rights are unknown.

⁹⁵ Contrarily, Melissa Schaub suggests that “Lucilla abandons Ruskin’s romantic garden” to break down the “boundary between male and female spheres” (201-202).

upon improvement decouples physical construction and identity construction. In short, the novel narrates how place breaks down. Despite rigidly adhering to the boundaries of her garden walls and performing her arranging and ordering duties perfectly—making walled paradises—Lucilla cannot truly control the townsfolk. Location and identity have decoupled, place has broken down, and improving a location does not mean identities will alter. By interrogating Lucilla’s physical alterations to Carlingford, we see how she is unable to actualize the social improvements she desires. In what follows I detail two walled gardens—Lucilla’s own and one she makes for a neighbor—to consider such decoupling of identity and location.

“Half the gentlemen . . . did not care about moonlight”

Lucilla draws upon her walled garden to order and arrange her sphere when navigating her first romantic entanglement. Carlingford expects Mr. Cavendish—a popular, fashionable flirt—to propose to Lucilla, yet his blatant preference for Barbara Lake, a lower-class singer often invited to Lucilla’s house, scandalizes the town. Much of the town eagerly anticipates Lucilla’s reaction to Cavendish’s preference. They congregate at Lucilla’s house to observe the interactions between the three: with “a larger assemblage than was usual” “Lucilla’s constituency. . . had come with the laudable intention of observing her on a trying occasion, and watching how she got through it” (Oliphant 130, 133). When Cavendish first enters Lucilla’s drawing-room, for instance, “the other guests had formed into groups round the [drawing] room, leaving a great space and avenue of approach to the lady of the house in the middle; and the audience thus arranged” so there was a “horrible naked space” for Cavendish to walk within (130, 131). In this moment guests arrange themselves to force Cavendish to stand alone while in the direct path of Lucilla; he is left in that “naked”

space, made to walk up the “avenue” to Lucilla in sight of all. In short, he is made to publicly approach Lucilla after his dalliance with Lake. Lucilla uses the garden to control this large gathering of gossips and onlookers.

The garden can reestablish the order that the drawing-room cannot maintain. “It was when things were at this crisis, and all eyes were directed to Lucilla . . . that Miss Marjoribanks made that proposal of adjourning to the garden,” as the narrator observes (Oliphant 132). Lucilla extends the “material—the spatial—possibility of influence” from the drawing-room to the garden, drawing upon her ability to control her guests’ movements more easily in the garden (Harris 6). Lucilla uses the garden to arrange her guests and mitigate the discomfort of Cavendish, Lake, and herself. It is here—in this walled garden—where Lucilla can direct everyone’s actions.

Lucilla manipulates the garden’s spatial and material components to accomplish the evening’s primary goal: entertaining and distracting her guests to suppress any social condemnation they may place upon Cavendish and Lake, along with redirecting any unwanted attention from herself. When preparing for the evening:

[S]he had placed the seats in the garden (not too visibly, but shrouded among the shrubs and round the trunks of the trees), and chose the spot for a little illumination, which was not to be universal, like a tea-garden, but concentrated in one spot under the big lime-tree. (Oliphant 129)

Moreover, for her garden’s lighting she ensured that “a glimmer of yellow light from the lamps” would appear on one side of the garden and rely upon the rising “moon” to come up “like a ball of silver over the dark outlines of Carlingford” on the other (134). Using the lime-tree as the evening’s focal point, Lucilla creates a sense of privacy at both the spatial and visual level. First, by dispersing seats around the garden, ensuring that there are “corners to retire into,” she guarantees that guests are neither seated near

each other nor readily visible to one another (134). In short, she prevents guests from collectively ambushing Cavendish. Likewise, this design creates multiple places for Cavendish to hide himself from unwanted public scrutiny. Second, by focusing the lighting on the lime tree, Lucilla directs her guests' eyes towards the tree and away from any seats obscured by shrubs. By staying away from the tree, one's actions are somewhat protected by darkness. Furthermore, bringing guests out while the moon is rising provides an alternative spectacle for her guests, directing their attention away from Cavendish. Lucilla arranges her garden to provide her guests (including Cavendish) more privacy in their movements than they have in the drawing-room.

Through such designs, Lucilla organizes and arranges most of her guests. Guests praise her hostessing efforts, toasting her ingenuity: "Nobody but Lucilla ever could have thought of anything so delicious" (Oliphant 134). While using a garden as an entertainment space was, and still is, common, for those in Carlingford such an act is positioned as unusual; it could only be successful with Lucilla at the helm. She (through her own efforts) has ensured that she is the only queen and only she can control the garden and those within it. Through her use of the garden, she evaporates the general discomfort over the Cavendish-Lake relationship felt throughout the town. Despite this initial concern, as her guests observe, "[e]verything was as clam and cheerful and agreeable as if Carlingford had been a social paradise" (135). Within Lucilla's walled garden Carlingford is in an idyllic environment.

Despite creating an idealized garden atmosphere, Lucilla cannot control all within her sphere. Specifically, she cannot control its men. She can move the women into the garden—"a bevy of ladies" move themselves from the drawing-room to the garden at her request (Oliphant 133). Most men, however, do not follow Lucilla's

request to adjourn to the garden: “Half the gentlemen. . . did not care about moonlight” (135). Theoretically, a woman’s embowered garden can metaphorically stretch everywhere when she is needed, therefore dictating the acts of men. In literalizing that concept, Oliphant shows that such a reach is not always feasible. Commenting on the limitations within Ruskin’s garden, Joanna Tapp Pierce observes that women can extend their sphere of influence, but only “when England’s men demand it of her” (758). Women can acquire such power, but only when they are called upon to use it. Lucilla rightly observes that there will be scandal if the townspeople do not follow her arrangements, yet she cannot force everyone to listen to her advice. While these men are still in Lucilla’s domestic space, they assert their own power by refusing to follow her directions.

By refusing to enter the idyllic garden she created, half of the men of Carlingford do not enter this social paradise and are immediately drawn into conflict. Most specifically, Cavendish refuses to go into the idealized garden created just for his protection and stays within the drawing-room. His determination to stay within the drawing-room—to not recognize how it is Lucilla, not himself, who knows the places of things—creates conflict. With the unforeseen entrance of Archdeacon Beverley, Cavendish is publicly scorned (Beverley informs the town of Cavendish’s past misdeeds). Cavendish is most assuredly not in an idealized spot, yet if he had entered Lucilla’s idyllic garden, he would have avoided such public condemnation. This event not only harms Cavendish, but also shows the limitations of Lucilla’s reach. Lucilla’s sphere shrinks; while she still controls the garden, she no longer has control within her drawing-room. Such loss of power is affirmed through Lucilla’s immobility: “so taken by surprise . . . she stood still, thinking no more of her duties” (Oliphant 136). Such a

momentary loss of control permanently alters Lucilla's improving efforts, for Cavendish, the only man in town who can flirt and who has served as Lucilla's "valuable assistant" in her Thursday evenings, leaves the town for years, altering how Lucilla can go about reforming Carlingford (84). In this instance it is Carlingford's male resistances who refuse to recognize Lucilla's ordering and arranging prowess, thereby disrupting her improving efforts. As the next section details, Lucilla's improving efforts collapse within the walled garden itself through her relationship with Mrs. Mortimer.

"the walls that shut her in"

Lucilla physically extends her sphere by creating a walled garden for Mrs. Mortimer, a poor widow. Unlike Emma's initial efforts with Harriet Smith, Lucilla operates under the assumption that by changing someone's physical position, their identity will also change. Lucilla constructs an idyllic walled garden for Mortimer to anchor her sense of self. It is an idyllic space, comprised of "whitewashed walls" with trellises of wisteria and "embowering foliage" enclosing a "little garden very bright with flowers of the simplest old-fashioned kinds, with a little house" appearing like "an old-fashioned and quasi-rural cottage" (Oliphant 194, 200). Such an emphasis on "old-fashioned" anticipates a late-Victorian desire to turn away from imported flowers that placed landscapes into global networks, and toward domestic, older fashioned flowers like peonies and sweet-williams.⁹⁶ Lucilla makes a walled cottage garden that would soon be seen as part of "the 'precious heritage' of the nation" by those like

⁹⁶ See Wilson 490-491.

Gertrude Jekyll (Helmreich 82).⁹⁷ Peaceful, away from the bustle of town, and evoking an older England, this garden is emblematic of a paradisaical walled garden.

Lucilla plans for Mortimer to assume the role of a queen in a garden. Mortimer physically becomes a “beautiful adornment of the state,” just as Ruskin outlines (“Queens” 43-44). In this idealized place, Mortimer physically thrives. The narrator observes that Mortimer had “grown younger by ten years during the period of comparative comfort and tranquility which Lucilla’s active help and championship had procured for her . . . and the bloom on her cheeks” grew over time (Oliphant 196). Arranging the garden’s flowers—flowers here referring both to the plants and Mortimer herself, whose “bloom” symbolically connects her to flora—Lucilla ensures that everything (human and non-human) is under her control. Moreover, as Lucilla sets up Mortimer as a governess, through Mortimer Lucilla attempts to ensure the growth of future generations. Mortimer has an abundance of “little scholars” and the children attend “little class[es]” and help tend the vegetable garden (196). Gardening and education were linked together throughout the nineteenth century.⁹⁸ Metaphorically, gardens align with schoolchildren; both plants and children improve with proper nourishment and training. Practically, the garden serves as a useful place to educate. Not only can students learn the responsibility attached to tending a

⁹⁷ For more on cottage gardens and their connection to Englishness, see Helmerich 66-90.

⁹⁸ The garden was often seen “as a school of virtue: a site both for modeling appropriate behavior in children, particularly girls, and for the contemplating the possibilities—and dangers—beyond the boundaries of that domesticated space” (Page and Smith 17).

vegetable garden, but they can also learn botany, a popular discipline during the period.

Yet, Mortimer will not order, arrange, or improve these children. While Mortimer lives within and occupies her prescribed role of being an improving “queen” occupying the garden, she does not recognize it as her *place*. Mortimer is living in a prescribed place made for her, yet she refuses the identity such a place attempts to bind. Rather, it is Lucilla who performs all of the garden’s maintenance. It is Lucilla, not Mortimer, who “set[s] the children to rights” after they get muddy (Oliphant 201). Lucilla tends to the children, occupying the role of female improver. Furthermore, it is Lucilla who initially created and now maintains this garden: “It was she who had seen after the putting-up of that trellis round that porch, and the arrangement of the Wisteria,” who arranged and designed the flower beds, and who “made the tour of the garden, inspecting everything, to see that all was in order” (199, 202). It is Lucilla’s directions that establish the bower, the metaphoric and literal boundary separating Mortimer from the outside world. Lucilla orders, arranges, and maintains this walled garden. Despite the fact that it is Mortimer’s residence, it is Lucilla who sustains this place. Mortimer’s inability to feel at home is directly connected to her lack of engagement with the place’s maintenance. Mortimer occupies this location but is not anchored or bound to it in any way. Lucilla outsources this place to Mortimer, yet it remains Lucilla’s garden, Lucilla’s place.

Through Mortimer, *Miss Marjoribanks* shows that forcibly living in a place that is not one’s own causes true distress to one’s sense of self. Mortimer directly connects such a walled garden to a prison, observing that it “may look like a little paradise in the sunshine,” but it can “feel like a dungeon when a poor woman all alone

looks out across her flowers in the rain, and sees nothing but the wall that shuts her in, and thinks to herself that she has no refuge nor escape from it” (Oliphant 205). Agony is not just found outside the walls in the world of men but is also felt within the garden walls. It is the very presence of the walls themselves—those barriers between Mortimer and the public world—that create such a feeling of imprisonment. The garden walls “cut her off from any succor outside” (205). She cannot find all that she needs to emotionally thrive within the garden and physically dividing her from the outside world causes mental distress. Such distress is nearly fatal to Mortimer’s spirit, as the “pleasant sounds [that] came in over that enclosure” are from “people who might be called alive, while this solitary woman was buried, and had nothing to do with life” (286). For Mortimer, to be behind garden walls is to be buried alive. In this instance, the garden prevents growth and life.

Eventually, spatial construction and identity construction fully decouple, and Lucilla completely loses control over her improving efforts. Significantly, Mortimer defies the social category Lucilla places her within—widowed schoolteacher—by marrying one of Lucilla’s potential suitors herself, Archdeacon Beverley. Mortimer and Beverley (who had a previous romantic connection) reunite within this walled garden and eventually marry. Lucilla designed this spot, intent on binding Mortimer’s identity to it, and yet her actions fail. She cannot construct a sense of place for another person. Lucilla herself meditates on this loss of control:

If there was any place in the world where she should have been free from such a shock, it certainly should have been here, in this spot, which she had, so to speak, created . . . she knew at the same time that the widow was the very last person from whom a new discomfiture should come, and that to enter in under that trellis when he left her was, on the Archdeacon's part, an aggravation of the change in his sentiments which it was difficult to bear. (Oliphant 199-200)

In a place of her creation, in one of her walled paradises, Lucilla loses power. She attempts to create a sense of place for Mortimer, yet Mortimer's actions and identity do not align with it. Mortimer's identity is her own and is not anchored to this new place. Such failure not only alters Mortimer, but also Lucilla, as she loses a potential husband. Despite creating this idyllic spot, Lucilla neither controls her subjects nor protects her own interests.

While Lucilla has control over the objects, plants, and some of Carlingford's people, ultimately improving the town is beyond her control. Her attempts to create a larger sense of place for Carlingford repeatedly fails. That said, such attempts will continue. There is no Mr. Knightley-esque "It was badly done indeed!" moment in *Miss Marjoribanks*, and Lucilla does not grow in this novel (Austen 259). Most pointedly, by marrying her cousin, Tom Marjoribanks, Lucilla does not change her identity. As Hope Rogers emphasizes, Lucilla "never changes, emerging from her novel without learning a single lesson, and without even experiencing a crisis of doubt and soul-searching" (693). She firmly remains Lucilla Marjoribanks both in name and action.⁹⁹ Therefore, her improving efforts will continue. Despite her failures in Carlingford, "it was not in Lucilla's nature to live without a *sphere*" and she simply decides to move her sphere from Carlingford to Marchbank (Oliphant 411; emphasis added). Moving to Marchbank, a country seat her family used to own, Lucilla plans to reform the village and extend her sphere of influence. Just as she did to Carlingford, she will do to Marchbank. She plans to improve the townspeople through spatial reorganization:

⁹⁹ For more on Lucilla's lack of change, see: Robinson (73); Peterson (70); Blair (160); and Rogers (691-692).

If it had been a model village, with prize flower-gardens and clean as Arcadia, the thought of it [moving there] would not have given Miss Marjoribanks half so much pleasure. The recollection of all the wretched hovels and miserable cottages exhilarated her heart. (486)

This village is not yet Arcadia. It is not yet an idyllic, rural paradise. Yet, Lucilla thinks she could make it so by creating new physical and social structures. She has learned no lesson and will continue to make physical paradises. Unable to recognize the decoupling of physical sites and identity, Lucilla continues to make *places* for the town and its residents will continue to not adhere to her construction.

Through the gardens of *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Miss Marjoribanks*, readers see the failure embedded within making a paradise. Yet, by the end of the nineteenth century, such quests to make garden-based paradises had literal roots. Urban planner Ebenezer Howard attempted to enact social reform through the creation of garden cities. Put differently, he attempted to change society through the transformation of people's sense of place. Howard's garden cities would theoretically provide their residents "with the most wholesome facsimiles of Eden that suburban planning and technological competence and social conscience could devise" (Schulz 5). Specifically, Howard conceptualized a bounded, prearranged garden city meant to blend the best of the country and the city for its 32,000 residents. This self-contained community would be communally owned by all residents and at its heart would be a "Central Park," which would have a small garden surrounded by public buildings like a museum, town hall, and library. Precisely ordered and arranged, all that the residents would need could be found in their self-enclosed, garden (see Figure 5). Howard's design privileges communalism, moderation, order, and civic and cultural engagement. When one garden city reached its capacity—32,000 residents—another garden city would be built. Eventually cities like London would be surrounded by

how to better the future. To create Eden, one is always projecting forward. Eden is a future aspiration, never an actualization.¹⁰⁰ By centering their narratives on improvers in gardens, Austen and Oliphant consider the futures that cannot be physically reached and illuminate how quests to bind identity upon future landscapes breaks down placemaking at personal, communal, and national levels.

In what comes next, I continue this exploration of how the novelistic imagination uses gardens to consider the development of national identity. Rather than focusing on future projections, however, in the next chapter I consider the practice of building the past. “To Historicize” considers how gardens were mobilized to link Scotland and England under the same national identity during the Romantic period. In particular, I turn my attention to one of Austen’s contemporaries, Sir Walter Scott, to reveal his role in historizing a national landscape to make a national identity.

¹⁰⁰ Such quests for paradisaical cities continue to this day. See Kargon and Molella (7-24).

Chapter 4

TO HISTORICIZE: BUILDING A HISTORIC LANDSCAPE IN SCOTT

I have done what man may. I have planted a good many acres—I have built a well about 400 years old—I have inclosed [sic]—I have gardened ~ Sir Walter Scott to Miss Clephane, 1813¹⁰¹

By constructing his 400-year-old well, Sir Walter Scott built time into his garden. Living three miles from the ruined, gothic Melrose Abbey, Scott “foraged” “carved stone, niches, [and] gothic molds . . . from ruined edifices,” thereby extracting physical evidence of the past to reincorporate into his estate, Abbotsford (Malley 239).¹⁰² Washington Irving also speaks to Scott’s architectural pillaging, observing that when he visited Abbotsford in 1817 all “[a]bout the place were strewed various morsels from the ruins of Melrose Abbey, which were to be incorporated in his mansion” (43). Comprised of “new old” objects—new to Abbotsford, old in physical existence—the estate is a bricolage of historical artifacts. As Irving summarizes, Scott’s estate “was one of his air castles” that “he was reducing to solid stone and mortar” (43). Abbotsford was a fantasy of the past that Scott attempted to physically

¹⁰¹ See *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott* 3: 232. For further “new old” references see 3:219, 223; 4: 18; 8: 271.

¹⁰² Such a practice was not isolated to Scott. Considering Northumberland’s wealthy residents in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Paul Readman observes that there was “[a] desire for continuity with the imagined medieval moss-trooping past . . . [and i]n some cases old houses, castles and pele towers were incorporated into new constructions, rather than being demolished and replaced, or rebuilt outright” (79).

realize in the Scottish Borderlands. Noting to his friend, John B. S. Morritt, that there is “nothing so easy as to make a tradition,” Scott builds a new version of the past by drawing from his local resources (qtd. in Lockhart 31). He makes Abbotsford a piece of historical fiction. Such past building through landscapes and estates materializes in his literature as well. Through his property and his writings Scott actively participated in a larger cultural impulse arising in the Romantic period to rewrite the history of Britain’s landscapes and gardens. This chapter puts Scott’s *Waverley* (1814) into dialogue with architectural and horticultural pattern books to uncover how Scott narrativizes what I call the Old English ecological aesthetic: an aesthetic that attempts to bring together the disparate communities of England and Scotland to form an overarching British community by way of a shared national style and ecology.

During the Romantic period, landowners who drew upon this aesthetic approach would all theoretically have the same sense of place, the same sense of identity. Creating this identity was culturally significant, for, as Saree Makdisi has so well outlined, this period was deeply concerned over “articulations of the sense of self (collective, social, national, imperial, and individual)” (*Making England Western* 13). This chapter specifically illuminates how horticulturalists and architects from the late-eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century proposed a national aesthetic, and therefore a national identity, that would unite England and Scotland. In doing so, it reveals how this national level of placemaking was founded around establishing a shared historical narrative through the estate garden. I interrogate the influence such horticultural designs and landscape management had in Scott’s Scottish estate gardens to argue that Scott played an instrumental role in this ecological management of Britain by helping formulate such an aesthetic while also critiquing it. *Waverley* reveals the violence

inherent within building a national landscape and identity—a national sense of place—and, by doing so, elucidates how Scottish landscapes are violently forced to refigure themselves at aesthetic and environmental levels with English landscapes to form an Andersonian imagined community.

Waverley has long been a focal point in critical debates on the novel and the development of Scottish, English, and British identities. As Katie Trumpener has shown, this novel comes out of a period when national tales and historical novels were articulating and developing national identities.¹⁰³ *Waverley* operates as a nexus where individual, national, and imperial selves interact, articulating themselves based upon each other. Collectively, a majority of Scott criticism considers *Waverley*'s Scottish identity and nationalism as a past remnant unable to operate in its contemporary moment. For Saree Makdisi Scott “ossifies history,” for Ian Duncan he “discover[s] history in order to discover the horizon at which . . . history comes to a stop,” for George Levine he “aestheticized” the past, for Evan Gottlieb he puts Scottish national identity into “the dustbin of history,” and for Andrew Lincoln Scott ensures past violence is “detached” from the present.¹⁰⁴ Scottish nationalism stops at the '45 and is replaced with British unity. Yet, Fiona Robertson, Alison Lumsden, Julian D'Arcy,

¹⁰³ Considering the differences between the national tale and historical novel, Trumpener observes: “The national tale before *Waverley* maps developmental stages topographically, as adjacent worlds in which characters move and then choose between; the movement of these novels is geographical rather than historical. In contrast, the historical novel . . . finds its focus in the way one developmental stage collapses to make room for the next and cultures are transformed under the pressure of historical events . . . the two genres develop [in] dialectically opposed ways of situating culture” (141-142). See xii, 128-157 for more.

¹⁰⁴ See Makdisi (*Romantic Imperialism*, 97); Duncan (*Modern Romance* 53); G. Levine (qtd. in Lumsden, 81); Gottlieb (178); Lincoln (61).

and Caroline McCracken-Flesher have considered Scott's subversion of this imperialist narrative; as McCracken-Flesher observes, "Scott provided many and contesting version of" Scottish, English, and British selves, meaning his "novels do not stay contained within the bounds of . . . the reductive and often binary assumptions of nationhood" (9, 11).¹⁰⁵ These scholars argue that Scott sometimes critiques the pro-imperialist agenda that appears on the surface of his works.

I find such a critique in Scott's representation of the *Old English ecological aesthetic*: an architectural and landscape style that a set of horticulturalists and architects proposed that was built upon the notion that the British climate demanded the Gothic style. Advertising estate ornamental features like ruins, bridges, and hermitages to landowners, these works proposed a national aesthetic—the Gothic—to mediate twin environmental and social concerns over what it meant to be part of Britain. During this period there was a simultaneous turn from a singular conception of nature to natures with the radical growth of the horticultural trade and a shift in the British Isles' cultural fabric with the growth of industrialization, urbanization, and imperialism.¹⁰⁶ By presenting the Gothic as a climate-based national style, these horticulturalist-architects proposed a physical and ideological turn back to a period when such an expansive horticultural trade did not exist and when nineteenth-century industrialization was inconceivable. Anyone within Britain who constructed their

¹⁰⁵ Also see Robertson (10); D'Arcy (55-74); Lumsden (8-9).

¹⁰⁶ Alan Bewell argues that rather than "a singular entity separately existing from us across all times and all places," people must "recognize a *plurality of natures*" that are all "*materially, historically, and culturally* distinct from one another" (12-13).

place, their garden, by drawing upon this landscape aesthetic could therefore claim kinship with this national, Old English identity.

This proposed national aesthetic relied upon re-writing the history of Britain's landscape to legitimize the Gothic's climatal domesticism. In short, this aesthetic supported the transformation of the landscape into a piece of historical fiction. Yet, how does one build such a sense of time into the landscape? To do so, enter Sir Walter Scott. A Scottish author narrativizing this English-based aesthetic aligns with the period's horticultural practices; as *L'Almanach des modes* observes in 1816, "almost all the gardeners employed in England are [Lowland] Scots" (qtd. in McEwen 118).¹⁰⁷ Francis Goodwin's 1833 *Domestic Architecture* evokes Scott when promoting the Gothic style:

That so original and interesting a species of architecture should have been so long neglected is passing strange, as all the most admired of our poets have celebrated its romantic beauties, even from Chaucer to Sir Walter Scott; and his affection for *our native architecture*, will to the glory of his genius, and his venerated name, be perpetuated in the structure which he raised on the romantic site at Abbotsford. (74-75; emphasis added)

Lamenting the Gothic's lapse in popularity, Goodwin positions Scott as a model for those building in the *native* style. By evoking the English Chaucer and the Scottish Scott, Goodwin positions the Gothic as the domestic style of Britain and ensures that readers visualize Scott as one who operates in a Gothic architectural moment as Chaucer did before him.

¹⁰⁷ A year after the *L'Almanach des modes* piece, Scott himself narrativizes this practice in *Rob Roy*; gardener Andrew Fairservice is a Scottish Jacobite who has worked at Osbaldistone Hall, a Northumberland estate, for almost a quarter of a century. See *Rob Roy* 60-74.

While the pages of Goodwin's *Domestic Architecture* cannot narrate the trauma incurred when landscapes are refigured, Scott's *Waverley* can do this work. Just as "To Escort" argues that it is the literary garden that can narrate the sexual violence women from the long nineteenth century often experienced in the garden, this chapter shows that novels are able to narrate the trauma of this horticultural practice. Through the physical transformation of Tully-Veolan, the Scottish Lowland estate of the Baron of Bradwardine, Scott articulates the relationship between the Scottish, English, and imperial British selves at play in the novel. Through the introduction, destruction, and reconstruction of this estate, *Waverley* exposes the violent and uncanny repercussions of such acts: how landscapes and the identities of those residing upon them are reworked to fit into the post-Act of Union Great Britain that England imagines. Scott narrativizes this proposal of creating a national aesthetic and ecology through replicable landscapes and identities, revealing the trauma inflicted onto the Scottish community. In short, he shows the violence engendered when one is forced to reconfigure their sense of place. While the horticultural-architectural pattern books expose how an imagined ecological and cultural union is gained with the local's participation in a national aesthetic, it is Scott's *Waverley* that illuminates the violent loss of the individuality of locality. I first examine Tully-Veolan's original aesthetic and its eventual destruction; the remainder of the chapter outlines the Old English ecological aesthetic and interrogates how this aesthetic inspires the way Edward Waverley and Colonel Talbot restore the estate at the novel's close.

A Scottish Aesthetic

The literal nature of Britain took on a multitude of new forms around the time of *Waverley*'s publication, meaning that gardeners had new choices when designing

their gardens. In 1500 there were around 200 cultivated plants, yet “by 1839 there were around eighteen thousand” so that “[b]y at least the eighteenth century, ‘much of English nature was now coming from somewhere else’” (Bewell qtd. in Chang 1). What a garden could look like and what form it could take broadened. Such a change ensured that the “belief in a nature that was universally stable, unchanging, and rooted in place” shifted “to one in which natures were seen as having histories shaped by mobility, conflict, and change,” as Alan Bewell has argued (xiv). A singular conception of nature collapsed, engendering a plurality of natures to exist contemporaneously. Summarizing this ideological shift, landscape gardener Humphry Repton proclaimed near the start of the century that gardens were now recognized as “works of art rather than of nature” (qtd. in Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* 10). Horticulturalists more firmly acknowledged the human hand in garden construction and recognized the power of their environmental choices.

Waverley’s Flora Mac-Ivor engages in one of the popular landscape aesthetics that is representative of this horticultural change: the picturesque. The picturesque was one primary style adhering to the approach that gardens are “works of art.” Popularized by William Gilpin, Uvedale Price, and Richard Payne Knight, the picturesque had gardeners simultaneously adhere to the *genius loci*—the “essential character”¹⁰⁸ of a place—while improving the garden to become more beautiful. As part of her attempt to woo Waverley to the Jacobite cause, Flora brings him to her woodland glen and cascade which she had previously altered to become more scenic:

Mossy banks of turf were broken and interrupted by huge fragments of rock, and decorated with trees and shrubs, some of which had been

¹⁰⁸ See the *OED* definition of “genius loci.”

planted under the direction of Flora, but so cautiously, that they added to the grace, without diminishing the romantic wildness of the scene.
(Scott 117)

Carefully deciding where shrubs should be placed, Flora works to control the aesthetics of this location. While not radically transforming its appearance, she amplifies its romantic setting. This act of controlling plant life to make it more aesthetically beautiful is reinforced when the narrator details this woodland scene: the glen “widened into a sylvan amphitheater, waving with birch, *young* oaks, and hazels, with here and there a scattered yew-tree” (117; emphasis added). While oaks are native Scottish trees, the ones surrounding Flora’s cascade are young, newer to this location than the other trees listed; no other tree species has “young” modifying it. With the ability to purchase and transport saplings, Flora moves the plants and trees on the bank to ensure the romantic aspect of the spot is not lost on its visitors. The final aesthetic touch is Flora herself, as the narrator compares her to “one of those lovely forms which decorate the landscapes of Claude” (117). Emphasizing and improving the *genius loci* of the spot, Flora follows the advice of these picturesque aesthetes, embodying this new approach to landscapes.¹⁰⁹

While landscapers and gardeners like Flora refigured their approaches to land management, those who could assume these positions also shifted. In considering

¹⁰⁹ Flora’s transformation of her glen participates in a larger approach to Scottish landscapes during the period. As Simon Schama notes, the resulting “[c]onfiscations and cross-border marriages [after the Jacobite Rebellion] resulted in the transfer of substantial Scottish real estate, not just to English dynasties but to aggressively acquisitive Lowland magnates. No wonder, then, that by the third quarter of the eighteenth century there began to be a market for more picturesque depictions of Highland scenery” (467). Actively working to manipulate her cascade-garden to appeal to an English tourist (Waverley), Flora remakes her spot into the picturesque scene that Waverley wishes to see.

ecology and nationhood, Raymond Williams, Anne Helmreich, and Jesse Oak Taylor have shown that entering into industrial modernity radically shifted the geographic and class boundaries of nineteenth-century British society.¹¹⁰ With the Empire's growth the concept of Englishness was brought to imperial outposts through a "dematerialized portability," as John Plotz has outlined (*Portable* 46). Yet, if Englishness could go outwards, other identities could come inwards. Marlene Tromp, Maria Bachman, and Heidi Kaufman outline that more than anything else, nineteenth-century xenophobia grew out of a fear over the "decay, or dissolution of English identity," which was "an embedded cultural response to [the questioning of] conceptions of home, abroad, [and] nation" (15, 14). John Ruskin, for instance,

[along] with many [other] Victorian critics of the metropolis . . . believed that vast numbers of the nation's urban inhabitants, exposed to the baleful influence of 'crowded [London] tenements' had become more like 'Arab[s], or Gypsy[s] than Englishmen. (qtd. in Baucom 20)

The fear of an English identity based upon a pre-industrialized, bucolic, white sense of self breaking down in turn fueled a fear of immigrants, a mobilized working class, and, as Scott shows through Tully-Veolan, Scottish identities.

Tully-Veolan bookends *Waverley*, as it is the first major stop on Edward Waverley's Scottish tour and its ruination/rapid reconstruction closes the novel. As Ian Duncan observes, it is "the first fully localized *place* in the narrative" (*Modern Romance* 90; emphasis added). As places bind identities, Tully-Veolan is one of the first *identities*, first *selves*, readers encounter (and then reencounter) in the novel. *Waverley* critics often quickly resolve the meaning of Tully-Veolan and the identity it

¹¹⁰ See Williams (142-153); Helmreich (223-232); Taylor (*Sky* 1-18).

anchors. Ian Duncan, Saree Makdisi, and James Buzard have collectively noted the magical restoration of the estate and how it leaves readers with an imperialistic impression at the close of the novel.¹¹¹ And with the Baron now *Mr. Bradwardine*, the estate restored by the *English* Talbot and Waverley, and the property “now a bought freehold, not a feudal estate,” Tully-Veolan’s ending serves as a poignant image when considering *Waverley*’s political message (Buzard, *Disorienting Fiction* 84). Valuable as these critical approaches are, with conversations predominantly focusing on the ending of Tully-Veolan and quickly glossing its landscape, the full weight behind its restoration is incomplete. Despite the efforts of Talbot and Waverley, it is not returned to its original physical condition and its socio-political implications are altered. It is aesthetically, ecologically, and physically a different place—a different identity—upon reconstruction.

“Almost monastic” and evoking feelings of “solitude and repose,” when first introduced Tully-Veolan is framed as a place of Scottishness, permanence, and seclusion (Scott 38). Not only is its Scottish-specificity reinforced due to its location and owner, but it is also affirmed through its design: the property “had been built at a period when castles were no longer necessary, and when the Scottish architects had not yet acquired the art of designing a domestic residence” so the turrets “resemble[ed] a pepper-box [more] than a Gothic watch-tower” (38-39). The property’s Scottishness is enforced by what it is not: Gothic. In a description of Waverley’s English home, Waverley-Honour, Scott associates Gothicism with English nationalism. This English property has “Queen’s Standing,” “a moss-grown gothic monument” that is named in

¹¹¹ See Duncan (*Modern Romance* 90, 101-104); Makdisi (*Romantic Imperialism* 92-93); and Buzard, *Disorienting Fiction* (83-89).

honor of its connections to Elizabeth I (19). This monument, along with unkept pathways and a solitary rock tower, associates Waverley-Honour to a branch of the picturesque where “[t]he enthusiasm for Gothic, for picturesque castles and for melancholy ruins” shaped landscape aesthetics (Bisgrove 126). By emphasizing the nationality of Tully-Veolan’s architects and observing that it is *not* a Gothic picturesque castle, Scott stresses this property’s Scottish identity.

The estate’s pigeon-house furthers such an identity, as it draws upon a Scottish-specific history: “of great size and rotundity, [it] resemble[ed] in figure and proportion the curious edifice called Arthur’s Oven, which would have turned the brains of all the antiquaries in England” (Scott 39). As Arthur’s Oven is a Roman shrine in Falkirk, Scotland, the pigeon-house draws upon a Scottish place that is outside the realm of English culture and history. Unique to Scotland, both this building and the local history it represents cannot be translated into English culture; as the narrator notes, it would befuddle English antiquaries. If such a description did not emphasize the Scottishness of Tully-Veolan enough, in an accompanying note Scott explains that “the peculiarities of the description occur in various old Scottish Seats,” such as The House of Warrender (39n10). Drawing upon historic Scottish models, Tully-Veolan is decidedly participating in a Scottish-specific aesthetic. This introduction stresses the distinction between a Scottish and English landscape and the histories and identities such landscapes participate within and generate.

After emphasizing its Scottishness, the narrator proceeds to detail the individuality of Tully-Veolan. This uniqueness is most firmly stressed with the bears, the heraldic symbol of the Baron’s family, which are “repeatedly introduced” throughout the grounds and produces the family motto: “Beware the bear” (Scott 51).

Such a symbol is unique to this family and is at the heart of Tully-Veolan's identity. The bears accompany a variety of organic and material ornaments: fruit trees, evergreens, terraces with a flower border, "dungeon-looking stables," a stone parapet, a sundial, a cascade, a greenhouse, "an octangular summer-house, with a gilded bear on the top by way of vane," "a massive but ruinous tower," and a park with a meadow (38-41). Not just stables, but dungeonesque, not just a summerhouse, but an octangular one; through such description Scott fills in the imaginative gaps a reader could have, localizing the estate and ensuring it does not appear generic. By providing an extensive list of the estate's ornaments, the narrator ensures that readers conceptualize the individuality of the property and that it cannot be mistaken for anywhere else.

While the built garden ornaments evoke a sense of Scottishness, the "bank . . . covered by ancient trees" affirms the estate's historicity and rooted sense of locality (Scott 41). When discussing the proper use of trees, Highlander Fergus Mac-Ivor notes, "English squires of our day keep their oak trees to shelter their deer parks, or repair the losses of an evening at White's, and neither invoke them to wreath their brows nor shelter their graves" (163). Trees should remain planted in place, a practice here attributed to Scottishness. Rather than using trees as a quick revenue source or to participate in a Brownian deer park aesthetic, landlords should recognize that trees impart a sense of historicity to a property. As Susan Oliver suggests, a "historical record [is] afforded by the soil" and its maintenance perpetuates a connection to the past ("Transatlantic Ecology" 117). Tully-Veolan's trees represent the longevity of the Bradwardine family and their control over their landscape. Taken all together, Tully-Veolan's introduction anchors a distinctly Scottish identity; this identity displays a

permanent, individual, and historically localized Jacobite family while also emphasizes its difference from English culture.

Yet, such a narrative of permanence, longevity, and Scottishness is not permitted to last. In retribution for the Baron's Jacobitism, Tully-Veolan is

sacked by the King's troops, who . . . attempted to burn it . . . the stables and out-houses were totally consumed. The towers and pinnacles of the main building were scorched and blackened; the pavement of the court broken and shattered; the doors torn down . . . the windows dashed . . . and the court strewn with articles of furniture broken into fragments. (Scott 327)

The estate now embodies social and ecological estrangement, violence, and hostility. Now a ruin, Tully-Veolan recounts the Jacobite Rising and the harsh retribution its contributors faced. The ruinous Tully-Veolan tells the tale of violence and the lack of socio-cultural unity between the English and Scottish; it is as a reminder of such disunity.¹¹² Moreover, with the assault on the ancient tree bank Tully-Veolan is ecologically traumatized. After their encounter with the King's troops, the trees have become ruins for "too lazy, perhaps, to cut them down, the spoilers . . . had mined them" (328). In an act of ecological violence, the King's troops blow up the landscape. This act ensures that this land will be forever altered not only aesthetically, but also ecologically. The troops figuratively mine out the family's endurance over time and the estate's history. Tully-Veolan is forever scared, and it can never reassume its former narrative of family and ecological longevity.

¹¹² Walter Scott's work connects the Jacobite Risings with Scottish culture and nationalism. Historians have shown that a direct connection between Jacobitism and Scottish culture/nationalism was not as strong as Scott depicts. The Jacobite and Government armies had support from groups in both England and Scotland at various times in their campaigns. See Pittock (31-64) and Plank (33).

From Waverley and Talbot's perspective, in its ruined state Tully-Veolan serves as a visible reminder of the division that inspired the Rising and its resulting violence. Here Jacobites can collectively reminisce and meditate on such violent events and perpetuate Scottish nationalist feelings. As Mark Cannata explains, "[ruins] mediate between an academic recognition of the past and an emotional reliving of a traumatic memory. . . . [serving] as the guardians of a collective consciousness" (198). If Waverley and Talbot leave Tully-Veolan a ruin, the trauma of the Jacobite Rising would persist and contribute to Britain's post-Rising identity. Scott registers the Englishmen's fear that Tully-Veolan's ruined presence might remind visitors of the fractured relationship between England and Scotland, which, in turn, would ensure that the narrative of disunification lingers. This ruined estate would become an emblem of discord, uncertainty, and, most especially, English violence. To prevent this possibility these Englishmen quickly recast Tully-Veolan's identity into one meant to remove the discord between the Jacobite and King's troops. This new identity originates from the Old English ecological aesthetic.

An Old English Ecological Aesthetic

Those who are at all acquainted with national architecture, are quite aware that the architecture of all nations originates, in a great measure, in the climate of the country, and the manner and wants of the inhabitants. ~ S.H. Brooks, *Designs for Cottages and Villa Architecture*, 1839 ¹¹³

In his 1839 garden ornament pattern book, *Designs for Cottage and Villa Architecture*, architect S.H. Brooks encapsulates why some nineteenth-century

¹¹³ See Brooks 61.

horticultural-architectural texts propose an Old English ecological aesthetic: architecture comes from both its climate and people. Therefore, with a unified architecture theoretically one has a unified conception of a national environment and people. Insisting upon the existence of such a national ecological landscape aesthetic stabilizes shifting concerns over the ecological and social make up of Britain. Theoretically, if all create the same landscape—both ecologically and architecturally—the unified landscape would present a unified identity and quell identity-based ecological and societal fears. As everyone would have the same sense of place, there would be no need to fear the “decay” of English identity that Tromp, Bachman, and Kaufman outlined.

Horticultural and architectural patterns books from this period feared that this decay of identity, this disjointed national narrative, would come from the incorporation of foreign styles by uninformed gardeners. In 1807 architect W.F. Pocock directly links this fear to shifting class relations in his *Architectural Designs for Rustic Cottages*: “exploring” the architecture of foreign countries is dangerous, for it could “lead to the indulgence of every extravagance, and thereby corrupt the purity of our taste in the Arts” (2). As the ability to design landscapes reached more people, the ability to control the British landscape continually grew more difficult. Pocock’s concerns were not isolated. Thirty years later, Brooks seemingly responds to this “corruption” of the landscape, observing that

[a] nation has undoubtedly the merit of a particular style of architecture, whose edifices correspond . . . with the sentiments and manners of the nation and of the times; and secondly, which constitute in their principal forms . . . a whole harmony with itself, excluding or rejecting every thing [*sic*] that is foreign. (22)

Rather than directly blame the newly wealthy for their aesthetic choices, here Brooks attempts to educate his readers about the correct style they should chose for their property. Yet, Pocock’s concern lurks in Brooks’ writing; each nation has their own aesthetic and going against such an aesthetic will negatively influence the harmony of the nation’s landscape. The concern is that gardens and their accompanying ornaments will be inserted into the British landscape without any forethought of how they are representing their society—that those inserting ornaments into the landscape will neither appreciate the link between history and architecture nor work to create a cohesive narrative for their culture. Fearing that many would not take the style of their landscapes seriously, those like Brooks and Pocock express concerns that a unified national landscape narrative would be destroyed by the whims of an ever-growing society.

To quell such concerns, these authors used the Gothic to ensure the continuation and proliferation of an English identity, suggesting that such a style would evoke feelings of Old England. This “Old English” identity was meant to encompass all of Britain. For instance, these works often argue that a shared ecology exists within Britain—in spite of various horticultural evidence insisting otherwise—and this shared ecology demands a shared aesthetic grounded in Old Englishness. As Ian Baucom has suggested, “Englishness has been identified *with* Britishness . . . and that Englishness has also defined itself *against* the British Empire” (12). All throughout the British Isles can acquire this Englishness if they appropriately style their landscape in the Gothic; conversely, all conflicting identities would be removed with the adoption of the Gothic. If Tully-Veolan adopts this style, it will fit within this

Old English narrative and theoretically shed its previous identities of Scottishness and cultural discord.

Harkening to Old England to mediate a current crisis is not unique to the start of the nineteenth century. Raymond Williams draws upon the imagery of the escalator to observe that calls to Old England occurred in various moments throughout British history and “[w]hat seems a single escalator, a perpetual recession into history, turns out. . . to be a more complicated movement: Old England, settlement, the rural virtue—all these, in fact, mean different things, and quite different values are being brought to question” with each call (12). What individuates this Romantic-period call is that these horticulturist-architects justified it with the British Isles’ climate. These pattern books suggest that British nature will only accept what is domestic. What they claim is domestic is the Gothic. Landscape artist Batty Langley, for instance, traced the Gothic to the British Saxons, removing its connection to its foreign namesakes, the Goths: “He consequently aimed to establish Gothic as a domestic style of architecture . . . promoting Gothic as British and non-Goth” (Lindfield 18).¹¹⁴ To prove the Gothic’s domesticity, these texts argued for its environmental and cultural naturalness. In his *Half a Dozen Hints* (1826), T. F. Hunt recodes the Gothic as the “Old English Domestic Style” and argues that this style should be “preferred to every other . . . as being better suited to the scenery of this country” (1). Brooks seconds this claim, noting that when architecture, “owing to foreign nations, to a different climate, and different circumstances, is transferred to other people and other countries, [it] retains the character of unsuitableness and incongruity” (21). To build an Italian Villa within

¹¹⁴ See Lindfield 14-20 for more about Langley.

Britain and adorn it with the aesthetically appropriate Cyprus tress would be unsuitable. Foreign styles cannot be acculturated, for they are neither part of English or Scottish history nor supported by their climates. In Hunt and Brooks' conception, climate will not nativize that which is not domestic.

Climate is not a passive element in the assimilation of these buildings to their landscapes. When describing ornaments in the "Old English Domestic Style," Hunt notes that upon initial construction they will seem out of place, yet the surrounding landscape will naturalize the ornament: "the pictorial effect" will be "acquire[d] by time and [with] the growth of ivy, roses, or other embellishing plants" (1). Nature will take hold over these ornaments over time; weather and plants will fix these ornaments to the land. Ignoring the fact that such plants will need to be bought and brought to the new ornament, Hunt suggests that the more time ivy and roses have to affix themselves to the ornament the more naturalized the ornament will become. By doing so Hunt also implies that the more time this climate has with foreign-styled ornaments the worse they will appear; the more English weathering the Italian Villa receives, the more out of place it will look. Similarly, Goodwin's *Domestic Architecture* suggests that "weather stains" will serve as the "picturesque tinting" needed to complete the ornament's assimilation into the landscape (162). Regarding the picturesque, William Gilpin echoes this sentiment when detailing a Gothic ruin:

naked, and unadorned, [it] seems scarcely to deserve a place among them [beautiful objects]. Tint it with mosses, and lichens [*sic*] of various hues, and you give it a degree of beauty. Adorn it with shrubs, and hanging herbage, and you still make it more picturesque. (13)

While a foreign-styled building will not easily blend into the British countryside, the British climate and landscape already do the work of affixing Gothic ornaments to the

landscape. These horticulturalist-architects suggest gardeners and homeowners draw from the British environment to further this Gothic aesthetic.

To incorporate styles other than the Gothic actively harms the British landscape. At least, this is how Pocock frames the inclusion of non-Gothic elements. Here Pocock metaphorizes the incorporation of the wrong aesthetic style to plant grafting:

Something may be feared also from the desire which induces us to explore the architecture of different countries during the remote ages of the world, for the purpose of engrafting new features upon our former stock, thereby forming a heterogeneous medley without either propriety or elegance. (2)

Unlike the hybrid, which is the progeny of two different plants, to engraft new features is to insert a new plant into an already existing one. Engrafting changes the already-formed plant. To engraft new features to the landscape is to permanently alter an already developed one. As an *unnatural*, overtly manmade action, the grafting of various other styles disrupts the unified, naturalized narrative these works present to their readers. Adhering to picturesque principles, these texts position the Gothic as improving nature to be its most beautiful. Rather than an artificial construction, the Gothic brings out what is already within the landscape.

Landowners participate within this national landscape and identity when they actualize the goods advertised in these books at a personal, local level. In other words, when they make their individual sense of place adhere to the national one the pattern books recommend, they become part of this national identity. Unlike catalogues whose listings have purchasable physical referents, these pattern books are filled with imagined goods that landowners themselves must create. One of the opaquest pattern books is Charles Middleton's 1810 *Decorations for Parks and Gardens*. Middleton's

work has six pre-designed Gothic ruins for landlords to choose from when deciding which ruin to incorporate into their property. Put differently, when reading Middleton’s work landlords have six different historical prompts to insert into their landscape. One such ruin and historical prompt is the “Prospect Tower,” (seen in Figure 6). Missing prices, detailed designs, and construction instructions, *Decorations* is a book of ideas—of theoretical goods—that readers must make. With only a sketch of the completed project and a birds-eye view of the tower structure, readers of Middleton’s work are left with many questions over size, materials, and structural support, for instance. *Decorations for Parks and Gardens* is meant to inspire, not instruct.

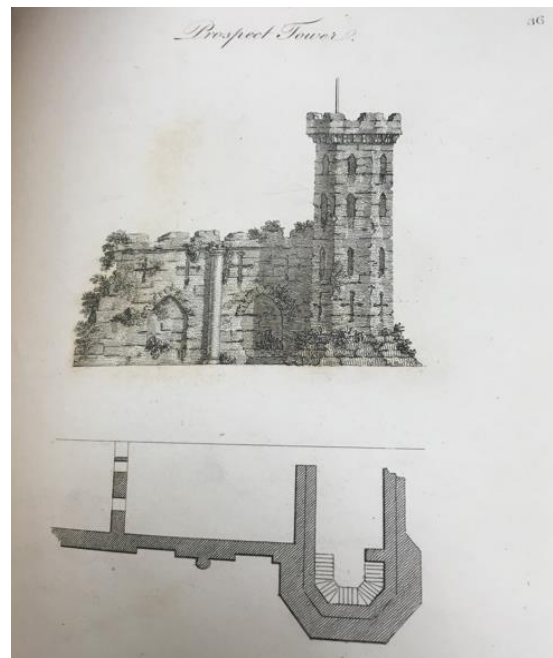


Figure 6 “Prospect Tower” Middleton’s *Decorations for Parks and Gardens*, Courtesy of UD Special Collections.

While Middleton's is the most theoretical text, he is not alone in his opaqueness. William Wright's 1790 *Grotesque Architecture* is also designed so no one can fully build these ornaments from the provided description. Similar to Middleton's "Prospect Tower," Wright's "Gothic Grotto," (seen in Figure 7) has a front and birds-eye view of the structure. Additionally, it does include some of the

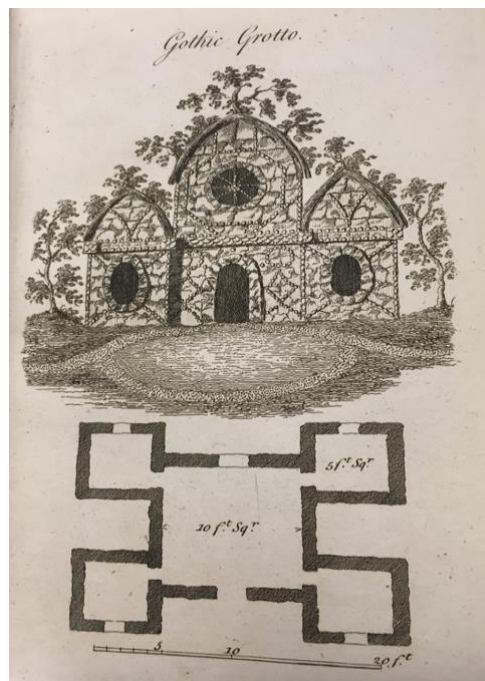


Figure 7 "Gothic Grotto" Wright's *Grotesque Architecture*, Courtesy of UD Special Collections

building's dimensions. Wright explains that for this to be a functional grotto it should have "four closets five feet square" and an interior space connecting the closets (4). Moreover, Wright suggests decorative materials that should adorn the grotto: flints,

irregular stone, pebbles, and shells. Yet, the size and placement of the door, windows, and arched roofs, along with the other building materials, are not mentioned. Builders need more information to construct this gothic grotto. Likewise, in *Domestic Architecture* Goodwin estimates the prices of his designs, but he does not detail the materials or necessary labor. For instance, when advertising his “Gardener’s Lodge,” he notes that “[t]he estimated price for erecting the Gardener’s Lodge, fitted up in a neat and appropriate manner, £660,” yet what “neat” and “appropriate” mean in this context is unclear (Goodwin 32). Even when providing some detail, Wright and Goodwin neither offer enough information to construct these ornaments nor provide an address to send purchase orders. T.D. Dearn and M. Dubourg’s 1811 *Designs for Lodges and Entrances* comes the closest by offering their consulting services:

Several of these designs have been built under my directions, and the whole have been accurately studied; but should more information be required, either as to Materials, Character, or Expense, I shall be happy to communicate such details on reasonable terms. (ii)

Yet, any details of materials, size, and expense are ignored in the majority of *Designs for Lodges and Entrances*.

Rather than purchase these ornaments directly from the pattern book, readers are meant to replicate the designs themselves. In an 1841 issue of *The Gardener’s Magazine*, horticulturalist J.C. Loudon offers a guide on how to use such texts: “There are now so many cheap books containing designs. . . . Nearly all country gentlemen retain a carpenter . . . and it would be for their interest to put into the hands of such persons books of design which might tend to cultivate their taste” (“A Summary” 587-588). These “cheap books” provide models for local carpenters to draw from and replicate. Rather than purchase new elements from afar, local features, resources, and labor that could construct an individuated landscape instead help construct the

aesthetic these texts promote. Local environments should be bent to fit into the collective identity that this unified national landscape aesthetic puts forth.

The Gothic paired well with these texts' presentation of imagined objects that local landowners actualize themselves, for during this moment the Gothic was an imagined aesthetic that individuals actualized locally. While this period is often treated "as a prelude" to the "'proper' Gothic Revival of Victorian Britain," in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Gothic engaged Britain's aesthetic consciousness (Lindfield 1). As Peter Lindfield explains, the Gothic Revival was initially "based upon the largely un-interpreted corpus of often mutilated and decaying medieval churches and abbeys littering Britain's landscape," meaning much of the early interpretations of the Gothic were theory-less (9). Furthermore, the gardens that accompanied such buildings were also unknown. This absence in the historical record had gardeners creating fictional interpretations of past gardens: "Gothic country houses had no historical precedent; what sort of garden would a thirteenth-century country house have had" was an unanswered question during this period (Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* 128).¹¹⁵ These horticultural-architectural texts used this absence in the historical record to license imaginative play with the past in order to propose a national Gothic style. Using what was already within the British landscape to inspire them, these architects, horticulturalists, and landowners were building a fictionalized, romanticized landscape history in their present.

¹¹⁵ "At Elvetham Park, for example, in the late 1850s, S.S. Teulon projected a parterre with crescent-shaped beds—probably evoking the crescent-shaped lake that had featured in the celebration of Queen Elizabeth's visit in the 1580s" (Elliott, *Victorian Gardens* 128).

While readers could not purchase Gothic ornaments from these texts, they could find models depicting how they should localize such a national, Old English landscape. This is most readily seen in Dearn and Dubourg's text. The authors propose an entrance for Bayham, home of the Earl of Camden. This entrance is styled to look like it was erected in the "time of Edward IVth" (1461-1470, 1471-1483); with its arrow slits and medievaesque turrets, such an entrance evokes a sense of older England (Dearn and Dubourg 9). Designing a "new old" entrance, Dearn and Dubourg ensure that upon their arrival guests would be met with Bayham's historicity. Moreover, accompanying their suggested entrance are details on the area's local history: "Bayham is situated about six miles from Tunbridge Wells, and . . . [near] the remains of an Abbey, originally belonging to the Premonstratensians, or White Canons" (19). Conjuring up an image of a ruined abbey from a then-defunct religious order, Dearn and Dubourg inform readers that landscapes should further a narrative built upon the past, yet it is a past reimagined to fit within the contemporary moment. By imagining a new entrance for Bayham, Dearn and Dubourg provide a tangible example of the Old England that all could participate in and help develop.

Through Waverley and his English home, Waverley Chase, Scott also provides a model for his readers. Detailing Waverley's adventures in his childhood home, the narrator observes that "[t]hrough these scenes [the estate garden] . . . Edward loved to 'chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy,' and like a child amongst his toys, culled and arranged" narratives for himself (Scott 20). Meant to adorn the landscape and fit into the imagination of the property's owner, here landscape ornaments function like a child's building blocks—capable of being rearranged and refigured to create new visions and narratives. The building blocks emphasized in Waverley Chase are Gothic.

Waverley Chase's Queen's Standing, a gothic monument, is supposed to be the site where "Elizabeth herself was said to have pierced seven bucks with her own arrows" (19). This landscape feature historicizes the property and the family. It serves as a model for Scott's readers, illuminating what faux ruins could do for one's personal and familial identity. Further historicizing this family and property—further modeling the kind of narrative landlords could create—is a rock where "a solitary tower" once stood, a tower where the Waverley family took refuge during the War of the Roses (19). Already steeped with history, Waverley Chase becomes emblematic of the kind of historical narrative people could create through their landscapes.

Not only does Waverley Chase serve as a model of the kind of narrative tied to an Old English historicity, but it also narrates how to incorporate ornaments like those depicted within these pattern books. Flora suggests that Waverley "will refit the old library in the most exquisite Gothic taste . . . and he will draw plans and landscapes, and write verses, and rear temples, and dig grottoes" (Scott 276). Presumably, Waverley would find inspiration for this temple and grotto from a pattern book, where he would pick his favorite style and then have a local carpenter adapt it to fit within Waverley Chase.¹¹⁶ Even while he has a property with historic ornaments already present, Waverley (in Flora's imagination) draws upon such new ornaments to further standardize his estate. By inserting new Gothic ornaments alongside older ones, temporal distinctions between here and there, past and present, collapse. Through Waverley's association with Waverley Chase, Scott models for readers how to historicize a property through ornaments like those described in these pattern books.

¹¹⁶ See Wrighte Plate XXVI for a depiction of a temple and Plate X, XI, XIII, XIV for a depiction of a grotto.

While such models appear to refer to the wealthiest within British society—to those with the most access to local resources—many others could concretize this nationally imagined past in their local landscape. Brooks suggests that “the residence of the man of wealth, and [those in] the dwelling of a more humble grade” can alter their property to fit within this present-made past (iii). For instance, faux ruins would enable landowners whose families were not proprietors of abbeys, castles, and other historic buildings to recreate their own landscape’s history. By including faux ruins landowners could retroactively create and claim ownership over a historical-based identity. For instance, the landlords skimming through Middleton’s text had multiple Gothic ruins and historical-based identities that they could incorporate into their estate. While no true historical event created the ruin, the present rewrites the past. The faux ruin concretizes this imagined past identity into reality. “[R]ather than archeological evidence of a particular past,” as garden historian Brent Elliott remarks, a ruin during this period “was a stimulus for meditation on time’s reversal” (*Victorian Gardens* 57). Such faux ruins harken to an *imagined past*, a past landscape and identity made real in the present. Harkening to an Old English past, faux ruins work to make this collective identity stabilized: to create the identity of the past in the present. The creation of a collective past identity through the landscape works to stabilize questions concerning nineteenth-century British identity.

In doing this landscape construction, however, individuated locality is sacrificed for a larger, national landscape. These remade landscapes are not identical in construction, yet all these ornaments are meant to adhere to the Old English ecologic aesthetic that these horticultural-architectural texts collectively theorize. While the ornaments would be slightly changed to accommodate the unsurmountable

nuances of local circumstances, these texts attempt to ensure that all their readers work to operate in a unified landscape identity. In the closing scenes of *Waverley*, Scott depicts the subsumption of the local under a collective national identity. Talbot and Waverley suppress Tully-Veolan's rooted Scottishness and violent ruination to ensure that this estate adheres to this collective national identity.

“This Is No Mine Ain House, I Ken By The Bigging O't”

Taken from a song of the same name, this phrase serves as the epigraph for the chapter detailing the reconstruction of Tully-Veolan. Loosely translated to “this is not my own house, I know by the building of it,” this phrase evokes feelings of estrangement and uncanniness.¹¹⁷ Throughout the novel the estate has transformed from a place of Scottishness and permeance into a ruin of violent relations. By *Waverley*'s close, it is once again transformed into something different—something more peaceable and “new old”—by Talbot and Waverley. While the property is restored, it is no longer the Baron's “ain house.” Critics often mistake Talbot and Waverley's perspective and role in this forceable reconstruction for Scott's. I suggest that Scott separates himself from these two landscapers by observing their practices as violent. Rather than return to the Scottish nationalistic identity from the start of the novel, Tully-Veolan's past is fictionalized, made into something more palatable by the English landscapers. Buzard reminds readers “that the power to lay waste and the power to efface the signs of destruction, to build and map and represent culture, go hand in hand,” as English soldiers both destroy and recreate this property

¹¹⁷ See David Herd 190 and the *Oxford English Dictionary*'s definition of the verb, “big.”

(*Disorienting Fiction* 84). By rebuilding Tully-Veolan, the English assert their right to control placemaking and the identity it binds. Following along similar ideological lines of these horticultural-architectural texts, Tully-Veolan—and with it that, the identity it binds—is remade, with the estate’s history retrofitted to fit within the contemporary moment.

Upon first description Tully-Veolan appears to be back into its pre-Rising status. “[T]he ruins [are] cleared away,” ensuring that the immediate evidence of the estate’s sacking is gone (Scott 368). In removing the ruination from the property, Waverley and Talbot attempt to eradicate the discord from the past in order to remove the estate’s recently assumed trauma-based identity. Such violent relations are not acceptable in the British identity Waverley and Talbot are making. Rather, they work to revert all to its pre-Rising appearance:

as much as possible [is] restored to the state in which he [the Baron] had, left it, when he assumed arms some months before . . . the house itself had been thoroughly repaired, as well as the gardens, with the strictest attention to maintain the original character of both. (369; emphasis added)

In such descriptive moments these English landscapers are framed as restoring the estate to its original Scottish glory. For instance, the heraldic bears that are so essential to the property’s identity are “renewed or repaired with so much care, that they bore no tokens of the violence which had so lately descended upon them” (369). Such imagery is remade to both recall and recreate what the estate once was in times past.

Yet, the estate is decidedly not what it once was. *As much as possible* is done in the restoration, yet it is not possible to restore Tully-Veolan to its pre-Rising status. The inclusion of such localized imagery like the bears does not return the estate’s previous Scottish identity structured around permanence. Rather, this inclusion

adheres to the pattern books' treatment of the local. Landscapes are not meant to be identical—local features and resources must be accommodated. Just as Bayham's entrance announces that it is the seat of the Earl of Camden, the bears announce the estate's connection to the Bradwardine family. Despite this particularizing information, just as Dearn and Dubourg propose to reshape Bayham to fit within the Old English ecological aesthetic, so too do Waverley and Talbot make this estate more Old English in its recreation.

While impossible to commission the Scottish architects who originally built Tully-Veolan to aid in the reconstruction, Talbot and Waverley do not call upon their aesthetic heirs. Instead, new ornaments are made in the picturesque style so popular during Scott's period: "the heavy stables, which had been burned down, were replaced by buildings of a lighter and more picturesque appearance" (Scott 369). Rather than the heavy, dungeonesque style, these new stables are standardized, placed within a more all-encompassing style found throughout Britain. Moreover, these English landscapers replace the "sort of green-house" with "a new green-house stocked with the finest plants" (328, 369). This makeshift ornament transforms into a cultural marker typical of wealthy eighteenth- and nineteenth-century estates and ensures that Tully-Veolan best fits within the horticultural and architectural practices of the moment. By singling out the greenhouse—by creating artificial climates, the greenhouse is one of the most potent images of man's assumed mastery over nature to gardeners during these centuries—Talbot and Waverley further affirm the newly recognized interactivity humans have with nature. Filling it with "fine" plants, they also bring the cosmopolitan London-centric plant trade to Scotland; no longer separated, rooted in spot, Tully-Veolan now participates in a cosmopolitan commodity

culture that the Old English ecological aesthetic both responded to and was a part of. The Scottishness, the seeming isolation, of Tully-Veolan is no more.

The historicity of the estate is also removed, for the environmental weathering that showcased this place's longevity is gone. Repairers "remove[d], as far as possible, all appearance of the ravage they [the estate ornaments] had sustained" (Scott 369). Removing the signs of ravage would also remove the buildings' environmental historicity. By cleaning off scorch marks, rejoining broken pieces, and replacing destroyed parts, the English builders also remove the climatal binding that once connected Tully-Veolan to the landscape. The place now appears new and must restart the environmental historicizing process. The new stables and older, cleaned buildings are put upon the same historical trajectory. They will have the same history of climatal binding: a history started by the English soldiers. As Mark Cannata argues, "[t]o erase actual decay . . . and the entropies of ageing and weathering, is to remove the understanding of the passage of time and, by extension, the gravity of history in contributing to a cultural identity in the present" (196). In erasing evidence of the violent English-Scottish relations and attempting to restart the estate's history by such rebuilding and un-weathering, Waverley and Talbot work to remove the past identities of this place.

These English landscapers perform ecological manipulations through the land as well, as the Scottish landscape is bent to assume a new environmental milieu. Trees that first showcased the longevity of the Baron's family and then served as a memorial for the Rising are now erased from the landscape: "not only had the felled trees been removed, but, their stumps being grubbed up, and the earth round them leveled and sown with grass" (Scott 368). With the "levelling of land contours" Tully-Veolan

begins to resemble the landscape gardens popularized by Lancelot Capability Brown (Oliver, “Trees” 285). Susan Oliver explains the ecological, economic, and cultural significance of this act:

the re-landscaping, which extends deep below the surface of the soil and affects everything that lives and grows from it, tells its own story of how the Highlands as the managed ‘estate’ of modern Scotland was transformed into sheep pasture from an older, mixed system of land use dominated by cattle husbandry and wild game hunting. The process is ultimately identified by Scott as an act of violence against the land as well as an act of cultural erasure. (“Trees” 285)

By ecologically transforming the land, Talbot and Waverley shift the cultural and economic roles of this place. In doing so they perform an act of “internal colonialism,” where the Scottish culture—both its landscape aesthetic and economic system—are regulated through an English filter.¹¹⁸ While Tully-Veolan has not changed its technical position, this grassing over ensures that this estate assumes a new memory and status. Still geographically in Scotland, the landscape goes outside of its original culture, assuming a culturally English centrality.

This reshaping of the landscapes and buildings cannot naturalize the peaceful history and identity Talbot and Waverley set out to create. The uncanny arises within Tully-Veolan and the trauma of the past cannot fully be removed. In its recreation, vestiges of Tully-Veolan’s former narratives of Scottishness and trauma remain. Scott suggests that retrofitting a new past does not eradicate the old. Previous identities will resurface. Despite removing the trees, those with “an eye intimately acquainted with the spot” can see the marks of devastation that could not be “grubbed up” or “levelled” away (Scott 368). In this case, the resurfacing of the past is literal. Recently

¹¹⁸ See Hechter (3-14).

acquainted with Tully-Veolan, Talbot and Waverley cannot see all vestiges of devastation when reconstructing the estate. One who has a lifetime of experience with the place, such as the Baron, will certainly see the difference. It is, as this section's epigraph states, not his house, he knew by the building of it. Similarly, while all the buildings are made to be on the same historical plain, the historic "pepper-box tower" exists alongside the picturesque stables and new doors and windows are fitted into the old buildings. Tully-Veolan's past selves remain a specter, existing alongside the place the English soldiers wish to create. Their modern, contemporary-made past is falsified, its new oldness asserted, its imperial identity questioned. Tully-Veolan neither binds its old selves nor the new one Talbot and Waverley work to create. Rather, it is an amalgamation of the various identities iterated throughout the novel.

Landscapers ecologically and aesthetically altering their local environments to create a new identity was not unique to Scott or the horticultural-architectural books here examined. Gardens and landscapes helped establish a sense of place, a sense of localizing identity, which has proved foundational to the development of the novel and nineteenth-century literature more broadly. Drawing upon the recognition that landscapes are socially constructed, novels use estate's landscapes and gardens to work through the various articulations of localized identity. In other words, novelists used the garden form as a vessel to interrogate the creation, perpetuation, and destruction of identities across Britain. Through Tully-Veolan, Scott shows the ramifications of adhering to a uniform, preconceived Gothic place—a place-formation so popularly narrativized in the works by Walpole, Lewis, Radcliffe, Beckford, Austen, and others. By narrativizing the creation of the Gothic aesthetic in Britain, of linking the Old English to Gothicism, Scott shows how this fictionalized past could

physically be constructed in the present. Furthermore, he both depicts the violence landscapers inflicted onto communities when creating these fictional past landscapes and the inability for such past identities to be fully eradicated. Just like the mined tree stumps of Tully-Veolan, these past violences and identities will remain. Scottish nationalism is not relegated to the past but lingers in the present, continually reminding readers of the violence within the imperialist project. In illuminating how such a landscape could be made, Scott further reveals how the landscape and identity it binds are pieces of historical fiction. The next chapter, "To Uproot," continues this consideration of placemaking within an imperialistic context. It examines how Maria Edgeworth's *The Absentee* and Anthony Trollope's *Castle Richmond* both employ the image of the rootless garden to showcase a widespread destruction of place within Ireland while negating imperialism's role in this destruction.

Chapter 5

TO UPROOT: DESTROYING COMMUNITIES IN EDGEWORTH AND TROLLOPE

It is a fact which cannot be denied, that the numerous wealthy absentees have tended to injure gardening upon an extensive scale. . . . the labor of a hundred years? —gone! for what? the mightily saving of a few pounds. The painter and gilder may repair any dilapidations that time may have made in the house; should even the fabrick [sic] itself have tumbled down, it can be rebuilt, but in the ordinary life of man what could reproduce the others? Every one [sic] conversant in the localities of Ireland knows well the truth of what we have here stated~ James Fraser, “On the Present State of Gardening in Ireland,” 1826¹¹⁹

Landlords who left their Irish estates to reside in London,¹²⁰ Irish absentees have destroyed Ireland’s gardens. At least, these are who James Fraser (the “Irish correspondent” for J.C. Loudon’s *The Gardener’s Magazine*¹²¹) blames for Ireland’s horticultural situation in 1826, as he claims they have “injured” Irish gardens upon such a large scale that they will take generations to recover. While Fraser was personally invested in advancing Irish horticulture—he was a gardener at Dublin’s Trinity College Botanic Garden and Terenure, a suburban Dublin estate—he claims to simply be informing those who have not traveled to Ireland of its current horticultural

¹¹⁹ See Fraser 10, 13-14.

¹²⁰ As Clara Tuite observes, absentees were “the Irish landlord class, usually referred to as the Anglo-Irish ascendancy” that left Ireland to govern in England (387).

¹²¹ See the *Dictionary of Irish Architects*’ entry on James Fraser.

state (Fraser 10). Writing to British horticulturalists (the primary readers of Loudon's magazine), Fraser presents a narrative of figurative and literal uprooting: those who left Ireland have reshaped its localities and destroyed its horticultural history and practices. While some correspondents agreed with Fraser,¹²² others did not; the Irish Farmer's Journal—the existence of which speaks to an Irish horticultural community that Fraser denies—observes that Loudon (and, by extension, Fraser) often overlook Irish landscapes' "brightest ornaments" ("Farming Society" 229). Regardless of the accuracy of Fraser's comments, his article is the first in the inaugural issue of *The Gardener's Magazine*, which places absenteeism and its alterations to the Irish landscape at the forefront of the nineteenth-century British horticultural community's considerations.

Such an emphasis on absenteeism is not unique to horticultural narratives, as absenteeism also appears in nineteenth-century Irish fiction. Despite absenteeism significantly decreasing in Ireland as the eighteenth century progressed, the figure of the absentee landlord endured in the cultural imagination. Moreover, while the practice of absenteeism was not unique to Ireland—consider Sir Thomas Bertram and his absence from his West Indian property in *Mansfield Park* or Scott's commentary on Scottish absenteeism in *The Bride of Lammermoor*¹²³—the absentee "is a

¹²² See M. Murphy (505-506) and Jeffery (65).

¹²³ Even when commenting upon Scottish absenteeism, Scott notes the link between Ireland and absenteeism in the cultural imagination: "The evils attending upon this system of government [Scotland post 1707 Act of Union] resemble those which afflict the tenants of an Irish estate, the property of an absentee" (28). In *resembling* the evils of the Irish absentee, Scott aligns absenteeism as an Irish-specific issue, even if similar situations arose in Scotland.

persistent figure in Irish fiction well into the twentieth century” for, as Vera Kreilkamp observes,

[n]ovelists made use of absenteeism as a complex symbolic representation of the historical narrative of colonial land settlements: on occasion, certainly, as criticism of such policy, but just as commonly as a recurring motif deployed by Catholic and Protestant writers alike for thwarting a more revolutionary critique of those very policies. (“Fiction and Empire” 168-169)

Absenteeism’s predominance in Irish literature was motivated, in part, by the fact that it enabled writers to consider imperialistic land practices within Ireland and their long-term influences. Yet, in doing so novelists often show absenteeism as the bogeyman to excise, rather than imperialism itself. This chapter examines two novels—Maria Edgeworth’s 1812 *The Absentee* and Anthony Trollope’s 1860 *Castle Richmond*—which both present such a narrative. Both depict harmful imperialistic landscape practices, yet they place the culpability of such harm onto absenteeism.

Specifically, I reveal the correlation these novels create between absenteeism and rootless gardens: gardens without cultivated roots. I do not mean that these gardens literally have no roots—the grass within these gardens insists otherwise—but rather here emphasize that their gardeners do not cultivate their physical roots. Within these texts, a gardener’s unwillingness or inability to privilege their garden’s physical roots correlates to their personal rootlessness. This personal rootlessness brings about an unmooring of place. While both works attempt to negate imperialism’s role in the destruction of place through this connection between absenteeism and rootlessness, I suggest that this connection itself illuminates imperialism’s role in the breaking down of place. As Úna Ní Bhroiméil and Glenn Hooper suggest, in nineteenth-century Irish fiction place and identity’s link is “represented on the land, and in the very landscape

itself” and “[w]hat is conveyed above all through making visible these locations is the importance of place, of a sense of place, of rootedness” (12). By “making visible” the rootlessness of these novels’ gardens, readers can see how placemaking breaks down. I am not interested in either novel’s accuracy in detailing the realities of nineteenth-century Irish landscapes and gardens. Rather, I argue that both novels employ the rootless garden to embody the cultural and ecological unmooring of peoples from their landscapes that results from imperialistic land practices.

While the rootless gardens within *The Absentee* and *Castle Richmond* take on very different appearances, I suggest that both texts tie their gardens’ current and future state to imperialistic land practices. Unlike “To Historicize,” which considers the imperial project of historicizing a garden to create a shared national identity, here I examine how rootless gardens show how imperial practices can bring forth the deracination of place and, with that, destroy identities at both personal, communal, and national levels. Yet, the novels also offer imperialistic solutions to such destruction. Through *The Absentee*’s depiction of ornamental, rootless gardens that fail to create a new sense place, the novel suggests that Irish communities should form around the colonial landlord’s properties. Trollope’s *Castle Richmond*, through its description of an English-like estate in Ireland, suggests that a country-wide Irish sense of place can only be remade after the Famine by modeling its place off this English-styled estate. Both novels draw upon the rootless garden to showcase such destruction of place as being linked to absenteeism rather than imperialism itself; in their final chapters, both novels also present a way to create rooted gardens—rooted communities—that embraces more imperialistic land practices.

By considering how these novels mobilize the rootless garden and its connection to absenteeism to consider Irish community formation, I follow in the tradition of many critics considering works set within the Celtic peripheries.¹²⁴ Scholars have revealed the imperial entanglements of such novels' form, content, influence. As Vera Kreilkamp and Joseph Rezek show, Irish novels¹²⁵ predominantly spoke to an English audience at their time of publication. Not only did many Dublin publishing houses move to London after the passing of the 1801 Act of Union in January of that year, but the form and content of such novels shifted, with authors incorporating "authenticating prefaces, footnotes, and glossaries; to shore up their authority in a London-centered marketplace, they claimed exclusive local knowledge grounded in personal experience" (Rezek 2). These works were simultaneously made accessible to an English reading public while also marked as distinctly different—distinctly Irish. Mary L. Mullen has recently argued that the very act of detailing everyday life in Ireland differentiates these works; narrations of "[l]ocal settings" and "distinct cultural practices" seemed more "extraordinary rather than ordinary" to their

¹²⁴ As Edward Larkin summarizes, "the core-periphery dynamic . . . structured the British Empire" (23). The critical term, "Celtic periphery," commonly used by critics (see Colley 101-146; Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism* 86 for two examples) to refer to Irish and Scottish literature itself evokes the imperial structures these works operated within.

¹²⁵ I use the phrase "Irish novels," for two reasons. First, it encompasses all the novelistic sub-genres associated with this century and setting—regional, national, historical—and second, this "phrase which gained currency from the 1820s [onwards for British audiences]," currently refers to novels set in (and often written by) authors residing in Ireland (J. Murphy 411). Furthermore, Trollope who is definitively not Irish and never discussed as Irish novelist, is often discussed as having Irish novels. See John McCourt (1-2).

English readers (52, 37). Gordon Bigelow echoes Mullen when considering Trollope's ill-received Irish novels: "the problem in these books is not that they are poorly conceived or poorly written. The problem is that they are, in some local sense, 'Irish': defying received categories, blurring identifiable patterns, disrupting interpretations" ("Irish question" 364). The very act of detailing Irish everyday life marks these works as distinct, containing moments of sociopolitical difference.

Literary critics have often considered such differences as putting forth new sociopolitical and national models. Specifically, nineteenth-century Irish novels are often considered to be theorizing Ireland's national identity after the Union.¹²⁶ The 1801 Act of Union (which was enacted almost two decades after Ireland declared legislative independence in 1782) theoretically meant that Ireland shared political institutions, like Westminster, equally with the United Kingdom. Yet, this union was "incomplete"; Catholic Emancipation, for instance, was not granted until 1829 and, as in India, Britain used architecture to affirm its power when calls for self-governance grew too loud.¹²⁷ As "part of the kingdom (a political subject) but not a part of Great Britain (not a national subject)," Ireland was both within and outside the metropole (Ferris 1).¹²⁸ These Irish novels' moments of difference speak to this liminal space. As

¹²⁶ Critics often consider this theorization through the marriage plot. Those in the critical line of Watson and Gary have suggested that such marriages depict a reconciliation, while those like Trumpener and Ferris suggest they question such unification. See Burgess 42-43.

¹²⁷ See: A. Jackson (124-130); Roberts and Wright (2).

¹²⁸ Historical considerations of Ireland reflect its complex colonial status, as "Ireland has often been described as both the first and last colony of the British Empire" and "[j]ust as often, historians have omitted the Irish case from British imperial history altogether" as historian Kevin Kenny elucidates (1). See Roberts and Wright's 2019 *Ireland's Imperial Connections* for a gloss on recent critical discussions (4).

Mullen summarizes, during “these moments of rupture,” these distinct moments of “Irish difference,” novelists “encourage readers to imagine politics and history otherwise” (52, 54, 59). By asking readers to imagine living in different local settings with distinct cultural practices, readers are further asked to imagine new political structures. In short,

Irish fiction is defined by this porosity: the novel became an active cultural agent in the period because of its ability to absorb and reshape other discourses in the context of wider shifts in the aesthetics of locality and nationality, the politics of representation and the meaning of national culture. (Connolly 1)

Irish novels examined how being in this new, incomplete union influenced Irish communities and identities to the English reading market.

While I draw upon Maria Edgeworth and Anthony Trollope to consider placemaking in Ireland, I do not mean to suggest either novelist has a claim to veracity regarding its representation of Irish people. Both are complex figures implicated in imperial networks. Edgeworth consistently plays a “key role” in critical considerations of the literary representation of England and Ireland’s relationship after the Act of Union (Connolly 2). Yet, as an Anglo-Irish writer—daughter of an absentee landlord, she returned to Ireland at age 12—she is a slippery figure. As Mullen summarizes, Edgeworth’s writing has been “understood to be plausible and not plausible enough, Irish and not Irish enough, realist and not realist enough” (43). Initially praised as realistically depicting Ireland, “[a]s early as 1838, critics” questioned Edgeworth’s legitimacy; by the close of the century critics compared Edgeworth to an Englishwoman and the rise of Irish studies in the 1980s further grew “this reading of Edgeworth as too English” (42-43). While Edgeworth’s Englishness has oscillated—Marilyn Butler, for instance, has suggested that emphasizing Edgeworth’s Englishness

overshadows her legitimate Irish connections¹²⁹—Trollope is definitively English. Although he spent about two decades in Ireland, in no way does that make him an authority on the lived experience of Irish people. Rather, I include *Castle Richmond* for its overt consideration of destroyed gardens in relation to placemaking. Both novels position the garden—and its rootlessness—in relation to absenteeism to consider how one creates (and loses) place. I draw upon these novels not for their veracity, but for their theorization of placemaking in an imperial context.

The Absentee: Absent Roots

“If people would but, as they ought, stay in their own country, live on their own estates, and kill their own mutton, money need never be wanting” Maria Edgeworth, *The Absentee*¹³⁰

Complaining about his financial woes, absentee landlord Lord Clonbrony claims that the solution to all his family’s problems is to leave London and reside at their Irish estate. Despite his assurance that this move would correct all his family’s economic concerns, his family does not immediately enact his solution. Lord and Lady Clonbrony are the titular absentees, and this novel tells the story of these landlords attempting (and failing) to acquire an English place and identity in London. This novel also depicts the resulting consequence their absence has on the Irish community they left behind. Lord and Lady Clonbrony have absented themselves from Ireland for so long that their son, Lord Colambre, can don a meager disguise to tour the family estate

¹²⁹ See Tuite 387.

¹³⁰ See Edgeworth 19.

unnoticed.¹³¹ Initially travelling to Ireland to see his family's property, Lord Colambre continues his tour when his Irish neighbors question the parentage of his cousin, Grace Nugent, who he plans to wed. Searching for proof that Grace is legitimate so they can marry¹³², during this quest Lord Colambre encounters a variety of Irish estates and properties, discovering a vast amount of land mismanagement in Ireland. After finding evidence that his beloved, Grace, is legitimate, he convinces his parents to return to their Irish estate and address the mismanagement of their property.

Critical considerations of Edgeworth primarily focus on her representation of Ireland after the Union, as is true for many other nineteenth-century novelists writing about Ireland. As Claire Connolly notes, Edgeworth and her contemporaries' texts "carry the imaginative and ideological weight of Union, proposing specific narrative solutions to the early nineteenth-century political puzzle of Anglo-Irish relations" (15). Considering *The Absentee* specifically, scholarship has often centered on the text's marriage plot, as it ends in the happy union of an English woman, Grace,¹³³ with a

¹³¹ As Robert Tracy notes, with *The Absentee* Edgeworth "introduced" a popular plot where a landlord visits "his estate in disguise, after which he rewards the virtuous and punishes the wicked, resolving moreover to live henceforth at home and manage his lands justly" ("Unnatural Ruin" 364).

¹³² In an economically useful turn of events for Lord Colambre, Grace only has property to her name after his investigation into her birth. Before this search, "her fortune is not particularly large, and she has left it, or almost all, in her uncle and guardian's hands" (Edgeworth 15). As such, his quest is not initially spurred by a desire to keep money in the family.

¹³³ As Tracy observes, when readers first meet Grace Nugent the text codes her as an Irish Catholic, yet after Lord Colambre's investigation into her family background she transforms into an English Protestant; she becomes Grace Reynolds. Yet, some connections to Catholicism linger within the newly christened Miss Reynolds, further complicating the Union shown at the end of the novel. See Tracy, *The Unappeasable Host* 33.

recently returned Irish landlord-to-be, Lord Colambre.¹³⁴ Such an ending is common, for “Irish novels in the nineteenth century . . . frequently dealt with romantic love and marriage, both literally and as a metaphor for constitutional union and its shortcomings” (Kenny 17). That said, while *The Absentee*’s narrative thrust centers around Colambre’s quest to find evidence that proves Grace’s legitimacy, it is in the novel’s gardens where readers can best see the class and community concerns bound up within absenteeism.

It is not just that *The Absentee*’s gardens are often ignored, but that they are significant locations where Edgeworth conceptualizes and comments on Irish placemaking—and, with that, identity construction—after the Union. As Robert Tracy observes,

Anglo-Irish landlords were well aware . . . that their legal right was not backed by any freely accepted social contract which would lead Irish peasants to concede that their Anglo-Irish landlord’s claim to his place was in harmony with the legitimate and natural order of thing.
(*Unappeasable Host* 26)

Edgeworth—the daughter of such a landlord—establishes the naturalness, the need, of such landlords through *The Absentee*’s gardens. With their deep connection to placemaking, gardens are essential when considering novelistic depictions of identities. Through her rootless gardens, Edgeworth does not critique the Union itself, but illuminates the harm the absentee’s absence has had on Irish communities and identities, thereby proving their need to return. Through her condemnation of absenteeism, Edgeworth produces a conservative (and imperial) class politic, with all

¹³⁴ For a few examples of critics considering this marriage, see: Tracy (*The Unappeasable Host* 25-33); Canuel (146-153); Connolly (83-84); S. Jackson (520-527); Butler (284-286).

of Ireland's communities' identities grounded upon the colonial, Anglo-Irish landlord's stable, rootled presence.

In what follows I turn to two depictions of gardens: an indoor pleasure garden designed by the protestant Lady Clonbrony (while born in England, she was raised in Ireland and married an Irish lord) and a miniaturized estate in a Dublin suburb erected by the wife of a (presumably) protestant¹³⁵ Irish grocer, Mrs. Raffarty. I focus on both women, for “[i]t was the same desire to appear what they were not, the same vain ambition to vie with superior rank and fortune, or fashion, which actuated lady Clonbrony and Mrs. Raffarty” (Edgeworth 87). Both women aspire to create a new social and class identity for themselves. They desire that a landlord from Ireland can be part of the English gentry and that a grocer's wife can assume a leadership role within Irish society, respectively. They both attempt to create this new identity through their gardens. Yet, both use the wrong materials, the wrong designs—the wrong gardens—to situate themselves into these new communities and social positions. Both establish rootless gardens; by ignoring a fundamental aspect of gardens (their literal roots) these women fail at making a new sense of place. While Clonbrony's rootless garden in London illuminates her need to return to Ireland, Raffarty's garden in Dublin exposes her inability to rise within Irish society. These

¹³⁵ The text does not explicitly comment upon Raffarty's religious affiliation. I read her as protestant due to the novel's commentary on her brother. She is the sister to one of the Clonbrony Castle estate agents, Nicholas Garraghty; Garraghty horribly mismanages the property, which disproportionately harms Catholic tenants. The novel contrasts Garraghty with the Clonbrony's other estate agent, Mr. Burke, who is especially accommodating to Catholic tenants, ensuring they do not face any prejudice (See Edgeworth 126). The text highlights how Burke does not harm Catholic tenants and emphasizes how Garraghty does. Such comparisons imply Raffarty and her family's sympathy with Protestantism.

rootless gardens and their gardeners highlight how absenteeism negatively alters class practices within Ireland. The abandonment of these failed gardens—with Clonbrony returning to her Irish estate and Raffarty forgoing her social aspirations—undergirds *The Absentee*'s endorsement of the Anglo-Irish landlord's presence within Ireland.

Uprooting the Pleasure Garden

Lady Clonbrony aspires to be part of the English gentry. Obsessed with London, she has "*Londonomania*" and desires to forgo any Irish connections to fit into London's most fashionable set (Edgeworth 192). For those within this set, however, Clonbrony will never fit: "'[D]oes Lady Clonbrony expect to pass for English?' said the duchess. 'O yes! because she is not quite Irish *bred and born*—only bred, not born,' said Mrs. Dareville" (2). While born in Oxfordshire, no one considers her English, as she was raised predominantly in Ireland. Despite her best efforts, Clonbrony is considered Irish and cannot pass as English. Being such an unmoored figure is a hallmark component of the absentee landlord in Irish fiction. As Vera Kreilkamp observes, "[i]n Irish fiction, beginning with Edgeworth's recurring focus on the theme, absenteeism becomes a marker of estrangement, signifying the colonial landlord's *rootlessness*" (168; emphasis added). Clonbrony has literally uprooted herself from Ireland—from her estate, local community, and public role—yet she cannot establish roots within England.

This failure to make roots within England is exemplified by her garden. Using Vauxhall as a model for her personal garden, Clonbrony attempts to fit within upper-class English society by making a place it values: a pleasure garden. Transforming her "supper room . . . with scenery to *imitate Vauxhall*," she redesigns her house to "ope[n] into a superb greenhouse, lighted with coloured lamps, a band of music at a

distance—every delicacy, every luxury, that could gratify the senses, appeared in profusion,” along with her inclusion of a pagoda inspired by Vauxhall’s Chinese pagoda (Edgeworth 38; emphasis added). Clonbrony ensures that her home mimics this iconic pleasure garden. With expensive transportation—one often needed to hire a boat—costly tickets, and many invitation-only events, for the fashionable in eighteenth-and early-nineteenth London society, the pleasure garden was a location to show off one’s status.¹³⁶ Combining ornaments, entertainers, and green spaces, pleasure gardens were designed to be “an Arcadia on earth,” an Arcadia that “blend[s] . . . fashion, wealth and fervent social posturing” (Downing 9, 19). Those that visited such gardens often placed value in its elitism, exoticism, spectacles, and green landscapes. The few scholars who consider Clonbrony’s townhouse-turned-pleasure garden have interpreted it through an interior-design lens, focusing on its materials.¹³⁷ I turn to what it attempts to model: Vauxhall. Recognizing the social significance of pleasure gardens, Clonbrony attempts to theorize a new identity for herself. She creates a place upper-class English society values to raise her social standing.

Clonbrony attempts to gain an upper-class English identity by making a place such people valued. When considering the formation of Englishness, Ian Baucom argues that “Englishness has been *generally* understood to reside within some type of imaginary, abstract, or actual locale” and that it is “something that could be acquired,

¹³⁶ Pleasure gardens were not exclusive to London. Sydney Gardens in Bath, Tinker’s Garden in Manchester, Ranelagh Gardens in the Royal Leamington Spa, and Vauxhall Gardens in Lincolnshire were all popular provincial pleasure gardens. That said, the pleasure gardens attended by the *ton* were in the metropole.

¹³⁷ See Tuite 400-406.

or lost. Englishness was not therefore something to which everyone in Britain could necessarily lay claim—not even everyone born in England. . . was truly English” (4, 20).¹³⁸ Clonbrony attempts to acquire Englishness by recreating a London-based pleasure garden.¹³⁹ When doing so she fails to recognize that different gardens establish different identities and that the pleasure garden, while valued by the *ton*, was not used to create a stable English sense of identity for the upper-class.

Such gardens were overtly commercial locations visited, but not owned, by the *ton*. While countryside estates were deeply implicated with agrarian capitalism,¹⁴⁰ these estates’ economic engagements were often obscured. Contrarily, the pleasure garden was an *explicitly* commoditized place, socially recognized as a business venture. To enter Vauxhall visitors had to pay entrance fees and, once inside, purchased food and drink. While it was not unusual for a hostess to also provide musical performances and food in her domestic gatherings, by doing all these acts under the structure of the pleasure garden Clonbrony aligns herself with a pleasure-garden proprietor rather than a society hostess. By choosing the wrong kind of garden

¹³⁸ Baucom focuses on a different period (Victorian) than *The Absentee*; his theorization of Englishness, however, comes from a consideration of imperial practices which can be applied to Edgeworth.

¹³⁹ Another method Clonbrony employs has garnered much scholarly critique: her adoption of an English accent so proper it is marked as false. By doing so, the text engages with “Homi Bhabha’s classic postcolonial formulation of ‘colonial mimicry,’ which refers to the process by which the discourse of the imperial subject is decentered from its imperial origin and mimicked by the colonized subject. It refers to the attempt at reproduction that fails at the very point at which it seems closest: failing precisely because it is so good” (Tuite 398).

¹⁴⁰ See Williams 2, 60.

to model, Clonbrony confuses the role she assumes. Rather than assume the role of hostess, who “helped create and sustain webs of relationships among the many visitors to” her home, Clonbrony aligns herself with businesspeople courting patrons (Harris 2).

Not only is she associated with a pleasure garden proprietor, but she also serves as one of the pleasure garden’s spectacles. As the narrator observes, “Lady Clonbrony, even in her own house, on her gala night, became an object of ridicule” so “[t]he company ate and drank—enjoyed themselves—went away—and laughed at their hostess” (Edgeworth 34, 38). Rather than identifying with the English upper class experiencing the pleasure garden, Clonbrony becomes a piece of entertainment for the *ton*. Like such gardens’ equestrian entertainers or tightrope walkers, as “a stranger, and from Ireland” she is marked off as something different, as something other to be ogled (33). The English guests refuse to recognize her aspirational identity.

Clonbrony’s lack of figurative English roots is exacerbated by her failure to recognize the significance of establishing literal roots in a garden. I suggest that this unrecognition stems from her model: Vauxhall. Around the time of *The Absentee*’s 1812 publication, Vauxhall fell out of favor with the upper classes. Not only was Vauxhall deemed overcrowded, riotous, and non-exclusive, but it also lost “what [Horace] Walpole called the ‘gardenhood’ of the place” (Downing 36). Between 1810 and 1811 Vauxhall cut down most of its trees, building walls and ceilings around its supper rooms and Grand Walk. Its literal roots were uprooted and the most socially significant location—the Grand Walk—transformed into an indoor space. As such, Vauxhall lost some of its fundamental traits: being outdoors and incorporating greenery. Clonbrony’s actions mirror Vauxhall’s alterations. She also forgets the

significance of the pleasure garden's "gardenhood," forcing hers indoors and focusing solely on its material aspects.

This attempt to create a sense of place within London brings about the destruction of her Irish estate both for herself and its local community. Rather than recognize that these larger estates are home to a plethora of people, Clonbrony disregards any sense of community and uses her property to fund her attempts to gain access to English society. Her individualistic approach disregards the property's historicity, embodied through her removal of the property's trees: "fine trees [were] cut down, and lying on the ground in lots to be sold. A hill that had been covered with an oak wood . . . was gone" (Edgeworth 161). Unlike at Tully-Veolan where the Baron's trees are mined out by an invading force, here Clonbrony is the imperial force actively destroying this communally used property. Landlords could quickly acquire money by cutting down fully-grown trees. In doing so, these landlords treat trees as monetary resources that they can extract when necessary. When making her supper boxes, Clonbrony only see her trees as monetary assets, not as evidence of the historicity of the family's estate. Her land is mined for its economic value. Her son, Lord Colambre, condemns her Vauxhall-like supper boxes, as they exist "at the expense of a great part of your timber, the growth of a century—swallowed in the entertainments of one winter in London" (193). In removing these trees, Clonbrony removes a tangible representation of her family's history. She eradicates centuries of growth to fund a few weeks of frivolity. Literally uprooting her estate, Clonbrony physically destroys her place in Ireland.

Such maltreatment of the landscape infects the rest of the estate's community. Estates like Clonbrony's include entire villages, meaning that her destruction of place

is forced onto others. In other words, her absence from and active destruction of her estate brings about the desolation of the local community surrounding Clonbrony Castle. Rather than keep the estate's resources within the local community, Clonbrony "reap[s] the harvest in England," economically destroying the local village (Edgeworth 141). When touring his family estate, Lord Colambre sees "one row of miserable huts . . . the mud walls crooked in every direction; some of them opening in wide cracks . . . all the roofs sunk in various places . . . dunghills before the doors, and green standing puddles" (140). With their houses falling down around them, the local tenants are forced to live amongst Clonbrony's destruction. Rather than well-fitted cottages with kitchen gardens, water scum is the only growth present. Due to Clonbrony physically uprooting her sense of place in Ireland to move to London, these tenants are unable to maintain their homes.

Clonbrony's destruction influences the local community's sense of place. Lord Colambre finds the local people "bereft of hope and energy" and, as his guide points out, this lack of energy is not due to a deficiency in the people but to the absence of the landlord (Edgeworth 140). Describing his recently deceased uncle, this guide observes that he was "as thriving and hard a working man as could be in all Ireland . . . *afore* he was trampled under foot [sic] and his heart broke" (140). All this emotional destruction occurs through the literal and symbolic uprooting of the Clonbrony family in their (failed) quest to transplant themselves in London. Clonbrony's disregard for the local community and her belief in her right to drastically alter this estate engages with Lynn Voskuil's discussion of Rushworth's imperialistic treatment of Sotherton in *Mansfield Park*. Both landowners believe in their "natural and noble entitlement" to radically alter their estates; this belief mirrors "much of England's imperial expansion

in the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth centuries” (“Sotherton” 598).

Clonbrony, further implicated within this imperial expansion as an absentee Anglo-Irish landlord, actively refashions her estate, disregarding the destruction she brings about for the villagers who call her estate home.

A Miniaturized Estate

With families like the Clonbronies¹⁴¹ absent from Ireland, class relations within Ireland are in flux within *The Absentee*. Considering this novel, Claire Connolly notes that “‘who set the fashion’ is still undecided in post-Union Dublin” (61). Mrs. Raffarty, the wife of a Dublin grocer and sister of the Clonbronies’ estate agent, attempts to assume such a leadership role. Raffarty attempts to purchase the place—the identity—of those who once ruled Irish society; many Dublin villas that used to belong to members of Ireland’s Parliament “were bought by citizens and tradesmen” when these government members moved to London after the Union (Edgeworth 82). By assuming a political leaders’ former home and creating a miniaturized version of an estate garden, Raffarty attempts to purchase a new class identity by creating a new sense of place. Yet, Raffarty’s miniaturized garden cannot fix this new identity. Through her depiction of Raffarty and her garden, Edgeworth proposes that Raffarty will never achieve her class aspirations for she cannot foster her own sense of place, let alone ground a sense of place for a larger community. Only with the return of the absentees can local Irish communities maintain their sense of stability and identity. Ultimately, Raffarty’s failure to create a new sense of place for

¹⁴¹ Edgeworth’s pluralization of the Clonbrony name does not follow standard English grammatical conventions. See Edgeworth 1.

herself or any surrounding communities exposes how the novel's solution to the absence of the landlords is not to elevate other class to a leadership position, but to return the absentees to Ireland.

I suggest that the narrative has Raffarty fail because she is not from the right class. She is not of the Anglo-Irish landlord class that the narrative works to naturalize as the rightful community leaders. Rather, Raffarty cannot create a stable, new sense of place—new identity—due to her focus on fashion, newness, and novelty. The narrative is overt in its condemnation of Raffarty's focus on fashion, observing that she and the others who purchased these villas “spoiled, by the mixture of their own fancies, what had originally been designed by men of good taste” (Edgeworth 82). Raffarty, for instance, remakes her new home with every extravagance available to her, rather than privileging its historicity or rootedness. As Raffarty claims, she is “determined to have at least the honour of having a little *taste* of every thing [*sic*] at Tusculum [her property]” (85). Rather than accounting for local circumstances, she privileges fashion over the history and natural milieu of the place. She “could not take that which nature had given,” and chooses to ignore the local (85). Raffarty is emblematic of a larger concern permeating throughout eighteenth and nineteenth-century upper classes. With a “[l]ack of taste by clients from commercial backgrounds,” there was a fear that “public ignorance” would both “dilute public taste” and corrupt local landscapes (Abramson 153-154). Similar to W.F. Pocock's fears, detailed in the previous chapter, that those from commercial backgrounds engaging in landscape gardening would corrupt a nation's aesthetic, this novel presents a culturally conservative proposal: absentees ruin local communities with their absence while those like Raffarty would corrupt such communities with their

presence. While such fear is inherently classist, meant to legitimize the Anglo-Irish landlord class's hold over society, Edgeworth attempts to legitimize such a fear through Raffarty.

At first, Raffarty's designs appear to follow the general taste of the period. She notes that "she hated every thing [*sic*] straight, it was so formal and *unpicturesque*" so all of her buildings had "a studied crookedness" (Edgeworth 85). Arising in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, the picturesque was a vastly popular aesthetic. Such picturesque estate gardens

reimagined the landscape in its entirety as a garden, typically featuring a lake or pond, gently rolling hills, and lawns punctuated by groves of trees, serpentine paths . . . [and] picturesque architectural structures (classical or gothic ruins, bridges or weather sculpture) to evoke pastoral associations. (Atkinson 147)

Aspiring to identify with the gentry, Raffarty attempts to create a landscape garden so often associated with those of an elevated rank. Yet, to have such a garden one needs land; ponds, hills, lawns, and ornaments take up a lot of physical space. For Raffarty, who lives in a villa in suburban Dublin, such a picturesque estate garden cannot be made in its entirety.

Rather, she makes such a garden in miniature. As Raffarty does not have vast swaths of land to create an estate garden in full scale, she miniaturizes everything to ensure she has a taste, a bite, a morsel, of all that is fashionable. As such, her garden is comprised of:

a *little* conservatory, and a *little* pinery, and a *little* grapery, and a *little* aviary, and a *little* pheasantry, and a *little* dairy for show, and a *little* cottage . . . with a grotto full of shells, and a *little* hermitage full of earwigs, and a *little* ruin full of looking-glass, 'to enlarge and multiply the effect of the Gothic.' – 'But you could only put your head in, because it was just fresh painted, and though there has been a fire ordered in the ruin all night, it had only smoked.' (85, emphasis added)

Including many of the ornaments common in estate gardens, Raffarty attempts to create a landscape garden. Yet, nothing is functional. The dairy, a site for industry, is so small that no labor can occur within it. The cottage, which would house tenants, is so small that no one can live there. The hermitage, which would serve either as a home for a hermit or a folly for the estate owner, is riddled with insects. Moreover, the *little* ruin is a mockery of an actual ruin. Rather than a site of remembrance, preservation, or evocation of past times, its size immediately announces its fictionality. Fearful that its small size will hide its Gothic elements, Raffarty uses a looking glass to show her visitors that she has incorporated this popular style into her ruin. Reminiscent of the size of a twenty-first century child's playhouse,¹⁴² at Tusculum functionality is replaced by a miniature world organized by what is most fashionable in the current moment.¹⁴³

She has not created a true upper-class identity for herself, for her garden's miniaturization continually reinforces its fictionality. Susan Stewart argues that miniatures bring "events 'to life,' to immediacy, and thereby to erase their history, to lose us within their presentness" (60). Raffarty's garden operates in this fashion. There is no history binding Raffarty's ornaments to the past. The buildings have neither

¹⁴² The inspiration (if any) for such oddly sized garden buildings is unknown at present. In *Practical Education*, Edgeworth and her father detail the need to make model-sized furniture for children's amusement (20-23). Such practices are akin to the rise of dollhouse furniture, which originated as samples attached to furniture catalogues.

¹⁴³ This list does not include all of the garden's oddities. As the narrator notes, "[w]e should be obliged to *stop* too long at Tusculum were we to attempt to detail all the odd circumstances of this visit; but we may record an example or two, which may give a sufficient idea of the whole" (84).

lichen nor weathering, either of which would give them a sense of historicity. Rather, Tusculum is constantly operating in the present; its lack of historicity enforces its fictionality and ensures that Raffarty's ornaments are seen as "device[s] for fantasy," to use Stewart's phrase (56). The garden is a spectacle, a sight to be seen and enjoyed, but nothing about it gestures towards an actual anchored sense of place.

This forgoing of use is most acutely emphasized by her stuffed fisherman, as this figure highlights Raffarty's aestheticization of laborers and preference for fictionality rather than reality. When a fish pulls a fisherman jauntily resting on her chinoiserie bridge into the water, guests "found it was only a *stuffed figure*, which had been pulled into the stream by a *real fish*, which had seized hold of the bait" (Edgeworth 86; emphasis added). In an attempt to have complete control over her creation—her attempt to forge a new identity—no laborers use her miniature landscape garden. Unlike in George Knightley's Donwell Abbey, community members neither walk upon Tusculum's paths nor fish in its streams. Rather, community laborers are fully aestheticized, as Raffarty replaces use with a representation of it in order to create an aesthetically pleasing scene. By replacing an actual laborer with stuffed figure, Raffarty attempts to literalize a picturesque landscape painting, which often aestheticized laborers.¹⁴⁴ Not only does this action show her negative treatment of those within a socially lower class than herself—functioning as aesthetic objects, they become non-human—but it also reveals her failure to create a new identity through her garden. The *real fish* reveals the *imagined*

¹⁴⁴ In Scott's *Waverley*, the narrator speaks to this aestheticization of laborers in landscape paintings and picturesque aesthetics (36).

scene. Tusculum highlights the imagined identity Raffarty wishes to have: to be a member of the Irish upper-class, to become the tastemaker in Dublin.

This privileging of fashion over function results in Raffarty creating a rootless garden. She has imagined a place for herself that is not physically bound to her land. Reminiscent of Clonbrony's indoor pleasure garden, in Raffarty's attempt to incorporate every fashionable garden ornament possible, she has ignored an essential characteristic of these landscape gardens: their *physical* roots. Trees and rolling hills covered with grass are essential components of such places. As she is unwilling to "take that which nature had given," she does not highlight the organic elements already found within her landscape.

Even in her pinery, Raffarty privileges fashion over function.¹⁴⁵ Pineries (pineapple hothouses) were highly desirable, for the pineapple was a significant status symbol during this period; with one pineapple costing upwards of \$8,000 in today's currency, pineapples were often rented out for parties. As Ruth Levitt explains, initially "brought back as trophies" from foreign climates, "pineapple cultivation in special hothouses became the expensive but fashionable pastime of a small though increasing number of horticultural enthusiasts among members of the gentry and nobility" (109-110). Drawing upon this upper-class pastime, the pinery would have been one of the most expensive elements within Raffarty's garden. By creating such a

¹⁴⁵ See the *OED* definition of "pinery." Today, pineries often refer to a grove of pine trees. I suggest that the novel uses the now-antiquated definition (a pineapple house) for two reasons. First, Raffarty couples the pinery and grapery; as shown in the above image, this pairing was common when the pinery refers to a pineapple hothouse. Second, her emphasis on fashion suggests that she would be invested in pineapples, as they were one of the most fashionable and expensive plants of her period.

fashionable ornament, Raffarty attempts to align herself with this elite group that could afford such a coveted fruit. Yet, once again she privileges fashion over rootedness. In J.C. Loudon's 1810 pinery design (see Figure 8), the pineapples are encased in a microclimate, separated from the fresh air and soil. As "[g]ardeners could make precise adjustments to temperature by releasing hot or cold air directly into the building, and they could warm and moisten the soil by pouring water into a series of vertical pipes that allowed steam to escape beneath the plants," pineries were separated from their local climate (Valen 406-407). For Raffarty, this means that her pineapples are grown with no connection to Tusculum itself. This disassociation also pertains to the *little* grapery Raffarty lists in her enumeration of miniatures, for the grapes would hang from the pinery's ceiling and would therefore subject to the same climatal separation. Even with her choice of plants, Raffarty emphasizes her lack of literal and symbolic roots to Tusculum.

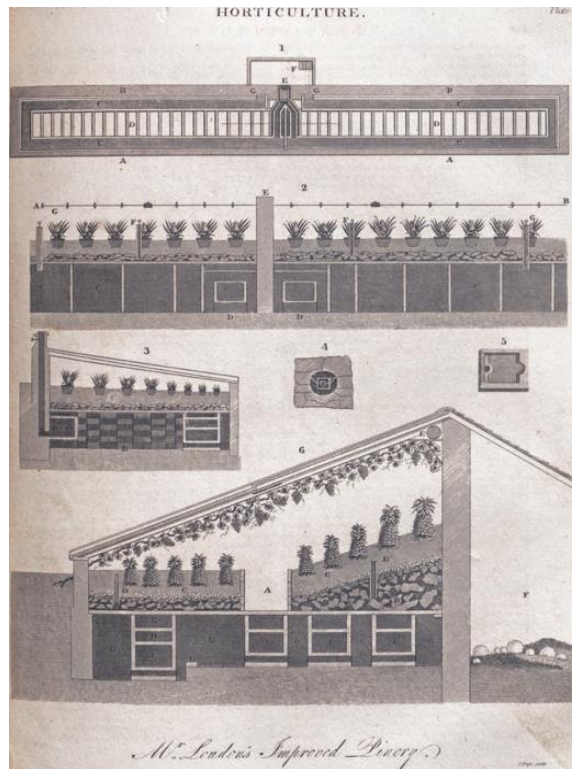


Figure 8 J.C. Loudon's design for a pinery, from Wilkes' *Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, pp. 413, Courtesy of University of Delaware's Special Collections.

The fashionable, taste making, upper-class identity Raffarty imagines for herself cannot be actualized. Rather than remain in her miniature estate garden, by the close of the novel Raffarty takes refuge on the actual estate gardens of the Clonbrony family. Such an emphasis on fashion over function means that she has accrued massive debt; she absconds to Clonbrony Castle to flee her creditors, relying upon the benevolence of the gentry. Rather than assuming the role of the gentry, she must take shelter on the landed estate she wished to replicate. Through her garden and its economic failure, Raffarty has reaffirmed her class distinction from Lady Clonbrony.

Upon arriving at Clonbrony Castle for protection, Raffarty finds Clonbrony returned to Ireland. Swayed by her son's economic and social arguments against residing in London, she and her husband are absentees no more. With Clonbrony and her family back on their estate, Raffarty can no longer attempt to take their place. Therefore, by the conclusion of *The Absentee* all have reassumed their "proper" class identity. With the Clonbrony family back, local community problems—such as tenants living in squalor, merchants attempting to reach beyond their station—dissipate, for the family "will long diffuse happiness through the wide circle [of their countrymen], which is peculiarly subject to the influence and example of a great resident Irish proprietor" (Edgeworth 252). For such community ties to be either reforged or strengthened, the once-absentee landlords must lead the charge on preserving communities; without them, as the novel has repeatedly shown, communities will devolve. In its conclusion, the text reinforces its conservative class and imperialistic politic. Only with the absentees returned can a local community be properly established in Ireland.

When readers privilege the garden, putting it at the center of their critical considerations of Edgeworth's narrative solution to the Union, they see how *The Absentee* draws upon the symbol of the rootless garden to present the concept that Irish communities must be grounded around the landlords rooted sense of place. The rootless gardens fail in creating new identities for Raffarty and Clonbrony, for rooted places are necessary components of placemaking in the garden. By the close of the novel, the text proposes that if people would but create a sense of place appropriate to their class status, communities would thrive. Most significantly, however, the novel

naturalizes Anglo-Irish landlords' right both to their land and to dictating their surrounding communities' actions and identities.

Castle Richmond: Corrupted Roots

“We used to hear much of absentees. It was not the absence of the absentees that did the damage, but the presence of those they left behind them” Castle Richmond¹⁴⁶

Upon the surface, Castle Richmond follows the love escapades of Clara Desmond and her two suitors: Owen Fitzgerald and Herbert Fitzgerald. Initially engaged to Owen, the owner of a small estate with a checkered reputation, Clara's family encourages her to break off this betrothal. Later she engages herself to Owen's richer cousin, Herbert, heir to the large, titular country estate. Yet, when the “low, restless, cunning” Mr. Mollett arrives, the text assumes a bigamy plot (Trollope 57). Mollett claims to be the first husband of Herbert's mother, Lady Fitzgerald, which transforms Herbert into an illegitimate son. Owen becomes the rightful heir to Castle Richmond and its vast properties. After this reveal, Clara's family desires that she re-engage herself to Owen, which is the primary focus of the book's marriage plot. Eventually the bigamy charge is discredited, and all is resolved in Herbert's benefit, meaning he reclaims his status as heir to Castle Richmond. Clara and Herbert marry while Owen travels abroad for the rest of his life.

Continually butting against this romance plot is the Great Irish Famine. As *Castle Richmond* is set during this period, the Famine's causes, social ramifications, and relief efforts refuse to stay in the background. They continually bubble up into the

¹⁴⁶ See Trollope 67.

narrative foreground. With a love story thinly directing the plot and the narrative primarily focused on the societal impacts of the Famine, Trollope's work is tonally odd. As one of its first reviewers noted, "the milk and the water really should be in separate pails" (qtd in Bigelow, "Irish Questions" 364). Contemporary scholars have continued to consider how this combination of milk and water—romance and Famine—establishes tonal dissonance in the novel. As Gordon Bigelow puts it, *Castle Richmond's* "romance plot is about the sheerest of any in Trollope's oeuvre, and this thin narrative fabric is stretched to the breaking point by the grievous political and economic matters the book takes on" ("Irish Questions" 367). John McCourt seconds this reading, noting that the novel "masquerades as a love story, but what remains with the reader is the insistence with which the harsh realities of Famine Ireland seethe beneath the surface of the narrative and erupt more than occasionally to overshadow the main romantic plot" (96). Rather than a marriage plot mobilized to consider Ireland and England after the Union, *Castle Richmond* seemingly uses this plotline to provide narrative familiarity, a familiarity which is then upset by its continual emphasis on the devastation within Ireland.

I show that through its description of the kitchen garden's widespread destruction—the transformation of this place of sustenance to a site of rootlessness—the narrative depicts the eradication of a communal sense of place within Ireland. Trollope's novel connects this unmooring to absenteeism, suggesting its widespread influence upon Ireland created the Famine. Whether residing upon a good or bad landlord's estate, the novel suggests that the Famine ensures that almost all Irish peoples are culturally and ecologically unmoored from their dwellings. Unlike *The Absentee*, where the colonial landlord returns to save the community and become a

stabilizing force, *Castle Richmond*, published about a half-century later, narrates another, highly problematic imperial model in its closing: no one must return to stabilize the community, for England is already within Ireland. I argue that, through its depiction of the Fitzgerald family, Trollope's narrative suggests that the Union created a shared sense of place between England and Ireland and that the families who have already adopted an English-styled sense of place will ensure the fulfillment of the Union for all within Ireland. In *Castle Richmond*, the Irish families who have established an English sense of place within Ireland keep their homes during the Famine, meaning that they are in the position to help Ireland establish a new (English) sense of place after the Famine's conclusion.

In its opening pages, *Castle Richmond* suggests one can experience the same sense of place, same sense of identity, in Ireland as one would find in England. Readers will not see the derelict, mismanaged land found in Trollope's other Irish novels, like *The Macdermots of Ballycloran*, which showcases the "folly, pretension, and mismanagement" of Irish landscapes (Tracy, "Unnatural Ruin" 365). Rather, when describing the titular estate and its landlord, Trollope notes "as regards its appearance Castle Richmond might have been in Hampshire or Essex; and as regards his property, Sir Thomas Fitzgerald might have been a Leicestershire baronet" (3). Within the southwest corner of Ireland, readers will find a property that looks like an English estate:

Neither Sir Thomas nor Sir Thomas's house had about them any of those interesting picturesque faults which are so generally attributed to Irish landlords and Irish castles. He was not out of elbows, nor was he an absentee. Castle Richmond had no appearance of having been thrown out of its own windows. It was a good substantial, modern family residence, built not more than thirty years since by the late baronet, with a lawn sloping down to the river, with kitchen gardens

and walls for fruit, with ample stables . . . It stood in a well-timbered park duly stocked with deer, —and with foxes also, which are agricultural animals much more valuable in an Irish country than deer.
(3)

This estate has the traits of an English-styled landscape garden: a sloping lawn, river, kitchen garden, and stable. As McCourt observes, “[t]he estate appears so well run, in short, that it might have been English” (103). The only association tying this property to Ireland is the description’s emphasis on foxes, which were specifically valued in Ireland. This “modern” residence, with none of the “faults . . . attributed to Irish landlords and Irish castles,” is coded as English. The Fitzgeralds—this Irish family—have created an English sense of place so perfectly that the narrator observes it could easily fit within Hampshire. Presumably built right after the Act of Union,¹⁴⁷ through this opening the narrative insists upon a shared sense of place, of identity, between Ireland and England.

Castle Richmond directly speaks to the shared sense of identity arising from this sameness of place. Wondering if “the novel-reading world . . . will be offended if I lay the plot of this story in Ireland,” as “daily English life” is what is in vogue, Trollope insists that there is a shared daily life between those in England and Ireland (1-2).¹⁴⁸ Setting is insignificant to narrative, Trollope insists, for both Ireland and

¹⁴⁷ As *Castle Richmond* is set during the Famine (1845-1849), this property’s construction is dated to the early 1800s.

¹⁴⁸ The material influence of this “unfashionability” of Irish settings is reflected in the work of Irish author, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu. He was contractually obligated by his London publisher to not set his novels in Ireland after the failure of his Irish-set *The House by the Churchyard* in 1863 (Sage xi). See John McCourt 29 for a broader discussion of this difficulty for Irish novels to find an English audience in the Victorian period.

England in this opening share a setting. Such insistence on geographic sameness frames *Castle Richmond* as a provincial novel, like those in Oliphant's "Chronicles of Carlingford." The provincial novel emphasizes sameness; its setting could be anywhere in the English countryside,¹⁴⁹ thereby making "national identity underwritten by a particular and yet generalizable rural landscapes" (Plotz, *Portable* 75). Trollope extends this national identity formation to the Irish landscape, insisting that there is a shared identity between England and Ireland, as Ireland participates within these "particular and yet generalizable rural landscapes" populating such provincial novels. As the narrator observes:

The readability of a story should depend . . . on its intrinsic merit rather than on the site of its adventures. No one will think that Hampshire is better for such a purpose than Cumberland, or Essex than Leicestershire. What abstract objection can there be to the county Cork. (Trollope 2)

Castle Richmond is just like an English estate and this Irish family is just like an English one. Trollope suggests that the "settings" for Irish and English daily life "are compatible, and thus generic distinctions between English and Irish novels" made by the English reading public "mistakenly separate novels that share a form and a purpose," as Mullen summarizes (54). Both English and Irish novels represent daily life in the nineteenth century for Trollope, a daily life that shares similarities regardless of if one is in England or Ireland.

Yet, the Fitzgerald's Castle Richmond is not all of Ireland. Absenteeism brings about the Famine (the narrative claims) and the destruction of the Irish landscape—specifically its kitchen gardens. Such destruction continually asserts a sense of Irish

¹⁴⁹ See Duncan "The Provincial or Regional Novel" 321-323.

specificity and difference, disrupting this shared sense of place and, with it, national identity that the opening presents. *Castle Richmond*'s gardens show how Irish daily life cannot be equated to English daily life and this shared sense of place and identity does not exist for a vast number of those inhabiting Irish landscapes. Rather than a novel on *English* daily life that happens to be in Ireland, the Irish-specific setting continually comes to the forefront of the narrative, ensuring that this work is about *Irish* daily life during the Famine. John McCourt observes that "[t]his flimsy description of a beautiful, almost 'English' Ireland clashes with the counter-images of poverty, starvation, and death that the novel will later illustrate" (101).¹⁵⁰ It is the kitchen garden that localizes Trollope's novel, making the setting unique, pushing its non-Englishness to the forefront. The garden brings forth the poverty, starvation, and death that McCourt alludes to in his criticism of the novel. The specificity of its Irish setting continually comes to the narrative's forefront and makes the destruction of many Irish communities exceptionally visible; in doing so, the novel attempts to force readers to see how the legacy of absenteeism eradicates the ability for many of those within Ireland to establish and/or maintain a sense of place.

Castle Richmond directly speaks to the garden's significance to place through the Fitzgeralds' property. The narrator asks readers

who have houses and the adjuncts of houses [to] think how considerable a part of their life's pleasures consists in their interest in the things around them. When will the sea-kale be fit to cut, and when

¹⁵⁰ See Mullen 54 for more about how this opening is disrupted by the novel's depiction of the Famine.

will the crocuses come up? will the violets be sweeter than ever? and the geranium cuttings, are they thriving. (Trollope 360)¹⁵¹

Cultivating gardens and their plants creates a sense of dwelling. While the narrator goes on to recount other articles that create such a feeling, I stress that it is the garden's plants that come first when considering dwelling. It is the sea-kale specifically, a plant commonly grown in nineteenth-century kitchen gardens (particularly those in coastal regions), which appears first.¹⁵² The dwelling that establishes place is, at its heart, grounded by a connection to the garden and its plants' growth cycle; when gardeners "have dug, and manured, and sown" they "look forward to the reaping" of this labor (360). People become tied to their landscape, for there is an

intimacy to which a man attains with all the various trifling objects round his own *locality*; how he knows the bark of every tree, and the bend of every bough; how he has marked where the rich grass grows in tufts, and where the poorer soil is always dry and bare. (384; emphasis added)

One's immediate sense of place, their locality, is integral to the patterns of their daily life. In other words, surroundings dictate the knowledge a person acquires, the habits they develop, the identity they construct. It is gardening in the garden that creates and maintains place. As such, the absence of the garden that plagues all other Irish

¹⁵¹ Alan Bewell has observed that in the late eighteenth century, along with "camelias, fuchsias, [and rhododendrons,]" geraniums "quickly established themselves as naturalized species in the wild" within England (59). While geraniums are not native to Ireland, their inclusion showcases how the Fitzgerald family participates within English horticultural community and practices.

¹⁵² See G. Allen 125. As it is commonly grown in coastal regions, sea kale—also known as scurvy grass—was commonly eaten by sailors ill with scurvy upon their return to port.

landscapes throughout *Castle Richmond* ensures that their inhabitants cannot have this sense of place.

There is an absence of gardens throughout the countryside surrounding Castle Richmond, for those controlling the landscape—the middlemen—devalue place, so the novel suggests. Rather than blame the absentees themselves for the Famine, Trollope blames those who filled their void: the middlemen. In Ireland during this period, middlemen were people who leased land from large estate holders and then sublet the leased land in smaller units at exceptionally high rates.¹⁵³ By blaming the middlemen, rather than the estate holders who leased the land originally, the fault is shifted away from the colonial landlords; these landlords are instead positioned as being capable of reform (as shown with Lady Clonbrony in *The Absentee*). If the middlemen who charge exceptionally high rates are removed and the absentee landlords take charge of their estate, all will be remedied within Ireland peaceably. The novel’s narrator—or a thinly disguised Trollope recounting similar opinions to his *The Examiner* articles¹⁵⁴—proclaims that

[t]he scourge of Ireland was the existence of a class who looked to be gentlemen living on their property . . . speaking of their properties and boasting of their *places*, but who owned no properties and *had no places* when the matter came to be properly sifted. (67; emphasis added)

¹⁵³ While today the term “middlemen” does not have such a specific meaning, the *OED* observes that this definition was used in Ireland from the eighteenth to early twentieth centuries.

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion on the narrator’s uncanny similarity to Trollope’s authorial voice in these periodical articles, see: Kelleher (432-244); Siddle (144).

Those that occupy, but do not value, places are at fault. Unlike absentee landlords who own property and would (theoretically) resume their maintenance and care of place and community when they return, middlemen have no connection to the land itself. With “[p]roperty . . . regarded as having no duties attached to it,” middlemen

underlet their land in small patches, and at the amount of rent to collect which took the whole labour of their tenants, and the whole produce of the small patch, over and above the quantity of potatoes absolutely necessary to keep the tenant’s body and soul together. (67)¹⁵⁵

To fund the absentee landlords’ English lifestyle while also lining their own pockets, middlemen unnecessarily increased rents, which led to the mass adoption of the potato. Those that had no sense of place within Ireland forced Irish tenants to reformulate their own gardens, their own places.

Specifically, *Castle Richmond* suggests that the middlemen’s treatment of the land ensured that a vast majority of Irish tenants depended upon the potato, to devastating effects. Such a reliance on the potato is historically accurate to the Famine. As “[a] laboriously cultivated potato garden could feed a large family, freeing up the rest of a tenant farmer’s land for cash crops or grazing,” the potato was one of the few crops that enabled tenants to pay their disproportionately high rents (Bigelow, “Trollope and Ireland” 197). Not only did the kind of produce get limited in the kitchen garden, but also the variety of cultivars shrunk until the Lumper became the primary potato cultivated in Ireland. Such a monoculture meant that any infestation could spread far more quickly. With potatoes acquiring dry rot, the kitchen garden

¹⁵⁵ Trollope is simplifying the factors leading to the Famine. As both Kreilkamp (“Painting” 75) and Tracy (“Unnatural Ruin” 361) observe, population growth, religious sectarianism, misgovernment by the British, and ineffectual landlords contributed to this devastating event.

failed in producing sustenance and eventually typhus and dysentery compounded the starvation to terrible levels. A February 1847 article in the *Southern Reporter and Cork Commercial Courier* notes that “[i]n a . . . garden I saw (as I was informed) the bodies of Kate Barry and her two children very lightly covered with earth, the hands and legs of her large body entirely exposed, the flesh completely eaten off by the dogs” (Ó Gráda 35). Representing the ultimate failure of the kitchen garden, this garden is a repository of death rather than a site of growth. With the garden no longer able to fix a people to a place, the physical composition of communities changed within Ireland: “Between 1845 and 1852 roughly a million people died of starvation; another million emigrated” (Bigelow, “Trollope and Ireland” 197). In *Castle Richmond*, this destruction of land, garden, and community comes about when those in charge have no personal connection to a landscape. With no recognition that this land helps ground a community’s identity, middlemen do not recognize the placemaking gardens do for a local community. Rather, they force tenants to change their own relationship to their gardens; such alterations, in turn, ensure the destructions of these places and communities.

Herbert Fitzgerald’s tour of his neighboring community highlights the blighted gardens and their failure of sustaining a sense of place within the novel. While his family’s English-like Irish property fared much “better” than the rest of the area—as they have never been absentees, middlemen never came and drastically altered their property— “even round Castle Richmond the distress was very severe” (Trollope 70). Herbert notes that “riding out of the district with which he was most thoroughly acquainted” he “pass[ed] by cabins and patches of now deserted land which were strange to him” and saw no “preparation being made for cropping” potatoes (367).

While his singular estate may not be devastated, his larger community is now unfamiliar. Deserted rather than cultivated, the absence of the kitchen garden not only forces Herbert to experience an estrangement from his local community, but also showcases how widespread this unmooring of place is throughout Ireland. Even for those whose livelihoods are mostly unaffected by the infestation, such as Herbert, there is a widespread deracination of place, an uprooting brought about by horrid landscape practices.

The difficulty in remaking a sense of place once it is destroyed is embodied in the scalp or scalpeen. *Scalp* is a “hole dug in the earth, some two or three feet deep” commonly “roofed over with sticks and pieces of turf, laid in the shape of an inverted saucer” while a “*Scalpeen* is a hole, too, but . . . [i]t is often erected within the walls when any are left standing, of the unroofed houses, and all that is above the surface is built out of the old materials” (“Conditions of Ireland” 394). The first is a glorified hole, the second is a bricolage of destroyed places. Such sites did not encourage dwelling. In both the *Illustrated London News*’ “Scalpeen” and “Scalp at Cahuermore” (see Figure 9) there are no accompanying kitchen gardens, no cultivated landscapes. As the newspaper observes, people were “placed in a hole, surrounded by pools, and three sides of the scalp. . . were dripped with water” (“Conditions of Ireland (continued from page 406)” 443). Rather than a garden filled with produce, there is only standing water drowning out any growth. Such sites foster a transient, homeless population. When Herbert travels through Cork, he comes across a scalpeen, observing that “[i]t was small and wretched to look at, without any sort of outside shed, or even a scrap of potato-garden attached to it, —a miserable low-roofed, damp, ragged tenement, as wretched as any that might be seen even in the country Cork”

(Trollope 368). With no kitchen garden and potato in sight, this structure is marked as “miserable” and “wretched.” Herbert’s entrance into the structure reaffirms the absence of any sense of daily use in this space: “inside was to be seen none of those articles of *daily use* which are usually to be found in the houses even of the poorest” (369; emphasis added). This lack of objects of “daily use” reaffirms what Herbert saw outside with the absence of the garden. There is no sense of habitation, of living within this place. Nothing is there to anchor the people to this spot. Nothing is left to establish an intimacy to place.

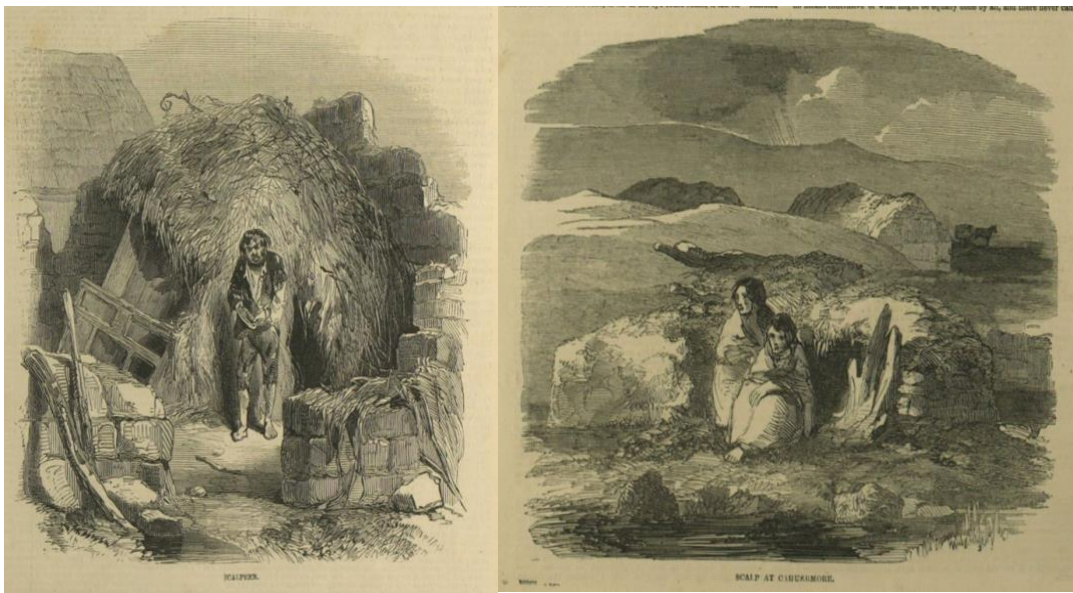


Figure 9 “Scalpeen” and “Scalp at Cahuermore.” 1849. *Illustrated London News*

To establish a new sense of place in the wake of the Famine’s devastation, *Castle Richmond* claims that England cannot, nor should not, be of help. First, through Herbert the narrative claims that Irish people will be unable to feel at home in

England. Herbert, the heir to the English-like estate in Ireland that opens the novel, takes refuge in London during his brief disinheritance.¹⁵⁶ Yet, he finds no *place* there. Instead, Herbert experiences a sense of estrangement: while “he would have professed that he knew it [London] well . . . he felt himself to be absolutely a stranger” (Trollope 392). Familiar with the metropole due to a variety of visits, Herbert is not in alien land. Yet, London cannot offer the same sense of community and place that Castle Richmond provides. London does not offer relief to this Irish émigré—emotionally or literally. Moreover, the novel sinisterly notes that England should not aid in this remaking of place. The novel, like Trollope’s *Examiner* pieces, suggest that English relief efforts were sufficient and instead argues for the Irish to rebuild their own community and identity without economic aid. In a moment when the distinction between Trollope and the narrator fully collapses, the text observes that:

I was in the country, travelling always through it, during the whole period, and I have to say—as I did say at the time with a voice that was not very audible [in the *Examiner*—that in my opinion the measures of the government were prompt, wise and beneficent. (69)¹⁵⁷

Trollope discounts any fault that could be cast onto the metropole. The novel suggests that those affected by the Famine should neither travel to England nor expect any further aid from England.

¹⁵⁶ As Margaret Kelleher argues, “[a]lthough certainly not a ‘cotter’ (p. 68) or a landless labourer, he temporarily shares their fate of emigration, moving to London to find employment” (246-7).

¹⁵⁷ History has condemned the government’s response to the Famine. As Neil Hegarty observes, “[s]uch political neglect and carelessness also undermined the politically vital claims made at the time of the Act of Union, that Britain and Ireland now constituted a fused society, with all the collective social and moral responsibilities that this implied.”

Rather, it is the Fitzgeralds, the Irish landlords who appear almost English, that will create new places within Ireland. England aid is not needed, for Englishness is already within Ireland. Significantly, this English sense of place was not destroyed during the Famine. Compared to their neighbors, Castle Richmond's "tenants . . . had more means at their disposal, and did not depend so absolutely on the potato crop" (Trollope 70). The narrative thereby highlights that it is the *English* model that will succeed in Ireland; it survived during the Famine and therefore (in the narrative) is representative of appropriate land management for Ireland going forward. Herbert himself is called the "model" for all of Ireland's community leaders, as he puts on "soup-kitchens, out-door relief, and labour-gangs, [which] might be taken as a model for . . . Ireland (489). Castle Richmond did not perish and therefore becomes the epicenter of both relief and new modes of placemaking. In short, the narrative concludes by observing that, with Herbert's father for all intents and purposes a "Leicestershire baronet," all within Ireland should resemble this English-like family (3). While Herbert's rejection of London can be positioned as his forgoing any English ties, I suggest that Trollope positions this English-like Irishman as being rooted in Ireland to show that the Irish must stay within Ireland while adopting an English sense of place.¹⁵⁸ Rather than being a proto-independence moment, the novel claims that the Irish already have their English model, meaning that they have no need to leave Ireland and/or rely upon London anymore.

Through their depiction of rootless gardens, both *The Absentee* and *Castle Richmond* illuminate what happens when a fundamental part of the "gardenhood" of

¹⁵⁸ Herbert proclaims that he will "never leave it [Ireland] again" (465).

the garden—its roots—are uprooted. It loses its ability to establish a sense of place. Those who no longer structure their place around rooted gardens (whether by choice, circumstance, or force), are unmoored. While both novels put forth highly problematic solutions to remake place after it is lost, solutions which forgo almost any critique of England's imperial expansion into Ireland, they both highlight the role the garden has in the nineteenth-century novelistic imagination's consideration of identity formation. In my final chapter, I continue to consider the destruction of place. To do so, I turn to the glasshouse. "To Glass Over" considers the devolution of place at the species level. In it I examine *The Time Machine*'s engagement with greenhouse gardening and Victorian schemes to enclose London in a glasshouse, along with the terrible repercussions of such proposals.

Chapter 6

TO GLASS OVER: ERADICATING HUMANITY IN WELLS

The door opens; a flush of heat steals over you; there is a strange, but not disagreeable, earthy smell; and you have migrated into New Holland! ~ James Hannay,¹⁵⁹ “The Palace of Flowers,” 1851

Kew Gardens’ visitors could travel across the British Empire while physically staying within Victorian Greater London. At least, this is how James Hannay—a diplomat, naval officer, writer, and editor of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*—describes his visit to *Household Words*’ readers. Within Kew’s various glasshouses—an umbrella term for enclosed gardens like greenhouses that regulate their atmosphere to control growth through light management—garden-goers immersed themselves within the “corresponding climate of any of . . . [the Empire’s] colonial possessions” (Hannay 120).¹⁶⁰ Not only were gardeners attempting to replicate such climates, but they were also endeavoring to create an “artificial Eden” (118).¹⁶¹ By containing a variety of colonies in one garden, Kew “juxtapose[es] in a single real place several

¹⁵⁹ See Hannay 118.

¹⁶⁰ As Isobel Armstrong notes, conservatories “could not but act out a horticultural imperialism that raised questions about the colonizing role” (167).

¹⁶¹ The connection between British gardeners, colonies, and Eden-making was not unique to Kew. See Grove 1-72.

spaces” (Foucault 25).¹⁶² It establishes itself as an idealization of the British Empire. A perfected, miniature version of the Empire, Kew fulfills one of the various roles of a heterotopia: “to create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled” (Foucault 27). Kew is highly organized and managed, removing any of the disorder, confusion, and ugliness of the external world. With its gardeners striving to “hatch—beauty,”

[e]verything about the Gardens bears testimony to careful management and excellent organisation. The brooding heat . . . is supplied by dozens of little subterranean pipes, or flues, and fills the places with an equal atmosphere. The dew moisture fattens the leaves ever in due time; there are no dead leaves, no decayed blossoms lying about. (Hannay 118, 120)

With an intricate heating system regulating these glasshouses’ climate, humans control the plants’ spatial-temporal patterns and movements. Kew’s plants live within a climate so perfected that they are in a continual bloom.¹⁶³ Eden is found neither in the domestic English climate nor in the tropical colonies’ climates. Rather, Eden is constructed by British gardeners.

Yet, it is not just the plants that are altered when acclimatizing to this artificial Eden. Humans adapt to this Edenic environment: “you feel something like the south mixing like wine with your blood” when entering into the greenhouse (Hannay 118).

¹⁶² Foucault suggests that “perhaps the oldest example of these heterotopias that take the form of contradictory sites is the garden” for “[t]he garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world” (25-26).

¹⁶³ Hannay records one instance of resistance. The *Foureroya gigantea*, an aloe plant, refused to grow according to the gardeners plans; after years of dormancy, it rapidly grew, breaking the glasshouse ceiling. That said, this destruction was immediately cleared away and the ceiling retrofitted around the plant (119).

The glasshouse's climate morally and biologically alters its visitors. Hannay evokes the eucharist with his mention of blood and wine; visitors participate in a communion of sorts, as the glasshouse's air cleanses them of their sins. Purged of their sins, visitors operate within this Edenic, prelapsarian environment. Moreover, like plants, whose veins are kept alive through the pipes pumping heat throughout the greenhouse, the veins of human visitors are seemingly altered. Hannay reaffirms the biological change this manufactured environment has on its visitors by observing that, when entering the Palm House, one feels "[a] flush rises to the brow—you are stepping to a bath—to bathe in beauty! It is a fine genial sensation, as if you were going to shut up, and grow a little, on your own account" (119). Humans respond to this artificial environment in a similar manner as plants. This artificial environment invites Hannay to consider how he would, at the biological level, change if he lived within such an idyllic climate.

Kew's glasshouses and others like it were climate engineering projects. While climate engineering¹⁶⁴ practices commonly proposed today—like putting sun-blocking particles into the atmosphere to combat climate change—were not feasible in the Victorian period, Victorians used the glasshouse to attempt to create amicable environments in order to combat pollution and grow exotic plants. The glasshouse was a necessary tool in such Victorian climate proposals, for "[t]he artificial climate of the glasshouse offered a paradoxically *more* natural habitat than the soot-laden London fog" (Taylor, *Sky* 18, 25). With Greater London so hostile to life, horticulturalists

¹⁶⁴ As defined by the *OED*, climate engineering is either the "management of the indoor microclimate" or "the artificial modification of weather patterns, esp. to counteract future climate change." Today the latter definition is most often used.

engineered micro-climates that were more conducive to growth than the “natural” climate outside the glasshouse’s walls.

Writing almost half a century after Hannay in his 1895 *The Time Machine*, H.G. Wells takes up these issues of nineteenth-century climate engineering: What if this artificial Eden is not limited to Kew, but instead all of England can exist within this paradisaical Spring? How would humans biologically adapt? Who would organize and manage this artificial climate? I argue that in *The Time Machine* Wells narratively travels to the future to consider what would happen if the entire planet were to become a glasshouse product. I do not mean that Wells *literally* shows the entire world encased in a glasshouse. Rather, in what follows I show how Wells theorizes what could happen if the entire planet was subject to climate engineering of the sort done by Kew’s gardeners. In this future, mankind lives within an artificial Eden; like Kew’s plants, the Eloi live in a tropical paradise that their own labor is not required to maintain.¹⁶⁵ Connecting *The Time Machine* to Victorian climate-engineering schemes that propose to ameliorate the harmful effects of industrialization, overpopulation, and the mechanization of human labor through horticultural advancements, I interrogate how Wells critiques such glasshouse schemes while calling for reform to the very environmental and labor conditions that engendered such proposed solutions.

Not only are plants under the management of this horticultural technology, but in 802,701 humankind is akin to the plants cultivated within glasshouses.

Correspondingly, humans also fall prey to the side effects of climate-based horticultural improvement schemes, which often resulted in sterility, miscegenation,

¹⁶⁵ One forced to leave Eden, humankind must work the land for food. By not having to work for their food, the Eloi return to this prelapsarian way of living.

and the like for plants and in the docile Eloi and cannibalistic Morlocks for humankind. Rather than the Darwinian concept of “progressive adaptation through natural selection . . . H.G. Wells . . . read evolution against beauty and teleology, suggesting a narrative of regression based on the colliding modernities of industrial squalor and consumer self-indulgence,” as Heidi Scott has recently argued (602-603). Humankind does not progress, but degenerates. Through his description of the Eloi and Morlocks, Wells theorizes the outcomes of nineteenth-century climate engineering: by 802,701 humankind has improved and cultivated the world’s environment so greatly that they have eradicated their own species. As Wells himself states, “[h]umanity had been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and had used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions” (34). By working to engineer a paradise, humankind altered its climate so much that they destroyed themselves.

I argue that such devolution stems from the eradication of place. Place needs to be maintained, as “To Improve” shows, yet within this artificial Eden such maintenance is unnecessary. To consider the eradication of place within *The Time Machine*, I draw from Paul Cantor, Peter Hufnagel, and Michael Sayeau, who consider Wells’ depiction of labor.¹⁶⁶ Cantor and Hufnagel consider the imperial implications of this work, suggesting that the Eloi “portray a Britain . . . that has succumbed to the seductive forces it hoped to subdue on the imperial frontier,” for it is only the “harsh climate” that separates colony and metropole, colonized and colonizer (42). Without a “harsh climate” forcing residents to work for food, heat, and shelter, people will

¹⁶⁶ See Shackleton 848 for more on Wells’ response to Darwinian evolution.

become complacent. People will no longer need to actively maintain their place when living in tropical climates, so *The Time Machine* suggests. Sayeau theorizes that such devolution centers on the “[u]nlimited, laborless production afforded by technological advance,” for “the end of the history of labor and alienation. . . is, in Wells’s rendition, the tipping point that heralds an evolutionary catastrophe” (435). Human history ends when labor stops, meaning that all humankind devolves with the absence of labor. Labor is no longer necessary in a perfected climate, for food and shelter are provided or not needed. With this lack of maintenance and interaction with one’s surroundings, there is also a lack of place. This lack of place is destructive, for place binds identity. This conceit has been the grounding focus of *Constructing Locality*, where I have examined how alterations to place alter personal, communal, and national identities. In this final chapter, I show how engineering artificial climates creates an artificial place for humanity at large. Such artificial places cannot ground identities and in Wells’ future the collective identity of “human” is eradicated.

A turn to the novelistic garden enables such theorization of humanity’s eradication, for both the garden and novel afford such speculative practices. Victorian horticulturalist F.W. Burbidge calls “[t]he garden . . . a laboratory, in which experiments are continually being carried out” (qtd. in Bowden 613). A garden can create a different reality than the one outside its boundaries. Yet, it is limited spatially by its physical boundaries and temporally by its period’s scientific advancements. Rather, it is novelists like Wells who can take up the garden’s speculations and expand them. Wells, for instance, literalizes garden-as-laboratory. When travelling from his laboratory into the future, the Time Traveller lands in “a little lawn in a garden” (Wells 23); the entirety of the Traveller’s adventure takes place in a garden-laboratory

since the time machine only moves temporally, not spatially. Wells draws from the speculative affordance of both the novel and garden to consider the long-term effects of current Victorian horticultural practices, theorizing how present behavior will influence future practices. In doing so, I suggest that *The Time Machine* serves as a potent example of how “[t]he novel . . . becomes a space of simulation, in which hypothetically possible outcomes can be tested (and contained) under safe conditions” (Taylor, “The Novel after Nature” 115).¹⁶⁷ When garden and novel are brought together, authors like Wells can theorize various outcomes without having to commit to any path.

To show how Wells mobilizes the novel’s form to theorize the long-term ramifications of climate deterioration through the glasshouse garden, I first detail the changes London’s climate went through during the nineteenth century. London is my focus, for this geographic spot is where the Traveller goes to in his adventure. I then show that the year 802,701 both resembles climate-perfecting scheme proposed by horticulturalists like Nathaniel Ward and Joseph Paxton and illuminates the long-term ramifications of such plans. In doing so, I argue that Wells shows that climate engineering results in artificial places, places that lead to the devolution of humanity. By narrating climate engineering’s destructive path, Wells highlights the mutual influence humankind and their environment have upon each other.

¹⁶⁷ Similarly, Aaron Rosenberg suggests that Wells narrates “the experience of deep time,” an experience outside the bounds of human experience (82).

Glassing Over Victorian London

Muddy, filthy, foggy, and overcrowded. Such descriptors characterize Victorian London. This portrayal of London is most famously recorded by Charles Dickens in the opening of his 1853 *Bleak House*:

As much mud in the streets, as if the waters had but newly retired from the face of the earth Smoke lowering down from chimney-pots, making a soft black drizzle, with flakes of soot in it as big as full-grown snow-flakes—gone into mourning, one might imagine, for the death of the sun. Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better; splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers . . . losing their foothold at street-corners, where tens of thousands of other foot passengers have been slipping . . . adding new deposits to the crust upon crust of mud, sticking at those points tenaciously to the pavement, and accumulating at compound interest. Fog everywhere. (11)

Dark from smoke and filled to the brim with filth from the city's human and non-human residents, London is an environmentally toxic place within *Bleak House*. Such a description is not a Dickensian exaggeration. Victorian London was filthy. As Lee Jackson observes, in London the “[t]horoughfares were swamped with black mud, composed principally of horse dung, forming a tenacious, glutinous paste; the air was peppered with soot, flakes of filth tumbling to the ground” (1). In winter a sulphureous stink would mix into the dust, soot, and dung, while in summer the scent of spoiled food lingered in the air.

Such filth compounded upon itself throughout the century, so by the close of the Victorian period London had a true environmental crisis on its hands. Emblematic of this dangerous filth was The Great Horse Manure Crisis of 1894. London's increasing population—it rose from one to six million throughout the nineteenth century—called for the increase of hansom cabs. By 1900 there were over 11,000 cabs in the city of London. These cabs, combined with the horse-drawn buses, carts, and drays, meant that there were over 50,000 horses moving—and defecating—in London

each day. By 1894 this crisis had come to a head; horse manure, urine, and carcasses¹⁶⁸ filled London's streets so heavily that *The Times* predicted that by 1944 every street in London would be buried nine feet deep in manure. This manure attracted flies, leading to the spread of diseases like typhoid fever. Taken all together, "[t]he streets of London were beginning to poison its people" (Johnson).

London was hostile to its residents, as the polluted environment humans produced was directly harmful to their survival. It was not just the streets, but the London air itself was harming, if not slowly killing, those breathing it in. In his 1892 "London Fog: A Scheme to Abolish It" *The National Review* contributor B.H. Thwaite reports that during the Winter of 1879 bronchitis deaths increased over 300 percent and those from whooping-cough over 200 percent. Thwaite directly links this increase in deaths to the poor air quality, observing that by "[i]nterfering with the interdiffusion of gases in the lungs, they [gas particles] impede the oxidation of the carbon, and in weak organisms they cause a loss of vital heat that frequently ends in death" (361). The filth of London—the result of human residence and consumption—was directly harming its people.

Horticulture made such air-born toxicity visible. Specifically, the "wither[ing]" of houseplants forced Victorians to recognize the existence of "the harmful fumes and microscopic carcinogens of combusted coal . . . that they themselves were breathing every day" but could not see, as Lindsay Wells observes (162). In her 1863 *The Indoor Gardener*, E.A. Maling speaks to how houseplants illuminate pollution, noting that

¹⁶⁸ At this period work horses had a life expectancy of 3 years; after their death their carcasses would "often [be] left to putrefy so the corpses could be more easily sawn into pieces for removal" (Johnson).

she had “to remove the effects of the London blacks” from rooftop plants as part of her plant care routine (56). Such pollution was not limited to the domestic, for London’s commercial garden nurseries also suffered. Pollution even changed how plants were sold, as seed houses became more reliable, for “they were less likely [than nurseries] to be badly affected by air pollution” (Elliott, “Commercial” 175). Growth outside of London was also affected. In an 1884 review of William Thomson’s “Is Our Climate Deteriorating,” author G.D. reports

that, in spite of enormous sums spent on manures of all sorts, and improved implements for every purpose, the land of Great Britain, acre for acre, does not produce anything like the crops it did forty years ago. If, therefore, this statement is well founded, it is difficult to disconnect it from climatal causes. (387)

G.D. further observes that plants need “protection” from the polluted air to grow; only “under glass,” for instance, removed from the polluted air can cucumbers, peaches, nectarines, plums, and apricots thrive (387).¹⁶⁹ While they could not readily see the pollutants in their own lungs, gardeners could see the black soot upon their plants or recognize their plants’ inability to grow. Filth infused itself into all corners of the Greater London area, inhibiting plant growth and human health.

Victorians recognized that this filth came from anthropogenic climate deterioration. Lockean improvement theory, which grounded much of eighteenth-

¹⁶⁹ This question over the extent to which the climate is truly deteriorating and altering plant growth is advanced throughout *The Gardener* by many of its contributors. With articles like the 1887 “Why Peaches Fail in the Open,” along with advertisements for newly developed manures meant to alter the soil to address the lack of plant growth, like the 1880 “Artificial Manures” advertisement, gardeners highlight how they were turning to glasshouse technology and the manipulation of soil to combat nineteenth-century pollution.

century environmental philosophy, was replaced with human-driven ecological destruction by the end of the nineteenth. Such a change is readily attributed to London's population increasing sixfold. Unlike industrial cities like Manchester, "London's smog was the product of a simpler and more profound force—population growth," meaning that

[w]hile industrialization in the urban environs was unquestionably a factor (as were gasworks, steamships, and locomotives), the primary offender was not the industrial chimney but the hearth that lay at the heart of the home and the Victorian domestic ideal. (Taylor, *Sky* 2, 51)

By this point in time, simply by existing humans polluted their environment. Thwaite observed that "[t]he cycle of natural actions, and their sequence, is regular and perfect. Interference is dangerous. Our methods of using carbonaceous fuel are particularly" harmful (360). Thwaite rightly observes that by the close of the nineteenth century humans were, collectively, environmental disruptors and destroyers. One's bodily presence made them part of this climate crisis.

Such culpability caused a moral panic. Knowing "that their pollution was unprecedented," Victorians "perceived in it not just ecological impacts, but moral culpability too" (Scott 589). They recognized that their consumption was causing the deterioration of their environment. "The 'whole earth' had once been a garden, according to Christian belief" and with such consumption and pollution the Victorians kept physically moving further away from the Christian ideal of how the world should be shaped (Bowden 614). Such concern infused itself into the period's literature. William Morris's 1890 *News from Nowhere*, Samuel Butler's 1872 *Erewhon*, and W.H. Hudson's 1887 *A Crystal Age* all, in some way, reflect on climate and environmental health when entering industrial modernity (H. Scott 591, 593). Moreover, John Ruskin's (in)famous "Storm Cloud" lecture overtly connects physical

and moral pollution: As “England” has “blasphemed the name of God deliberately and openly” soon one would “choke yourself with your own nastiness” (43, 42). Physical gloom manifests from moral corruption; in turn, that physical pollution increases moral pollution in a destructive feedback loop. Such physical and moral corruption could travel, as air pollution disregards human-drawn boundaries.¹⁷⁰ There is no container binding the filthy air to London’s city limits.

To make such a container, a container that could hold and improve London air, Victorians turned to the glasshouse. In the early Victorian period, horticulturalist Nathaniel Ward developed his Wardian Case, a terrarium, “in which plants grew, protected from urban smoke and factory pollution” (I. Armstrong 141).¹⁷¹ A “cousin” to the greenhouse, as Lindsay Wells puts it, the Wardian Case was a prominent form of glass technology throughout the Victorian period. By creating “a constantly pure and humid atmosphere,” plants could grow “as well in the most smoky parts of London, as on the rocks of Killarney” (N. Ward 38). Unlike Maling, who had to clean the soot off her plants, owners of the Wardian case ensured that their plants grew in a pristine environment. Horticulturalists soon theorized how this glasshouse technology could be extrapolated on a larger scale.

The glasshouse enabled scientists to consider climate engineering at a global, atmospheric scale. French scientist Joseph Fourier recognized that, when released in

¹⁷⁰ As Ruskin notes, “[b]y the plague-wind every breath of air you draw is polluted, half round the world” (*Storm Cloud* 42).

¹⁷¹ Terrariums enabled gardens to exist inside the domestic sphere. Like their outdoor counterparts, these miniature gardens blended the public and private. The terrarium was often a show piece situated in the parlor where it would be visible to guests.

the atmosphere, certain gases acted like glass panes that trapped in heat.¹⁷² While Fourier recognized the climatal problem of these gases, Swedish scientists Svante Arrhenius and Nils Ekholm used glasshouses as models to theorize solutions to climate problems:

increasing the concentration of atmospheric carbon through coal combustion might raise the surface temperature of Earth. . . . The world would literally become like a glasshouse or conservatory, in which climate could be regulated as a means of fending off the next ice age and expanding the temperature and habitable areas of the globe. (Taylor, *Sky* 26)

By manipulating the release of gasses, one could control the climate.

While these meteorologists and mathematicians were theorizing how to manipulate the atmosphere, horticulturalists were theorizing ways to create ambient environments separate from the globe's atmosphere. To do so, they considered the physical erection of large-scale glasshouse that would house people. Such a theory had architectural and ideological precedents. In 1831 Henry Philips "transferred the conservatory principle to the display of animals Housing the animal species of all nations in a gesture of inclusion" (I. Armstrong 146). Punch satirically called upon Joseph Paxton to make conservatories for the Great Exhibition's visitors, so "every human being under the sun might have been accommodated with his own climate" ("Climates for All Nations" 229). At the close of the article, the author notes that "should we not rear young ladies under glass, and see if we cannot grow Circassian beauties" (229). Renowned for being the ideal of feminine beauty, the article asks if Circassian beauties could be grown within England; if so, women would be

¹⁷² Fourier is thought to be one of the first scientists to theorize the greenhouse effect. See H. Scott 590 for more on Fourier's climate theories.

biologically altered like hothouse plants. In this one glancing comment, the article suggests that to control climate is to control people at a biological level. England could grow nonnative people, thereby controlling their biological, mental, and aesthetic development; through climate engineering schemes, such horticulturalists would create a type of imperialistic eugenics program. While the article's call to Paxton is satirical, Paxton himself had a plan that follows similar ideological lines.

In 1855 Joseph Paxton presented his "Great Victorian Way" to Parliament members. Creating a "girdle" within London, Paxton proposed a covered roadway whose "central nave" would traffic goods during night "and omnibuses and passage vehicles during the day. On either side of the roadway would be shops and apartments, and beyond these, within the same structure, would be . . . smokeless pneumatic railways and walkways" (Nead 27-28). Central to this plan was the purification of London's air:

The streets of London, particularly in the City, are full of filth, arising from the dirt and smoke emitted from the chimnies [*sic*], which I propose to get rid of in this arcade by putting a roof upon it, and by so arranging the ventilation as to prevent all this heavy dirt and filth from coming into the arcade. (*Minutes of Evidence* 80)

Material byproducts of industrialization would be purified out of the "roof of glass," ensuring that in this contained section of London one could experience an improved atmosphere.

Paxton was not alone in theorizing such plans.¹⁷³ Architects and gardeners like William Mosely, Frederic Gye, J.C. Loudon, and Nathaniel Ward had similar

¹⁷³ William Mosely and Frederic Gye present a similar plan as Paxton. J.C. Loudon also consider how large swaths of land could be enclosed in glass and was interested in how such spaces could have artificial rain. See I. Armstrong 155-158, 182 for more

strategies to combat pollution. While the bulk of Ward's treatise centers on his Wardian case, in its conclusion Ward shifts focus; he suggests that mammals would also benefit from this technology if applied on a larger scale. He claims that "it is [possible] to grow some plants in closed cases, in even more than their native luxuriance" (N. Ward 42). If such a point is transferred to his consideration of humans in closed houses, this proposal suggests that it would be possible to grow humans better than in their native luxuriance. With London being so filthy, the artificial environment is healthier than the "natural" environment outside the glass walls. These technological salubrious climates would exist alongside the smoky, polluted London one. Moreover, the clean air of the glasshouse would be more reminiscent of a past English environment untouched by nineteenth-century pollution than anything found in Victorian Greater London. As such, those in this Greater London area could grow themselves more effectively in a glasshouse than they could in their native England.

Both Paxton and Ward highlight the medical benefits these largescale glasshouses would have on the ill. When attempting to acquire funding for the Great Victorian Way, Paxton suggests that his design "would prevent many infirm persons being obliged to go into foreign countries in the winter. . . and it would be almost equal to going to a foreign climate from the manner in which the temperature could be regulated" (*Minutes of Evidence* 81).¹⁷⁴ Paxton here implies that unlike London,

details. I highlight Ward due to the popularity of his glass cases and his general influence in the Victorian domestic sphere.

¹⁷⁴ Ward echoes this sentiment, noting that by creating a Mediterranean climate in London these "closed houses" could prevent "the painful necessity of sending a beloved relative to a distant land for the remote chance of recovery" (112).

whose winter was filled with smog and sulphureous stink, countries like Italy and France—popular convalescing spots—were not blighted with the same problems. He links such extensive pollution to England. For Paxton, England needs such a climate engineering scheme, for it is the English who have degraded their climate. These schemes would “hea[l] the physical wounds of the city experience” by having foreign climates “conjured in opposition to the ‘impure’ and ‘murky’ atmosphere of London” (I. Armstrong 158-159). Likewise, Ward suggests that through the creation of “closed houses” that maintain “a pure and properly regulated atmosphere we possess a remedial means of the highest order for many of the ills that flesh is heir to” (110). Humans residing within the closed houses would physically improve. Both Paxton and Ward suggest that ill Victorians could sequester themselves into these closed houses and convalesce. Their plans align with J.C. Loudon’s theorization of the conservatory’s benefit, as he observes that having such “artificial climates” will be “useful in a medical point of view” as “[t]he sick and healthy body could be fundamentally changed” with the warmer weather (qtd. in I. Armstrong 182). In short, glasshouse technology would improve the ill at the biological level.

Such plans would further gentrify and stratify the city. As Frederic Gye notes in his own plan for a glass arcade,

low-value properties would allow for the glass arcade to be ‘greatly increased,’ ‘expanding into several magnificent galleries or halls.’ Cheaply purchased slums would be overshadowed by the gigantic glass colonnades in the air, misery increasing in proportion with the expansion above. (qtd. in I. Armstrong 155).

Those unable to purchase a place in the glass colonnade would be forced to gaze upon their social betters from below; this structure would physically reify upper- and lower-class divisions. Those in the glasshouse would enjoy the clean, artificially perfected

environment, while those outside it would breathe in the filthy air. In other words, all unable to live within these large glasshouses would be slowly killed by the pollution that those in the city, including those inside the glass arcade, create.

Glassing Over 802,701 London

When reaching 802,701, the world's residents are now products of such climate engineering schemes. Observing that now "the whole earth had become a garden," Wells theorizes the outcomes of such glasshouse proposals (32). Put differently, Wells projects a conclusion to these horticulturalists' theoretical extrapolations of Victorian glasshouse technology. Dirty, sooty, stinky London is gone. It is replaced with an artificial Eden. In 802,701 the Time Traveller encounters a "future world's climate, which resembles the ones artificially produced in nineteenth-century conservatories" for here Britain is now seemingly "a tropical island" where exotics continually thrive, as Mary Bowden observes (613-614). No longer are portable terrariums in one's parlor, additional rooms added to the home, or separate buildings built to grow out-of-season produce; the Wardian cases, conservatories, and hothouses of the Victorian period have been removed. Instead, the whole earth is subject to glasshouse technology.

Eradicating seasonality by manipulating climate and time are core tenets of glasshouse technology. Elizabeth Chang notes that "such enclosed spaces gave obvious physical and visual proof of an off-set time frame, as flowers long dead in outdoor beds bloomed continuously indoors under their glassy protection" (71). By changing seasonality—by manipulating light and heat the blooming season is extended—glasshouses alter a person's experience of time. Not only can the growing season be extended, but it also can occur quicker: "[some] plants do not appear to

require a period of rest during the twenty-four hours of the day, but make increased and vigorous progress if subjected during daytime to sunlight and during the night to electric light” (“Influence of Electric Light” 241). Throughout the pages of *The Garden* magazine, gardeners express their various levels of success at alternating seasonality.¹⁷⁵ In March 1885, for instance, gardener A.D. notes that with the use of “pits or frames,” peas could be carried “far into the autumn” (216).¹⁷⁶ With the advancement of glasshouse technology, human control over the environment—specifically their gardens—also advances.

The narrator observes such climatal and temporal manipulation so characteristic of the glasshouse. When first arriving the Traveller quickly notes “how warm the air was” (Wells 25). It is so warm the Eloi do not need clothing to protect their heads and legs from the cold. The suspension of seasonality further affirms the Edenic milieu the Eloi live within. Despite the fact that the Time Traveller claims to have “lived eight days” in the future, when commenting on the unusual plants he notes that “a floury thing in a three-sided husk” was “in season all the time I was there” (20, 29). This observation both complicates the actual duration of the Traveller’s trip in the future—noticing a lack of seasonal change implies that he was there long enough to

¹⁷⁵ As a mid-to-late Victorian magazine, *The Garden* aligns with the advancement of the horticultural technology discussed in this chapter.

¹⁷⁶ A.D. observes that while “some would prefer to have Peas all the year round,” this technology would probably not be available until 1905 (216). This date is not far off from its real-life counterpart. In the 1920s Clarence Birdseye developed frozen peas for the mass-market. One Birdseye advertisement expresses the wonder of eating produce out-of-season: “Here is the most wondrous magic of all! June peas, as gloriously green as any you will see next summer. . . . Imagine having them all summer-fresh in March!” (qtd. in Kurlansky 182).

have observed one—and, more significant to this chapter, further implies that the climate is that of a glasshouse, for plants are perpetually blooming.

And with 800,000 years of humans engineering the garden, climate has been perfected. Despite the Traveller observing that the gardens are “long-neglected,” “[t]he air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers” (Wells 27, 33). What is classified as a weed is in the eye of the gardener. Weeds are unwanted plants that continually reaffirm the presence of non-human forces within the garden. Most everyone who has gardened has experienced weeding out unwanted plants only to find that they have grown back much too quickly, reminding the gardener of their own limits. Yet this common evidence of human failure at totally controlling the garden is absent. Unwanted flies, unwanted plants, and unwanted spores are absent. Most significantly, their absence requires no labor on the part of the Eloi. Rather, the Eloi experience a self-sustaining world, a world where no maintenance is required.

As weeds, fungi, and gnats are defined by humans, human selection drove the engineering of this Edenic environment. Influenced by the general population’s consumption of plants, past horticulturalists decided the future’s floriculture. For instance, one of the few named plants in *The Time Machine* is an exotic—the rhododendron, a Victorian favorite¹⁷⁷—while domestic plants like honeysuckles,

¹⁷⁷ When the Traveller arrives in 802,701, he notes that he is “surrounded by rhododendron bushes” and “noticed. . . their mauve and purple blossoms” (23). Rhododendrons were exotics from Asia and North America that were naturalized into the English countryside by the 1850s. These plants were so popular that garden historian Brent Elliott characterizes their naturalization as a “successful takeover of the British countryside” (“From the Arboretum” 75). The mauve and purple blossoms implicate these flowers in industrial modernity. Mauve was also known as “Perkin’s purple,” as William Henry Perkin received the first English patent for this aniline dye

cornflowers, forget-me-nots, and the like are absent. As domestic plants are more often ignored by the cultivators' hands, they are absent in the future. Due to human selection, the exotic has been fully domesticated and the domestic eradicated. Wells directly speaks to these human-centric garden practices, noting:

horticulture destroy[s] a weed just here and there and cultivate[s] perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they can. We improve our favourite plants and animals—and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower . . . We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because, Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hands. Some day all this will be better organized, and still better. That is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and cooperating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs. (32-33)

Horticulturalists manipulate desired plants to be more amenable to the human pallet and aesthetic. This practice ensures that only those plants desired by humans are cared for and improved. Therefore, all desirable plants will be redesigned to cooperate with human ideals; the rest, the weeds, will be left to their own devices. Writing in 1831, horticulturalist John Lindley observed that the “two great considerations” of his period’s horticulture were “AMELIORATION and PROPAGATION” (qtd. in Bowden 607). In other words, driving nineteenth-century horticulture was the desire to perfect a plant to fit “human needs” and to disseminate the plant in its new form. As

in the 1850s. Unlike vegetable dyes, this new dye did not fade with washing or light exposure, as it drew from coal tar, a byproduct of coke and coal gas production. See Johnston 83-86 for more.

such, only those selected by humans would receive the resources to survive in this glasshouse environment.

Yet, as the narrator notes, human knowledge of horticulture was limited. While eventually humans will learn to be “better organized,” in the process they will continually make mistakes. In redesigning plants, Victorian horticulturalists were limited in what they could do and could not predict all outcomes; these limitations often resulted in “the reversion, degeneration, and sterility found in selected and hybridized plants” (Bowden 611). In attempting to alter plants to obtain the human-desired look, smell, and the like, horticulturalists often changed a plant so much so that it began deteriorating or taking on the form of something else entirely. Such an instance occurred in 1893, when *The Garden* reported on “Monstrous Pears.” With Jersey growers breeding extremely large fruits, these fruits soon became repellent to the human pallet.¹⁷⁸ In a quest to improve, horticulturalists failed. Artificial climates exacerbated such failings, for all the plants within such engineered climates are “human-engineered” (Bowden 603).¹⁷⁹ The Traveller encounters the literal fruits of hundreds of thousands of years of horticulturalists labor in the glasshouse, but humans have selectively bred plants so extensively that they are now something different. Some of the only recognizable fruits are “hypertrophied raspberr[ies] and orange[s]”; the rest “were strange,” altered into new species and existing in new taxonomies

¹⁷⁸ See Field 409.

¹⁷⁹ Isobel Armstrong speaks to such human-engineering of flora, observing that glasshouses “could change and adapt species. . . [meaning] [t]he hothouse generated rival taxonomies” (169).

(Wells 28). Living in a greenhouse could alter a species, meaning that horticulturalists could eventually transform a plant into another species altogether.

Grown into Species Anew

Such is the fate of the Eloi. Like the monstrous pears, the Eloi are a warning of what can happen when human-engineering goes wrong. As Allen MacDuffie notes, “[t]he question of whether the Eloi are actually still human is one that the story poses, and the narrator begs” (557). By living in a glasshouse environment, the Eloi are descendants of humans that were adapted and changed so much by this glasshouse culture that they now operate in a new taxonomy. The Traveller sees biological and cultural evidence to suggest the Eloi are a different species from him. Only around four feet tall, with curly hair, small mouths, and large eyes, the Eloi appear to be “beautiful and graceful creature[s]” that are frail and reminiscent of a “more beautiful kind of consumptive—that hectic beauty” (Wells 25). Physically slight, in a state of beautiful decay, and lacking all forms of intelligence, they are similar enough to humankind to be considered a descendant yet different enough to be something distinctive from the Victorian. These biological changes influence their intellect, as all forms of cultural development are absent in this future. When touring the Palace of Green Porcelain, which the Traveller sees as an “ancient monument of an intellectual age” comprised of “the ruins of latter-day South Kensington,” he discovers “decaying vestiges of books” (61-62, 64). The Eloi have abandoned this house of knowledge. Their intellect is dead. Like the gigantic raspberries and oranges that evoke Victorian fruit, but are distinctly something else, the Eloi are akin to the human species, yet are something else entirely.

The Eloi, who live within this idealized paradise, are treated as plants. Those living outside this paradise operate as the gardeners, controlling and engineering the environment. The industrial world of the Morlocks—underground, dark, and filled with “big machines”—serves as the technological component of this world-sized glasshouse, as it creates this tropic, exotic environment (Wells 52). Considering the Morlock’s underground industry, Heidi Scott suggests that while the Time Traveller “does not directly remark on climate engineering . . . the Morlocks’ machine realm sets the perfect stage for climate forcing, and the climate appears tailored to the needs of the selected plants and animals” (595). Scott’s reading is compelling, as it suggests that the Morlocks are the greenhouse gardeners ensuring that this gigantic glasshouse maintains its perfected environment. Such a divide—horticulturalist-Morlocks and plant-Eloi—aligns with the class commentary embedded within the novel. Morlocks are the decedents of the Victorian factory workers while the Eloi are the decedents of the middle and upper classes. Such upper classes would have had first access to the idealized glasshouse environment, while such working-class people would have been responsible for maintaining (but not living within) it. Wells takes such a relationship to its inevitable conclusion, showing how those in the idealized environment eventually become subject to the control of the working class. Like the horticulturalist in the glasshouse, ensuring that they can have their produce year-round, the Morlocks create the ideal environment for the Eloi to make them the best source of food possible: docile and inept prey.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ As the Traveller observes, the Morlocks eat the Eloi.

I suggest that the Eloi are in this state of devolution for they have stopped laboring. In other words, rather than gardeners who are actively working to shape, improve, and maintain their garden, the Eloi are the products of a glasshouse. The Morlocks are the ones engineering the Eloi. The Morlocks construct the Eloi's sense of place. Like the monstrous pears that are so improved they are no longer edible, the Eloi are so far improved they can no longer labor as humans. These species-based alterations occur, for the physical and cultural developments that the Eloi lost were dependent upon labor. Labor is so significant for humanity's preservation, for it is essential to the maintenance of place. To labor in one's place is to construct and preserve one's identity. Lockean theory insists that laboring is what makes land one's own property, one's own place. With "no signs of proprietary rights" and "engag[ing] in no toil," the Eloi do not labor; therefore, they do not have private property and the individual identity that comes with it (Wells 32-33). The Eloi serve as a warning to Victorian readers of what happens when one idly exists and no longer takes an active role in shaping their place. The narrator notes that "[t]he work of ameliorating the condition of life—the true civilizing process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on to a climax" and, once reaching that climax, began the dénouement of mankind (32). Continuing to improve the human condition (constantly improving the quality of one's air, for instance) is not an indefinite project. Despite the fact that J.C. Loudon argues that improvement is integral to the British spirit—"the most beautiful scenery in the world, whether the work of nature alone, or the result of nature aided by art, will soon cease to please" and landowners will keep laboring—Wells' text suggests otherwise ("Descriptive Notice" 354). At some point in their

quest for perfection, humans will cease laboring. Yet, to strive towards a paradise without labor is to ensure the destruction of humankind.

Such a warning was prescient at the time of publication, for human-labor relations shifted in the garden.¹⁸¹ The mechanization of labor, for instance, altered the socially perceived value of workers;

Dolf Sternberger has argued that the categories of ‘Nature’ and ‘Artificial’ were themselves transformed in the nineteenth century as ‘the blend of the technological and the organic’ and the interchange between men and machines grew more insistent. (qtd. in I. Armstrong 195-196)

Such blending of “nature” and “artificial” is greatly seen in horticulture. For instance, in 1885 *The Garden* advertised a new spray diffuser that disseminated insecticides and was meant to replace the syringe: it “create[s] a moisture-laden atmosphere without the excessive amount of moisture which follows the use of the ordinary syringe” (325). Not only does this technological advancement perform the brunt of the labor, but it also performs the labor more effectively than humans ever could. This tool enabled gardeners to replicate a “Scotch mist,” an environmental condition that a manual syringe could never duplicate (325). Furthermore, landowners often obscured and outsourced manual labor, positioning gardens as leisure spaces for themselves.¹⁸² In his *Suburban Gardener* J.C. Loudon “dismisses such manual labor as unworthy of

¹⁸¹ For a discussion of nineteenth-century labor relations, see: Jason Moore’s *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* and Nathan Hensley and Philip Steer’s *Ecological Form*.

¹⁸² That said, this focus on leisure rather than labor was not universal. For women, the garden was one of the few places where physical labor was permitted (Bilston, “Queens” 2-3).

attention” and instead focuses on the “aesthetics, self-cultivation, and gentle exercise” present in the suburban garden, as Sarah Bilston notes (*Promise* 25).¹⁸³ Day laborers or jobbing gardeners would weed, remove leaves, and the like. Despite maintaining the garden, such workers did not ground their own identity in it, as it belonged to someone else. This outsourcing of labor was not a new phenomenon. Rather, the combination of mechanization and obscurification ensured how one labored to maintain their place shifted in this period. Such shifts were more widespread, as the “suburban villas and . . . urban housing, swelled the confines of London, creating large numbers of new gardens, large and small” (Elliott, “Commercial” 168). More people had access to gardens than ever before. With gardens as integral spots of placemaking, such a change to their construction and maintenance inevitably influenced identity formation.

Wells shows the long-term effects of such labor-erasing practices—of what happens when one no longer needs to labor in their place—by having the Eloi reside in a tropical paradise. By continuing to make climatal conditions resemble such a paradise, eventually there will be nothing left to improve, nothing left to work or labor towards. In the polluted London, there will always be something to strive for, something to perfect, simply because the climate is inhospitable to healthy growth. An artificial Edenic space, on the other hand, is exceptionally hospitable to growth without labor. According to *The Time Machine*, such a tropical climate grows produce

¹⁸³ Specifically considering the glasshouse, J.C.C. notes that they “doubt if many of the owners of conservatories that are kept bright throughout the year with relays of fresh plants have any idea of the amount of labour which such embellishment involves, much of the work which it entails not coming under their observation” (406).

without traditional agricultural labor methods. With no labor necessary, with nothing left to improve, people go into a decline. “[C]limate delimits what can be thought, said, and done in a given place and time,” and the tropical paradise ensures that labor is not needed (Taylor, *Sky* 13). As the Traveller notes, there is “no evidenc[e] of agriculture,” for within this especially warm climate there is no need for humans to force or encourage plant growth (Wells 32). As bountiful fruits are all around them, the Eloi have no need for hunting, cooking, or tilling the land. Most significantly, this climate and the bountiful food it provides ensures that fire is absent from Eloi culture: “I don’t know if you have ever thought what a rare thing flame must be in the absence of man and in a temperate climate” for “the art of fire-making had been forgotten on the earth” (Wells 67-68). The change in climate brings about the unremembering of this skill. Unlike the Victorian period, where seasonal change necessitates the presence of fire for human survival, seasons have been leveled out by the year 802,701. Rather, the climate is fixed in a state where people can live without fire’s presence.

The absence of fire is an especially forceful symbol for the fall of humankind, for it was through this Promethean gift that human civilization progressed. As told in Greek myth, Prometheus’s gift of fire enabled technological advancements, which was fundamental to human progress. For the creation of the conservatory, for instance, gardeners needed fire, as “steam-heating, [was] the key to a controlled environment” (I. Armstrong 182). The loss of such a tool, a tool that was necessary for the creation of the Eloi’s glasshouse environment, further affirms the decline of this group. By making a climate so perfect that those living within it do not need to labor, society progressed too far and ensured its own devolution.

Living in a tropical paradise and performing no manual labor, the Eloi are morally degraded. Despite living in a setting that evokes a prelapsarian state, the Eloi are in a postlapsarian world where labor is essential in developing a sense of morality. When describing to Adam and Eve their life outside the Garden's walls, "the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil . . . Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken" (*KJV*, Genesis 3:22-23). It is through labor that humankind will learn good from evil, right from wrong. A life without labor morally degrades humanity. This connection between labor and morality was felt in the Victorian period, with Anthony Trollope observing "that curse of Adam, unremitting toil . . . was actually humanity's greatest blessing" (Buzard, "Portable Boundaries" 10). Wells emphasizes this lack of Christian morality by aligning the Eloi with British imperial subjects. Cantor and Hufnagel suggest that this text can be read as "a journey to the imperial frontier" where "[t]he Eloi conform to a specific archetype of the good native in imperialist romance. . . . they appear to live in a kind of paradise, where all things are held in common and enjoyed without labor" (36, 39). This racist, colonialist perspective—that those living in tropical paradise are morally lesser, for they do not know the pleasures of work—was a common point in the justification for imperialism and enslavement.¹⁸⁴ By associating these future Victorians with colonized people, not

¹⁸⁴ Anthony Trollope sums up and perpetuates such racist ideology in his *The West Indian and the Spanish Man* (1859). He suggests that the largest problem with emancipation is that formerly enslaved people would refuse to work: "The negro's idea of emancipation was and is emancipation not from slavery but from work. To lie in the sun and eat breadfruit and yams is his idea of being free" (qtd. in Buzard, "Portable Boundaries" 10).

only does the novel show that a life in paradise goes against a core tenet of Christian humanism, but it also reinforces the colonizer/colonized division in the Victorian consciousness. If Victorians do not want to be like the docile, inept Eloi (or their colonized subjects) they must labor. In short, living in a paradise of idleness goes against a core tenet of British Christian theology and morality.

This lack of Christian morality is most overtly seen when none of the Eloi attempt to save Weena from drowning. Only the Time Traveller, with his Victorian sensibilities, attempts (and succeeds) in saving her:

[A]s I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with [a] cramp and began drifting down stream It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you that none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly-crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes. (Wells 42)

With their inaction, the Eloi show a lack of humanity. As Robert Luckhurst notes, “rescu[ing] someone from drowning was considered a defining mark of human empathy That these future Londoners are indifferent to the distress of one of their number is a sure sign of their degeneration from humanitarian ideals” (Wells 42n1).¹⁸⁵ Empathy and community preservation have been written out of this new species. The Eloi are the manifestation of years of artificial breeding. Creating a perfect atmosphere for humankind, putting humans in an artificial climate that is meant to improve their condition, will have negative side effects, just as it so often does for plants.

¹⁸⁵ London’s The Memorial to Heroic Self-Sacrifice further emphasizes the significance of saving those that are drowning. It commemorates “ordinary” people who died saving (or attempting to save) someone’s life. For instance, in 1874 Edmund Emery was celebrated for saving a drowning child and in 1899 Mary Rogers was commended for giving up her floatation device to save others from drowning. For more, see “Memorial.”

The Time Machine is a prescient warning about the eradication of place in the age of global warming. To keep a sense of place—and a sense of identity—Wells suggests that humankind can neither keep polluting nor opt out of this polluted environment. If societies keep pushing forward into industrial modernity without changing the way in which their industrialization engages with the environment, it is not individual identities that are in question; rather, the collective human identity is put at risk. The species could change, fundamentally altering how people define themselves. Wells predicts that altering the climate—whether it is through polluting or attempting to “fix” such pollution—would have unforeseen, long-term effects on the human species, such as destroying the species entirely.

Today, we in the twenty-first century have begun to live with some of those long-term effects. For instance, “humans in high-income countries have changed physiologically over the last 200 birth years with a mean body temperature 1.6% lower than the pre-industrial era” (Protsiv 7). As Stanford University researchers have discovered, rather than measurement biases explaining away this 1.6% temperature shift, it is improvements in medical care—such as infection prevention and dental hygiene—in sanitation, in housing, and in economics that have led to a decrease in human body temperature from the once standard 98.6°F. Specifically, the evening out of ambient temperature at one’s house and workplace greatly contributes to this bodily change in temperature. Considering homes in the United States, these researchers observe that “[m]aintaining constant body temperature despite fluctuations in ambient temperature consumes up to 50-70% of daily energy intake,” so with heating systems and air conditioning units used in the majority of homes, “the amount of time the population has spent at thermoneutral zones has markedly increased, potentially

causing a decreased in RMR [resting metabolic rate], and, by analogy, body temperature” (Protsiv 6). The majority of one’s energy is spent in regulating one’s bodily temperature; with a decline in the energy necessary to perform this work—the energy to maintain one’s body temperature in a 40°F house and a 65°F one is drastically less, for instance—there is a corresponding decline in body temperature. This change in body temperature has immediate consequences to personal and communal health. How we define fevers, for instance, is dependent upon the average human body temperature. Such a definition is tremendously pertinent in the year this study and chapter were written: 2020. In a worldwide pandemic where a fever is one of the most common symptoms, how we define a fever is greatly important. “The role that this physiologic ‘evolution’ plays in human anthropometrics and longevity is unknown,” as Protsiv reminds their readers (7). Body sizes, proportions, and lifespans could change. Within two centuries human body temperature has decreased. Add eight-hundred thousand years, and humans could be unrecognizable.

While living in a gigantic greenhouse to avoid the bodily harm of pollution seems implausible, in 2018 Peter Beaumont reported in *The Guardian* that a “giant sunshade” was a newly proposed solution for the twenty-first century climate crisis. From solar engineering to technologically removing carbon dioxide to creating underwater seawalls to reducing carbon emissions, scientists have theorized new ways that they can intentionally alter the climate to make it cooler. Such alterations feel necessary, for industry growth rising alongside rapid population growth—at the start of the nineteenth century the world had around 1 billion people, whereas in the twenty-first it has around 7.7 billion¹⁸⁶—means that carbon dioxide is emitted at vast

¹⁸⁶ See “World Population Day 11 July.”

and often unchecked levels.¹⁸⁷ In short, geoengineering at global levels has moved from the realm of speculation and science fiction into science itself. With sea levels and temperatures rising, change is necessary for humans to safely live on the earth. Significantly, livelihoods are put at risk; with temperatures rising at their current rates, climate scientists predict that by 2030, this climate will “expose some 350 million additional people to drought and push roughly 120 million people into extreme poverty” (Alter et al.). Climate change destroys homes and livelihoods. It destroys people’s sense of place.

Despite Wells’ foreshadowing of such events, much of the world is seemingly living in transit to the year 802,701. As Timothy Morton argues, “we are still inside the Victorian period,” for we are still living with the climatal effects that “began to impress themselves on us humans in” that period (“Victorian Hyperobjects” 489). Living within the hyperobject—an ecocritical theorization of entities that “are massively distributed in time and space” yet are too large to be seen in their totality—that is global warming, like the Victorians we have altered the climate through industrialization and population growth and are now intentionally altering the climate to correct our own actions (Morton, “Victorian Hyperobjects” 489). When entering Kew Gardens’ Palm House James Hannay felt like he had migrated to Australia due to the change in climatal conditions. Soon the glasshouse’s material structure may not be needed for all, regardless of geographic location, to feel like they are in Australia. Rather than living within the artificial Eden that Kew Gardens’ gardeners were

¹⁸⁷ For instance, in 2019 Amazon reported a 15% rise in its carbon footprint, as it emitted 51.17 million metric tons of carbon dioxide, which is “the equivalent of 13 coal-burning plants running for a year” (“As Amazon’s Carbon”).

striving to create, however, we could be trapped within a toxic garden of our own making.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To end, let us return to the beginning. Opening *Constructing Locality*, I theorize that Charles Dickens uses the literary garden in his 1853 *Bleak House* to both sow the seeds of the uncanny in his *magnum opus*' otherwise seemingly happy ending and ask readers to consider the conventions of the Victorian "angel of the house." Yet, at this dissertation's close, we can see that Jarndyce's action within this Yorkshire garden—replication—not only alters Esther's sense of place, but also changes other characters' places. In other words, if we were to consider Jarndyce's efforts within a chapter titled "To Replicate," we would see how his duplication of Esther's St. Alban's garden in Yorkshire, his rechristening of Woodcourt's house as Bleak House, and his giving of Esther to Woodcourt engages both with the uncanny *and* with many other socio-political concerns discussed throughout this project. Alan Pritchard suggests that the multiple Bleak Houses in the novel are iterations of a different kind of Gothic house, with Esther's final home in Yorkshire a "*cottage ornée* [*sic*] . . . [which has] on a small scale many of the picturesque and organic qualities of the Gothic country house" (451). While Dickens does not describe a house following the Old English ecological aesthetic, the various Bleak Houses described in this novel engage with a larger discussion considering the relationship between Englishness and Gothicism, as outlined in "To Historicize."

This act of replicating with a difference not only evokes questions over the Gothic, but also asks questions regarding nineteenth-century land improvement practices. With Woodcourt, the professional working man, getting an improved

version of Bleak House from the benevolent, wealthy Jarndyce, this narrative ending emphasizes and complicates the connection between class and land improvement practices. While both Bleak Houses are in geographically different locations, with Jarndyce and Woodcourt having a house with the same name and garden design, these two houses evoke the before and after slides so integral to Repton's horticultural practices discussed in "To Improve." Yet, as it is Woodcourt (the professional man) who has the more picturesque, improved, version of Bleak House, the novel closes by asking its readers to consider the role class has in Jarndyce's replication. In short, this narrative closing not only asks questions about gender roles and the uncanny, but also considers how English nationalism was embedded within the picturesque Gothic and how improvement practices and class systems altered in relation to one another as the nineteenth century progressed.

Gardens were integral to the development of nineteenth-century British society, helping shape and grow its national identity, theorization of domesticity, imperialistic agenda, class structure, economic system, scientific practices, and gender politics, to name a few socio-political issues. Nineteenth-century novels use the garden as a central tool, enabling them to consider how all of these socio-political issues shape identity. Each chapter of this project highlights one action—escorting, improving, historizing, uprooting, and glassing over—and I have shown that each action is embedded with many socio-political issues (glassing over engages with imperial and climate concerns, for instance) which all contribute to the shaping of the character's identities. Yet, as my brief discussion of *Bleak House* shows, there are a plethora of other actions—like replication—that nineteenth-century novelistic characters perform. This project is an initial consideration of how characters use

gardens, but readers should continue to consider how gardens afford additional actions and the socio-political meaning those actions hold going forward.

Constructing Locality's readings advance the concept that the garden was a popular and oft-used tool that novelists used to address how such socio-political issues shaped identity, specifically identity at the national level. As this project argues, the garden itself shapes the way in which characters are able to act, meaning that it both shapes the identity of the characters and how the narrative itself can develop. In so doing, *Constructing Locality* suggests that without a culture invested in the garden many plots within these novels could not be actualized. By doing so it works to widen novels studies to account for the garden and, more broadly, advance scholarship on British literature and the environment by revealing how the form of the nineteenth-century novel needed the form of the garden to develop. Both the garden and novel were prominent cultural forces within the nineteenth century, working to help shape British identity during this century of massive social, political, climatal change. *Constructing Locality* is one of the few monographs of its kind to reveal how these two forces—garden and novel—worked together in the novelistic garden to actively shape the way in which such identities were represented, shaped, and reified throughout the century.

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